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Socialist Worker

As the Dáil reopens it is time to...

Build the Resistance to the IMF/EU Deal!

Fight the austerity

Build the protest on 8 October

THIS week marks the return of the Dáil after the summer break.

TD's are back in Leinster House for the first time in nine weeks, and right on cue, there has been a ratcheting up of the ideological onslaught.

The next few months are crucial for the government as they seek to push through the continuing austerity of their EU/IMF masters.

Labour and Fine Gael ministers know the importance of the upcoming budget and they have been queuing up to tell us that if we 'front load the pain' we will get back to prosperity.

This is the same lie that Brian Lenihan spouted for over three years as he continually attacked the living conditions of working people.



Last year Fianna Fail had apparently already achieved 60% of the cut backs needed.

This year we are again being told that we have to frontload!

The reality is that the economy is continually slowing down.

Every cut drains consumer demand from an already battered economy, and this is the key reason why organisations like the IMF are drastically reducing their growth forecasts.

In its latest report, the IMF cut its growth projection for Ireland from 0.6% of GDP to 0.4%.

Despite all of the governments' attacks there is just no recovery, but this is not stopping them for coming back for more.

Inside

The human cost of cutting special needs assistants



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The tenth anniversary of the 'War on Terror'



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Labour's Shame

LABOUR are supposedly in government to curb the right-wing excesses of Fine Gael.

This was the line they spun before the general election.

But, if anything, they have been more willing to attack their supports than their right-wing partners.

Speaking at a parliamentary party meeting in Co. Carlow, Eamon Gilmore stated



recently that he would 'level' with the people about the hard decisions that would need to be taken.

Seeking to blame the previous government for the economic crisis, he stressed that "no

government wants to cut spending... But it has to be done, for the sake of our country, and for the next generation....

"It is going to be difficult, but we are going to get on with it."

Singling out social welfare as an example of these 'necessary cuts' he suggested that "I think it is pretty clear that we do have to reduce the overall social welfare budget, there hasn't been any doubt about that, and the measures that Joan Burton is undertaking will achieve that."

For her part, Burton has been busy demonising the



victims of the economic crisis as good for nothing scroungers making 'lifestyle choices'.

Instead of highlighting the fact that most of these people were perfectly willing to work during the 'Celtic Tiger', Burton has

poured her energy into slugging off workers and making sure that children of foreign nationals are deprived of their welfare payments if they are living abroad.

This is all a smoke screen to cover up the fact that Labour have implemented exactly the same policies as their FF predecessors.

It turns out that 'Labour's way' is 'Frankfurt's way' and as the budgetary cycle comes around, it is vitally important that workers break with their illusions in Gilmore and his cronies.

RESISTANCE IS THE KEY

THIS week saw the first of a series of protests by genuine members of the Irish Left.

The 'Enough' campaign is working determinedly to increase the pressure on this rotten government, and as the IMF come back into town, there will be a follow up protest on 8 October.

These protests are designed to give a focal point for people's anger and it is vital that we build for these demonstrations in our local areas.

Over the next few months we need to bring every group that is under attack onto the streets in a mass protest.

But protests alone are not

enough.

We also need to convince workers that it is only through withholding their labour that the government will sit up and listen.

We need a general strike to ditch the government and halt the rotten IMF/EU deal in its tracks.



Mortgage debt worsens

By MICHEAL WALLACE

THE mortgage debt crisis has worsened again with Central Bank data showing that 55,763 families were in arrears and in danger of being thrown out of their homes.

This is an increase of 7000 in the last three months alone.

The FG/Labour government has promised to 'look into' the findings of an 'expert group' for possible 'solutions.'

However Minister for Finance, Michael Noonan, has already ruled out debt cancellation for the many people trapped in a spiral of debt and despair.

Noonan remarked that the solution to the mortgage debt crisis would not be a "big pool of money in substitute for the lottery."

In contrast, the Minister poured €24 billion into the banks in March to forgive their gambling debts, bringing the total bank bailout to €70 billion.

This is paid for with ruthless austerity attacks on ordinary working people.

The greed of bankers and developers fuelled the housing bubble, which trapped so many in massive debt and negative equity.

Irish banks borrowed more than €200 billion from German and French banks alone - and the resulting expansion of credit meant house prices rose 292% between 1996-

2006.

Many families were forced into the over-inflated housing market just to have a roof over their heads.

While the housing bubble raged out of control, local authority housing lists increased 45% between 1999-2008 to 56,249 families.

Following the housing crash, prices have fallen 43% leaving 100,000 in severe negative equity.

An estimated 130,000 are now on the social housing waiting lists.

Attempts by FG/Labour to divide workers by claiming that those who pay their mortgages will have to subsidise those who cannot have failed miserably.

An Amarach/Frontline Report from June showed that 82% support debt cancellation for those in difficulty.

