Well Dan O'Neill's visit began with a hurry up & wait dash to Dublin airport, with "Hammered by the Irish " author Harry Browne, Dan being stalled at passport control for over an hour after a delayed departure from Glasgow. The five day visit concluded with Dan and I traversing some pretty rough areas of Dublin on Sunday night trying to locate the knocked down unmarked house of James Joyce in Eccles St.

At one point, when local yoof’s were threatening me in a darkened sidestreet and a rapid deployment of fit looking Garda screamed by, I thought it's one thing having my epitaph “killed while breaking into a military base” but quite another "taken from us on a badly timed Joyce/Ulysses treasure hunt through the former brothel area of Dublin". The "Legion of Mary" did a thorough job there, little sign left of the Monto brothel area of Bloom's day that serviced the British legions (little sign of them too, thanx be to God!)

On Sunday night Dan was oblivious to cops and yoof, he was on a lifetime's quest to retrace the steps of Joyce's Bloom. Time was short, Dan was departing the next day.

WHO IS DAN O'NEILL
I first got to spend quality time with Dan O'Neill starting on a Saturday afternoon in March '78. I was 17, and in my first week of university. It was to be a day when I was, like many Brisbane students of the '60's/'70's/'80's, incited by a great Dan speech to break the draconian anti-civil liberties laws that denied basic democratic rights of free expression in Queensland.

I linked arms with Jim Dowling (who I didn't know and was to spend much of the rest of my life linked to in Catholic worker and resistance) and John Roberts (who I had met in the police cells the previous October) and on Dan's impassioned advice strode out into the streets surrounding King George Square. I was promptly bashed by Detective John Frederick Johnstone of the consorting squad after I had screamed objections to him felling John Roberts. Johnstone was later to break my brother Sean's nose in an unfortunate (for Sean, not for me) case of mistaken identity at a similar march in the August of that year. Johnstone was later charged and convicted, along with another corrupt copper, of extortion and sentenced to 3 years. Norm "the Doorman" one of the central witnesses in that case went missing (and forgotten),
After realising he was being well filmed by a TV crew Johnstone added the charge of "assaulting a police officer" (sound familiar) by the time I reached the city watchhouse. The watchouse cops slapped a huge prohibitive bail on me and wouldn't let me out - so Dan O'Neill and 8 others volunteered to stay in the watchhouse all weekend to accompany me and extend their noncooperation with the denial of civil liberties in Queensland, Australia.

I had my first university assignment to do on the Jesuit anarchist Ivan Illich and was conveniently locked down opposite Dan's cell, so spent the weekend firing questions across the corridor and scrawling away his responses on toilet paper for future reference. Dan had fortunately studied at Illich's Institute in Mexico and I got good marks for my first uni assignment. Hey! Wherever you go, there you are! There's always a silver lining even the fluroescent sky of Brisbane watchhouse under Joh. If lifeserves you lemons, make lemondade etc. etc.

Dan O'Neill is a radical intellectual, who combined courage and capacity for reflection for many of us in Brisbane who went up against the state in the '60's, '70' and '80's. Coming initially from a Catholic background Dan embraced, and was a key figure, in the New Left of the '60's in Australia. After postgrad studies at Oxford, he taught literature at the University of Queensland (the most activist Australian campus of the '60's) for over 3 decades. He was key mentor for myself and others experimenting with the Catholic Worker and nonviolent direct action for civil liberties, against the racist Sprinbok Tour of '71.

( a State if Emergency was delcared in Queensland by Premier Joh so this racist game of Rugger could take place in Brisbane) and against the wars that have come and gone and never really go. Dan met Dorothy Day in New York, he taught Joyce's Ulysses for many years.

**BACKGROUND LINKS ON DAN O'NEILL**

Dan O'Neill Addressing Anti-War Crowds in Brisbane during visit of South Vietnamese Vice President Ky

1967 Civil Liberties rally in Brisbane

Rad politics at U of Q - Dan O'Neill Talking - a free form of democracy
Dan O'Neill Launches "Radical Brisbane" - A History (text of his book launch speech)
Dan O'Neill at Joyce's Ulysses
http://www.emsah.uq.edu.au/conferences/Joyce/

So we packed a lot into Dan's 5 day stay in Dublin. He was on a Joyce/Ulysses quest and I wanted more mentoring in relation to what I should be doing 12,000 miles away from home in the middle of an escalating and expanding war that few in the West seem to care about? The last time I had asked Dan directly what I should do with my life he had quipped - get a job in the bank! That had sounded a little like Dylan's "I don't want the gig" response after they had tried to make him a figurehead of the Civil Rights movement when he played that rally in D.C So I was hoping to get a few more insights this time around.

