

Socialist Worker

Stop the Health Cuts, Sack Reilly:

BREAK UP THIS ROTTEN GOVERNMENT

THIS week has witnessed some of the most savage cuts of the crisis so far. Under pressure from their 'troika' paymasters, the Irish government has committed to cutting €130 million from the HSE budget by the end of the year.

This will cause real hardship as care packages for the old and vulnerable are reduced, as are home help hours and a raft of life improving medications.

The man directly responsible for implementing these cuts is Minister for Health, James Reilly.

Reilly, who lives in a stately manor in Co. Offaly, made his fortune as a medical doctor, rising to become President of the Irish Medical Organisation in 2004.

As a key representative of the Irish consultants, Reilly helped to negotiate massive salary increases for medical elites during his term of office.

Today there are more than 500 Irish consultants earning over €200,000. This breaches the salary cap imposed by the government, but rather than taking on the vested interests, Reilly has predictably chosen to go for the vulnerable.

This has caused widespread anger among ordinary people and the Labour Party has suddenly found its social conscience.

Labour Pains

Last year Labour were more than willing to cut €700 million from the social welfare budget, crucifying single parents, the elderly and those with big families.

Between them Joan Burton and Brendan Howlin slashed billions from the budgets of the poor. But with a Fine Gael minister now in the firing line, senior Labour Party figures are suddenly making noises.

Party Chairman, Colm Keaveney responded to the latest news by stating that "there is blatantly an issue of social justice here where the most vulnerable are being targeted", whilst an unnamed Labour minister charged Reilly with "going for soft targets rather than taking on the pharmaceuticals industry, the insurers and the consultants".

No doubt this is all true. But the real reason for Labour's protest has less to do with patient care and more to do with self-preservation.

In March 2011 the Labour Party promised to use their mandate to curb the right-wing excesses of their Fine Gael partners.

Since then Labour has consistently be-



Resistance to the health cuts is spreading

trayed their pledges to working class people, but they have always made sure to keep in with the unions.

Keaveney himself is a former SIPTU official, whilst SIPTU President Jack O'Connor regularly strategises with key figures in the Labour hierarchy.

This is why the home help issue in particular has become so important.

People Power

Scores of meetings have already been held by home help workers furious with the government's latest attacks. This has been a remarkable showing of resistance from below, and such as been the momentum that it has forced SIPTU to reluctantly act.

Over the last few weeks SIPTU has initiated a national campaign to defend the terms and conditions of home help workers.

This threatens to drive a wedge between Labour and the unions and with Reilly charging SIPTU with blocking pay cuts for consultants through the Croke Park Deal, Labour strategists have had to respond.

This is the real reason for their sudden concern. After all, there has already been 20 times (€2.5 billion) the level of health cuts announced last week without so much as a whimper.

Labour are only too happy to implement cuts so long as they maintain their political position.

This point is confirmed by the fact that they will support Reilly if a vote of No Confidence is tabled against him in the Dail this week.

Like the Greens before them Labour will speak left when they think it will help them.

But they are far more concerned to manage Irish capitalism than to defend the interests of the people.

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Foyle Pride: Marching for liberation



By CONNOR KELLY

HUNDREDS of people marched through the streets of Derry for Foyle Pride at the end of August.

The march traced the route of the October 1968 Civil Rights March, from Duke Street in the Waterside to the City Centre.

This year's festival was launched by Cork hurler Dónal Óg Cusack, Ireland's only openly gay sportsman, who gave a moving speech outlining past and present struggles for LGBT rights.

The festival came in the midst of a series of homophobic assaults from the unionist parties at Stormont.

The health minister Edwin Poots, recently refused to lift the lifetime ban on gay men giving blood in Northern Ireland because of supposed 'health risks'.

In the rest of the UK, the ban has been lifted.

Though Poots' term as health minister is nearly up, they propose to put another homophobic, Jim Wells in his place.

While the DUP hammers out its homophobic stances and the rest of the parties at Stormont do little

to seriously challenge them.

It is up to ordinary LGBT activists on the ground to build a movement to fight for these rights.

In Derry, last month



the first of a series of demonstrations was held at a blood donation session, where gay men picketed outside then went in to offer their blood (all were denied).

Similar actions are expected to happen in Belfast and elsewhere. Foyle Pride was an excellent demonstration and celebration of LGBT struggle.

It shows that through fighting, the LGBT community has won a great many gains, but it also sends out a call for the defense of those rights, and to fight for liberation.

Marian Price remains in prison without trial

By EAMONN MCCANN

MARIAN Price was arrested on 13 May 2011 and charged with encouraging support for an illegal organisation. The charge arose from an Easter Rising commemoration in Derry city cemetery the previous month. On a blustery day, she had reached up and held the script from which a masked man was reading the Real IRA's "Easter Message".

Three days later, Marian appeared in court in Derry where, despite strenuous prosecution objections, she was granted bail. However, she was rearrested as she emerged from the courthouse on the basis of a document signed the previous evening by Northern Secretary of State Owen Paterson and taken to Maghaberry high-security prison.

She is gravely ill. She can be held for the rest of her life.