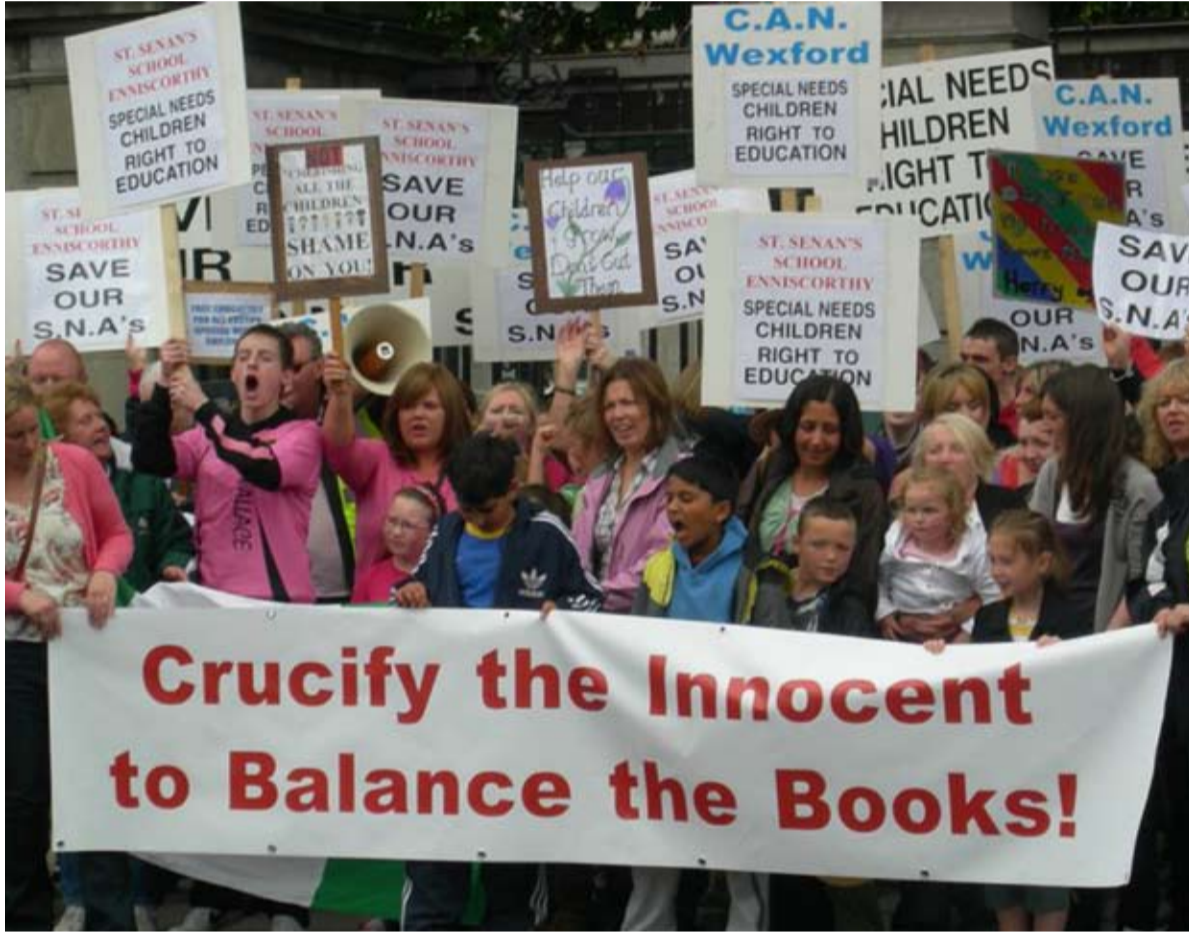
The time has come to launch a campaign of resistance against a government that serves only the interests of the banks, the rich and the 'markets'.

Join the fightback against FG/Labour outside the Dail on 14 September and oppose their masters, the EU/IMF when they return to Dublin on 6 October.

Also, help tear down this government's latest disgraceful austerity scheme by joining the Anti-Household Tax Campaign today.

SPECIAL NEEDS:

Parents are fighting back



By ROISIN RYDER

WHEN your child is born you are full of joy and expectation.

But when your child becomes seriously ill or has a disability, the joy is tinged with terror for the future.

This terror is not from the idea of having a child with a disability but from the knowledge that Ireland is becoming increasingly unsafe for vulnerable children.

When my son survived a brain tumour we could not relax as we knew he had to struggle to keep up with other children.

The first battle was keeping him in Enable Ireland (service for children with cerebral palsy) so that he would get the necessary support - speech & language, orthotics (splint), physiotherapy, access to paediatricians, psychological support.

Thankfully this battle was won

but now this organisation is under serious threat.

Health professionals work tirelessly for our children, but they are hampered by drastic cutbacks, waiting lists, machinery which is not upgraded and ward closures.

The latest battle is within the education system.

My son is entitled to a Special Needs Assistant through ACCESS.

But he shares this assistant with another pupil in the class and another child in a different class.

The SNA is therefore running between 2 classes throughout the day. It's totally crazy.

The Department of Education argues that an SNA is only there for the 'care' needs of a child, rather than their educational needs.

This is shameful as it is only invoked to allow them to escape their constitutional right to en-

sure that everyone gets a decent education.

My son has difficulties concentrating for long periods because of his brain tumour.

This year the SNA is not allowed to bring him back to task, reinforce anything or help him write down his homework.

He is slower than other kids at this and his education will therefore suffer.

On top of this there are 28 pupils in the class with one other pupil having special needs.

This environment is no good for my son, the other children or the teacher. Everyone will lose out.

We must all come together now to demand that we have a society that puts the needs of our children above those of the bankers.

It is hard enough having a sick child without constantly fighting for the services he deserves.



ESB sell-off bad deal for the public

By MADELEINE JOHANSSON

PRESSURE is growing on Greece to privatise vital state assets.

The ECB/IMF is demanding the Greek government sell off €50 billion worth of assets including telecom and energy companies.

In Ireland, the IMF/ECB is looking for what may seem like a modest €5 billion sell-off.

However, this privatisation plan would be devastating for public finances, service users and workers alike.

As SW goes to print, the Cabinet is discussing selling off its stake in Aer Lingus and the ESB.

It's unclear how much or which parts of the companies will be sold, but a review from April 2011 can give us some guidance.

The review group, headed by right wing economist, Colm McCarthy, gave some recommendations concerning the sell-off of state assets.

Firstly, it was recommended that the ESB's energy supply, electricity distribution, consulting and engineering businesses should be sold as a single entity.

It also recommended selling all further generating capacities, ending public investment in any electricity generation, including renewable energies.

Disposing of state assets, like electricity and telecoms, has a detrimental effect on the necessary upgrading of networks and services.

In Ireland this has been most obvious with the sale of Telecom Eireann.

Private company's major concerns are profits for shareholders, rather than supplying services to people.

Selling the ESB would also be a bad deal for the public finances, as the government made profits of €600 million in 2009 alone.

Finally, it would be damaging for public sector workers who are currently unionised.

There is something sick about solving a private sector crisis by selling more assets to the private sector.

Privatisation is just another way of punishing workers and we must stand against this over the coming months.

Resist Work for Dole schemes

By VANESSA O' SULLIVAN

THE number of people thrown out of work and claiming welfare has risen to appalling levels.

Instead of dealing with the issue the FG/Labour government are hiding the unemployment problem through mass emigration and welfare cuts.

Work placement programmes (WPP) and the TUS scheme are their latest attempt to hide the shameful figures.

The WPP is for college graduates and undergraduates to work as 'interns' for 40 hours a week.

It is for 9 months in a private company with no clear contract at the end of it.

Under the TUS scheme, people without qualifications will be forced into similar conditions in the community sector.

These initiatives cause serious problems for the working class.

Firstly, these schemes are compulsory.

If anyone contacted refuses to comply, their welfare payments will be immediately cut off.

Secondly, applicants will be sent to places that receive no extra funding, support or training.

The community sector will have no say over who is placed in their care.

