

# Socialist Worker

## IMF leaves but austerity remains

THE FG-Labour Coalition is never short on PR hype. Just look at the way they are holding up 15 December as a date when the Troika 'exits' and Ireland regains its sovereignty.

The usual platitudes are expressed about how 'everyone pulled together' for the good of the country. The impression given is that we have done '85% of the heavy lifting' and that economic recovery is around the corner.

### Some friends

But even as they welcome the departure of the Troika, the government still claims that they were 'our friends'.

"They (The troika) kind of became honorary Irish people after a while' suggested Michael Noonan. 'They were very committed to getting us out of the difficulties we were in'.

In reality, the Troika were economic hit men, sent over by the rulers of Europe to squeeze us dry. They gave the local politicians cover to press for 'reforms' that they always wanted themselves.

So, for example, Fine Gael and Labour used the excuse that they had 'no option' because of the Troika Memorandums but to impose the property charges. This was their justification for breaking their own election pledges.

The mission of the Troika was to make the Irish population pay for the private debts of the banks. Confirmation for this has come from two key economists in recent days.

In an interesting technical paper, Gary O'Callaghan, has shown how the troika programme 'was almost exclusively aimed at financing a withdrawal of private capital averaging 17 percentage points of GDP in 2011-12 alone'.

Similarly, Joseph Stiglitz has argued that the ECB wanted to save the European banking system and that 'it was a trade off between banks all over Europe and the Irish citizens.'

### Permanent Austerity

Even though the Troika has departed, they have put in place a permanent programme of ruthless austerity which the establishment politicians will implement for years to come.

Under the Fiscal Treaty, Ireland will still be subjected to an 'excessive deficit procedure' from the EU Commission.

This means continual monitoring to ensure that public spending is cut and that the population is squeezed by even more 'structural reforms'.

This is a code word for the removal of any free public service and its replacement with 'user fees' to make people pay.

### Rate cut

Despite all their hype, the government's economic strategy is also in tatters. Following orders from the IMF, they pinned their hopes on Ireland exporting its way out of the crash.

They squeezed the domestic economy dry, hop-



ing that exports would increase growth rates and so reduce the overall debt to GDP ratio.

But they failed to take account of a long period of stagnation that has followed the 2008 crash.

Today, for example, the EU economy is still in the doldrums with only Germany growing significantly.

Just last week the ECB was forced to make money even cheaper in the hope of reviving the Eurozone.

Specifically they cut the ECB interest rate to 0.25% and while many mortgage holders will benefit, the truth is that interest rate cuts ultimately reflect a deep worry by the ECB that the EU has not made a full exit from recession – five years after the initial crash.

### Ready for action

All of this means, we have to prepare for battle. So far the government has been fairly successful

in getting the union leaders to spread defeatism in order to defuse public anger.

But the continual attacks – especially when everyone's savings have been depleted - means that resistance will grow.

Behind all their bluster and PR spin, the political elite know this and talk quietly among themselves about the dangers of 'austerity fatigue'.

It is time to shake off the mood of demoralisation that followed the defeat of the property tax campaign and the government's victory over Haddington Road.

There are new battles ahead and new groups of working people already entering the fray of resistance as the votes for industrial action by teachers, ESB workers, and Aer Lingus cabin crew demonstrate.

This time around we need to go all out to use the maximum amount of civil disobedience and industrial action to push back the bully boys in the government and the EU.



### In their own words

#### The Myth:

*Today is historic in the sense that we have come from a very difficult period...*

*People now see the decisions have been made as part of a process leading to the programme being completed and over.*

*And afterwards with a strong and clear Government leading to the better placement and management of our affairs,"*

*Taoiseach Enda Kenny on the 'exit' of the Troika*

#### The Reality:

*Those currently making medical card applications or renewing them could be in for a very rough time.*

*There appears to be a new 'get tough' policy at the HSE on medical cards.*

*Queries are made and cards do not come...*

*The truth is that medical cards cost money and the government is doing everything they can to stop people getting them.*

*This is the price we are now paying for reckless bank lending and ineffective government—make the people suffer and pay...*

*Maurice Fitzgerald, Shanbally, County Cork.*

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### Labour Party Disintergrating

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### Asylum Seekers Hell

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# Debasing us to tax our water

By Maeve Mc Grath

PROPERTY Tax Minister for the Environment, Phil Hogan, admitted that the money brought in from the property tax will be used for the establishment of Irish Water - the new private body responsible for charging us all for water.