In Maghaberry in July, Marian was further charged with "providing property for the purposes of terrorism". The reference was to her allegedly having bought a 'phone which the authorities believed had subsequently been used in connection with the killing of two soldiers outside Massereene barracks in Antrim in March 2009.

Marian had been held for two days and questioned about this allegation in November 2009 before being released without charge. No evidence unearthed in the interim was offered in court. She was again granted bail. But, again, Paterson's order took precedence.

Marian's supporters believe that the Massereene charge was designed to associate her with a notorious crime



that the authorities had been unable to connect her with in order to stymie a campaign for her release which was attracting support from a wide range of people who found it difficult to see what crime had actually been committed at the Easter Commemoration.

On 10 May this year, almost exactly a year from her original arrest, the charges relating to the commemoration were thrown out at Derry court.

Since then, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Juan Mendez, and two of the North's leading criminologists, Dr. Phil Scraton of Queen's University and Dr. Linda Moore of the University of Ulster, have visited Marian: all three have called for her release, either on grounds of civil rights and due process or for humanitarian

reasons to do with her health.

The two academics, authors of a number of official reports into prisons in the North, concluded: "Given the concerns expressed locally and internationally regarding (her) continued detention and declining health, we urge you to release her on humanitarian grounds."

They added: "Marian Price has been imprisoned...without trial in circumstances which may amount to administrative internment and which we believe to be in breach of the European Convention on Human Rights."

Paterson turned a deaf ear. Marian remains imprisoned without a release date or a date when she can apply for release.

Building bosses prepare new attacks

THE Construction Industry Federation are preparing a new round of attacks on building workers.

In response SIPTU has launched a national recruitment campaign.



A letter from Eddie Keenan, director of the CIF to the unions contained the following demands.

The bosses wanted:

- A 20 percent reduction in pay.
 - A new entry grade to be paid only the minimum wage
 - Overtime only to be paid after nine hours work, Monday to Thursday.
 - Travel time only to be paid after ten miles
- Workers who want to resist these attacks should contact the SIPTU organising unit. They can be rung on 1890 747881

Protestors sit-in over Respite closure

by CLLR BRID SMITH

SUPPORTERS of the People Before Profit Alliance staged a sit-in as the HSE closed Respite Services in the Rowan Unit which caters for HIV sufferers.

These services are to be moved to the Homeless Agency and catered for by the Simon Community on Ushers Island in the city centre.

But they only had three beds ready to cater for respite services for the service users.

Currently there are eight beds available and in full use in Cherry Orchard Hospital.

Patients who were to be discharged on the weekend originally had nowhere to go to cater for their respite.

But after a campaign of public pressure, Junior Minister Roisin Shortall pledged to



find eight more places by the Wednesday afterwards.

The HSE have repeatedly said that there will be a full alternative service available to the patients but this is clearly not the case.

It could be October or November before a new unit to provide respite services is fully operational in Ushers Island.

This means that AIDS patients who require respite could be neglected

or end up occupying the needed beds in mainstream hospitals.

Patients whose health is compromised by the HIV virus have been sustained and kept alive by the Cherry Orchard services over many years.

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 socialists 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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What Socialists Say



Clare Daly and the Socialist Party

CLARE Daly's resignation from the Socialist Party has led to conflicting statements.

The Socialist Party claimed 'She now places more value on her political connection with



Clare Daly TD

independent TD Mick Wallace than on the political positions of the Socialist Party'

By contrast, she has denied this and claimed that the primary issue is building a broad, radical United Left Alliance rather than a smaller party like the SP.

Mick Wallace has operated like any capitalist, exploiting his workforce and trying to dodge paying taxes.

His left rhetoric never impressed Socialist Worker and we supported the call for him to resign his seat.

Both the SP and Clare Daly refused to call for his resignation.

Clare Daly went further and did not sign a letter responding to Wallace's attacks on the left even though he threw out the usual capitalist claim that 'he created jobs' and socialists did not.

This hesitation was seized upon by the Irish Independent who mounted a hypocritical campaign to associate Wallace with the left and convey the impression that somehow socialists gave cover to 'their rich friends'.

Ironically, the same paper has never given the slightest publicity to the tax dodging antics of its owner, Denis O'Brien.

And, of course, both Clare Daly and the Socialist Party were far more honourable representatives of workers than the TDs of right wing parties who take their full Dail salary and live a privileged life.

Clare Daly's own statement suggests that there were other disputes between herself and the SP. In particular, it points to a disagreement about the emphasis to be placed on broad parties of the Left as against harder revolutionary currents.

Behind the acrimony, there is an important strategic issue for all of the left

The creation of broad, radical parties is a key strategic objective today. As social democracy collapses into social liberalism and accepts the dictates of the markets, tens of thousands of workers are seeking a new political home.

Inevitably these will include workers who want to fight for reforms within capitalism as well as those who want to overthrow it. Radical left parties can bring the genuine fighters together and create a space which moves on the process of politicisation.

But if these parties are successful, they will face pressures to compromise with the system.

The Syriza Party in Greece has been strong in opposing bank bailout programmes – but weaker in stating how they would counter the economic terrorism of the rich.

The Dutch Socialist Party – no connection with the Irish SP – has been strong in opposing neoliberalism but weak on the dangers of coalition government.