These schemes also undermine working conditions of both existing staff and the applicant.

With no restrictions on the numbers taken on under these schemes, private companies will now be in a position to threaten the workforce.

Applicants will receive less than €90, below the minimum wage for working a full week.

This is the latest attack from Labour Minister Joan Burton to make the unemployed pay for the crimes of the bankers.

Workfare for dole is NOT the answer.

We demand real jobs and training initiatives to get people back to work.

Instead of the shocking exploitation of work for dole schemes, we need sustainable jobs that protect workers rights.

Both the employed and unemployed must join together to resist these vicious cuts and defeat them once and for all.

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WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet.

A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION
The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy.

To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based on much greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR
War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.

The "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION
We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the working class.

We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH
We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Cameron government.

Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction'

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
To win socialism we need to organise in a revolutionary party.

This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system.

We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

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Chilean winter of mass protest

By MARNIE HOLBOROW

THOUSANDS of Chilean students have taken to the streets and become the voice of a massive protest movement.

What started as calls to reform Chile's elite education system has embraced environmental campaigns in Wild Patagonia, the demands of the indigenous Mapuche movement and the still homeless victims of the 2008 earthquake.

Like Ireland, Chile was a neoliberal show case for deregulation.

On the back of Augusto Pinochet's right-wing economics, inequality rose, corruption was widespread and education became simply unaffordable for the vast majority.

Now Chilean students – along with everyone else – are saying enough is enough.

Neoliberal inequality

Following a military coup in 1973, Chile became a neoliberal laboratory for everything from education to natural resources.

This made the country one of the most unequal in Latin America.

And the government that was supposed to usher in a democratic transition after the generals, crucially left many of their neoliberal policies intact.

Whilst the richest 10% of Chileans have an average income higher than Norway, the poorest 10% have income levels equal to those in the Ivory Coast. The average cost of attending university is 300,000 pesos (€460) a month, making Chile one of the most expensive educational destinations in the world.

To put this in perspective, 83% of the students attending public schools live in a household in which the average monthly in-



Marchers moving up the Alameda, on August 25th Below: Camila Vallejo, President of the largest Student Federation of Chile (the fesh)

come is less than 180,000 pesos (€275).

This is clearly unsustainable, and students have become the lightning rod for opposition to the neoliberal free market model.

The 'Chilean winter'

Over 100,000 students have taken to the streets dressing up in costumes and running laps around the presidential palace.

They have also staged a mass kiss-in, occupied a TV station and torched a retail chain (La Polar),



which recently imposed huge interest rates on overdue accounts. Alongside these students have

been Gay rights campaigners, farmers protesting about the impact of a strong Chilean peso and transport workers protesting about job insecurity.

People are calling the movement 'the Chilean winter' and, like the Arab Spring, it has captured the political mood.

It has also, unsurprisingly, been met with brutal police repression.

Students were drenched in tear-gas and beaten by the police.

874 people were arrested, and according to Camila Vallejo - a uni-

versity student leader - 'the centre of Santiago is in a state of siege and is totally unacceptable'.

This clampdown has only served to spread support for the movement, and Chilean workers are now beginning to stir.

At the end of August, the Chilean Trade Union Congress (CUT) mobilised over 600,000 workers on a 48 hour general strike that brought the country to a halt.

Teachers, students, human rights organisations, artisans, shantytown dwellers and doc-

tors all supported the strike wave. Workers' conditions have been central to the movement, as a new labour code, and end to temporary jobs, better salaries, health care reform, and a publicly funded pension system are vigorously demanded.

Politics and Slogans

One of the slogans on the protests has been a reworking of 'the people united shall never be defeated', into 'the people united move forward without parties'.

This partly reflects a healthy cynicism with the social democratic La Concertacion's capitulation to the right.

But one of the strongest lessons from Chile's past is that if there is not a coherent radical left alternative, then the path lies open for the right.

Salvador Allende's Popular Unity government did some very radical things.

They nationalised 100 firms and raised wages by over 100% in some cases.

But Popular Unity could only go so far without taking on the capitalist class.

His government chose to dampen workers struggles in the name of legality.

Pinochet and the CIA had no such worries and, in the climate of restraint, carried through their coup.

The student movement are right not to trust the social partnership approach of La Concertacion.

But their very strength as the expression of a wider social movement should now lead them in the direction of creating a real socialist alternative and the kind of revolutionary socialist party that can help them to achieve it.

For more details on this story see the SWP website at <http://www.swp.ie/>.

Protests sweep through Israel

By IAN MCDONNELL

A series of mass protests have erupted throughout Israel.

Two of the main issues motivating protesters are the increasing cost of living and the lack of social housing.

Quarter of a million people took to the streets of Tel Aviv, likewise in Jerusalem, and other major cities.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's residence was surrounded by 30,000 protesters, demanding better living conditions.

This is yet another response to the economic crisis and while such expressions of anger are to be welcomed, the Israeli demonstrations are hypocritical in-so far as they exclude the Palestinian population.

The protests, having assumed an 'apolitical' stance, refuse to take a position on the occupation of Palestine.

The protesters are therefore complicit in their states refusal to extend to rights to the Palestinians that they themselves are



demanding.

In the absence of progressive calls against the ongoing occupation, the governments' response to demands for social housing could well mean more settlements on Palestinian lands.

A more progressive solution would be to call for an end to the \$16 billion currently wasted on the Israeli army & its costly occupation.

However, no such demands have been issued.

This, of course, raises the issue of Israel's economic relationship with the United States.

Israel is the largest recipient of US economic & military aid in the world.

In 2003 US aid to Israel amounted to \$140 billion and this is largely predicated upon Israel's position as a pro-US military outpost.

In the event that the Jewish population called for an end to the occupation, these

payments would likely be withdrawn.

This relationship significantly limits the extent to which anti-austerity protests in Israel can call for progressive/anti-imperialist resolutions.

Therefore, only when the working class of the Arab states spread their revolution into Palestine will both Jewish & Muslim workers be freed from the dual stranglehold of capitalist crises and western imperialism.

Global imbalances becoming more apparent

By BRIAN O' BOYLE

SOCIALIST Worker has consistently located the roots of the economic crisis in a crippling imbalance between capital and labour.

Stagnating wages and tax cuts for the rich have helped to ensure that capitals' share of GDP has risen across the world.

To take some of the most important examples, US wages have barely risen over the last 25 years; government debt has ballooned to around \$14.5 trillion, whilst private sector wealth has increased to around \$50 trillion.