The tax money is not going towards the maintenance and improvement of our local services and infrastructure, as previously promised.

Instead it will be used to further entrench the privatisation agenda so beloved of Fine Gael.

## Jobbridge

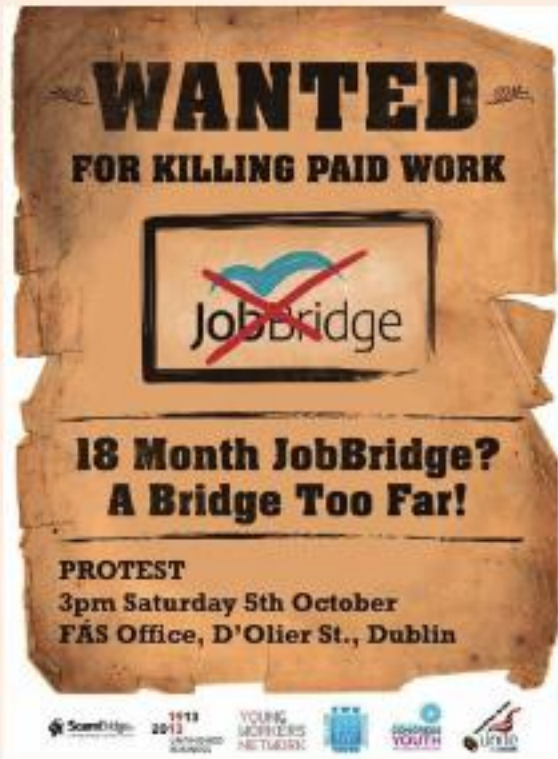
Now, to add insult to injury; an advertisement has appeared on Jobbridge.ie asking for unemployed people to participate in a scheme installing water meters.

Many of the positions advertised on this site are actual jobs which the company would normally have to pay a worker to do.

Given the excuse of paying people a paltry sum on top of their state welfare, employers call the positions internships and pocket the profits.

In response to questions in the Dáil on October 4, Joan Burton admitted that 59% of interns do not complete the internship.

Of those who do finish their internship, only 24% end up with a job.



## Private sector

Irish Water is potentially even more unsavoury. Denis O'Brien paid just €45 million to take control of Siterserve, a company which has been

described as an 'infrastructure and utilities support services' business.

This deal involved €110 million of taxpayers' money being simply written off by the bank.

But one of the divisions of Siterserve is involved in civil engineering and its activities are described as 'water networks rehabilitation / water meters'.

Thus the timing and calculation of this deal would put O'Brien in an ideal position to take over the administration and many profits of the taxation of water in Ireland.

Pat Rabbitte has denied this suggestion, calling it "premature", but few will find his words much comfort.