We need, therefore, strong revolutionary organisations that work inside and alongside broad left formations.

That is not to say that a revolutionary organisation must be a top down, sectarian formation that appears devoid of human feeling.

Nor is it to suggest that revolutionary organisations are the teachers and workers the pupils. In a rapidly changing situation of capitalist decay, everyone needs to learn.

How does all this apply to the ULA?

Clare Daly is right to suggest that the ULA has punched well below its weight.

The main reason, however, is that the alliance has not developed as a campaigning organisation and has remained primarily an electoral alliance.

Far too much emphasis has been placed on purity of political statements and far less on bringing new layers of people into struggle.

The absence of a vibrant, internal democratic life has also stymied the process.

Clare Daly's commitment to remain in the ULA is to be welcomed.

Despite our disagreements with her over the Wallace issue, she is a genuine committed socialist with a magnificent record of fighting for workers rights.

Broad parties of the radical left must hold a space for people like Clare Daly.

But she also has to find ways of engaging with a process of socialist democracy that makes TDs accountable.

REILLY CUTS AND RUNS



By NICHOLA HARVEY

THE most savage attack yet on working people and their families was mounted by bully boy Health Minister, James Reilly last week in a move that may yet be seen as the beginning of the end of this noxious coalition.

Reilly took cover from both cabinet colleagues and the media as the HSE announced a ferocious €130 million of cuts before the end of the year, with the most draconian cuts being made to services for the elderly and disabled.

Some 600,000 home-help hours are to be cut – the second cut to this service this year while €1.7 million is to be saved by targeting 200 homecare packages a month. €10 million is to be saved by reducing personal assistant hours to the disabled.

A HSE spokesman's claim that every effort would be made to target the cuts in areas that would not impact on patient care rang increasingly hollow as the list continued:

- €6 million to be saved by ending the provision of dietary supplements and anti-cholesterol drugs on the medical card scheme;
- Agency staff to be cut by half and overtime by ten per cent;
- €26.5 million cut in expenditure on medical equipment, education and training.

Drastic cuts have also just been announced in



Top: Fighting health cuts and below: health minister Reilly

the HSE north east, while it has further emerged the HSE plans to begin means-testing for home-care and out-patient therapies, such as speech

homes."

Patricia Conboy, director of Older and Bolder described the cuts as "tantamount to turning off the life support ma-

ing to his Labour Party fellow-travellers.

None of the Labour ministers, even of those working in his Department, was told about the attacks being planned on the most vulnerable before they were announced.

Last weekend saw questions being raised about whether the Labour Party would have the stomach to continue in Government through another austerity Budget come December.

The coming months will see that party's true colours, as true blue members of the ruling class.

It is up to us to bring the fight of working people to the streets, to fight back against this brutal, ruthless coalition of cowards.



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive

and language, physiotherapy and chiropody. Groups representing the disabled, the elderly and carers expressed their outrage at the announcements.

John Dolan, chief executive of the Disability Federation of Ireland said: "For many people these cuts will mean confinement within their own

chance on services that are already thinly spread".

Amid all this where was the drum-beating Minister?

At his desk, according to his minions at the Department of Health. He certainly wasn't talking to anyone.

He was nowhere to be seen or heard.

Least of all was he talk-

Impose tax on wealth not family homes

By MICHAEL WALLACE

DESPITE bitter resistance, Fine Gael/Labour are pressing ahead with plans to impose a property tax in December's budget.

More than 700,000 households have still refused to register for the €100 household charge forcing the government and their 'troika' allies to change tactics.

Now the government wants to circumvent the popular will with a tax at source.

In line with the EU/IMF bail-out programme, the government is pushing for the property tax to be based on house value, regardless of income or ability to pay.

The tax, averaging around €400 next year, is to be collected by the Revenue Commissioners, possibly straight from workers' pay packets.

However, these measures cannot be levied if people continue to refuse to register and pay, and will in all likelihood provoke widespread resistance.

The potential for a fight-back against this tax is enormous.

According to the latest Central Bank data, 168,192 households are either in mortgage arrears or have been 'restructured'; one in six residential mortgages in the entire country.

This includes 50,000 mortgage-holders that are now out of work (Census 2011).

House prices have collapsed 47% leaving around 380,000 (50%) of households languishing in negative equity, according to Davy Stockbrokers.

Imposing greater misery on so many families by ramming through a property tax could be the final straw, leaving FG/Labour in the direct firing line of a mass revolt across the country.

Right wing spin

The left is often accused of hypocrisy on this issue, given that left parties in Europe are

often happy to support taxes on property.

The big difference is the levels of home ownership in Ireland which are generally among the highest in the world.

Well over 70% of adults are homeowners meaning that any tax on property is overwhelmingly a tax on the primary residence of ordinary people.

Instead of taxes on homes we want a genuine tax on the property of the superrich.

According to a Credit Suisse Global Report on Wealth (2011) the richest 5% of the Irish population holds 48.6% of the wealth in the country, giving them net assets of €220 billion.

At least €100 billion of this is non-property assets such as stock, shares and liquid capital (cash) etc.

There is no inconsistency on the part of the left. We want people to come before profit and the wealth of rich to fund our social services.