In Italy, government debt is around €1.9 trillion, workers pensions are being savaged, whilst the private sector has increased its wealth to around €10 trillion.

This scenario is being played out across the developed economies, and it points to two important truths.

The first is that when we hear that a country is broke, we have to distinguish carefully between governments',



workers' and the private sector.

If governments and workers are massively indebted, they must owe somebody somewhere.

Overwhelmingly, it is capitalists' that are 'owned'.

And this leads to our second point, which is that there simply is not enough value being created for all of the debts to be repaid.

According to Stephen King (chief economist at HSBC bank) most commentators have failed to understand that the totality of claims in the system is too big for its productive capacity.

This then means that "someone somewhere will have to accept losses and investors everywhere

are trying to protect their financial claims...when the financial system itself appears to be crumbling".

This is a remarkably frank assessment from a 'prize fighter' of the ruling class and it comes on the back of people like Warren Buffet and Maurice Levy arguing that the rich (themselves) should pay more taxes.

This is brutal pragmatism rather than kind-hearted benevolence, but it does point to the fact that some representatives of the ruling class are waking up to the central problem.

For over 25 years capital relied on debt fuelled bubbles to drive economic activity.

This strategy has become almost impossible since the crash of 2008, and without this injection there is simply no engine in the global economy.

Increasingly it looks like we are heading for a 1930's style 'Great Depression'—and that, the only way to really avoid this, is to fundamentally redress the balance between workers and their bosses.

Holy Cross: Plumbing the depths ten years on



By SEÁN MITCHELL

TEN years ago, before the events of September 11th had happened, the world's eyes were fixed on a very different place from the skyscrapers of New York City.

Holy Cross, a small Catholic girl's school in North Belfast was to become infamous for scenes of sectarianism so disturbing, that even the most hardened observers of the North were left shocked.

The blockade of Holy Cross, in which children were forced to run a gauntlet of abuse on their way to school, proved to be one of the ugliest episodes in the history of Northern Ireland.

For a number of weeks, excluding a brief respite during the summer holidays, Loyalists organised a protest aimed at preventing schoolchildren entering Holy Cross.

The abuse levelled at the children, some as young as 4 years old and their parents was horrifying.

Despite this, the parents rightly refused to bow to the pressure, determined to take a stand for the right of children to go to school free from hate.

The Loyalists continued to try and intimidate them, sectarian and sexist abuse was regularly heckled and balloons filled with urine where thrown over police lines.

At one point a pipe bomb was hurled towards the school children, falling short and injuring a police officer.

It was during the dispute that the discredited RUC was repackaged as the PSNI.

With the world's media watching, the supposedly reformed police were forced to act, but they would only go so far.

Whilst they separated the children from the bigots, they largely tolerated the protesters.

The reality was that whatever protection the PSNI provided to the children was done begrudgingly.

Many parents complained of being harassed and verbally abused by the police, contrasting this with an apparently friendlier attitude taken with loyalists.

During the dispute one parent took a legal challenge over the conduct of the security services stating that "the loyalists shocked us, despite what they had done over the years, but the

police were worse".

Loyalists claimed that their blockade had been sparked by Nationalist intimidation of a man erecting UDA flags, but it was clearly more than this.

The blockade was an attempt to further segregate North Belfast along sectarian lines.

Loyalists talked of a Nationalist plot to take over their area and had determined to stop Catholics moving into empty houses in Protestant areas. In the distorted mind-set of loyalism, attacking Catholic school children was fair game in this battle to reclaim territory.

But the events at Holy Cross did not come out of thin air - they were a by-product of the chest thumping sectarianism of the politicians.

At the time, Unionists, particularly the DUP, were prophesying about an imminent sell out to Nationalists.

They took to the airwaves to insist that concessions being made to republicans were at the expense of Protestants and that Catholics were getting preferential treatment.

None of this was true of course, but the perception was very real.

The residents who carried out the protest talked of a lack of community services, but the idea that school children were to blame was ridiculous.

The vast majority of people, both Catholic and Protestant where utterly opposed to the blockade.

Despite Unionist intransigence, the protest became increasingly isolated and was eventually called off.

Today the idea that this could happen again seems unthinkable.

But in a society where whole areas are defined as either Nationalist or Unionist and where bigotry is accepted as a component of politics the idea might not be so unrealistic.

Yet we shouldn't feel trapped by sectarianism, it can be challenged.

It should be remembered that despite the suffering and the considerable trauma endured, we would be in a much worse position had those parents and their children decided to go home.

The bigots could have won - but they didn't and we are better off today because of it.

From Tahrir and back

Following the toppling of Muammar Gaddafi, John Molyneux, and Tunisia and the more conver

WHEN, at the beginning of this year, the Tunisian people overthrew the dictatorship of Zine Ben Ali and the Egyptians rose in revolution against Mubarak, they launched the Arab Spring and became a source of revolutionary inspiration around the world.

In Dublin on 11 February, the day Mubarak fell, there was a protest at the Egyptian Embassy which turned into a celebration as the news came through.

After a good deal of dancing in the street an exiled Libyan held up a picture of Muammar Gaddafi with his face crossed out, and said 'Him next!'

Sure enough four days later demonstrations began in Benghazi in eastern Libya and on 17 February came the first popular rising in the capital, Tripoli.

Six months later Gaddafi has also fallen, but this time there is not the same mood of wondrous inspiration.

The difference, of course, is that it was the struggle of the masses themselves that brought down Ben Ali and Mubarak, but in Libya it was a more or less conventional war in which the forces of the Libyan Rebels were heavily assisted by NATO intervention.

To assess this development and the current situation we need to briefly review the sequence of events that led up to it.

On 17 February Gaddafi responded to the uprising with the utmost savagery.

Demonstrators in Tripoli were mown down and approximately 230 people were killed, including many of the few leftists in Libya.

The fact that Gaddafi reacted this way and that the army in Tripoli carried out his orders had huge consequences.

It stemmed what up to that point looked like the triumphal march of the democratic revolution through the Arab world.

It divided the country between the government controlled capital and the rebel controlled Benghazi.

It prepared the ground for transforming the struggle from a popular uprising from below into a primarily military conflict.

At first it seemed the Rebels might secure a rapid victory but on 6 March Gaddafi launched a major counter attack and drove the Rebels back towards Benghazi.

On 8 March Obama and Cameron began to draw up plans for military intervention but at this stage European governments were still divided with Germany opposed.