On Thursday evening we organised a Catholic Worker "Clarification of Thought". The event was to strengthen our small CW network in Dublin - and was a good mix of Colombians who had experienced a society of state sponsored terror, northerners who had experienced the troubles, punks and the anti-war activist remnant of Dublin town. We looked at the costs of resistance, how does one respond to third world suffering from a first world comfort zone, spirituality and deconstructing a Catholic upbringing!

Dan is a libertarian Marxist impressed by Gramsci.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gramsci

and attracted to mass movement politics. He is not personally attracted to the Berrigan/plowshares approach and wondered where we get the nourishment to keep on keeping on. I guess the focus on community building (faithbased or affinity) has nourished me more over the last 30 years much more than being lost and lonely in many of the temporary mass manifestations in which I have participated! We begged to differ but it was an interesting night, alrighty!

On Friday morning finding the Joyce House on north Georges St. closed for renovations, we dashed around to the Sinn Fein office for the daily 11.30am 1916 Walking Tour but found that abandoned due to sickness
of the tour guide. We did meet a couple of from Brisbane there. Small world or small movement? The jury is still out on that one!

We had a refuel stop at the Hare Krishna's Govinda Restaurant on Abbey St. where we shared a table with a young woman from Ananda Marga (a group that had very rough ride at the hands of the NSW cops in the '70s....take a bow former Det Sgt. Roger Rogerson http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Rogerson who upon release from his own incarceration got a gig doing private security in the Kings Cross redlight district! Go figure?

We made it on time to the Irish Film Institute for a wonderful screening of "Route Irish". It was a good crowd for a 1pm screening. I scored free tickets for our GPO anti-war vigil crew and sold 10 copies of "Hammered by the Irish". So that lightened my bag and heavied my wallet. We then took a table with filmmaker Eamonn Crudden, actor/playwrite Donal O'Kelly, Pitstop Damien Moran and a lot of other good people for the next few hours. Dan's brother Errol O'Neill based in Brisbane http://www.greenleft.org.au/1996/250/13282 does similar work to Donal as an actor and playwright, so that was a good connect.

We adjourned for dinner at a Chinese restaurant with an environmental activist/film maker who had an interesting theory on how the advent of the teabag, the consequent abandonment of the shared pot, had undermined the rituals of community building in Ireland! Well he convinced me and we ordered a pot of Green Tea.

Saturday we got out to Sandymount and the Joyce museum near the 40 foot swimming hole (which I guess is really the Irish Sea). Dan was lucky with the weather the whole time he was here - I sat outside reading The Guardian as he worked his way through the museum.

Sunday was the last day, so armed with the Joyce/Ulysses http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulysses_(novel) walking map we set off from The Spire. Different folks alerted by texts joined in and dropped off as we progressed and tried to pinpoint various Bloom spots from the map. Lunch at the Chester Beattie library was disturbed by an evacuation order. Cops on bikes screamed in as we dawdled out.

Once we hit Christchurch Cathedral was able to text Elaine, a tour guide on a day off, for historic info. on the site. As dark fell we then had a pitstop at the Palace Pub where we were joined by Labour historian Fintan, Pitstop getaway driver Dave, recently arrived Farah who had been nonviolently deployed to Iraq and Lebanon - passport stamps along with her Iranian surname that had not impressed the security folks at the airport and also a young Irish guy born in Paraguay. This guy new about the New Australia movement, a group of 230 anarchists along with William Lane who had departed Brisbane in the 1890's to build the utopia in the jungles of Paraguay! What is it with Paraguay and western utopians? http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Australia

So with the minutes ticking down on Monday morning, I took Dan's bag while he dashed around to the Yeat's exhibit near the Dail. I did some photocopying at Reeds for the Thursday October 9th. "Hammered by the Irish" gig at the Lower Deck (where you can dance away the night with many of the folks mentioned in this article)! http://www.indymedia.ie/article/89067