GOVERNMENT RAMPS UP ITS INTIMIDATION OF NON-PAYERS

By MICHAEL WALLACE

RIGHT-WING parties and the corporate media are trying to use the bogus claim that government funding to local authorities is being slashed because of high levels of non-payment of the household charge.

Councils around the country have been ordered to slash €70 million before 1 January, with Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)

boss, Paul McSweeney, declaring that "parks will be closed, mobile libraries won't be going out and we may have to start switching off street lights except for at junctions."

This is blatant intimidation designed to terrorise people.

People's safety, their right to public knowledge and their public spaces will be attacked by a government that does everything in its power to pay off the bondholders.

This is the real reason for the cuts to our services and the government's cynical attempt to link non-payment to cuts in local amenities is a shameful lie.

According to statistics from the Department of the Environment, successive governments slashed funding to local councils well before the household/property tax was even proposed.

Since 2008, the Local

Government Fund General Purpose Grant allocation to councils and local authorities around the country has been cut by a massive €348 million.

Over the same period ordinary workers have seen their contributions to the state increase significantly through universal social charges, changes in tax bands etc.

There is more than enough coming in to fund our services but the government insists on

frittering it away on interest payments to speculative capital.

This year alone the government will hand over €6.7 billion in interest payments - or around 38 times the yearly amount supposed to come from the household charges.

They will say anything to justify this lunacy and any moves to close down libraries and other local services should be met with massive resistance.

People with disabilities to protest cuts to independent living supports

By BRIAN O' BOYLE

AS Socialist Worker went to Press disabled people were planning to hold a mass protest outside Government Buildings.

The Tuesday 4 September demo is designed to coincide with a meeting of the Cabinet on the appalling cuts to Personal Assistance and Home Help Services (see page 5 for more details).

One disabled woman outlined her disgust stating that "these cuts are illogical, and counter to Government policy.

They make no economic sense and will increase costs to the exchequer at the same time as denying people basic fundamental rights to live with dignity and choice".

The organisers of the protest, a non-aligned disabilities group, have stated that they will continue with an escalated campaign for as long as it takes for citizens to be given back their independence.

They have also listed a set of key demands that government must provide



including

1. Immediately assessing the needs of all disabled and older people on waiting lists for personal assistance and other community based services who are currently held captive in costly acute

hospital beds and nursing homes.

2. Commit to the non-dilution of emancipative Personal Assistance Services with restrictive Home Help Services.

3. Apply Government policy

of supporting older and disabled people to live in their homes and participate in the community in order to remove pressure on costly institutions and acute hospital beds, but NOT to institutionalise them in

their own homes through inadequate provision of Home Help and PA services.

4. The Government must provide PA and Home Help employees equal status with directly employed HSE staff protected by the Croke Park Agreement.

5. The Government must commit to ratifying the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by January 2013.

6. The Government must provide Independent Living the status it deserves and agree to transfer the social supports (i.e. PA and Home Help Services) currently provided by the Department of Health to the Department of Social Protection by January 2014.

7. PA and Home Help Services must be available on the basis of need.

For more information please contact:
John Roche - 087 6899977;
Leigh Gath - 086 8554573
and/or
Eileen Daly - 086 3437166.

NEWS IN BRIEF

SIPTU fails workers in Dublin Airport

By NICHOLA HARVEY

MULTINATIONAL catering conglomerate SSP has succeeded in forcing all ten bar workers, and SIPTU members, out of their jobs in Dublin airport. Some had been working at the airport bar for decades.

SSP, which describes itself as "the leading dedicated operator of food and beverage brands in travel locations worldwide" operates in 30 countries including Australia, Singapore, Austria and the United States. It does not recognise trade unions, forcing down wages wherever it operates.

Its race-to-the-bottom approach won the catering contract at the airport in February in a process overseen by the Dublin Airport Authority.

Upon winning the tender however it ignored the transfer of undertaking obligations and set about forcing workers to accept wage cuts of 37%, to €9.40 per hour, by saying their skills needs would change.

Six bar staff was selected for redundancy and others were put on a four week 'trial'.

When one worker challenged the process by which he was being 'rated' in the trail process he was suspended.

Despite workers' arguments in favour of a strike ballot SIPTU engaged with SSP on redundancy terms.

Rather than stand for the attack on their conditions, all ten have taken the redundancy in recent weeks and have been replaced with non-unionised workers.

No Cuts in Home Helps

Proper contracts for all workers



HOME help care for some of the most vulnerable people is being cut by Health Minister, James Reilly.

Reilly has ordered that 600,000 home help hours be slashed and this follows a cut of 500,000 hours previously. In total, this represents a cut of one tenth in the hours.

One pensioner, Patrick Carthy, describes the reality behind these cuts,

"Before the home help came to me, I was very depressed. At the mere mention of my deceased wife's name, I became an emotional wreck.

"That problem was removed when my home help came.

"The Home Help person may only visit me one hour every week, but her physical and practical help is invaluable to someone living alone.

"I will fight any attempt by this government to remove what is a minimal provision by them but so important and necessary for me."

As well as the cuts, the government wants to privatise the home help service.

Up to now, most home help care has been provided by voluntary, not-for-profit organisations who are funded by the HSE.

