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Socialist Worker

NO to NAMA NO to cuts NO to Lisbon

ENOUGH IS enough! We need a huge display of people power to protest against the massive NAMA bail out of the banks, which is taking place while jobs, wages and vital public services are being savaged with cuts.

Following the An Bord Snip report, the government is planning to impose up to €5 billion more worth of brutal cutbacks on workers, the poor and the most vulnerable in our society.

Yet, the government is re-calling the Dail early in September to push NAMA through at an estimated cost to us all of €60 billion or more.

Bord Snip's proposals include: a further cut of €1.8 billion in social welfare, €1.2 billion cut in health spending, €746 million worth of cuts in education.

These cuts will mean the slashing of thousands of jobs in health and education, including special needs teachers, increased class sizes and school closures, hikes in hospital charges, cuts in child benefit, cuts in basic social welfare payments, cuts in CE jobs, the re-introduction of water charges, property taxes, more pay cuts, student fees and much more.

The government's Commission on taxation report makes it clear that Cowen and Gormly want to make ordinary people pay for the crisis not the corporate elite who created the mess.

The government are ignoring the voice of the people. We have no option now

PEOPLE POWER TO STOP THE CUTS

NATIONAL DEMONSTRATION

NEED BEFORE GREED

NO TO NAMA

Saturday Sept 19th



BAIL OUT JOBS & SERVICES NOT THE BANKS

Assemble 1pm, Garden of Remembrance
Farnell Square Dublin

but to take to streets now in large numbers to demand a change of course or force this government out of office altogether.

We must say:

- **No to NAMA – Bail out jobs and services not bakers and developers**
- **No cuts in health, education, social welfare and vital public & community services.**
- **Invest public resources in jobs, public services and public enterprise.**
- **Tax the super-wealthy elite - slash the salaries of politicians, top civil servants and**

corporate bosses.

- **Defend jobs, pay, conditions and pensions for all low and average paid workers.**

We need to unite workers, students, pensioners, unemployed and local communities across the country to demand that those who created this crisis pay to clean it up.

Only a huge show of people power can ensure this happens. Join the demonstration on Saturday Sept 19th

Bring your family, friends, workmates and neighbours & bring pots and pans to make maximum noise.

Defeat Lisbon II

THE SECOND front that we can defeat this government on is the Lisbon Treaty referendum. Recent opinion polls have shown a surge in support for the NO side and a collapse in the support for the government. FF now stands at just 15% support.

People Before Profit councillor Richard Boyd Barrett said, "Since the last referendum Europe has experienced an unprecedented economic crisis.

While workers and the poor are being hit with unemployment and cuts in services the Irish government, with the support of the EU, is preparing to give a massive handout to Irish banks.

"The Lisbon Treaty

was drafted by the same politicians who drove the Irish and European economy into recession.

It contains the same economic policies that led to the economic crisis.

"This treaty promotes undistorted competition, greater deregulation and subjects public services to the full force of the market.

"It restricts the ability of governments to stimulate growth and create jobs.

"We need a new kind of Europe which prioritises the needs of people over the market."

People Before Profit Councillor Joan Collins said, "All those concerned with workers rights must reject this treaty.

"When union busters

like Michael O Leary are aggressively supporting it all trade unionists should be alarmed.

"We have no doubt that the treaty will copperfasten recent decisions of the European Court of Justice undermining collective bargaining rights and the right to strike.

"There was a golden opportunity to address these issues during the negotiations following the last referendum.

"This issue was not addressed because the Irish government has no interest in strengthening workers rights and the EU prioritises the right to do business in the single market over the rights of workers."

Campaigners to lobby Green Party Conference in Athlone

DAVE MCKAY, spokesperson for the Stop the Bail Out of Banks Campaign, announced plans for a demonstration to lobby the Green Party special conference in Athlone on Saturday 12th September.

"The cost to us all of the bail out of the banks through NAMA has been estimated at €60 billion to save the skins of top

bankers, speculators and developers.

"An Bord Snip Nua proposals for €5 billion worth of cuts in Social Welfare, Health, Education and other services will be only the first installment if the bail-out continues."

"Opinion polls indicate that 74% of Green Party voters oppose NAMA.

Dave McKay continued, "We call on the Green

Party to respect democracy and pull the plug on NAMA.

"We are calling on all those who oppose NAMA to demonstrate at 10.00am on Saturday 12 September outside the Green Party Conference at the Sheraton Hotel Athlone to demand the Green Party does the decent thing and votes against NAMA in the Dail."

COMMENT

Government puts women's lives at risk

By JOHN MCCABE

THE NATIONAL Cervical Screening Programme (NCSP) has recently announced changes to the Cervical Check screening programme. The Cervical Check programme was launched in September 2008 which involved the creation of a nationwide screening test which assessed a woman's risk of developing cervical cancer.

All a woman had to do was to attend her General Practitioner who would carry out the simple test for free there and then. If the test found abnormalities another simple procedure could be carried out, if necessary, on a later date by a gynaecologist which would essentially prevent the progression to cervical cancer. The programme has the potential to reduce rates of cervical cancer by 80% if 4 in every 5 women were to avail of the test.

However, the recent changes announced mean that screening will shift from being open access to an organised call, re-call method of invitation to begin in September 2009. This means that women who have not availed of the screening programme yet will need to register if they wish to do so in the future. In a letter to GPs the NCSP said that this will mean that even after going through the trouble of registering, women will have to wait 6 months before receiving a letter of invitation allowing them to avail of the test.

This is clearly a cynical attempt by the HSE to make cut backs by intentionally making it difficult for young women to avail of a free test that could potentially save their lives.

Between 70-80 women die of cervical cancer each year and some 200 women are diagnosed with it annually. Furthermore there is a great concern among health professionals that these changes will target those women at greatest risk of cervical cancer in the first instance, such as those from lower socio-economic groups and travellers, who are likely to regard the process of registration and the 6 month wait that follows as a nuisance, and not bother with it.

This case highlights how this government are prepared to make cut backs at all costs even if that means putting the lives of young women at risk.

Tralee Cuts Demo 17th August

By SEÁN MORAGHAN, PEOPLE Before Profit, Tralee

OVER 250 people took part in a lunch-time demonstration against cuts in Tralee.

The protest was organised by Kerry Network of People with Disabilities, and supported by several other community organisations, including People Before Profit.

KNPD organiser Margaret O'Shea called the demo "just the start". She pointed out that the

proposed cuts in the disability area would be a massive retrograde step for the rights and welfare of those with disabilities. Margaret also stressed that if cuts had to come they should start at the top, with TDs and the top-salaried.

PbP spokesperson Kieran McNulty pointed out that People Power can win against cuts, citing the example of the campaigners who won against cuts in the Medical Card Scheme.

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Assembly, Trade Union, Workers of the Movement
People Before Profit



Lisbon: We can win

By SINEAD KENNEDY

IT WAS all supposed to be so easy the second time around. With the Irish economy in tatters, everyone assumed that it would be a no brainer to sell the Lisbon Treaty second time around.

They hoped that the economic crisis would convince people to vote yes out of fear that Ireland might be cut loose from the EU and left in 'financial isolation'.

Indeed, the entire media and political establishment have been behaving all Summer as if a yes to Lisbon was a fait accompli.

Everybody was on side, from the the mainstream political parties to the leadership of the ICTU, not to mention the bankers, every national newspaper, every farming organisation and business group you could think of.

If things got really bad they even had a few trusty celebrities like Bono and Seamus Heaney to roll out.

In an unprecedented move in a referendum campaign, big business stepped up to the plate.

Corporations like Ryanair and Intel aggressively campaigned for a yes vote.