On 15 March, Gaddafi's forces started to attack Benghazi and on 17 March the UN authorized intervention 'to protect civilians'.

Two days later, under cover of the notion of 'imposing a no-fly zone' NATO launched the biggest aerial bombardment since the early days of the Iraq War.

Why did they do this? That it was to 'save civilians' can be rejected on many grounds.

First, all the Western powers involved have sat through innumerable massacres of civilians on a scale far exceeding that in Libya, perpetrated by allies and enemies alike, without lifting a finger unless it was in their economic and/or military interests.

Listing these massacres, from Argentina and Chile in the seventies to Rwanda in 1994, would fill this whole article.

Second, while the Libyan events were taking place, the Saudis marched into Bahrain



Above: Revolution in Egypt and below military conflict in Libya

to crush the developing revolution in that country, without so much as a diplomatic protest from Sarkozy, Cameron or Obama.

Third, not only did all these powers support Gaddafi up to the last moment, but as has now been revealed, they even used him for rendition purposes, ie torture.

The real reasons were partly to regain control of Libyan oil, but even more importantly

to establish a western bridgehead within the region so as to contain and tame the Arab Revolutions which posed a deadly threat to imperialist interests.

In this they were partially but not wholly successful.

After five months of bombing, during which the Rebels, with their Transitional

From Tripoli to Tahrir

...exposes the key differences between the mass revolutions in Egypt and the national military struggle in Libya.



National Council, became ever more dependent on NATO, Gaddafi was finally overthrown, and it can be safely assumed that the new government, which contains a number of former Gaddafi loyalists, will be willing to do the West's bidding whether it comes to oil supplies or regional strategy.

However the element of genuine popular revolt in Libya has not been entirely extinguished and this is leading to tensions within

the new government.

In Misrata for example, which had repelled Gaddafi without aid from NATO, there was a major protest on 29 August against the appointment of a Gaddafi henchman as Tripoli security chief.

At the same time the Arab Spring has not yet been reined in.

The well known radical philosopher, Slavoj Zizek, rather light-mindedly, proclaimed that

the summer of 2011 marked 'the end of the revolution'.

He was wrong.

Much more accurate was the diagnosis of Egyptian Revolutionary Socialist, Sameh Naguib who said of Libya and the fall of Gaddafi:

"Some Western politicians are talking about it like it's Iraq but with better planning! But Libya's impact in the region will be contradictory.

The fact is that to see another dictator toppled, even though it is in a more confused way, could boost the Syrian opposition.

If President Assad falls in Syria, the regimes in Jordan and Saudi Arabia will be in serious trouble."

Despite relentless repression the courage of the Syrian people has meant that the Syrian Revolution remains ongoing and there are increasing signs that the brutal regime of Assad is starting to crumble.

The revolution in Yemen achieved a partial victory when the seriously injured President Saleh fled to Saudi Arabia in the first week of June.

And as I write this article (9 September) there has been a massive wave of protest right across the country, with millions – in many cases led by women, who have played an important role in the Yemen revolution – taking to the streets in what they called the 'Friday of Imminent Victory'.

At the same time the past week has seen a major resurgence of the Egyptian Revolution.

Leading the way have been the workers and their new independent trade unions.

A threatened mass strike by Public Transport Workers was called off when the employers granted all their demands.

This was followed by an indefinite strike by Delta postal workers.

The Mahalla textile workers also won a massive victory just by threatening strike action and numerous other groups of workers, including textile workers in Alexandria, teachers, health technicians and workers at cultural centres have been on strike or are threatening action.

And, again today, the revolution has returned to Tahrir Square.

Mass demonstrations from different parts of Cairo have converged on the Square demanding to 'Correct the path of the Revolution'.

This has included a large contingent from the Ahly Ultras football supporters chanting 'The government is full of criminals'.

After occupying Tahrir, marchers set off for the Ministry of the Interior and the Israeli Embassy.

The Israeli flag was hauled down and the security wall in front of the Israeli embassy was completely demolished while military police stood by.

As I write there are unconfirmed reports that a floor of the Ministry of the Interior is on fire.

At this moment it is obviously impossible to know what will have happened by the time this article is read but one thing is clear: with the struggle mounting in Egypt, accompanied by a rash of student occupations in Greece, mass student and worker struggles in Chile, a general strike in Italy and threatened big strikes in Britain the rising tide that began at the end of last year is still with us.

Fine Gael and Labour promoting a 'race to the bottom'



"...and the winner of this week's 'Race to the Bottom' is..."

By LEAH SPEIGHT

IN the short period of the FG/Labour government, workers pay and conditions have been severely attacked.

Before the elections, the country's biggest union, SIPTU, encouraged its 200,000 members to vote for Labour.

An illusion was created that Labour would quell the aggression of a FG led government.

But Labour has actually helped the Minister for Jobs, Richard Bruton, to create a race to the bottom.

The Duffy-Walsh report conducted on request of the EU/IMF, found no evidence of increased employment through reductions in wages and/or work conditions of the lowest-paid.

This essentially discredited Employer bodies' like IBEC.

But undeterred Burton continued to back the employers push for further cuts on pay and conditions.

According to an OECD



report (2008), Ireland had the highest inequality of earnings in the original EU-15.

Over 21% of full-time employees are low-paid compared to a euro zone average of 14.7%.

EU commission data shows that labour costs in the food and accommodation sector in Ireland are 6% below the EU-15 average.

Despite this, IBEC along with the restaurant associations have continually pushed the idea that high wages are halting job creation.

In July this year they gained an important victory, when it was decided that laws determining minimum pay and conditions was unconstitutional.

On the back of this victory the bosses are pushing for a new inability to pay clause.

The number of JLC's will also be reduced and JLC's will no longer be involved in setting Sunday premiums.

Putting it succinctly, the IBEC/Bruton proposals will further deregulate and marginalise low unionised workers.

As expected, the Labour party quietly went along with all of these plans.

The idea of 'derogation' is found in many of Bruton's proposals.

This is merely a polite way of allowing employers to get away with paying below accepted standards.

In early August, in a letter to Congress General Secretary, David Begg, Minister Bruton said he was seeking one of these derogations on an EU Directive on Temporary Agency Work.

Exploitation of agency workers has long been fought against in the trade union movement.

For example, a major dispute at Irish Ferries in 2005 occurred when management threatened to replace 543 employed seafarers with an agency crew paid less than the minimum wage.

