

# SOCIALIST VOICE

Newsletter of the Communist Party of Ireland, Dublin

November 2003

Contributions welcome

## Service charges—a danger to public health

**T**HE campaign to prevent the imposing of bin collection charges by three councils—Dublin (city), Dún Laoghaire and Rathdown, and Fingal—is intensifying. We have seen the jailing of elected representatives and a large number of activists, with more due before the High Court to “purge their contempt.” The approach taken both by council officials and by the courts is an attack on the democratic right to protest. The way they are approaching how we should protest in effect rules out effective civil disobedience.

Who do the political and legal establishment think they’re kidding? If you believe that the court system is “above politics” and is free of political bias, then ask all the tax fiddlers, corrupt planning officials and bent politicians, both national and local.

### What a load of oul’ rubbish!

We now have a further attack on people’s rights, both the right to protest and the right to public services, with the passing of a new by-law in Dublin—which no doubt will be followed up around the country—whereby council officials have now imposed a €1,300 fine for “littering” if you put your bin or rubbish out without the proper tag or without having paid the service charges. This is clearly raising the political temperature and is very much an attack on civil rights.

*The old saying is true: “Law is only congealed politics.”*

With that said, the statement by David Begg, general secretary of the ICTU, was, to say the least, very disappointing. By his intervention he was attempting to

undermine the campaign. He stated that “a significant number of normally law-abiding people have, wittingly or unwittingly, been drawn into a campaign clearly motivated for political ends.” Are not all campaigns motivated for one end or another, whether by farmers, publicans, or for that matter trade unions? Is the imposition of service charges throughout the country not also motivated by a political philosophy, called neo-liberalism?—a political and economic philosophy that is the enemy of working people in general and of trade unionists in particular.

It’s the oldest trick in the book to smear people by saying they are fools being manipulated by others. Begg’s comments lent credence to the Government’s smear campaign, and in particular that of the PDs, that the campaign had no support and was just a few leftists.

The campaign to stop service charges will not—as David Begg claims—lead to privatisation but if successful will have the opposite effect, of keeping the service under public control. Where councils have been successful in bringing in service charges, refuse collection has ►►

“ Assuredly it was within the realm of probability, that a people suffering under the smart of intolerable conditions caused by a misuse of political power and social privilege should, at the first opportunity, set itself to the task of sweeping away such conditions by a public-spirited use of their newly-acquired control of municipal powers. The concept of the Irish nation as an organic whole, each part of which throbs in fullest sympathy with every other, and feels in the movements of its public administrative bodies, the pulsations of its own intellectual heart-beats, a concept vaguely outlined in the dreams of patriotic enthusiasts, poets and martyrs of the past, might reasonably have been expected to take form and substance in miniature, with the establishment of popular control over cities in which hundreds of thousands of Irish men, women and children passed their lives.—James Connolly, *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* (1899). ”

► in fact subsequently been privatised: examples of this can be found in Bray, Sligo, Kilkenny, Co. Galway, and a host of other towns and counties around the country. If they can quantify the amount of waste to be collected and, more importantly, how many people are willing to pay for that service, then it becomes a valuable commodity or service, from which profits can be made. If they can't quantify the amount or the numbers, then it's very hard to sell it.

## **This approach can only lead to further inequality and further fragmentation of our society**

It is part of the growing moves to commodify all aspects of public services as a prelude to privatisation, whether water, sewerage, electricity, rubbish collection, health, or education. They want to bring the maximum amount of services into the ambit of private ownership, and then those who can afford them will benefit the most. This approach can only lead to further inequality and further fragmentation of our society. It has led to a deterioration in services and a worsening of working conditions for refuse collection workers. In these areas the waivers have ended and everyone has to pay, whether they can afford it or not. And the price is constantly on the increase: independent observers reckon that within three to five years, service charges in the Dublin area could be as much as €2,000.