The anti-union computer corporation Intel took a full-page ad in the Irish Times calling for a yes vote in Lisbon and Intel's General Manager pledged that he intends "to spend hundreds of thousands of Euro in support



of the yes side".

Interesting, this Summer Intel launched a major appeal against the EU decision to fine the corporation 1.06 billion euros after it was found guilty of several violations of anti-competitive practices. Perhaps they hope that in return for their support in the Lisbon campaign the EU commission may reduce their fine.

Ryanair boss Michael O'Leary eloquently called for a yes vote to Lisbon arguing that it was "the f***ing sensible thing to do."

He announced that Ryanair would spend €500,000 on an advertising campaign that will call for a yes vote.

He went on to label opponents of the treaty,

principally Sinn Fein, Socialist Workers Party and the Socialist Party, as "idiot headbangers" and "unemployable headbangers" and "economic illiterates".

It is not surprising that O'Leary is a big supporter of Lisbon.

The EU has helped bring about greater privatisation and the Lisbon Treaty will extend this even further. EU rules on state aid were the main reason advanced by the government for refusing to invest in Aer Lingus when it was under public ownership.

These rules helped O'Leary gain a large minority stake in the airline when it was privatised.

Ryanair, like Intel, have a little favour to ask of the

EU Commission: They want monopoly rules changed so that they can take full control of the former national airline, Aer Lingus.

Unlike other campaign groups who are subject to rigorous scrutiny and spending limitations by the Standards in Public Office Commission, big business are free to interfere in democratic referendums at will.

They are subject to no monitoring and to no spending limitations.

However despite all the combined and intensive efforts by the corporate and political establishment support for Lisbon fell dramatically over the Summer, confirmed by the

recent Irish Times /MRBI poll.

The current crisis and proposed solutions like NAMA are a direct result of the neoliberal economic agenda that Lisbon would only further enshrine.

What we need now is a major rethink about the whole direction in which the EU is being driven.

We need to build a different type of Europe, one that puts the interests of people before those of profit and big business.

By voting NO a second time we are sending a powerful message to our government, big business and the European elites on behalf of the people of Europe: We won't pay for your crisis.

Break the injunctions to win strikes

By KEVIN WINGFIELD (Editor of swp.ie)

MARINE TERMINALS Ltd obtained an injunction in the Courts against the striking workers and trade union officers of SIPTU and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions.

The injunction, the judge told the strikers and union officials, outlaws calling a scab a scab!

For over a century in the trade union movement, the worst shame is to be a strikebreaker--and the usual way to designate strike-breakers, reflecting this odium, is to call them scabs.

Now a High Court judge, at the bidding of an anti trade union employer, has threatened strikers with jail time for telling the truth about strikebreakers.

This is the third outstanding injunction against the dock workers. The employers aim is to destroy wages, conditions and job security in the docks and to see trade unionism made completely passive, if not eliminated altogether.

In this the Courts are giving the employers every encouragement.

Then it was the turn of the strikers of Coca Cola to have an injunction slapped



Coca Cola strikers in Galway

on them. This injunction, backed with the threat of jail time, aimed to remove the right of the strikers to picket effectively. The company complained of harassment, but it wasn't the strikers that were doing the harassment but the management. On two separate occasions the pickets have been driven at by managers in vehicles--on one occasion injuring a picket who required hospitalisation.

These new injunctions follow the injunctions and

jailing of the Thomas Cook workers who occupied to get their entitlements.

The employers and the Courts throughout Ireland have an agenda. It is to tame trade unions to the point that they are entirely toothless.

The wealthy judges would have no idea what it's like to have to stand up against ruthless employers like Coca Cola, MTL or Thomas Cook. Their outlook and privileged lifestyle echos that of the senior

managers and captains of industry. How quickly the Courts jumped to provide these injunctions, even sitting on a bank holiday--what a contrast with the delays and obstructions working people face if they need these institutions to vindicate their rights!

Many workers are now discovering, if they did not know it before, that the Courts and the law are not some impartial body fairly holding the ring in society, but instead are an instru-

ment through which the ruling class seeks to enforce its will on the rest of us.

There is an undeclared but nonetheless vicious war going on Irish society. The bosses want to use the crisis to re-organise society with weakened trade unions, worse wages and conditions and the bare minimum of services like health, education, social welfare and pensions for working class people.

The trade union leaders have to take off their suit jackets. A call from the trade unions for mass protests, including mass defiance of these confetti injunctions, would begin to signal that working people will not allow themselves to be walked over.

Also solidarity action needs to be organised. For example, Coca Cola syrup travels by train from Ballina to Dublin Docks two times a week, for export around the world. If SIPTU, the NRB and UNITE instructed their members to black this product, no doubt the employers and the press would be outraged. But a few days of this action would put the Coca Cola strikers in a winning position.

If the union officials fail to act independent rank and file action is needed.

Dublin Port workers fight on



MTL strikers and supporters solidarity rally

By MADELEINE JOHANSSON

THE PORT workers at Marine Terminals Ltd have been on strike for more than two months.

The dispute began when management imposed redundancies and slashed terms and conditions.

The company, MTL, is owned by Peel Ports (part of the Peel Group) who owns several major ports in the UK and are known for having smashed unions in all locations they operate.

The High Court immediately granted an injunction against the strikers prohibiting the blocking of entering trucks ending effective picketing.

Scab workers have been brought in from Belfast, the UK working and Ireland.

The company have also employed the global security firm Control Risks, set up by ex-SAS, as they claim 'protect' management.

Control Risks Group, were also involved in the Deutsche Bank scandal, spying on rivals. Interestingly enough, Deutsche Bank owns 49% of the Peel Group. The bank was also

bailed out by the US federal reserve in 2008 to a tune of 6 billion dollars.

The workers have massive support in the local community, with thousands coming out to protest in recent weeks.

The most recent protest led to a mass trespass on grounds of the company and a short occupation of one of their offices.

Other actions taken have been naming scabs, by postering the town of Athy, Kildare with scab worker Brian Dooley's election poster (he was the candidate for Fianna Fail in the local elections) with the sentence 'Wanted for crimes against Irish workers'.

For this some workers are now in the High Court where an interim injunction have been granted against 'harassing and intimidating' the scabs.

SIPTU has the power to shut down the whole of Dublin Port, and they should use that power to get ALL port workers out to stop this injustice.

If you want to get involved with helping these workers please contact: supportportworkers@dublin.ie



Coca Cola strikers in Ballycoolin, Finglas

Solidarity with the Coca Cola strikers

COCA COLA is trying to destroy trade unionism in its company in Ireland. The company has told its warehouse and distribution staff that their jobs are to be outsourced and refuses to negotiate on their jobs.

The SIPTU workers have been on strike since Thursday 27 August to defend their jobs. If the company gets away with its plans workers with up to 30 years service will be losing their jobs and those who do manage to get work with new operators will suffer wage cuts of up to 60 percent.

The company wants to destroy union conditions in the distribution centres in Ballycoolin in Finglas, Galway Road, Tuam, Cork, Tipperary town and Waterford.

Sales staff and administration staff have joined the truck drivers in solidarity.

The shop steward for sales in Tuam explained to Socialist Worker why 95% of the staff he represents were supporting the strike.

"It is morally wrong to outsource these jobs for cheap labour" he said. "The costs have been bench-marked against the costs in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Ours are not minimum wage jobs. Experience really counts in this job, building relationships with customers over the years. Some of the staff have been employed here all their working lives, such as Mary who has been here for 42 years. Just look at the profits

made by the company."

"This is also a strike for the community of Tuam," he continued. "The staff are local, Tuam is a small community. Knock on affects will be devastating for the locality. This is the equivalent of Limerick losing Dell. The staff were even willing to take wage cuts but for management to demand 40%-60% cuts was an insult."