December 2005, saw 100,000 people march in Dublin against this blatant exploitation.

This led to a campaign for an EU Directive granting equality for all agency workers, and December 2011, was to see this protection come into effect.

Agency workers should have the same rights as everyone else, but Bruton is hell bent on making sure there is a derogation for employers.

Union support is needed to achieve such a derogation.

But with Bruton cheer leading the employers' interests, it is likely that the JLC scenario may happen again.

Low-paid agency workers are lowly unionised and susceptible to attack.

However, passivity by a trade union movement - with strong links to the Labour party - is one of the key reasons why the government is succeeding.

As socialists we support workers joining trade unions, as this unites them in their struggles with the ruling class.

But our current union leadership is simply unwilling to do the job that is expected of them.

Next year, Labour celebrates the 100th anniversary of the founding of their party by Larkin and Connolly.

The actions of the Labour leadership and the trade union bureaucracy are an insult to their memory.

Workers need collective solidarity and part of this must seek to win the unions from the bureaucrats.

This fight will be helped by a conference in the Teachers Club in Parnell Square on Saturday 1 October.

Real trade unionists should make it their business to attend this conference.

How the US is losing its 'War on Terror'

Ten years after the attacks on the World Trade Centre, **Kieran Allen** analyses the latest phase of US imperialism, arguing that despite the massive loss of lives and resources, the United States is steadily losing its place as the global superpower.

AT the end of August an unclassified diplomatic cable made public by WikiLeaks focused attention on one of the many little-known atrocities of the US 'War on Terror'.

In the town of Ishaqi in 2006 American troops executed 11 Iraqi civilians before calling in an air strike to destroy the evidence.

What made this incident different from so many hundreds of others was that a US trained Iraqi police colonel and other high-ranking officials were willing to talk on the record, even though it cast US troops in an unfavourable light.

The evidence subsequently showed that US troops entered the house, which belonged to a farmer, and then handcuffed and executed each of the occupants with a bullet to the head - five children who were all five years old or younger, four women and two men.

This case of a massacre followed by a cover-up is merely an extension of the daily conduct of US troops in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere around the world.

In the autumn of 2010, for example, reports surfaced of a self-appointed 'kill team' made up of 12 US soldiers from the 5th Stryker Brigade.

Five of the 12 soldiers were accused of killing Afghan civilians 'for sport' in three separate incidents, and seven were implicated in the cover-up.

But according to Gen. Stanley McChrystal, previously the commander of US forces in Afghanistan, the day-to-day operations of the US military killed far more civilians:

"We've shot an amazing number of people and killed a number, and, to my knowledge, none has proven to have been a real threat to the force..."

"To my knowledge, in the nine-plus months I've been here, not a single case where we have engaged in an escalation of force and hurt someone, has it turned out that the vehicle had a suicide bomb or weapons in it, and in many cases, had families in it."

This is the reality of the 'War on Terror' that was launched by George Bush in the wake of the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington.

Bush used the attack on the Twin Towers as an excuse to re-assert US power across the world.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had left the US apparently globally dominant, as the 'lone superpower'.

But the global process of capital accumulation was relentlessly shifting the distribution of economic power to the disadvantage of the United States.

At the end of World War Two the US accounted for over 50% of global GDP, but by the turn of the century this had been cut



back to around 25%.

This prompted the neo-conservative intellectual Paul Wolfowitz to compare the end of the 20th century to that of the 19th century.

Once again the emergence of new powers, thanks to economic growth, was destabilising the international system.

One of the main advantages that the US had after the Cold War was its apparently overwhelming military superiority.

During the 1990s, the administrations of George H W Bush and Bill Clinton increasingly resorted to military power to resolve crises and assert their power (in Iraq, Somalia, Bosnia and Kosovo).

The 1991 war against Iraq was authorised by the United Nations.

But, increasingly stymied by Russia and China on the UN Security Council, the US resorted to unilateral military action, usually loyally seconded by Britain.

Military

By 1999, the thoroughly mainstream US policy intellectual Samuel Huntington could write, "While the United States regularly denounces various countries as 'rogue states', in the eyes of many countries it is becoming



the rogue superpower."

After George W Bush became president in January 2001 these tendencies were radicalised.

His administration was packed with right wing nationalists such as vice-president Dick Cheney and defence secretary Donald Rumsfeld, and neoconservatives such as Wolfowitz, who was appointed Rumsfeld's deputy.

Many were supporters of the 'Project for the New American Century'.

This strategy was formed in 1997 by the Republican right to reassert US global primacy by expanding its military capabilities.

9/11 thus gave the right the opportunity they had been

seeking.

The "War on Terrorism" Bush proclaimed after the attacks was much more than a knee-jerk military response to Al Qaida's challenge.

It became an ambitious gamble to sustain the global dominance of US capitalism.

Here the key was less Afghanistan - even though the US first attacked there - but Iraq, which had nothing to do with 9/11.

By seizing Iraq the US would further entrench its dominance of the Middle East.

This would give it tighter control over what the Marxist geographer, David Harvey called the 'global oil spigot', by regulat-

ing the access of potential rivals in Europe and Asia to the Middle East's energy reserves.

Added to this strategic objective was the more utopian goal, enthusiastically endorsed by Bush's loyal ally Tony Blair, of 'reordering the world' by using Western military power to unleash 'democratic revolutions' in the Arab world.

The gamble failed.

The US and British invasion forces rapidly seized Iraq in March 2003, but soon found themselves confronted with an intractable guerrilla insurgency.

All Rumsfeld's theories of 'transformational warfare' waged by small hi-tech armies proved ineffective in the face of the ancient truth that overwhelming conventional military power cannot force obedience on a rebellious population.

Destroy

To defeat the Iraqi resistance the occupiers played on the divisions between the Shia Muslim majority, long suppressed under Saddam Hussein, and the Sunni minority.

This simply unleashed a terrifying logic of civil war and ethnic cleansing that threatened to destroy Iraq and the occupation alike.

A change in US tactics in 2007-8 eventually brought a

degree of stability to Iraq.

This was no military victory but a political compromise that incorporated the bulk of the Sunni insurgents but left power in the hands of Shia Islamist parties closely aligned to Iran.

This was a huge geopolitical setback for the US.

Barack Obama succeeded Bush in January 2009, promising withdrawal from Iraq, but escalation in Afghanistan.

There too, the US and its NATO allies are bogged down in an unwinnable war against Al Qaida's former allies the Taliban, who are too deeply embedded in southern Afghan society to be rooted out by the occupiers.