But the HSE wants to turn over the services to gigantic

multi-nationals like Comfort Keepers. This is a subsidiary of a giant multi-national, Sodexo, which runs private prisons and is anti-union.

About €140 million of tax payers' money is being channelled into these private corporations and a good slice of it will be taken in profits and bonuses for over-paid directors.

The HSE is awarding contracts to those companies who offer to cut the wages and conditions of the workers.

WHAT THE HELP WORKERS WANT

There are 13,000 home help workers and they play a valuable role in Ireland's health services.

But they are stuck at the bottom of the pile and have long been mistreated. Now their situation is getting worse and they are organising to resist.

The Home help workers are fighting for:

■ **Proper Contracts:** Thousands of home help workers have been employed for years without any real contract. In June, the Labour Court told the HSE they should enter negotiations to develop this contract but they have done nothing so far.

■ **Stress and Monitoring:** The HSE is a mad bureaucracy that

shows little real care for patients or their own staff.

■ They have developed a new system to monitor home helps and, because it has been drawn up without consultation, it is causing huge stress.

Home helps are supposed to clock in by ringing from their clients' phone when they arrive. If they are even one minute late, they can be docked 15 minutes in pay.

This type of madness satisfies the bureaucrats who run the HSE – but it does nothing to help those on the ground.

"There is no flexibility. You could have someone who is sick or distressed and you would need to spend more time with them.

"This could mean that you are a bit late for the next call—but, in the past, you could make it up to them the next week.

"With this new system, you feel like you are serving a stop watch. It's just inhumane" is how one Home Help explained her situation.

■ **Security of Earnings:** The hours of home help workers are continually being cut and they have no security of earnings.

Some have been reduced to having just one or two hours work a week because of these cuts.

The HSE has decreed that all work on new contracts must be

handed over to the private for profit companies.

That means that when existing clients move away or die, hours are taken away from home helps and transferred onto those who are working for even worse conditions in the private firms.

These three simple demands – for proper contracts; security of earnings, and an end to monitoring for stress – are entirely moderate and just.

LABOUR'S CROCODILE TEARS

The Labour Party has been crying crocodile tears over the fate of the Home Help Service.

Eamon Gilmore said that he 'regretted' the cuts but welcomed the fact that the HSE would apply the reductions on a 'case by case' basis.

But if there is any vote in the Dail to reverse the cuts, Labour will march in beside the Celtic Tories of Fine Gael and vote for privatisation.

The Labour Party always says it is sorry – but it has 'no option' but to bring in cuts.

This is total rubbish.

Over the last two years, the assets of the 300 wealthiest Irish people increased by €12 billion to a total of €62 billion.

If a wealth tax were imposed on this super-elite, there would

be no need for cuts in the home help service.

If the government stood up and said that it would no longer pay back the European Central Bank for the money it ordered us to pay into private banks, there would be even more money to go around.

Labour will do none of this because it is committed to managing capitalism and will do what it takes to keep the rich happy.

The Labour Party is supposed to have a link with the SIPTU union.

Each year, SIPTU donates over €90,000 in affiliation fees and conference expenses to the Labour Party.

Labour Ministers such as Joan Burton, Ruairi Quinn and Brendan Howlin received donations from SIPTU at the election time.

We should end this link immediately.

STEP UP THE PROTESTS - FIGHT TO WIN

Home help workers have been staging magnificent protests around the country.

These protests began even before the latest round of cuts were announced and are growing stronger.

One thousand home help

workers marched in Cork; hundreds attended a SIPTU rally in Dublin and 200 marched through Wicklow town.

The People Before Profit Alliance has been supportive of this campaign from the very start. We have organised local community meetings across Dublin in areas like East Wall, Drimnagh and Ballyfermot to galvanise support for the campaign.

It is now time to escalate the action and put forward clear demands that can be won.

Home Help workers are demanding:

■ Standard contracts
 ■ Stop the Privatisation of the service – no for-profit companies.
 ■ Reverse the cutbacks and give workers security of earnings.

These demands can be won if we adopt strong tactics that mobilise 'people power'.

We need to escalate the protests and call a national mobilisation leading to a march on the Dail.

We should target Labour Party TDs and demand that they vote for Dail resolutions that seek to reverse the cuts and privatisation.

We should form alliances with patients in local communities.

We should move on to civil disobedience if the government does not move after a national protest

Marikana: Apartheid laws used to charge miners with murder

by KEN OLENDE

THE decision of the National Prosecuting Authority of South Africa to charge 270 platinum miners at Marikana with the murder of their 34 dead colleagues has provoked outrage.

The charges were made under the 'common purposes legislation' that was introduced by the apartheid regime.

The charges make a mockery of the decision of South Africa's president, Jacob Zuma, to hold a judicial commission of inquiry into the deaths.

The massacre has created a deep divide between the leadership of the governing party, the African National Congress (ANC), and its Youth League.

The Youth League is still led, in practice, by Julius Malema even though he has been expelled. He was the first politician on the scene at Marikana.

His fiery denunciations of the police, Zuma, capitalism and the National Union of Miners are well received.

The old left has played an appalling role. The NUM pushed strongly for the police intervention that led to the massacre.

The union's leadership is closely aligned with the South African Communist Party (SACP). Blade Nzimande, minister for higher education in Zuma's government, leads the SACP.