This is the first strike action Mary has ever taken. "Staff do not take strike action lightly," she said, "but we need to keep these jobs."

Like bosses elsewhere the company is using the recession to attack jobs, wages and conditions in a bid to boost their already growing profits.

Also like the bosses in Thomas Cook and Dublin Docks, the company has rushed to the courts to obtain injunctions banning the workers' right to effectively picket.

The strikers have been threatened with physical violence, and seen management drive cars at them on the picket line, injuring and hospitalising one of their number on Tuesday morning.

In collaboration with Coca Cola management, Kiely's of Tipperary are one of the main companies organising scabbing from their plant on the Belgard Road in Cookstown, Tallaght.

Boycott Coca Cola

Shoppers should refuse to buy Coca Cola products, including Coke, Diet Coke, Fanta, River Rock, Vitel and other soft drinks and juices marketed by the company.

Trade unionists in shops, supermarkets, transport and distribution should black the products of Coca Cola.

Invite a delegation of Coca Cola strikers to address your union branch or section meeting to give their side of the story.

SIPTU must pull the stops out.

The bosses in this country are on the rampage demanding wage cuts and job losses. On the docks, the employers are trying to break trade unionism. Aer Lingus threatens more wage cuts and job losses—we need a massive response. The country's largest union must up its game.

SIPTU should call public demonstrations in support of the Coca Cola workers and link their fight to that of the docks, it should call on railway workers and others grades to black the company's product and it must back its members who are prepared to defy the injunctions wealthy judges hand down to bosses just for the asking.

Carrolls Joinery win extra week redundancy



After 8 weeks on strike the workers in Carrolls Joinery won 3 weeks redundancy. The company caved in after the workers organized a mass protest at the main Carrolls Door factory outlet in Dublin. It shows that more militant tactics and being willing to challenge the law and injunctions can win.

ROYAL MAIL TO STRIKE IN SEPTEMBER

POSTAL WORKERS across the UK, members of the Communication Workers Union, are balloting for a national strike in September.

Postal workers at Carrickfergus Royal Mail Delivery Office held a 24 hour strike on Saturday 17th

August in response to management's refusal to honour a previous agreement on "Pay & Modernisation".

Bobby Weatherall, CWU Combined Branch Secretary said, "Our members are continually expected to work beyond their

finishing time, and on many occasions, not even getting paid for it. Our members in Carrickfergus also feel they are being bullied and harassed by management to complete this unachievable workload, which has led to members going off sick with stress"

Lawrence C. Huston, CWU Regional Secretary, Northern Ireland said "Strike action is set to escalate across the UK, in response to Royal Mail's continuing executive action of imposing cuts. The company has abandoned the final phase of

the 2007 Pay and Modernisation agreement and is set on piling more work and pressure on already stretched staff. This is being replicated right across the country and we have ballot requests for industrial action stacking up."

"Our members do not want to lose money or disrupt services by taking strike action; However, while Royal Mail refuses to acknowledge the serious issues facing its own employees, then the CWU has no alternative".

Fight-back over Fujitsu Jobs, Pay & Pensions

By IAN ALLINSON

UNITE AND PCS members at IT services giant Fujitsu have voted overwhelmingly to strike in UK-wide consultative ballots which closed last week.

Despite Fujitsu Services making record profits last year, and the parent company forecasting record profits for the future, the company imposed a pay freeze and is proposing to dismiss 4000 staff and re-employ them on new contracts as a mechanism to close the main defined benefit pension scheme. The company also plan to cut up to 1200 jobs. UNITE estimates that the attack on pensions is equivalent to a pay cut of 15-30% for most employees.

UNITE and PCS have been running a joint campaign over pay and pensions that has produced a rapid increase in union membership across the company, most of which doesn't yet have union recognition.

The Fujitsu campaign shows that where unions are prepared to put up a fight, employees flock to join, even in an industry such as IT which has little tradition of trade unionism. Even in a recession unions can grow if they can win for their members, but if they fail to resist the attempt to make workers pay for the economic crisis, they are bound to decline.

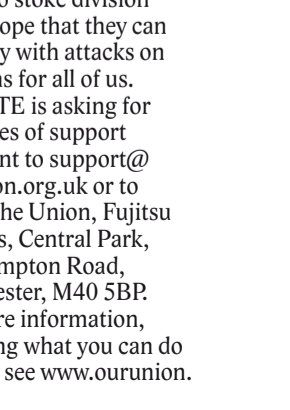
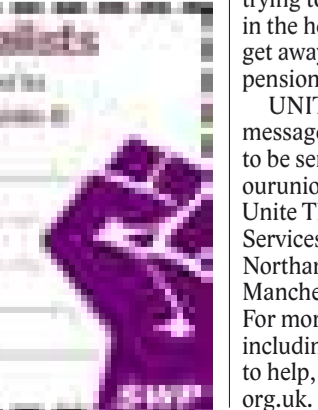
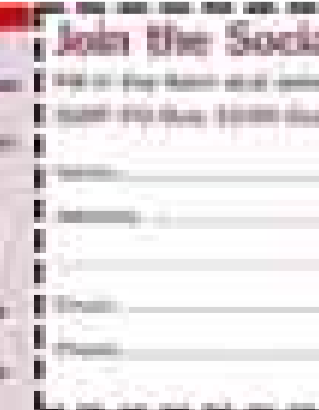
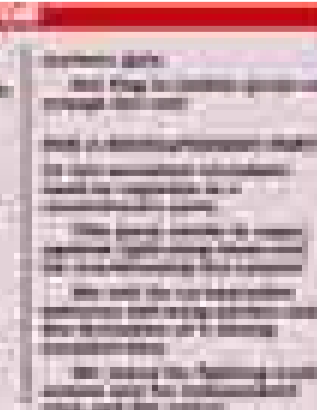
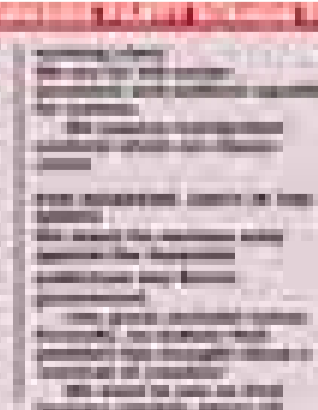
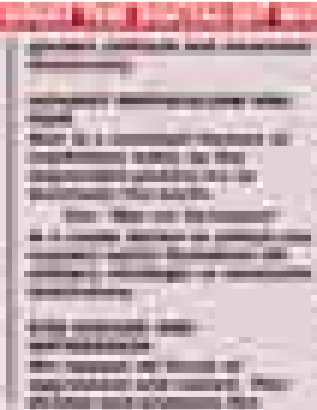
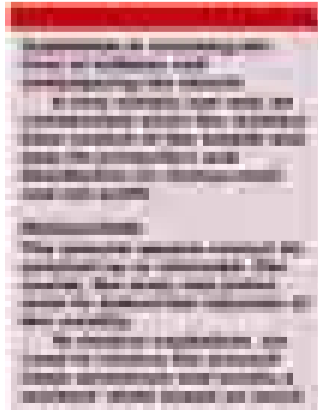
Sections of the media and many politicians, including David Cameron, have been keen to seize on the attacks on private sector pensions, keen to create a division between public and private sector workers.

They hope to encourage private sector workers to direct their anger at the supposedly "gold plated" public sector pensions, rather than at the employers and government who are responsible for inadequate occupational and state pension provision.

The "gold plating" is a myth - as the TUC points out, the mean public sector pension is £7,000 but the majority of public sector pensioners have pensions of less than £5,000.