So the "War on Terrorism", which was supposed to entrench US global hegemony, has merely accelerated its decline.

It is only one of the forces driving this trend.

The global economic and financial crisis is widely seen as the breakdown of Anglo-American free-market capitalism, which the Bush administration had proclaimed the 'single sustainable model of national success'.

More important, the recent stagnation of the US economy has contrasted sharply with the rapid recovery of China - now the world's second biggest economy.

The crisis has speeded up a realignment of global geopolitical relationships to accommodate Chinese power.

A small indication of this shift was last month's revelation that Pakistani authorities allowed Chinese engineers to inspect the Black Hawk helicopter that crashed during the Navy Seal raid to kill Bin Laden.

Even as close an ally as Pakistan feels able to play off the US against China.

Meanwhile, democracy has come to the Middle East - not thanks to either the US or Al Qaida, but through revolutions from below that overthrew Western client regimes in Egypt and Tunisia.

The NATO intervention in Libya is a desperate, almost certainly unsuccessful, attempt by Washington to regain the initiative.

Obama's determination to begin withdrawing US troops from Afghanistan reflects among other things recognition that US global strategy must focus on countering China's rise.

This doesn't mean that the 'War on Terrorism' is over—the deployment of Predator drones and Special Forces will continue in unlucky countries such as Pakistan and Yemen.

And domestic anti-terrorist legislation is too useful to be dismantled.

But no one now imagines that the 21st century will belong to America.

'A useless bunch of good for nothings'

Donal Mac Fhearraigh looks at two recent accounts of Fianna Fail's history.

THE collapse of Fianna Fail is the subject of a three part documentary by TV3's Ursula Halligan.

Episode 1 looked at the recent history of FF, from its highpoint in the boom to the tatters of its organisation now.

The recent spat between Michael Martin and Bertie Ahern over the failure of FF to field a candidate in the up-coming presidential election highlights that FF are still reeling from their battering in the general election.

Some like Ahern and O'Cuiv still can't accept that a pillar of the Southern state – FF, has collapsed.

Or rather has been wiped out, and is now moribund.

In the documentary O'Cuiv says, "FF as a party is still totally traumatised." Ahern for his part describes many in FF as "A useless bunch of good for nothings."

The programme contains some other classic one-liners from Ahern, including, "I have never received a bribe in my life."

Halligan argues that the rot set in from the early 1970's as FF sidelined its grassroots base and moved away from a more militant 32 county republican stance.

In reality, FF had ditched any radicalism much earlier on.

A new book by Bryce Evans on Sean Lemass, the FF Taoiseach credited with modernising Ireland, shows FF was from very early on deeply embedded with the business elite and the church.



Evans shows the corruption many associate with today's FF was even more prevalent in the 1940s, '50s and '60s.

Any republican and nationalist rhetoric was just that – talk.

DeValera did nothing to chal-

lenge partition and interned republicans who did.

FF pioneered an economic nationalism that sought to bind workers to the new ruling class.

Their success in doing so was helped by the weakness of the

left, especially the Labour Party, who were terrified of being seen as left wing.

The collapse of FF is a reflection of the collapse of the economic model they were most closely associated with – neo-liberalism.

Halligan mixes up cause and effect.

The FF 'cumainn' were dropped because policy needed to be more closely decided by the business elite.

FF didn't 'lose its way', it simply

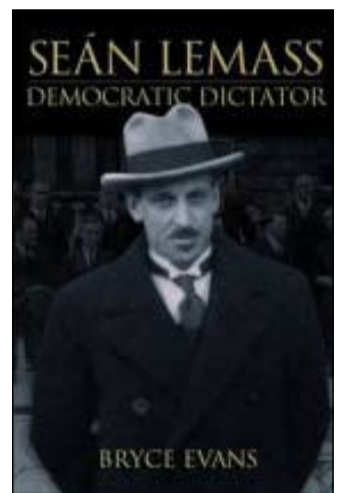
couldn't maintain the fiction of a grassroots party anymore.

The collapse of two pillars of the Southern establishment – the church and FF, offers an immense opportunity for the left in Ireland.

A danger is that FF will once again be able to use the rhetoric of economic nationalism to ally with Sinn Fein to renew its fortunes.

Unfortunately SF doesn't seem averse to such advances.

That's why socialists must offer a clear class alternative to the empty rhetoric of nationalism and republicanism.



The Rise and Decline of FF, TV3 10pm Mondays.
Past episodes are available at www.tv3.ie
Sean Lemass: Democratic Dictator is by Bryce Evans

MUSIC REVIEW:

Recounting social decay in seventies America



'What's Going On' by Marvin Gaye

Reviewed by Jimmy Smyth

POPULAR music is currently dominated by sanitised corporate interests like the X-Factor.

For example, it was reported last year that over 60% of current British chart acts went to public school; compared to just 1% twenty years ago.

But it's not always been this way.

This year marks the forty anniversary of the release of Marvin Gaye's *What's Going On*, an album that expressed the social upheavals being experienced by black and working class

Americans.

Gaye was an unusual source for such an album.

Over the course of the sixties Gaye had become the clean-cut male star of Motown Records.

However, in the late sixties the US was burning with riots and demonstrations.

Racism, poverty, police brutality and the impact of the Vietnam War were radicalising a generation.

Gaye had direct experience of this as his younger brother had fought in Vietnam.

This was the milieu that surrounded Gaye when he went to record *What's Going On*.

The result was a recording

that in form, content and lyrics captured the state of the world – an album that Motown boss Berry Gordy originally refused to release.

Musically, Gaye dramatically moved away from his previous style.

However, it was the political nature of the lyrics that alarmed Gordy.

What's going on is a review of US society through the eyes of a returning Vietnam veteran.

The songs deal with police brutality, drug addiction, social decay, war and environmental degradation.

In one of the stand out tracks, *Inner City Blues (Make Me Wanna Holler)* Gaye sings: *Rockets, moon shots / Spend it on the have nots / Money, we make it / 'Fore we see it, you take it.*

Gaye was not the only soul singer to address political issues.