As Jack O'Connor, president of SIPTU, stated, "the imposition of these charges is inequitable in practice, since they are not applied on the basis of ability to pay. We believe that it is also inequitable in principle, since it fails to recognise that some local authority services (like the supply of proper drinking water, sanitation services and domestic refuse collection) are so essential in terms of public health and environmental protection that they should not be treated as commodities which can only be dispensed if the consumer pays an additional charge."

So what will happen if these charges continue to be imposed? We will have a very marked deterioration in the social environment in many estates throughout the Dublin area, as people will be unable to pay the bill and have their rubbish collected. Areas of the city that can afford to pay will be kept clean, and other areas will look like the scenes we see on television of shanty towns in the majority world.

## **What will be the consequences of piles of rubbish lying around in back lanes, or thrown over walls and hedges?**

We are already seeing an alarming rise in the number of cases of TB, a disease that we all thought had been eliminated. What will be the consequences of piles of rubbish lying around in back lanes, or thrown over walls and hedges? We will soon have many more health problems to deal with.

*The very reason that local government was established was to look after public health, which included the provision of clean drinking-water, sewerage, and*

*rubbish collection.* Refuse collection was not brought in as a service to the "consumer" but to protect public health. Commodifying and privatising the service will create a danger to public health, with illegally dumped or uncollected rubbish all over the place.

Jack O'Connor's statement that "these essential services should be funded through general taxation in order to ensure that citizens are guaranteed access to them regardless of their personal financial circumstance" is absolutely correct. What is happening can only lead to further deterioration in services, with refuse collection getting worse right across the board.

It is only through the general taxation system that we can ensure equity throughout the country. Why should someone living in north Donegal or on the Dingle Peninsula be penalised for where they live? For there is no doubt that people living in rural communities will have to pay more for services if everything is privatised.

The only equitable and fair way is to have local services funded out of the national pool of taxation. Each local authority should enter into a contract, say for five years, with the central government, outlining what it plans to spend its revenue on and what priorities it will set. So then we have greater accountability for how money is spent, and it could lead to the control of junkets by councillors or of bloated salaries for county and city managers and other officials.

## **Local government is becoming increasingly meaningless**

Local government is becoming increasingly meaningless as the Government increases the power of the unelected city and county managers to make arbitrary decisions, with no democratic accountability. The imposition of service charges will not improve the environment, or make people more environmentally conscious, but will lead to further environmental degradation and illegal dumping throughout the country, whether by local people or bogus refuse-collectors.

Manufacturers and packagers must also be made to take responsibility for the rubbish they create. Worn-out household goods, such as fridges and televisions, contain toxins, as well as recyclable materials; they should go back to the manufacturers. The mountain of plastic packaging should go back to supermarkets. The corporate creators of our rubbish have been given a free ride for too long. If they were forced to take responsibility for their throw-away society we would see a much quicker change in the environment than by imposing a bin tax.

Clearly the campaign will succeed only if we can involve the broad labour movement. That will require both a long-term and short-term approach. The convening by Dublin Council of Trade Unions of a city-wide forum representing local communities, trade unions and political parties is an important first step.

This should only be the beginning, and not the end. We have had enough tokenism from elements of the labour movement. Equally, we have had enough adventurism from elements of the left who are in danger of undoing the good work already achieved. The call for a city-wide stoppage at this stage is premature and can only place refuse-collectors in a very difficult ►►

► position. In particular, the attack on Jack O'Connor was unhelpful and very divisive. If leaders of the labour movement are moving in the right direction, then they need to be supported and not booed off our platforms.

This campaign will quickly become an industrial dispute if binmen are suspended and it then becomes a case of getting people back their jobs. This is a major

political question about the nature of our society and government policy. The campaign will succeed only if we can broaden the base of struggle and involve the labour movement across the board, leaving no hiding-place for those who have played footsie with the Government for years in relation to service charges and privatisation.

## A government driven by bankrupt ideology

**THIS government is being exposed as never before as a mean-spirited neo-liberal right-wing government.**

The Spending Estimates for 2004, published in November, show this to be the case.