But that isn't preventing employers and the right trying to stoke division in the hope that they can get away with attacks on pensions for all of us.

UNITE is asking for messages of support to be sent to support@ourunion.org.uk or to Unite The Union, Fujitsu Services, Central Park, Northampton Road, Manchester, M40 5BP. For more information, including what you can do to help, see www.ourunion.org.uk.



Ireland's banking crash



By BRIAN BOYLE

ON SEPTEMBER the 19th the collapse of Lehman brothers threatened the entire global financial architecture.

It was in this context that eight wise men (6 bankers plus the two Brian's) met and decided to underpin the Irish banking system with a State guarantee and thereafter to relieve these banks of their bad debts to allow them to continue to function.

Banks like other firms in a capitalist system are driven by profit making and this necessarily means selling as much of their products as is possible.

Lending money is therefore the raison d'être of banking and yet one of the key differences between banks and other capitalist institutions is that they don't uniquely own the assets that they lend out.

An industrial capitalist, outlays for raw materials, labour etc and then attempts to recoup this outlay plus profit after the event.

This then means that the cars produced in the production process are unambiguously owned by the capitalists.

This is frequently not the case with banks however, as they operate a double entry system as follows; Individual savings are a liability for the bank and an asset for the saver.

This money or around 90% of it is then recycled as loans to people who borrow.

This is the opposite entry i.e. an asset for the bank and a liability for the borrower.

To ensure liquidity banks must maintain levels of reserves of around 10%.

Added to this they can go into bankers markets such as LIBOR to attain short term liquidity.

Unfortunately this bringing of lenders and borrowers together is not the only activity that modern banks get up to.

In particular, they also speculate by borrowing large amounts of money, usually from international investors' which they then lend primarily to big investors such as property developers etc. Again there is a double entry but it is now an international speculator that the bank has to worry about and not the average person in the street.

In the Celtic Tiger this process increased dramatically with Irish banks taking advantage of low interest rates and easy access to finance to ratchet up their loan books.

In the event a property bubble was created and this was fine as long as property prices were going up.

Property developers were obviously happy to pay back their interest on increasingly valuable assets.

But once the property's prices (and the land values) themselves started to collapse; it became inevitable that the developers and many households would start to default on their loans.

This has dire consequences for banks, as although they still owe a certain amount back to the international financiers, many of the companies that they lent money were failing to re-pay their loans.

This situation quickly meant the real possibility of bankruptcy for the Irish banks given the scale of the bad loans

they now had on their books.

It is in this context that NAMA has been set up to rescue these banks and this is truly the greatest bank robbery ever carried out in the history of the State.

With NAMA it is argued that the tax payer will take toxic loans out of the bank balance sheets at around a discount value of 25%.

In other words assets nominally worth 1 billion will command a fee of roughly 750 million.

The problem of course, is that the actual values of these assets will be far less than this.

Indeed, if the case of Liam Carroll is anything to go by, about 50% less, and so if we pump in around 67.5 billion as is expected (75% of 90 billion bad assets) we may well end up with a loss of 45 billion or so.

One final point is necessary. Neoliberalism if often seen as primarily an economic strategy for managing the economy in the interests of all, yet if this was the case then surely NAMA would never be on the agenda.

After all, even on their own terms, the good bank is superior as a strategy for getting credit flowing again.

Indeed, it is better on every criteria except the one that really matters to the ruling class, namely saving their own position in society.

In short, neoliberalism is a class strategy not an economic one and NAMA is just the latest in a long series of class based initiatives to ensure that the capitalist class continues to hold a position of dominance in Irish society.

NAMA: The C

By KIERAN ALLEN & BRIAN BOYLE

THE GOVERNMENT is trying to push through legislation to create, NAMA, a new agency to take over the bad debts of the banks. It will amount to the greatest bank robbery in the history of the state.

Should they succeed, all hope of progressive legislation to alleviate poverty or to help create jobs will be diminished.

Ireland will have taken on such a huge level of debt, that politicians will constantly claim that there is 'no money left in the kitty'. A report for Morgan Stanley, for example, has already predicted that 'the legacy of the banking crisis is therefore likely to be a long lasting, if not permanent, increase in net public indebtedness'.

The sheer scale of this economic crime makes it urgent to prepare for a large national demonstration of 'people power' on Saturday 19th September.

The NAMA scheme

THE NAMA plan involves the transfer of mainly toxic loans to the tune of €90 billion to a state-run assets management agency, NAMA.

The banks already know that half of these loans are not 'performing'. This means that the builders or speculators who took them out have ceased making the necessary re-payments. But the banks have not closed in on them.

If you were a small borrower, the banks would haul you before the court to get their money back. But if you are a large builder, the banks will 'roll over' your loan – knowing that they can eventually hand over responsibility to NAMA to collect it.

NAMA will take over these bad loans at a discount rate - most likely at a 25 per cent discount. So, if an individual bank loan to a builder was €500 million, the state would buy that loan for €375 million and then chase up the builder for the assets if it was not paid.

In all, the Irish state will therefore pay out around €67.5 billion to take over toxic loans that were at one time supposed to be worth €90 billion.

But the reality is that they are worth nothing like this, since the property market has collapsed.

The case of the Zoe Group owned by Liam Carroll illustrates this. Zoe owes the banks more than €1 billion and recently went to the court to seek some protection from its creditors. In evidence it stated that, if it was forced to sell off all its properties now, the banks would still be left with a shortfall of €900 million.

In other words, as Irish Times journalist John McManus put it, 'based on this write-down value, properties on which it has borrowed €1.1 billion from eight banks would fetch €275 million if they went on sale this morning. That means a 75 percent writedown for the banks.'

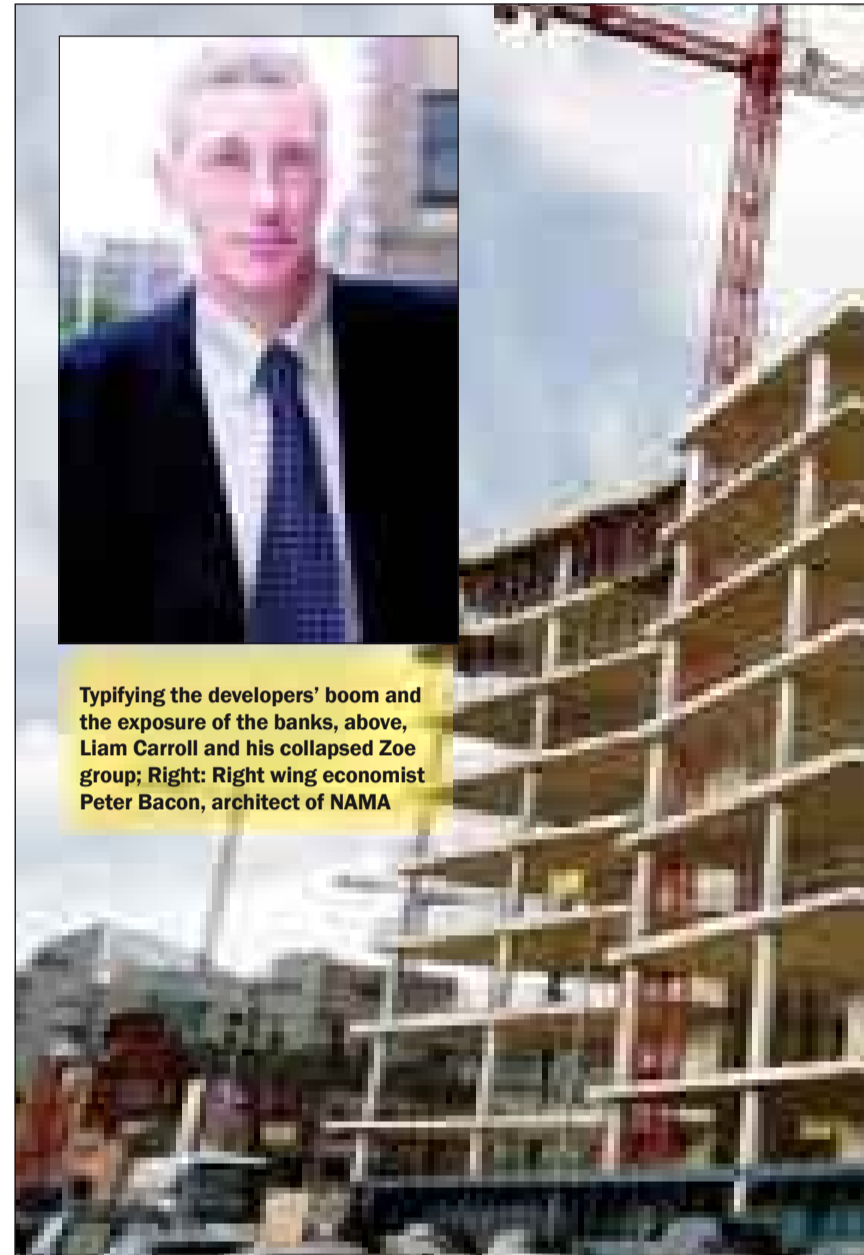
If this example was typical, the assets backing the €90 billion in loans are only worth a quarter of their value or €22.5 billion.