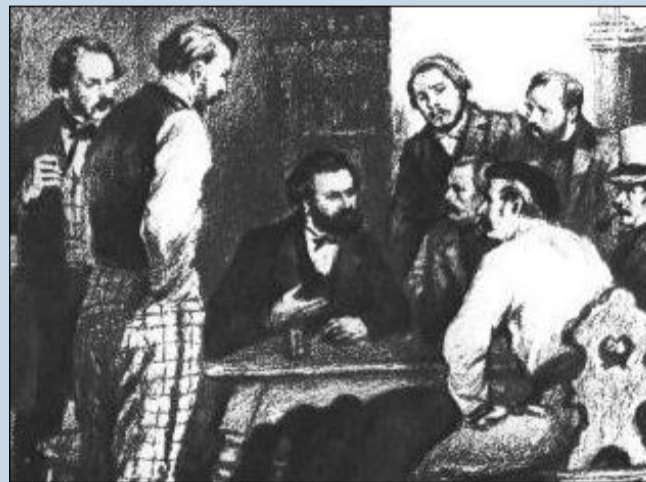
Curtis Mayfield and the Impressions had written the soundtrack to the civil rights movement earlier in the decade with songs like *People Get Ready* and *Meeting Over Yonder*.

Later Aretha demanded *Respect* and Edwin Starr exclaimed *War – what is it good for!* Today the charts maybe dominated by X-Factor clones and ex-public school careerists, but there are artists taking inspiration from early generations.

For example Aloe Blacc's *I need a Dollar* or Sharon Jones and the Dap Kings' anti-war song *What If We all Stopped Paying Taxes?* These musicians and others like them are the inheritors of Marvin Gaye's legacy from 1971.

Revolutionary Classics

Sinead Kennedy reviews *The German Ideology* by Marx and Engels



The German Ideology (1845-46) was the first work in which Marx and Engels outlined their understanding of history, and created a framework that would guide their theoretical and political work for the rest of their lives.

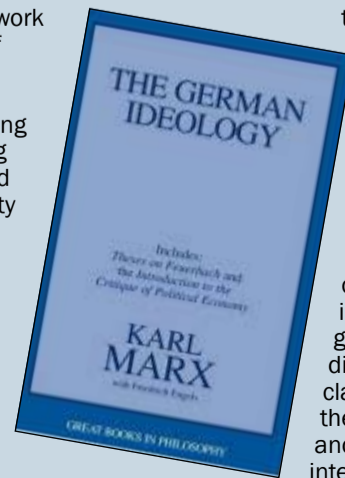
Marx and Engels' starting point in trying to understand human society was not the realm of ideas, but actual human beings and the material conditions in which they live;

both those pre-existing conditions (e.g. the environment) and those produced by human activity.

Human beings must engage in production in order to survive, and this in

turn influences every other aspect of their lives.

This includes the division of labour within production, which at a certain point in history gives rise to distinct social classes with their differing and contradictory interests.



On this basis develops the whole of the rest of society, including culture, society and state institutions.

However, Marx and Engels also note that the ideas to be found in any society are not simply the result of general material conditions, they are also a reflection of the interests of the ruling class in that society: "The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas."

Marx and Engels conclude by arguing that real change is only possible under capitalism through the self-activity of the working class.

Under capitalism the working class occupies a unique position as it is not in the interests of workers to protect a system based on exploitation and private property.

It is the material situation of workers under capitalism that leads them to fight-back and in the course of doing so their consciousness changes.

It is in the course of struggle, that workers see the need to replace the whole system, and gain the confidence and vision to do so.

Therefore when workers move into self-activity and fight-back, they will fight not just for their own interests, but for the interests of the whole of humanity.

The *German Ideology* is a must for anyone moving towards revolutionary politics.

You can read *The German Ideology* at: <http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/german-ideology>

Socialist Worker

STRIKES CAN BEAT STORMONT CUT BACKS...

UNITE THE RESISTANCE

Stop the transfer of taxes to the multinationals

Coordinated strike action is the way forward

UNISON are currently balloting their members for a public sector strike against cuts to health, education, jobs and services.

The Union will ballot its members until 22 September after which they will announce a strike date, likely to be sometime in October.

Similarly, NIPSA, the North's largest Union with around 40,000 members, is balloting its members, and has announced its intention to coordinate the date of its action with strikes by the PCS in November.

These moves should be welcomed by anyone who wishes to see jobs and services protected. It is exactly the kind of action we need and is the only effective way to make the Assembly sit up and listen.

The scale of the onslaught should not be underestimated. Already there have been hundreds of job cuts in Education pushed through by SF minister John O'Dowd.

Next on the chopping board are our health services. Health minister, Edwin Poots (DUP) is spearheading the most vicious cutbacks in our health service since the creation of the NHS.

Perhaps the starkest example of this is his plan to shut down the accident and emergency service in Belfast City Hospital. Despite talk of it being a 'temporary measure', this policy will almost certainly cost lives as 50,000 patients currently use this service annually.

And it isn't just Belfast which is feeling the pain. Already Lagan Valley A&E has been downgraded from a 24hour to a 12 hour service, and there's more to come. The McKinsey report, commissioned and paid for by the Health Committee to the tune of £200,000 is proposing the sacking of 10,000 staff from the NHS in Northern Ireland. It also calls for a £40 charge on A+E visits, doctor visits, ambulance usage, x-rays etc.



The outcome of these proposals will be a reduced health service and an end to the principle of free health care for all. The size of your pockets will become a greater determinant of the service you receive than the extent of your illness.

It is a perverse world where the interests of the bankers become more important than the treatment of the sick. But when questioned on this, politicians just shrug their shoulders and say that there is nothing they can do. Yet when it comes to policing or issues of Orange and Green they seem to find their voices - often threatening to bring the whole political system down unless they get their way. Why not have these attitudes when it comes to the things that ordinary people rely on?

The truth is there are a number of things the Assembly could do to stop the cuts. First they could stop handing £1.4 billion of tax payer's money to multinational companies. Second, they should call for the £123 billion in uncollected and evaded tax to be collected by the UK government.

But none of this will happen without struggle. We simply can't sit back and rely on the Stormont parties to change their policies. The only way to get a decent society is to fight for it ourselves.

That's why it's great that the Unions are taking strike action. We have had very big protests so far against the cuts. But strikes are the only way that we can win.

Unions in the North represent over 200,000 workers across the public and private sector. Public sector strikes will bring Northern Ireland to a standstill. It will change the game and put workers and trade unions in the driving seat.

We need other Unions to follow the lead of NIPSA and Unison and start to ballot their membership. Mass coordinated strike action is the way forward, let's make it a reality.

Inside: Ten years on from the Holy Cross dispute - has sectarianism gone away? p 4