Sides

It has defended the police while the Congress of South African Trade Unions (Cosatu) has refused to take sides on Marikana.

This is becoming increasingly untenable as reports emerge that more miners were shot down as they fled.

Leaked autopsy reports confirm that most were shot in the back.

The Democratic Left Front has taken part in these activities.

It is a socialist grouping that includes members of the Socialist Workers Party's sister organisation Keep Left organisation.



South African police shoot down striking miners

The ANC: From left nationalism to neoliberalism

by KEN OLENDE

THE Marikana massacre highlights the huge shift which the African National Congress has undergone.

The ANC was a left nationalist organisation in the 1970s, which was heavily influenced by the South African Communist Party. But it adhered to a rigid 'stages' theory whereby all talk of socialism was postponed until after the victory against apartheid had been achieved.

It used a rhetoric that was similar to that of Sinn Fein in the 1980s, when they too were at their left-wing phase.

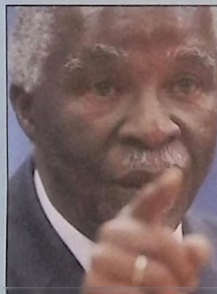
But once apartheid had

fallen, the ANC made their peace with capitalism and promoted a black upper class.

From 1997 to 2008, South Africa hosted the world's biggest property bubble. House prices rose by 389 per cent from 1997-2008, more than double the second biggest bubble, Ireland's, according to The Economist.

But while the new rich made fantastic profits, the conditions of the mass of black workers deteriorated.

After provision of 'Free Basic Services' – a tokenistic 6000 litres of water and 50 kWh of electricity per household per month – the ANC government supported



Former President Mbeki

a policy of price hikes and privatisation.

This led to huge levels of disconnection, with nearly 1.5 million people being disconnected from water

supplies each year.

The rural power structure was also dominated by white farmers, causing enduring malnutrition even amongst farmworkers.

Under Mbeki, the ANC openly embraced neoliberal policies, refusing to subsidise food price or zero rate VAT on essential items for the poor.

The right wing US think tank, the American Enterprise Institute noted approvingly 'to its great credit, the ANC in office proved the naysayers more wrong as it became the very model of fiscal and monetary policy rectitude'.

Meanwhile, under the guise of a black empowerment



Cyril Ramaphosa

policy, crony capitalists associated with the ANC won massive state contracts, often on wasteful projects.

Key figures in the ANC enriched themselves. The

most notorious figure is Cyril Ramaphosa, a former leader of the NUM, who became chairperson of Bidvest Group, Johnie Holdings, Capital Property Fund and several other major corporations. The capitalist class of South Africa as a whole, however, remained overwhelmingly white. However, the mass of black workers did not take this lying down.

There have been huge protests over privatisation, with activists in Soweto, for example, forming a dynamic Anti-Privatisation Forum.

Yet these protests never broke through on a political level because the ANC was able to hold together a Tripple Alliance,

comprising itself, the South African Communist Party and the COSATU trade union.

When protests grew against the ANC, the unions moved to topple the previous premier Mbeki and replace him with Jacob Zuma.

But Marikana shows that Zuma never halted the ANC's drift to the right. There is growing evidence that the massacre was pre-planned at the highest levels to break worker militancy.

If significant sections of the left now break fully from the ANC and form a broad, radical party that would represent a major step forward for South African workers.

Political earthquake in store as Holland swings left

by KIERAN ALLEN

HOLLAND is set to become the latest EU country to undergo a political earthquake.

A general election set for 12 September could see the Socialist Party emerge as the largest party in the country.

The party was formed as a Maoist organisation in the 1970s and then did a turn to 'mass work' where it engaged in local community activism. It has positioned itself on the radical left of the political spectrum.

Dutch politics used to be one of the most stable in Europe, with a number of political parties playing a game of musical chairs for who should be in cabinet together.

However, in recent years an anti-immigrant party emerged around Pim Fortuyn, who was later assassinated. This



Pim Fortuyn

party, the Party for Freedom, stoked up fears about Islam and was a supporter of the last government.

This was led by The Peoples' Party for Freedom and Democracy (WD) and

promoted neoliberal policies. The WD and the Socialist Party are now contending to be the largest party.

The Socialist Party has a long record of opposing Dutch involvement in wars; fighting against greater EU control and resisting privatisation.

Its current programme calls for a €3 billion increase in public investment. They want to keep the pension age at 65 and want to increase the minimum wage. They want more funds – not cuts – for disability services, care for the elderly and anti-poverty programmes.

Banking would be re-regulated with savings banks separated from investment banks and an 'anti-speculation plan' introduced; a financial transactions tax would be applied and the bank tax rate increased; the



Dutch Socialist Party leader Emil Roemer at the start of his party's campaign

tax rate on incomes over €150,000 a year would increase to 65%; the capital gain tax would increase to 40% and a separate property tax introduced.

Bonuses for company directors would be

banned and a limit set to maximum salaries in the semi-public arena.

Dutch taxpayers would not be asked to fund European Union 'bailouts' but the banks and other holders of the public debt of the

European 'periphery' required to take a larger 'haircut' on non-performing loans.