## Exploitation

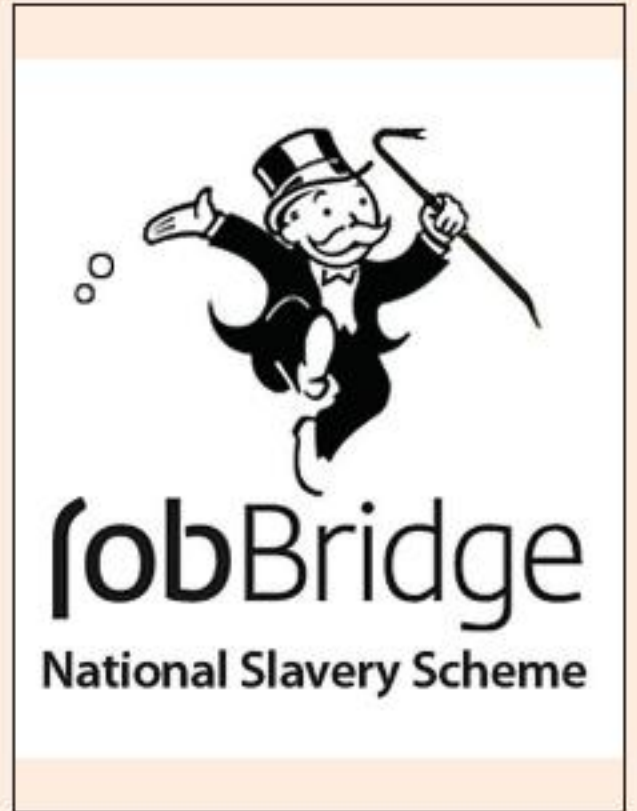
This comes as it has been revealed that 58 teaching positions have been filled through Jobbridge.

Furthermore, The Independent reported that training schemes were asking for €600 to teach people how to install water meters.

Despite Fine Gael and Labour's firm belief that the unemployed are willfully lazy; the thousands reluctantly emigrating to find work would disagree.

It has been shown that long term unemployment has significant negative repercussions on one's mental health.

The government should be investing in real jobs, and not on making Ireland a haven for corporations. Under normal circumstances employers earn



massive profits from the productivity of their staff, compared to the value of what they are paid for. Jobbridge has pushed that exploitation to the brink of slavery.

## INDUSTRIAL NEWS

### Connolly's Shoes Rally



A Rally was held on 7 Nov in support of the four members who were unfairly dismissed from their employment in Connolly's Shoes, Dun Laoghaire in 2010.

Between them, they have served the outlet for more than 100 years.

The workers were awarded compensation in excess of €100,000 in relation to various breaches of Employment Law, including Unfair Dismissal.

To this day they have not received one cent of that from their employer.

Matthew Connolly is now trading from the same premises under the name of "Shoe Xclusive."

The purpose of the rally was to highlight the injustice done by this employer to these workers and the defects in Employment and Company Law that has left these workers without compensation to which they are

legally entitled. Cllr Hugh Lewis of the People Before Profit Alliance stated that "the workers need to be treated with the respect they deserve and to be paid what they are owed."

### Bus workers balloted into submission



By Owen Mc Cormack

DUBLIN Bus drivers have voted to accept cost cutting proposals, having been effectively balloted into submission by their unions last week.

Following a three day strike in August drivers had repeatedly voted down revamped proposals put to them by their

union leaders.

Amidst increasing anger and frustration drivers were eventually worn down.

It was clear that neither the NBRU nor SIPTU leadership would act on any mandate they received.

Instead on 5 separate occasions the unions put to ballot very similar deals with some concessions on the original one.

However the core elements in cuts to overtime and bank holiday rates alongside the recruitment of new drivers on a reduced pay scale and a four day working week remained.

The union leadership played along with both the company and Minister Varadkar's disgraceful scare tactics.

The last rejection saw the extraordinary intervention of a joint Govt/IBEC/ICTU committee to "investigate" the drivers repeated rejection of the deal.

It concluded that "facebook" campaigns played a role and recommended another ballot!

Throughout this the union (and unfortunately most shop stewards) repeated the scaremongering that the Government was prepared for a long strike, would employ private operators to scab, and would allow the company to go bust.

In reality the repeated ballots showed that Government and the company were terrified of a strike by a well organised

militant group.

Drivers are to be congratulated for standing up to the unholy alliance of union leaderships and Govt on five occasions.

Eventually, lack of a lead from shop stewards and an intensive media campaign forced the deal through.

However Dublin Bus workers will face more battles ahead and no one believes that the rates in payments will be returned as promised in 2015.

The NTA has already stated it will tender out 10% of the routes to private operators by 2016 while continuous government reductions in subvention will mean another "financial crisis" next year.

The August strike showed drivers, like other workers, are prepared to fight.

The question is how to move past their leadership.