*Hospital charges for A&E: up 10%*

*Nightly in-patient bed charges: up 10%*

*Drug refund threshold: raised by 10%*

*Student registration: up 12%*

*Junior Cert and Leaving Cert exams fees: up 12%*

The state-owned VHI is being fattened up for privatisation with the allocation of €63.5 million for "restructuring" the board. The VHI itself was surprised by the allocation.

The annual allocation to local authorities will leave

them with a shortfall of €42 million, as they will have to meet benchmarking and "Sustaining Progress" pay awards. This can only mean that local services will be cut, with more privatisation, an increase in commercial rates, and service charges for refuse collection and other necessary local services.

There are reductions in sixteen separate social welfare allowances, which they hope will save €54 million. Lone-parent allowances, rent allowances and supplements, back-to-education allowance and child dependant allowances are some more areas to be affected by cuts.

All this when the Government's own figures state that 70,000 children live in consistent poverty and 300,000 in relative poverty.

### The North

## Election to Assembly back on track

**THE announcement by the British Government that the postponed election to the Northern Assembly will now take place on 26 November is to be welcomed. It was an undemocratic act in the first place to have cancelled it; it also exposed the anti-democratic role and nature of the powers invested in the British Secretary of State and the British state as a whole in the political life of the people of this island and in particular in the political process in the North. This is an area that democratic opinion on this island as a whole must return to in the not-too-distant future.**

Clearly the decision to postpone the election and suspend the Assembly (as we have pointed out in the past) was to save David Trimble. Both governments went along with this strategy, for different reasons: the British because they need the UUP as their local political allies in the North, the Irish Government because they are worried by the rise of Sinn Féin and the use of its political strength in the North to build a strong political base in the South. They need to bolster the SDLP in its efforts to slow the growth of Sinn Féin.

### Both governments want a political solution that is in the main confined to the North

The Irish Government and the political elites see the rise of Sinn Féin in the South as providing a political transmission belt for the political instability within the North to be brought into the heart of the cosy establishment that has paid lip-service to the goal of

national unity for decades.

Both governments want a political solution that is in the main confined to the North. They have had to concede political structures that have the potential to move beyond that political objective, mainly because of the position of northern nationalists and republicans. Both these groups know that they must rely first and foremost upon themselves.

Nevertheless both governments have signed up to the Belfast Agreement, and they must be forced to implement and work it. In particular, the British Government must be forced to keep to its commitments and responsibilities. It has to undo the damage done both to the confidence and to the actual implementation of the agreement by the former Secretary of State, Peter Mandelson.

Subtle but important changes have appeared in the position of the DUP, which everyone seems to believe will emerge as the largest unionist party. Until recently the DUP was calling for the scrapping of the agreement and a return to "majority" government. They wanted no truck with Sinn Féin. Now their position is to re- ►►

► negotiate the Belfast Agreement. They now sit in the same television studios as Sinn Féin members. So are they positioning themselves for government? Have they come to the realisation that the agreement is here to stay? Will there be a new realignment between Robinson and Donaldson?

Robinson knows there is very limited mileage in the religious bigotry of the Paisleyites and the Free Presbyterian Church. He is ambitious and hungry to get his feet under the table. Trimble clearly lost all credibility when he walked away from the last deal, when the IRA decommissioned a substantial amount of weaponry. Everything had been agreed. The British delivered on the elections, Sinn Féin made a clear political statement on the use of violence, the IRA placed a large quantity of weapons beyond use, verified by de Chastelain, and Trimble had agreed to welcome these developments and move forward.

At the last minute he clearly backed off. It is now looking more and more as if Trimble is unable and unwilling to move forward. The two wings of his party, the Donaldson and Empey wings, have not got the numbers to oust him. Trimble remains the leader of the UUP almost by default.

The coming election will have a number of different elements. It will be a struggle for the hearts and minds of unionism between the UUP and the DUP. The UUP is divided between three groups. Donaldson supporters appear to have secured a number of nominations to stand for the Assembly, which includes the other two dissident MPs as well as Donaldson himself; so he will be in a position to challenge Trimble for leadership within the Assembly. Also, if Robinson has political ambitions, how will the Paisley-dominated DUP react to this bid for power with the party?