However, while this shift to the left is welcome, the Socialist Party are also seeking to join a coalition

government, even with right wing parties. Its main slogan is 'Keen to govern, willing to compromise'.

It is vital that a strong revolutionary left emerges alongside the Socialist Party.

Assange, Wikileaks and rape allegations

By JUDITH ORR

ARGUMENTS about the case of Wikileaks founder Julian Assange have divided the left. The debate has centred on the question of rape.

Can you both defend Assange from persecution by the US while also calling for the allegations of rape and sexual assault against him to be investigated?

First on Wikileaks. The US has been damaged by its disclosures of war crimes and is out to take revenge and silence those responsible. That is why US soldier Bradley Manning has been incarcerated for over two years without trial, accused of leaking evidence of US war crimes.

It is also why Assange is being pursued and risks a similar fate. If the US captures him, it will be a powerful deterrent for anyone thinking about exposing the dirt on the US war machine in the future.

Assange should not be extradited to the US—but you do not need to rubbish women's accusations of sexual assault to make that case.

Interventions in the debate by George Galloway, the British MP, have done precisely that.

The specific allegations from two women in Sweden cannot and should not be subject to trial by media. Nor should we be subjected to foul views on what constitutes rape.

Galloway claims that if Assange is guilty of anything it is "bad sexual etiquette" because it is not necessary to ask permission "prior to each



Top: Julian Assange; Below: George Galloway

insertion".

Let's get something clear. If a woman does not consent to sex it is rape. It does not matter if she has had sex with the man before, once or many times, the same evening or long before.

The archaic view of women exposed by using such language sees them as passive receptacles for men's insatiable desires. Women were once told that sex was something that men wanted and they had to endure, or "lie back and think of England". Part of the fight for women's liberation has been for us to no longer to be seen as sex objects.

Autonomous

Women have demanded to be acknowledged as autonomous sexual beings with their own desires. So to see high profile campaigners who are seen as part of the left to spout such reactionary views is shocking and damaging.

Backward attitudes on rape appear to be on the increase across the board.

Northern Ireland's next health minister Jim Wells echoed US Republican bigot Todd Akin's views that women who had been raped should be denied access to abortion.

Wells claimed "The stats are very low for pregnancies which arise as a result of rape."

The comedy circuit today is filled with performers using rape jokes. This is termed "rape banter". "Rape banter" even had a Facebook page including "jokes" such as "You know she's playing hard to get

when you're chasing her down an alleyway."

Facebook rejected complaints about the page, saying it was humour and so acceptable.

For socialists the fight against women's oppression is central to our struggle to change the world. It's fundamental to this battle to challenge the prevailing ideas that women are in some way culpable if they experience sexual assault.

Women's sexual behaviour is subject to constant double standards.

They are encouraged to make themselves sexually attractive and available. Yet if they experience unwanted sexual advances they are told it's their responsibility.

The latest debate will have made some women think twice before reporting rape in case they face similar scrutiny.

It may also undermine support for Assange's battle with the US.

Some may be wary of being associated with Galloway's views on rape. But we can't allow the British state to enforce extradition and hand a victory to the US.

Tory foreign minister William Hague is not surrounding the Ecuadorian embassy with police to pursue justice for women.

Instead, the investigation could continue with the Swedish authorities questioning Assange in Britain or making a commitment not to extradite him.

We cannot oppose imperialism if we discard women's rights along the way.

The politics of Pussy Riot



By EAMONN MCCANN

PUSSY Riot were accused of blasphemy but may have saved the soul of music - and even rediscovered revolution for Russia.

Feminist punks Maria Alyokhina, Yekaterina Samutsevich and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova showed a defiant face to the might of Church and State to reclaim

the ethic that once made punk a force for freedom and freedom a force in Russia.

The trial arose from the wave of protests earlier this year against the dubious re-election of Vladimir Putin as Russian President.

Pussy Riot intervened on 21 February by stepping onto the altar of the Orthodox Cathedral of Christ Saviour in Moscow, blessing

themselves and offering a "punk prayer" begging the Virgin Mary to "drive Putin out" and denouncing Patriarch Kirill for believing more in preferment under Putin than in the grace of God.

They were convicted of "premeditated hooliganism motivated by religious hatred" and sentenced to two years in prison.

Putin and the Patriarch recognise Pussy Riot as a serious threat. It is not just that their chutzpah appeals to millions of the restless among Russia's youth but that they draw on a deep tradition of political struggle which once gave a glimpse of how the world might be but which was buried by Stalinism and now is suppressed by its free-market variant under Putin.

Nadezhda wears a T-shirt with the slogan of the Left in the Spanish Civil War 'No Pasaran' - used more recently by Unite Against Fascism in demonstrations against the English Defence League.

In her closing statement, she spoke of "Stalin's Great Terror", characterised Russia today as "dominated by rigidity, closedness and caste ... serv(ing) only narrow corporate interests", and referenced the Oberiu poets of the 1920s and 30s who defended imagination against deadening orthodoxy and were purged, imprisoned, put into psychiatric wards. She ended by predicting "the collapse of this political system".