### Aer Lingus Cabin Crew to strike

By Declan McGovern

AER Lingus cabin crew have voted for industrial action.

The dispute is over roster changes and the closure of an Aer Lingus cabin crew base at Shannon.

Almost 91pc of IMPACT union members voted overwhelming for industrial action.

This is not the first time that staff have threatened strike action over a reduction in working conditions.

Last August the airline's pilots threatened to strike in support of Aer Arann pilots protesting over low pay.

Also, unions threatened strike action last year over a huge hole in the airline's pension fund.



The pension scheme has a deficit of close to €780m.

However, the airline claims it cannot pay unless the terms and conditions of workers are dramatically changed.

Nevertheless, unions say that this may lead to poorer working conditions for current staff.

The airline knows it must act soon, as a looming strike by workers would have a devastating impact on the airlines revenues over the Christmas period.

Therefore, the airline will be eager to come to some sort of agreement with the workers.

## What socialists say

### End the War on Drugs

By Eamonn McCann

DEPUTY Luke "Ming" Flanagan's bill to legalise cannabis was defeated on Nov 6 by 111 votes.

Those who voted in favour were Flanagan, Richard Boyd Barrett, Joe Higgins, Thomas Pringle, Catherine Murphy, Joan Collins, Mick Wallace and Clare Daly.

The bill was fully supported by the Socialist Workers Party.

## History

The phrase "the war on drugs" was coined by Richard Nixon to win support for repressive laws against his opponents - opponents of his wars abroad and of his repression of the poor and African

Americans at home.

If you create enough hysteria about "drugs", people are more likely to accept harsh laws and discrimination.

Young black men in the US are six times more likely than whites to be imprisoned for drugs offences - the main drug involved being cannabis.

## Reality

Figures from Dublin Circuit Court show that every foreign national convicted of drugs offences in the last 30 months - mainly cultivating cannabis - has been jailed.

Two thirds had pleaded that they'd been trafficked or intimidated. They were virtual slaves.

But Europeans, mainly Irish, convicted of cannabis-related offences are far less likely to be imprisoned.

This should be a scandal. But it's not, because the image of foreigners dealing in "drugs" scares people off.

Not one death in Ireland has ever been attributed to cannabis use - not one.

The same can't be said for alcohol, tobacco or paracetamol.

## Control

The only reason cannabis becomes associated with harder drugs is that it is illegal - just as, during prohibition in the US, alcohol was associated with

gangsterism and vice.

For as long as cannabis is illegal, criminals will control the trade.

The result is more violence and murder on our streets - with young working-class men again the main casualties.

Drugs should be taken out of the hands of criminals and put into the hands of doctors, pharmacists and educationalists.

Ming Flanagan's bill is a step in the right direction.

We need an open adult debate on drugs, with no option ruled out - including the option of legalisation.

The discussion around this bill is a start.

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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 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.

## Join the Socialists

Fill in the form and send to  
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## What socialists say



### Mental health is everyone's concern

By Dr. Peadar O'Grady

NEWS of cuts in Mental Health services can often get a response of sympathy mixed with a desperate feeling of 'But what can we do?'

The key weapon of the government is to 'divide and conquer' those hurt by the cuts in welfare and services, that is, the vast majority of the population.

Unity is therefore vital between staff and service-users, between disabled and non-disabled workers and between advocates for different services.

We are all at risk of having mental health problems at some time in our lives.

Up to a quarter of people at any one time are concerned about their mental health and would like to consult with trained staff in a position to help.

A majority will suffer a significant mental health problem in their lifetime.

Many problems start in childhood, and children whose parents are under severe stress, or who suffer abuse and neglect, are particularly at risk.

#### One in Ten

As many as one in ten will suffer a long-term disability, in terms of work and relationships, as a result of suffering a mental health concern.

We therefore need to have decent services provided to deal with mental distress, depression or psychosis just as we need services for physical pain, heart attacks or cancer.

It follows that any campaign for better health services must include demands for better mental health services and vice versa.