But the Irish state will agree to pay €67 billion for loans that are only worth €22.5 billion.

This government is taking on huge debts in a desperate gamble to save the banks.

Who caused the crisis?

THE CURRENT crisis has arisen out of a property bubble that was deliberately created by a tight alliance of Fianna Fail,



Typifying the developers' boom and the exposure of the banks, above, Liam Carroll and his collapsed Zoe group; Right: Right wing economist Peter Bacon, architect of NAMA

the bankers and property speculators.

Banks were allowed to borrow funds from international money markets to push loans on customers who were desperate for housing. The government turned a blind eye while the banks ran their business on the equivalent of a low fuel reserve. Irish banks maintained the lowest ratio of underlying capital to the outstanding loans in the EU.

The banks were motivated by sheer greed as each of the top three – AIB, Bank of Ireland and Anglo-Irish - aimed at securing profits of over €1 billion a year. They knew that the more they hyped up the property market, the more profit they gained.

Table 1: indicates how successful they were:

Table 1: Profits of the Three Main Banks			
	2005	2006	2007
Allied Irish Bank		€2.6 billion	€2.7 billion
Bank of Ireland	€1.393 billion	€1.7 billion	€1.794 billion
Anglo Irish	€680 million	€850 million	€1.24 billion.

The banker Billionaires

JUST SEVENTY directors controlled the Irish banking system but of these a mere twenty acted as executive directors and these were the main decision makers. They paid themselves outrageous salaries and, even after they left office in disgrace, they continued to enjoy pensions that were well beyond the reach of averages workers. Brian Goggin, the former director of Bank of Ireland,

for example now lives on a pension of €626,000 a year – the equivalent of the wage of 17 average workers.

See Table 2

We have already given the banks €11 Billion

THE EXTRAORDINARY feature of the NAMA scheme is that the very institutions who helped to cause the economic crash are being rescued.

But the government does nothing for those suffer the most from this crash – the poor, the unemployed, mortgage holders on negative equity.

Even before NAMA is introduced, the government has already poured billions into the banks in three main moves.

1. On September 30th the government announced a scheme to guarantee all the loans taken out by Irish banks. This guarantee covered a total of €485 billion and was the equivalent of 2.5 times the size of the Irish economy. This special insurance scheme was given to the banks at a reduced rate and so involved a subsidy of an estimated €425 million.

2. Since December 2008, the government has injected €4 billion into Anglo-Irish

Great Bank Robbery



banks to prop it up and to prevent foreign investors calling in loans as the company is barely functioning.

3. A further €7 billion has been injected into Allied Irish Bank and Bank of Ireland.

In other words, even before NAMA has been introduced the government has already spent more than €11 billion

propping up failed banks.

NAMA guru promoted property bubble

THE GOVERNMENT has once again

turned to Peter Bacon, a ruling class economist, to draw up the NAMA plan. In 2001, Bacon produced a special report on housing which essentially promoted the de-regulated market philosophy which contributed to the bubble economy.

After the publication of the Bacon Report, he became a director of one of Ireland's biggest property companies, Ballymore Properties, whose main shareholder is Sean Mulryan. Mulryan was a regular attendee at the Fianna Fáil tent and a donor to the now deceased Fianna Fáil TD, Liam Lawlor.

Peter Bacon was the European director of Ballymore and so it has been suggested, he is not linked to the company's operations in Ireland. But this is hardly relevant as one of the main strategies of the company was to borrow huge sums to expand in countries like Slovakia and Hungary, where he was in charge of operations. In Britain, for which he was also responsible,

Ballymore was partnered with Michael Fingleton's Irish Nationwide. Ballymore and Irish Nationwide have a joint venture company called Clearstorm, to which Bacon was appointed director in 2003.1

Asking an economist, who had such intimate connections with the property industry, draw up a plan for cleaning up the mess caused by their borrowings might be considered somewhat questionable.

Why this madness

THE GOVERNMENT argues that all of this pain (about 11 times the current cuts in spending) is necessary in order to get credit flowing to the economy again.

This argument is clearly problematic, given that each time we have recapitalised the current banks they have



steadfastly refused to pass on this money in liquidity.

And why should they? After all, their number one responsibility is to their shareholders and directors. Indeed, any private firm will choose its own interests in a crisis, and so as we pump money into ailing banks they use it to secure their capital ratios to better ensure a profitable future.

Thus it is hardly surprising that along with a total bail out for the bankers and the speculators we find provision for 10 billion that can be raised to help developers to finish their developers. This is clearly a strategy set up by the Irish elite to ensure that while someone obviously has to pay for this mess it will not be any of them.

It gets worse than even the madness we have so far described.

1. Transparency: NAMA has to negotiate on each loan 'portfolio' individually, and there will be no transparency about its dealings with particular builders. We will not be told, for example, what the government paid to take control of Liam Carroll's €1.1 billion loan portfolio. Rather the government's guidelines state 'information regarding its [NAMA's] exposures and their size is commercially sensitive so it will not be appropriate to disclose every detail'.2 Only the total bond issued to each institution will be made known.

2. Even More Money for Banks. Even with a 25 percent discount rate, the write-down would see Allied Irish Banks make a €8 billion pre-tax loss this year, while Bank of Ireland's pre-tax loss would be €5 billion. They would then need yet another injection of capital - to the tune of €2.1 billion in the case of Allied Irish Bank and €1.2 billion for Bank of Ireland just to keep going. But what private investors would put that much money into a loss-making bank? It would, once again, fall to the state to 're-capitalise' the banks. In other words, even with a 25 per cent discount, taxpayers' money will be bailing out banks even further.

3. More Help for Builders and Speculators. In its recently published legislation, the government will enable NAMA to raise an extra €10 billion in loan to help developers. One third of the property, which is backing loans is located outside Ireland. This arose because Irish speculators were the second largest purchasers of commercial property in Europe. Another third of the overall loans are for 'work in progress projects' - in other half completed building sites. The government might, therefore, find itself taking over half completed apartment complexes in Bucharest or Budapest. These are worthless and no banker will lend money to Irish developers to complete these complexes Hence NAMA - or the Irish taxpayer - will step in to provide funds to complete the projects in 'joint venture' with the very speculators who

helped cause the crash.

Is there a better way?

