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I dare not tell my friend why we school mums all *loathe* her stay-at-home husband

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SOC DEMS TD WORKED FOR ISRAELI ARMY SOFTWARE SUPPLIERS

Party source says they were not aware of his involvement in firm founded by Trump backer

NEWLY elected Social Democrats TD Eoin Hayes previously worked for a software company that supplies the Israeli Defence Forces and the US military, the Irish Daily Mail can reveal.

Mr Hayes, who won a seat in

EXCLUSIVE

By Craig Hughes
Political Editor

Dublin Bay South, worked for controversial firm Palantir between 2015 and 2017 and until recently held shares in the company, which also lists several US government intelligence agencies as its clients.

Party sources told the Mail they

were 'not aware' of his involvement or the nature of work Palantir was involved in. The company is behind an AI tool, 'Lavender', which has been used by Israeli forces to identify targets in their bombing campaigns in Gaza.

Palantir was co-founded in 2004 by entrepreneur Peter Thiel, who also co-founded PayPal and is a long-time supporter of Donald Trump and a Republican donor.

A spokeswoman for the Social

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Man in court charged with murder of his eight-year-old daughter

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Democrats refused to say whether the party was aware of Mr Hayes's role with the company prior to him being added to the general election ticket.

However, party sources told the Mail that they were 'not aware' of his involvement or the nature of Palantir's work. This is despite Mr Hayes listing it on his LinkedIn profile and previously speaking about it in an interview with the Irish website Fora.

Earlier this year, the Social Democrats deselected a local election candidate in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Orli Degani, a German Jew with Israeli citizenship, who had said the Jewish people feel 'more and more unwelcome and unsafe in Ireland' as a result of the conflict in Gaza. It is understood the party felt they could not reconcile her views with their policies on Gaza.

The Social Democrats repeatedly denounced the Government's response to Israel's war in Palestine, criticising them for not passing the Occupied Territories Bill, which would ban imports or exports from illegal Israeli settlements.

In November, party leader Holly Cairns said that 'time is running out for Ireland to meaningfully act in the face of Israel's brutal military onslaught' and criticised the Government for not using the term 'genocide' when referring to Israel's actions.

In January, Ms Cairns urged the Government to join South Africa in its International Court of Justice case against Israel for Genocide saying that it was 'a disgrace that we are sitting on the fence, watching this happen and not taking action'.

The party did not respond to questions asking how they could criticise Government on Gaza given Mr Hayes's past affiliation with a company which works with the Israeli military.

Mr Hayes was elected to Dublin City Council for the party in June's local elections. A declaration of interests shows that he had divested of shares in Palantir within 12 months of taking his council seat.

'These shares were granted to me as part of my employment compensation at the company several years ago,' he wrote.

'I completely divested from all holdings in the company within the last 12 months and no longer hold any interest – financial or otherwise – in the company,' the

'Quietly spy on their people'

declaration states.

Only shareholdings that exceed the value of €12,697 are required to be declared.

Mr Hayes pulled off a political surprise on Sunday when he managed to unseat Sinn Féin's Chris Andrews to claim a Dáil seat.

Palantir – a name derived from the all-seeing stone in the Lord of The Rings – has long worked with US government agencies such as the CIA, the FBI, the US Army, as well as the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF). The company's software has worked to identify terrorist networks, navigate safe driving patterns through war-torn areas, identify cyber fraud and even trace disease outbreaks.

It is at the forefront of data analytics and takes large data from companies and agencies and provides insights and capabilities it was previously unable to utilise.

However, concerns have been raised about its operations by privacy groups such as Privacy International who have said it uses big data to 'expand the capacity of governments to quietly spy on their people'.

In 2014, the New York Times reported that some Palantir staff raised concerns about the company working with Israel because of its policies towards Palestine.

In 2015, Palantir opened an



New ID:
Eoin Hayes
and Social
Democrats
leader Holly
Cairns

office in the Israeli capital Tel Aviv and in 2017, Israeli news outlet Haaretz reported that Israeli security organisations had contracts with only two technology companies that provide predictive analytics systems: Fifth Dimension and Palantir.

A report by Privacy International on Palantir states that Israel uses those systems to ana-

lyse social media posts for the purpose of identifying individuals who fit the 'terrorist profile'. 'As a consequence, Palestinians are reportedly surveilled, questioned, detained, and arrested for, say, "...posting photos of family members killed by Israeli forces or in prison, citing Quranic verses, or calling for protests,"' the report states.

In January of this year, the com-

Soc Dems rising star offloaded his shares before the '24 local elections



Founder:
Billionaire
entrepreneur
Peter Thiel is a
supporter of
Donald Trump

pany agreed to a strategic partnership with the Israeli Defence Ministry to supply technology to help the country's war effort.

Mr Hayes worked for the company between 2015 and 2017 in a role he has previously described as business operations and strategy. In an interview with Irish website Fora in 2019, Mr Hayes said that he worked with 'exceptionally smart engineers' who worked with companies who hadn't had innovation in a 'really long time'.

He said his role with Palantir saw him 'based in New York' but that he spent 'anywhere between 25% and 50% of my time in Palo

'Travelling all over the world'

Alto [California], at the company's headquarters as well as 'travelling around the world'.

Despite previously telling Fora he could not speak about his role as it was 'confidential', a spokeswoman for the Social Democrats last night said his role related to 'internal operations – so nothing related to the IDF or other military'. The spokeswoman added that the travelling relating to the role related to 'other parts of the States and London', despite Mr Hayes stating it involved 'travelling around the world'.

'Eoin Hayes last worked for data analytics company Palantir nearly eight years ago, when he lived in the United States,' the spokeswoman said.

Mr Hayes did not respond to a

number of requests for comment from the Mail from early yesterday afternoon.

A video of an internal staff briefing at Palantir in 2015, previously published by Buzzfeed, shows CEO Alex Karp outlining the potential influence the company can have on the world.

'We can end up powering the industries in the world that determine the fate of most citizens in the worlds we live in,' he said.

Last month, a major Norwegian investor in Palantir sold its stake in the company over concerns that its work for Israel might put them at risk of violating international humanitarian law and human rights.

Palantir founder Mr Thiel told students at Cambridge University in May that he is 'more on the pro-Israel side and Israel should have broad latitude to do what it feels necessary'.

Asked if he was concerned about mass attacks and deaths of Palestinian civilians Mr Thiel said he believes Israel are 'broadly right' in their actions. He said: 'I don't know what your alternative is... I don't think the alternative is to let Hamas run things.'

Asked specifically about the use of his company's AI tools and project 'Lavender' Mr Thiel said: 'I'm not on top of all the details of what's going on in Israel, because my bias is to defer to Israel.'

'It's not for us to second-guess everything. And I believe that broadly the IDF gets to decide what it wants to do, and that they're broadly in the right.'

craig.hughes@daily@mail.ie