On the one hand this means that opposition to Reilly's plans to privatise the health service must be opposed by advocates for better mental health services.

Putting the health service under the control of Private Health Insurers will mean lower quality and more expensive care for all but the elite.

Private insurers will also limit access to counseling and psychotherapy and even hospital care for mental health reasons.

On the other hand concerns about reductions in staffing and beds in the health service severely affects mental health services.

Beds and hospitals have been closed, many with run-down facilities, but the planned community services to

replace them have clearly not been funded.

In 2006 there were almost 10,000 HSE funded staff in mental health services and 2,000 more were recommended by 2014 under 'Vision for Change' – still Government policy – a total of more than 12,000 staff.

Recent figures show that, in 2013, there are in fact only just over 9,000 staff, only three quarters of what was planned for a safe service.

#### Crisis

The relationship between rises in unemployment and increases in suicides is well known but not inevitable.

Since the recession hit in 2008 suicide rates have increased dramatically and have only been kept from going higher by young people emigrating to find jobs.

Instead of responding with a public work scheme, providing jobs, as advocated by People Before Profit, the government has just turned a blind eye while giving lip service to the distress of grieving families of suicide victims.

The fight against austerity cuts to bail out banks is another example of where unity between people with a disability and other workers is vital.

Cuts to welfare and public services hit people with disabilities and their carers particularly hard.

The Disability Allowance has been cut by a staggering €847 per year since 2008.

The unemployment rate for adults with an intellectual disability is 95%.

Home help hours were cut by 450,000 hours last year.

In the fight against austerity and privatisation we need to unite.

The best mental health services are developed by the active democratic involvement of service users.

Moving away from coercion and the overuse of drugs will require the power to access counseling and social supports including housing and decent jobs.

Unity between Anti-Austerity, Health Services and Disability Rights campaigns supported by Trade Unionists and Socialists will be vital to beat the government and win genuine improvements for all Health and Welfare services.

# Labour sell-out – we need a political alternative



By Kieran Allen

THE Labour Party is bearing the brunt of public anger and the cracks have started to appear.

Since taking office, 26 councillors have resigned from the party – or 10 percent of the total.

Some have a genuine commitment to their constituents and can no longer put up with Labour's austerity policies. Others are simply opportunists who are jumping ship before the local elections next year in May.

The Labour Party is shrinking in the polls and could follow the Greens into political oblivion. And that is not a bad thing.

The Irish Labour Party has a number of peculiarities.

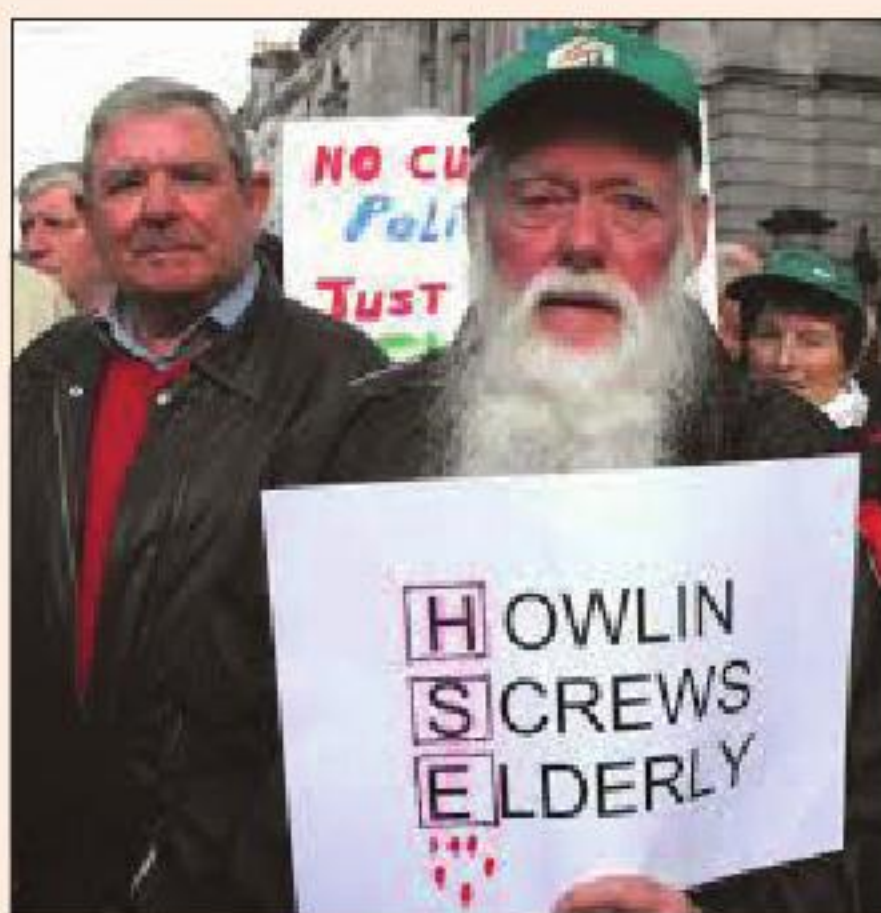
■ It always props up right wing governments and only uses left sounding policies to achieve that support role. Even at the height of his radical rhetoric, Eamonn Gilmore played a double game. He courted votes by expressing the real concerns of workers – but only to cynically sell them out for his seat in government.