OF COURSE there is - but it involves thinking outside the box of capitalist economics and recognising some essential realities.

There is an undeclared war underway in Ireland about who is to pay for the economic mess left behind after the orgy of greed. In simple terms: will the wealthy elite who are intimately connected through share ownership of the banks pay up - or will it be wage earners and the poor?

Given this conflict, those who want to defend workers and the poor need to take radical measures that are appropriate for emergence conditions.

These involves:

1. Recognising that the present bank companies are bankrupt and that under the rules of the capitalist game shareholders who invested in them must bear the loss - and take responsibility for the loans their banks took out.
2. Immediately repudiating the state guarantee scheme that underwrote bank borrowings. The Irish people should not have to pay for the reckless behaviour of people like Sean Fitzpatrick.
3. Creating a 'good state bank' that can provide credit for society - and which should be banned from any engagement in speculation.
4. Introducing emergency legislation to transfer existing bank staff, buildings and physical assets of the old private bad banks to the new state run bank.
5. Maintaining a guarantee on all deposits below €100,000 to ensure an orderly switch over.
6. Confiscating the assets of bankrupt speculators so that proper social development can be planned for the benefit of Irish society.

How do stop this?

NONE OF the major political parties are willing to take such radical measures at present. While they object to many aspects of the government schemes, they are still imprisoned in the wider capitalist framework that has been the major cause of the current problems.

Ireland clearly needs a radical alternative and election of Joe Higgins as MEP the progress made by the People Before Profit Alliance indicates that this is a real possibility.

But even if such an alternative were constructed tomorrow, we still need to ensure that the NAMA disaster does not occur.

It is therefore vital that there is a sustained display of 'people power' to force the political establishment to drop the bank bail out.

Three major events can become the focus of such a sustained outpouring of popular anger.

1. On Saturday September 19th, a new coalition has emerged to call for a national demonstration to demand 'Stop the Bank Bail out - Bail out Jobs and Services instead'.
2. On September 30th, SIPTU has called on all community organisation to mobilise against the planned cut-backs in the community sector. This should also become the focus of a huge mobilisation.
3. In October, the Green Party will hold a special review conference to discuss their participation in government. There should be a special 'ring around the Greens' gathering to ensure that they hear the voice of the people.

Table 2: Salary Package and Annual Pension Entitlements of Directors of Three Main Banks.

Name of Director	Total Salary Package	Annual Pension	Bank
Brian Goggin	3,998,000,000	626,000	Bank of Ireland
David Drumm	3,274,000,000	258,000	Anglo Irish
Eugene Sheehy	2,105,000,000	526,000	AIB
Colm Doherty	1,663,000,000	289,000	AIB
John O Donovan	1,581,000,000	202,000	Bank of Ireland
William McAteer	1,427,000,000	94,000 (DC)	Anglo Irish
Donal Forde	1,394,000,000	275,000	Allied Irish
Declan Quilligan	1,366,000,000	147,000	Anglo Irish
John O Donnell	1,273,000,000	261,000	Allied Irish
D. Donovan	1,246,000,000	258,000	Bank of Ireland
Tom Browne	1,226,000,000	123,000 (DC)	Anglo Irish
Pat Whelan	1,212,000,000	117,000	Anglo Irish
D. Crowley	1,113,000,000	260,800	Bank of Ireland
R. Boucher	1,015,000,000	131,700	Bank of Ireland

Source: Bank of Ireland Reports and Accounts 2007; Anglo Irish Bank Reports and Accounts 2007; Allied Irish Bank Reports and Accounts 2008

Northern Ireland friends of Israel



By EAMONN MCCANN

MANY SUPPORTERS of the Palestinian cause have been dismayed - and Sinn Feiners have been embarrassed - by Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness meeting with the Israeli ambassador to the UK during his visit to Belfast in May.

Sinn Fein puts itself forward as a supporter of Palestinian rights and an opponent of the State of Israel. This stance can't be reconciled with the scenes at Stormont.

A number of prominent Sinn Feiners, as well as the party's youth organisation, have pledged support for the campaign for a boycott of Israel. And yet the ambassador, Ron Prosor, was able to announce that the First and Deputy First Ministers - Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness - had agreed to send a trade delegation to Israel.

There has been a series of contradictions in Sinn Fein's positions over the years, particularly since the formation of the Northern Executive. But nothing as startling as this.

Party loyalists argue that Executive Ministers have no choice but to fulfil functions that go against the grain. This is a dubious argument at the best of times. In the case of the visit of the Israeli ambassador, it's irrelevant. This wasn't a formal constitutional event. Martin McGuinness could easily have said that he wasn't attending, and left Robinson to shake hands with Zionism.

DUP Ministers do it all the time when they are scheduled to take meetings they don't fancy.

Whatever about the Executive, there is no defence at all for Sinn Fein as a party greeting ambassador Posnor - a major in the Israeli Defence Forces, incidentally. Gerry Adams and Tom Hartley were pictured with Posnor, all three smiling broadly, obviously at ease in one another's company.

All this recalls Hillsborough in March 2003, where George Bush and Tony Blair held their final meeting before the invasion of Iraq. One Sinn Fein leader stood on the platform outside Hillsborough Castle denouncing the sordid shenanigans inside. Inside,

other Sinn Fein leaders were greeting George Bush.

Afterwards, party apologists suggested that the delegation inside had tackled Bush about his foreign policies, including the imminent attack on Iraq. The claim was exploded when the only journalist present, Peter Stothard, gave an account of the scene afterwards, painting a picture of the various Northern party representatives standing in horseshoe-shaped formation while Bush moved along the line like the Queen greeting commoners at a garden party.

Neither the Sinn Fein representatives nor anyone else broached Iraq issue.

At one level, all this is run-of-the-mill political opportunism, the usual two-facedness of conventional parties manoeuvring for advantage. But there is something else at work with Sinn Fein, which explains the sharpness of its contradictions.

Sinn Fein is not socialist. It is not a party of the Left. It is a Nationalist party. It can be Right-wing today, Left-wing tomorrow. In the 1940s, Sinn Fein flirted with fascism. In the 1980s, it flirted with Marxism. The nation, and therefore the Nationalists, are entitled, so to speak, to take support where they can find it.

So the party youth wing denounces the racist jailers of the Black Panther journalist Mumia Abu Jamal, framed for a murder in Philadelphia and serving life. But a SF member who arranged to visit Mumia during a tour of the US is told in no uncertain terms to cancel the visit.

The man Mumia was framed for killing is a Philadelphia cop of Irish extraction. The party had to choose, and made its choice.

None of this is to deny that there are rank-and-file members of Sinn Fein, North and South, who are genuine in their socialist beliefs but who are loyal to a Movement which many of them suffered a great deal for. But if they want to carry the struggle forward, past the point where the leadership has come to rest, then they'll have to consider whether the time hasn't come to make a clean break and join a full-blooded socialist organisation.

Israel: Water as a tool of oppression



Settlers consume 3 times more water than the average Palestinians living in the same area in the West Bank.

By MIRA SABA

ONCE A romantic scene, the view from the shores of the Dead Sea has changed significantly over recent years.

This unique brine lake is shrinking at the rate of one meter per year and has dried up so much that it has now split into two smaller lakes. The main tributary of the Dead Sea is the Jordan river - if it can still be called a river - now reduced to a trickling stream of sewage since its diversion by Israel in the 1950's towards Tel Aviv and the Negev Desert. Construction in 1964 of a dam that diverts water from the Sea of Galilee, a major Jordan river provider, to the Israeli National Water Carrier, further reduced the width and depth of the river. The sights we see on the surface are only half the story; bigger problems are brewing underground as water aquifers are being over-extracted and contaminated.