On the nationalist side, the struggle is between the SDLP and Sinn Féin for who will provide the strongest leadership and representation to the nationalist population. There will also be the battle for or against the Good Friday Agreement. In the process it looks as if the small but important advances made by the PUP and the Women's Coalition could be squeezed out. No doubt when the election is over the whole process will go into review, and the British Government will be left with the problem of pushing its local allies in unionism to work the agreement. But there will be no significant changes to be made to the agreement that will pull the DUP into the middle.

## **The old maxim of the British— divide and rule—has backfired on them**

The British will be looking on with some concern to see who will be the winners within unionism. Their long-term allies are in complete disarray. The old maxim of the British—divide and rule—has backfired on them, and they are no doubt looking to see whatever allies can be established within both the DUP and the UUP.

Sinn Féin will have many questions and demands asked of it. The more success it achieves the more it presents itself as the only guarantor on the nationalist side of the successful implementation of the Belfast

Agreement, the only party capable of standing up to the British and facing down unionist intransigence. The more its constituency looks for tangible results, both in the social and economic sphere but more importantly on the national question, the more its own limitations and possible contradictions will come to the fore.

## **The alternative has been tried for seventy years of unionist rule, and that most certainly did not work**

It is true that there is an element of built-in sectarianism in the formation of the Executive; but the alternative has been tried for seventy years of unionist rule, and that most certainly did not work. In a divided society with conflicting aspirations and political goals you need mechanisms that ensure democracy and equality of representation at the highest level, a form of positive representation at the highest level. To claim otherwise in the short term is the stuff of wishful thinking.

The slogan of "class not creed" sounds revolutionary, but it is not real. It is not based on how the situation is, how ideas and divisions are shaped by the real world, the fact that inter-class divisions are born out of real political difference and conditions that can only be overcome by addressing the underlying political divisions.

Sectarianism is not just religious but is political at the same time. Divisions were and are used to block class unity for clearly political reasons, to block the path to national unity. So if we are to overcome sectarianism we need to set in motion the political process that begins to undo the central fissure that is partition. When we have that in place, then those who sow division will have been disarmed of one of their most important weapons.

We need the return of the maximum possible number of pro-agreement Assembly members. The political parties are now gearing up to maximise their numbers, which of itself will only lead to increased polarisation in the short term but is the inevitable result of a polarised society like the North. Sometimes things get worse before long-term progress can be made and sustained.

The Belfast Agreement is not a panacea for the ills of the North but is a vehicle by which problems and political difficulties can and should be solved by political means. It has provided a process through which armed-force republicans can move to a purely political struggle. It allowed new voices and forces to emerge within loyalism.

The Communist Party does not see the agreement as the end but rather the beginning of a process, the potential opening up of new democratic arenas of struggle. We have moved a long way to get back to the position when the civil rights movement was established and the issues that it campaigned for.

The CPI in its 1962 programme, *Ireland's Path to Freedom*, pointed out that within a divided nation and divided people the struggle for democracy was the Achilles heel of both unionist domination and British imperial control and was the means to break both. We have been shown by current developments to have been correct.

# Blinded by power and greed



**THE United States is now finding out that it may have won the battle against Saddam but it is increasingly looking like it will lose the war on the Iraqi people. The Americans have failed to broaden international support and pull the United Nations on board to bolster their position and to get more troops from outside the present “coalition” forces on the ground inside Iraq. The financial burden is beginning to tell on the American economy and in the long run could do immeasurable damage to the fabric of American society.**

The Madrid donors’ conference, 23–24 October, was a failure in many ways for the US-led coalition. Most of the \$13 billion pledged was in the form of loans rather than grants, some was money that had already been loaned to Iraq, and some was in the form of a cancellation of previous loans to the old regime, for which any sensible new government would tell them to get lost.