Pussy Riot's choice of the Cathedral for their performance was apt. "The Orthodox religion had the aura of a lost history, of something crushed and damaged by the Soviet totalitarian regime," explained Yekaterina. Faced with sinking popularity, Putin's regime appropriated this legacy in order to "present their new political project as a means of restoring Russia's lost spiritual values".

For its part, the Church "took on the role of "confront(ing) all baleful manifestations of contemporary mass culture, with its concept of diversity and tolerance".

Kirill, a former KGB colleague of Putin's, was appointed Primate of All

Russia in February 2009. "After this happened," says Yekaterina, the Cathedral "began to be used as a flashy setting for the politics of the security services - the main source of power."

Putin and Kirill appeared together at televised events in the Cathedral, "providing background shots for morally and ethically edifying news stories."

Using the same altar to urge the Virgin Mary to "drive Putin out" was not blasphemy but a cry of protest against the blasphemers, political as well as religious.

The Russian revolution of 1917 was marked by an unprecedented efflorescence of creativity and daring in art, literature, music, architecture and much else. The moment didn't last. But it provided that flicker of a golden future which Pussy Riot still project.

Pussy Riot erupted into global consciousness in the wake of musical travesties closer to home. Madness loyally performing on the roof of Buckingham Palace. The Who bringing the closing Olympic ceremony to a twee conclusion that had true fans weeping that they hadn't died before they got old. The Pistols' "God Save the Queen" mushily incorporated into the Jubilee mainstream. Bono bullshitting over everything.

Where have all the punk radicals gone? Gone to sponsorship almost every one. But Maria, Nadezhda and Yekaterina still stand strong, harbingers of hope, calling out around the world.

OPPOSE SECTARIAN MARCHES!

CATHOLICS AND PROTESTANTS UNITE AND FIGHT!

SECTARIAN tensions have been heightened in Belfast after a provocative Orange Order march forced its way up Donegal Street past the St Patrick's Catholic Church, just on the outskirts of the city centre.

The protest was deemed illegal by the parades commission however this didn't deter a Loyalist band on July 12th to march past the church whilst playing the racist "Famine song".

As a result of these actions a Royal Black Preceptory march was subsequently banned from marching past the same church on Saturday August 25th.

On the day the Young Conway Volunteers from the Shankill refused to recognise the ban and defied the Parades commission ruling by marching past the church, this ended with cops injured and several arrests.

But the real story here was that Loyalists would march where they wanted and not be stopped by the parades commission or the PSNI.

This act of sectarian defiance was supported by the head of State Peter Robinson, Nelson McCausland and Nigel Dodds from the DUP along with every elected unionist politician in Belfast.

They choose to blindly ignore the sectarianism of the Orange Order and Young Conway volunteers and instead decided to take a swipe at the parades commission and call for their abolishment.

Nelson McCausland went even further to excuse the violence and intimidation and said the actions of loyalist bands in Belfast on Saturday were "almost inevitable" given the "anger" felt about the Parades Commission.

This is the tune of Peter Robinson who talks about ending "them and us" politics but gives the green light to sectarian marches.

The biggest party in Northern Ireland is playing dangerous sectarian games, they are stoking up sectarianism and supporting those who partake in it.

At the end of September there will be a centenary march commemorating the signing of the Ulster Covenant, in Belfast there will be over 20,000 marching in city centre again passing the St Patrick's Church.

There is a real danger this will escalate into high levels of violence given the tension created by the previous two marches and the fuel added to fire by politicians.

People use the excuse of "culture" as a reason for accepting and allowing the Orange Order to parade where they want.

The Fact remains that they are a deeply political and reactionary organization.

When not busy playing Famine songs outside the Catholic church they spend their time attacking immigrants and gay marriage.

It is the absolute duty of any progressive and anti-sectarian to oppose these marches.

The events over the past few months go alongside other sectarian events such as the road blockade in support of Loyalist killer Billy Hunter and riddling with bullets the house of Peter Neill, a key witness in the murder trial of Catholic Coleraine man Kevin Mc Daid.

A republican Henry Joy McCracken commemoration marched was also attacked by a group of 350 loyalists.

Water cannons were used by police after 47 were injured as a result of the rioting.

The Good Friday agreement didn't eradicate sectarianism but entrenched it into the heart of the state.

The approach of the DUP and SF is to base politics on one communities interest against the other. In no way does this challenge sectarianism but enshrines it in every day politics.

Worse still, the path of "respecting" other

"cultures" led Sinn Fein MP Pat Doherty to campaign for the Arts council to publicly fund the Castleberg Young Loyalist Flute band who include on their website songs glorifying the murder of Catholics.

Sinn Fein is part of the set up and don't have the desire to tackle sectarianism in the sectarian state of which they are a key component.

Over the next few years we will have devastating cuts implemented, hitting the most vulnerable in our society. Billions will be slashed from welfare payments along with tens of thousands of job losses in the public sector.

In order to beat these brutal cuts will need unity between Catholic and Protestants. The Stormont parties are uniting to make us pay, we need to be united on the ground if we are to win and stop their cuts.

Class politics is the only arena in which sectarianism can be truly challenged.

Whilst building unity against the cuts we have to at the same time stand firm against the people enthusiastically using sectarian provocation and intimidation to bring us back into the past, that means taking a principled stance against these marches wherever they take place.