Four aquifers lie beneath the ground in Israel/Palestine. The largest of these is the Western or Mountain aquifer. In the war of 1967 Israel not only occupied the West Bank, but also gained control of this aquifer which is both Israel's and the Palestinians' most important freshwater source today.

Consume

Settlers consume 3 times more water than the average Palestinians living in the same area in the West Bank. State subsidies meant that in the period between 1967 and 1995 Israeli settlers in the West Bank were paying one third the price for domestic water that Palestinians were paying. And when the burden of supply was transferred to the Palestinian Authority in 1995, the pricing double standard was transmitted through sales to the Palestinian Water Authority (PWA.)

30% of West Bank Palestinians and 5% of Gaza Palestinians do not receive piped water to their homes. Captured rainwater in the West Bank is collected in cisterns and is the primary source of water



The ratio of all Israeli to Palestinian agricultural water use is 9:1. Domestic water use in Israel exceeds all agricultural water use by the Palestinians.

for West Bank farmers. When the unserved Palestinians run out of the water they collect from the rain, they are forced to purchase water from Israeli settlements who get their water from the Western Aquifer Basin lying literally under the feet of the Palestinians.

Wells are another source of water in the West Bank. Israeli wells are however deeper due to their technological superiority and to the legal restrictions placed on

Palestinians with regard to depth of their wells. No permit has been given to any Palestinian to use the Western Aquifer since 1967 - only smaller inferior aquifers.

Waste water is another important issue. Israeli settlements discharge domestic, industrial and agricultural wastes into the smaller aquifers found within the zone of the apartheid wall. The average daily per capita amount of wastewater produced by settle-

ments in the West Bank is more than twice the amount produced by Palestinian communities. This is because more water is available to the settlements to begin with.

According to a June 2009 report by the Israeli human rights NGO, B'tselem, despite the health hazards from free flowing wastewater, the majority of wastewater in the West Bank is not treated. Without wastewater facilities, 80 percent of Palestinians deposit their wastewater in cesspits, from where it seeps into the groundwater.

The delay in implementing a proper solution for treating wastewater means that the flow of this waste in the valleys of the West Bank and seepage of pollutants into the Mountain Aquifer threatens water contamination and has already harmed Palestinian harvests with one farmer citing that the olive oil from his trees had such an awful taste that he had to use it to make soap instead.

A study by the Palestinian Ministry of Health found that 22 percent of water in wells and springs had bacterial readings exceeding WHO drinking-water standards. It also found a connection between frequent outbreaks of intestinal diseases in the West Bank and severe pollution of water sources in the area.

Residents living near Israeli West Bank settlements are exposed to infestations of mosquitoes and rodents. Israel does not care much for its settlers either, whom it seems to use as placeholders, sitting on the land and reserving it like one would reserve the seat for a friend in an overcrowded venue.

Israel's control over West Bank water is almost complete, and a central component of its occupation of Palestinian lands. Be it through sheer military force, lopsided agreements, or de facto unilateral construction, the control is certainly in the hands of the powerful. And if contamination of the Western Aquifer continues, it will eventually become useless to all.

How Sammy Wilson peddles dangerous lies



Desperately divisive slogans and Sammy Wilson, below.

By GORDON HEWITT

BACK IN January Sammy Wilson put forward the argument that jobs in Northern Ireland should be prioritised for local people. And by “local” he meant people “born” in Northern Ireland.

Effectively he gave rise to the slogan “Local jobs for Local Workers” which predated the slogan, “British jobs for British workers” which emerged at the Lindsay Oil refinery dispute a few weeks later.

Wilson tried to cover the underlying racist argument by arguing that migrant workers were “flexible” labour and could easily be sent “back home” when the economy turned sour.

As the myths grow around the cause of the recession and rising unemployment, and as the recession bites the argument carries with it immense dangers of racism with migrant workers being blamed for the recession.

If the already disturbingly



high level of racist attacks which emerged before the worst of the recession are to be reversed, it is vital that these myths are exposed.

Firstly the unemployment rate has increased dramatically in the last few months and is now over 50,000 and growing.

It is a direct result, not of an increase in migrant labour - the latest available figures suggest somewhere between 30 and 40,000 migrant workers are based in Northern Ireland and almost all of these workers arrived well before the recession started - but of employers sacking workers to keep profits up during the downturn. Visteon, Bombardier, Stream and HG Wilson all sacked workers in the first part of the year for this reason.

It was less than 12 months ago that the argument was made that people should come to Belfast because there were not enough local people to fill the vacancies.

The argument was also made up until recently that migrant workers were responsible for saving local businesses and boosting the local economy in Dungannon, Armagh, Cookstown and in Belfast.

Secondly, migrant workers had nothing to do with the cause of the recession. It has been well documented that the banking crisis - the subsequent credit crunch - and a general level of overproduction lead to the downturn.

But more interestingly a recent study suggested that up until very recently Northern Ireland had a net outflow of workers. In other words until the recession kicked in around 1200 more workers left Northern Ireland to find work elsewhere than came to Northern Ireland to find work here.

Migrant workers contribute more in taxes and general expenditure, housing, food, clothing, white goods and services than they take from the economy in terms of medical treatment, social housing or general access to welfare benefits.

It is argued that many of the migrant workers who arrive here are undocumented or illegal. This simply isn't true.

The research available from the Assembly suggests that less than 4 percent of migrant workers get around the quite strict legislation which migrant workers have to comply with and those workers are faced with the worst working conditions and are highly exploited by local employers.

Hardly a beneficial situation for those who arrive here without documentation.

We know who caused the recession and we know the employers who are creating high unemployment.

There is one way to solve this problem. Fight for jobs, demand the Assembly and Gordon Brown's government stops bailing out banks and uses those funds to create jobs and more to the point we can do what the local workers at Montupet did and unionise the migrant workers and fight alongside local workers to maintain decent jobs and get pay rises for all workers.

Migrant workers: No Home from Home

By BARBARA MULDOON

IN A recent report entitled “No Home from Home” the NI Human Rights Commission has shown how the UK's immigration laws are leading to the enforced destitution and homelessness of some of the most vulnerable people living in Northern Ireland.

The report details how most immigrants in the north are barred from accessing public funds.

This bar includes a complete prohibition on being able to access public housing. Disgracefully this includes a bar on all statutory bodies being able to provide immigrants with emergency accommodation if made homeless - even if homelessness has been caused as a result of racist attacks. Recently, when over 100 Roma were forced to flee their homes following racist attacks the NI Housing Executive was unable to re-house them because it



Barred from accessing public funds

would have been unlawful for them to do so.

This bar on access to public housing means that many immigrants are living in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions.

It means that landlords can easily exploit and overcharge

immigrants as they have no alternative housing options.

It can mean that the victims of domestic abuse are never able to break free from their abusers. It can force people to remain in houses where they have been repeatedly attacked by racists.

In some cases the results of

these laws can be catastrophic and can have an effect that will literally last a lifetime. In 2005 Oksana Sukhanova, a 23 year old migrant worker had both legs amputated following frostbite contracted as a result of spending a particularly cold Christmas lying homeless on the streets of Coleraine.

Like many others Oksana simply had nowhere else to go.

The Human Rights Commission Report shows that most of those who are barred from accessing public housing in the north are actually migrant workers.

This means that people who are contributing economically, socially, culturally and paying their taxes are being denied a right given to “locals”.

This gives lie to the racist propaganda that says that immigrants come to the UK to exploit a lucrative benefits system and that they are somehow responsible for the lack of social housing available.