The total pledged was far short of the \$55 billion that some international bodies have stated would be the cost of rebuilding Iraq (after they had blown it to pieces in the first place). The countries that did pledge to send troops have now stated that they will not do so any time soon.

The British and US governments are now having real difficulty in maintaining their military operations intact. They have insufficient forces on the ground to really control the situation and are increasingly relying on poorly trained and poorly equipped reservists, who have not got the training and are not willing participants in what will be the long haul of occupation. They will increasingly lack the morale to fight, and their



*A very special relationship*

families will want them home as the body-bag count continues to rise. As they are not professional soldiers, they are not reliant to the same degree on the military for their and their families’ education, health care, and housing, unlike the position of professional soldiers, which ties them into the military machine.

## The last thing imperialism wants is democracy for the Middle East

There are serious long-term consequences for the United States and Britain if the whole situation in Iraq goes belly-up, as increasingly seems likely. The Arab peoples have suffered greatly from the policies of colonialism and imperialism over the centuries. It will spur on the demise of the regimes in Saudi Arabia, Iran, Jordan, and many more countries. Imperialism has used fanatical religious regimes and feudalism to maintain its grip in the Middle East, which is on the verge of imploding. The last thing they want is democracy for the peoples of the oil-rich Middle East.

Their very actions within Iraq, in how they handle themselves, their increasing frustration with their situation, is spilling over into how they treat local people. The abuse that they are daily handing out to people will only lead to greater resistance and resentment. Many Iraqi people are experiencing at first hand what the Israeli military have been handing out to the Palestinian people for more than fifty years. The Americans are attempting to copy the approach of the Israeli army: the pupil is now becoming the teacher. It is not that the Iraqi people want Saddam back but that they want their freedom. Unfortunately, if the opposition appears to be siding with the occupying army, then the people will look elsewhere for leadership. ►►

►► The unfortunate recent event in which the extreme-right-wing Deputy Secretary of Defence, Paul Wolfowitz, was staying in the wrong room in Baghdad shows that there are no safe hotel rooms in that city.

A brief six months after the end of the war (as George Bush claims), rip-offs on a vast scale are under way. Halliburton-KBR, the oilfield equipment corporation, secured a \$2.3 billion uncontested contract for the so-called reconstruction of Iraq, the largest contract awarded so far. The former chief executive officer of Halliburton, Dick Cheney, received a \$33 million severance package when he stepped down to become Bush's running-mate. He is still receiving deferred payments from the corporation, a case of cashing in on the death and misery of American military personnel in Iraq.

Similar corrupt deals have been granted to the Bechtel Corporation (\$1.03 billion), International American Products (\$527 million), Perini Corporation (\$525 million), Fluor (\$500 million), and Washington Group International (\$500 million). The CBS television news programme "60 Minutes" had a feature on Halliburton that pointed out that many of the crucial decisions in the war and its aftermath have been made by the Pentagon's Defence Policy Board. The thirty members of this secretive body are a "Who's Who" of former government and senior military officials. Nine have links to corporations that have won \$76 billion in military contracts in just two years. Among the members are Richard Perle, who has long-standing ties to Boeing, and General Jack Sheehan (retired), vice-president of the Bechtel Corporation. The American and Iraqi people are paying through overcharging and kick-backs and other corrupt practices by these corporations.

Christian Aid has accused the US occupation authority of failing to account for \$4 billion spent so far. Most of this money came from Iraqi oil revenues. The United States was hoping to finance this war out of the pockets of the Iraqi people's natural resources; so American and British military resources could be destroyed and replaced, thereby stimulating economic growth, on the backs of the Iraqi people.

## The use of Shannon Airport has exposed the dependence that constitutes Ireland's relationship with the United States

The role of the Irish Government has once again been brought into stark relief. Shannon Airport continues to be used as a staging-post for the movement of American soldiers going to Iraq. Saddam is no longer a threat, and the war is over (according to Bush); so why is Shannon Airport still being used to facilitate the movement of American soldiers? The situation with regard to the use of Shannon Airport has exposed, as never before, the dependence that constitutes Ireland's relationship with the United States. It makes it clear as never before that there is no such thing as a free lunch, and this goes for our relations with the United States and our desire for investment and also with our membership of the European Union as it now stands.