REVIEW

Malalai Joya's Raising My Voice



Malalai Joya is Afghanistan's youngest member of Parliament

By JULIEN MERCILLE, IRISH Anti War Movement

MALALAI JOYA'S central message in *Raising My Voice* is that “today the Afghan people are tragically sandwiched between two enemies—the Taliban on one side and the US/NATO forces and their warlord friends on the other”.

Malalai Joya is Afghanistan's youngest member of Parliament, well-known for openly challenging the US/NATO, warlords, and the Taliban. She spent her childhood in refugee camps in Iran and Pakistan and returned to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan in the late 1990s, where she worked for underground organizations helping women.

She was elected to Parliament in 2005 but was suspended in 2007 after saying it was worse than a zoo or stable, because at least “in a stable we have animals like a cow which is useful in that it provides milk, and a donkey that can carry a load”.

Joya's key argument is that the US/NATO, warlords and Taliban must be rejected and instead, progressives must be empowered, such as herself, the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), and others.

She therefore opposes the mainstream media's implicit claims that Afghans can only choose between the Taliban and the current government.

She also rejects the tendency of some on the left to lend some support to the Taliban in their act of “resistance”.

Joya documents in some detail how the current government in Afghanistan is filled with warlords, drug lords and murderers who committed numerous atrocities over the last decades.

Human Rights Watch has estimated that up to 60% of deputies in the lower house of parliament are directly or indirectly connected to current and

past human rights abuses. It is this kind of government that international troops—including seven Irish troops—are supporting in Kabul.

Joya says that some members of Parliament are not even literate and that one day she saw a fundamentalist commander sitting in front of her with his newspaper open as if he was reading, but he was holding the paper upside down!

Joya is no kinder to the Taliban. There has been much talk of possible negotiations with them, but she writes that “It is incredible to me that these criminals and misogynistic killers could be considered part of a ‘settlement’”.

So what is Joya advocating to improve the situation in Afghanistan?

First, send real humanitarian aid: the US alone spends \$100 million on the military every day in Afghanistan, whereas total international aid for reconstruction comes to a meager \$7 million a day, much of which never reaches those who need it, stolen by corrupt officials or returned to donor countries in corporate profits and consultant salaries.

Second, put an end to the rule of the warlords, who must be disarmed. Warlords and the Taliban are a “photocopy” of each other and must be prosecuted for their crimes.

Third, withdraw all foreign troops, which have killed many civilians.

The book covers much ground, but does not reveal Joya's views about the possible presence of United Nations peacekeepers (or something equivalent) to replace the NATO/US troops and act as a buffer between the warlords and Taliban.

This is an alternative that many progressive activists in Afghanistan could support (if done right), but is not addressed by Joya.

Raising My Voice: The extraordinary story of the Afghan woman who dares to speak out
By Malalai Joya
London: Rider 2009

Socialist Worker

Jobs and houses for all Say NO to racism

THERE HAVE been over 1000 racist attacks in Northern Ireland in the last year.

Over 100 Roma and 30 Polish families in Belfast had to flee their homes due to racist attacks. In recent weeks we have seen more attacks in Newry and Armagh.

Sammy Wilson, the Assembly Finance Minister, has encouraged racist sentiments by calling for discrimination against migrant workers in jobs. He also sought to minimise the racist attacks by saying the anti-racist movement were hyping them up or even provoking them!

As Finance Minister he has a direct interest in deflecting anger at the jobs crisis and the failures of Capitalism onto scapegoats like migrants and away from himself, the bosses and the failures of their economic system.

His statements apart from being morally repugnant are dangerous. An atmosphere where racism is acceptable, where racist attacks on minority communities happen regularly, creates the breeding ground not just for racist ideas but for fascist movements.

A few weeks ago it was revealed in the Belfast Telegraph that the Nazi British Nationalist Party is operating a call centre in Unit 5, Carrareagh Business Centre, Dundonald.

The BNP are using this call centre as a



Nick Griffin, leader of the Nazi BNP, which operates a call centre in NI

base to build up their membership in Britain. They are raising £1500 a day from this operation to spread their hate and racist filth.

The BNP have to be seen for what they

are - a Nazi organisation.

Despite their attempts to don suits or to use 'softer' language their stripes haven't changed, for example Nick Griffin, the BNP

leader, denies the holocaust happened.

"I am well aware that the orthodox opinion is that six million Jews were gassed and cremated or turned into lampshades. Orthodox opinion also once held that the earth is flat...I have reached the conclusion that the 'extermination' tale is a mixture of Allied wartime propaganda, extremely profitable lie, and latter day witch-hysteria."

- Nick Griffin

"I want to help stop the immigration which is destroying this and every other white nation in the world." He has already called for the sinking of boats of asylum seekers trying to get to Europe.

Closing down the BNP call centre in Dundonald would be a huge blow against the fascists and their attempts to build themselves up as a 'respectable' party.

As well as campaigning for the call centre to be closed down immediately we also need to sweep away the racist ground which the BNP are trying to grow on top of.

This means understanding that migrants are not to blame for the recession, it was the bankers, the speculators and the capitalist system that created the crisis not migrant workers.

We need to be united and stand together to say that no Nazi's are welcome here and organise until the BNP call centre is closed permanently.

SF/DUP push through privatisation bill

By SEAN MCVEIGH

JUST AS market solutions have been exposed around the world as lacking any credibility, the Executive at Stormont has been busy drawing up legislation that threatens to unleash a new wave of privatisation across the North.

With zero media coverage Sinn Féin and the DUP have united in the Assembly to introduce the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill - which will allow private companies to take over and make profits from services currently delivered by the North's 26 district councils.

When the bill becomes law in a few months time a whole range of public services, including bin collections and leisure centres, could be contracted out to private companies with the prospect of additional charges.

According to an Executive statement on the bill, it will grant wide-ranging powers to local councils to enter into PFI type agreements with private businesses for the provision of facilities and services.



McGuinness and Robinson: United in privatising

The statement says the bill "clarifies the power of councils to enter into contracts for the provision of assets or services (or both) for the purpose of discharging any of their functions. Although this provision will enable councils to enter into PPP/PFI type contracts, it is not restricted to such contracts."

The Executive said a change

in the law was necessary because there is currently a "lack of private sector confidence concerning the powers of councils to enter into long-term service contracts".

When the bill becomes law it will open up a new area of profits for big business and will threaten the jobs and conditions of thousands of local council

workers.

The bill was introduced into the Assembly in June by DUP minister Sammy Wilson and it got wholehearted support from Sinn Féin.

Both parties tried to put an environmental spin on the bill saying it will allow the private sector to build new waste facilities - enabling the North to comply with EU environmental directives.

Sinn Féin environment spokesman Daithí McKay said in the Assembly the bill "is an important piece of legislation that gives councils a number of new powers and will help them in their efforts to meet recycling targets".

The Sinn Féin man went on to "commend the bill to the House".

Leading Sinn Féin MLA, John O'Dowd, welcomed the bill as "an important step on the road to restructuring local government".

Previously the Executive parties had no problem implementing neo-liberal legislation that originated in London.. But this bill was conceived and authored entirely by the DUP/ Sinn Féin led Executive.

While the DUP's position comes as no surprise, the actions of Sinn Féin in promoting Thatcherism in the North is shameful and hypocritical as the party still uses the language of the left.

The Assembly is due to vote on the bill in November- the Executive wants the law in place and ready to implement by 2011 when the planned council reorganisation takes place.

However, any attempts to privatise council services can still be stopped.

The campaign against water charges showed that when Catholic and Protestant workers stand together they can halt attacks on services.

Over the next two years three elections will take place in the North - to Westminster, to the Assembly and to the 11 new district councils.

These elections would be a perfect opportunity for the left to unite around agreed candidates and argue for united working class resistance to the neo-liberal policies of Sinn Féin and the DUP.