It is a shameful period in the life of our nation that we are still allowing Shannon Airport to be used for assisting in an illegal occupation, resulting in thousands of Iraqi adults and children being murdered and maimed daily. This slaughter is being completely ignored in the reporting of this sanitised conflict.

The reasons for opposition to the war and the predicted outcome for the whole imperialist adventure are coming to haunt the United States. Its defeat in the sands of Iraq can only be good for world peace and will give a bloody nose to corporate world governance. It should also provide a salutary lesson to those who wish to establish yet another imperial power, in the form of the European Union, and should make them think twice about it. What the world needs more than ever is a structure of democratic world governance, which would include the regulation and control of the manufacture and sale of arms, protection against corporate greed, and people-centred investment.

### Europe

## CPI at European Social Forum

**THE Communist Party of Ireland is sending a delegation to the European Social Forum in Paris, 12-15 November. This is the first European Social Forum at which the CPI will have an official delegation.**

The delegation will be taking part in a number of seminars, including

- (1) "For a Europe without NATO, EU army and US bases," organised by the Balkan Anti-NATO Centre;
- (2) "Alternatives to capitalist globalisation," organised by the Marx-Engels Foundation (Germany) and Centre for Marxist Research (Greece); and
- (3) "The role of young people in central and eastern Europe after EU accession," jointly organised by the World Federation of Democratic Youth, Hungarian



Left Front, KJOE, KSM, NKU, UJCE, and CJC. The Connolly Youth Movement will be represented at this seminar.

The delegation will also participate in a number of other solidarity forums.

A full report of the Social Forum will be published on our web site ([www.communistpartyofireland.ie](http://www.communistpartyofireland.ie)).

# Welcome to “Forward”!

**A**s part of the increasing activities of the Connolly Youth Movement, we are giving over part of *Socialist Voice* to provide a platform for a youth view on contemporary Irish politics. As this young people’s movement grows in experience and activity, *Forward* will come out as a separate publication, produced by and for young people.

This is part of the rebuilding of the Connolly Youth Movement and our efforts to bring another generation of young political activists into contact with the ideas and politics of Ireland’s major political theorist, trade union leader and patriot, James Connolly. (*Forward* was the title of one of the papers edited by Connolly.)

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## Killer-Cola CYM boycott of Coca-Cola products

By Rónán Harte

**T**HE boycott of Coca-Cola continues to gather pace around the country, both north and south. The recent victory by the boycott campaign in NUI, Dublin, was a major step forward.

After the excellent work of the students of NUID in the victorious referendum to have Coca-Cola products removed from Student Union shops, those who opposed the referendum on banning Coca-Cola products have called for a second referendum.

A number of student activists from other universities have followed the lead of the NUID referendum and are now working towards their own referendum. The campaign has sparked interest in the United States and Britain: students in the University of California at Berkeley and in the University of Liverpool have been inspired by the success of the referendum and are working to have referendums in their colleges to ban Coca-Cola.

Two pubs in Belfast are also boycotting Coca-Cola products, including the John Hewitt. Youth clubs around the country have also stopped the sale of Coca-Cola. These successes, with the continued nationwide publicity, have started the ball rolling on the international boycott.

### Why boycott Coca-Cola?

The boycott was called by the National Union of Food Industry Workers (Sinaltrainal), the union that represents the majority of workers at Coca-Cola bottling plants in Colombia.

Twelve Sinaltrainal members working in two Coca-Cola bottling plants have been murdered by right-wing paramilitaries in the last eight years; others have been forced to live in exile or face death threats and intimi-

dation and many have lost their jobs and livelihoods. A similar boycott in the 1980s led to Coca-Cola ending its support for the violent oppression of workers in Guatemala.

This company has a very poor record in allowing workers to join trade unions. The working conditions are hard and long. In addition, it has a very poor environmental record; water pollution is a significant by-product of its activities, and in countries where it has established plants there have been many cases of water pollution. That of itself may not seem like much to us living in Ireland, but in the majority of these countries millions of people rely on wells, rivers and streams for drinking-water. They do not have access to tap water, water that has been cleaned and purified, as we have. ▶▶



# Boycott Coca-Cola!

►► If water is contaminated you affect the lives of millions of people—people who in the main have no access to medical attention. So what we have is a callous disregard for the well-being of ordinary people by these global corporations.

Some people in the Irish labour movement have stated that the boycott will only hurt the workers of Colombia. The best judge of any situation and the impact of any decision are those directly affected, in this instance the Colombian Coca-Cola workers. They called for the boycott; it's their decision. *"None so fit to break the chains as those who wear them; none so well-equipped to know what is a fetter."*

## An injury to one is an injury to all

We have a duty as young Irish people to stand by Colombian workers at this time. Our labour movement, if it can't or won't actively campaign in solidarity with the workers of Colombia, should not actively hinder or block or indeed campaign against the boycott. We Irish workers can't have our freedoms and rights at the expense of other workers' rights and freedoms. In the year of the ninetieth anniversary of the 1913 lock-out for establishing the right to join a trade union we are in a sorry state of affairs. We need to remind ourselves that "an injury to one is an injury to all."

Boycotts are a very effective way of telling the corporations to change their ways. Boycotts empower people to make decisions about what they buy. We live in a world where increasingly we are being told that we have no choice in the matter. There is only one way to look at the world, and that is through the eyes of global capitalism: everything else is dangerous. They'd make

it illegal to dream if they could.

In the globalised economy that the Irish political establishment talk about and global corporations glorify, the question of international solidarity takes on greater meaning. These global corporations on the surface appear to be all-powerful and above the law and political, environmental and social control, unlike the rest of us mere mortals.

But their very size and their global reach make them vulnerable to boycotts and global campaigns. If establishment politicians and elements of the trade union leadership are afraid or unwilling to take them on, then it's up to ordinary people and in particular young people, whom Coca-Cola targets as its main customers, to withdraw their consumer power, to hit them where it hurts, and the area where they only listen is the bottom line, that is, their profits. Profits to them are far more important than workers' lives or the environment that poor people live in.

**The Connolly Youth Movement calls on Irish people, and especially young workers and students, to support the boycott of Coca-Cola products.**

Coca-Cola is not only a soft drink, it is also a cultural vehicle for the spread of that most virulent virus, white middle-class American life-style. In many ways it symbolises globalisation itself and capitalist values. It presents itself as reflecting the power of the United States and its cultural domination.

The Connolly Youth Movement has played a significant role in the boycott of Coca-Cola since the campaign began in July. The CYM has produced and distributed hundreds of its own "boycott Coca-Cola" leaflets and held a highly successful public meeting in Connolly House. CYM activists in NUID played a prominent role in the referendum. We hope that a successful boycott of Coca-Cola products will pressure this transnational corporation into recognising Sinaltrainal and intervene in attacks on their workers by paramilitaries.

## Join the struggle for socialism. Join the Communist Party.

*Please send me information about membership of the Communist Party of Ireland.*

Name: .....

Address: .....

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Send to:

- Communist Party of Ireland, 43 East Essex Street, Dublin 2
- Communist Party of Ireland, PO Box 85, Belfast BT1 1SR
- Communist Party of Ireland, PO Box 124, Eglinton Street, Cork.

## What you can do

1. Get your school or college to hold a referendum on stocking Coca-Cola.
2. Set up your own local school or college boycott group.
3. Get the person who buys the groceries in your house not to buy Coca-Cola.
4. Ask your local shops not to stock it.
5. Write to Coca-Cola and express your opposition to what they are doing in Colombia.
6. Set up an e-mail tree and get people to send e-mail to the company.



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