■ Its voting base is more skewed towards the upper professional occupations than the manual working class. Labour was never a party of struggle and was, therefore, unable to consolidate a real base amongst the poorest of workers.

#### Union Bureaucracy

The Labour Party has one advantage which could protect them from the fate of the Greens.

They are propped up by the



union bureaucracy in SIPTU. Ireland's main union has been infiltrated and dominated by Labour Party hacks who spread a constant message of defeatism to support their party.

A recent SIPTU conference, for example, heard repeated attacks on Labour Minister Joan Burton over her abolition of the state transition payment to workers aged between 65 and 66. But despite this, the SIPTU leadership claimed that Labour was 'fighting at the gates of hell to defend workers'.

As well as rejecting Labour at the polls, we also need to break the links between Labour and

our unions. That means ridding ourselves of union leaders who put the interests of the Labour Party ahead of their own members.

The main initial beneficiary of Labour's decline is Sinn Fein (SF). In the Dáil, they have become the loudest voice in rejecting the policy of permanent austerity.

But a closer look at SF policies shows that it is probably on track to join a coalition with Fianna Fail after the next election.

SF support for cutting taxes on big business in the North – even as it cuts back public services – shows that it can talk

left and then support policies which harm workers.

Workers need a party to express their interests.

But the lesson of Labour's failure is that it cannot be a party that is solely geared to winning elections in order to manage Irish capitalism.

It must be a party of struggle that seeks to build solidarity and working class action from below.

A left party that tells workers to stand back and leave it to politicians in Dáil Eireann to solve their problem is either a party of fools or liars.

The People Before Profit Alliance is emerging as an important initiative that brings together revolutionary socialists with grassroots activists who want to fight.

Next May it will be standing candidates in the local and euro elections. But at the core of its philosophy is an idea of promoting grassroots struggle from below.

Its elected representative – Richard Boyd Barrett in the Dáil and a handful of current councillors – are answerable to the wider membership.

If they are councillors, they refuse all junkets and TDs must only take the average industrial wage and put the rest of their salary back into campaigning.

It is the first step on the road to creating a network of activists who will form the core of a broader, open and inclusive party of the future.

We urge you to get involved.

#### NEWS IN BRIEF

## Onanuga death after told she was 'faking' pain

THE inquest into the death of Bimbo Onanuga (32) has concluded and her death has been recorded as medical misadventure.

On 1 March, 2010, at seven months pregnant, Ms Onanuga was directed to the Rotunda Hospital, after a

routine scan with her GP in Ballymun.

There she was told that her child had died in the womb and was sent away an hour after hearing the news.

She returned to the Rotunda on 3 March in extreme pain

and was admitted.

The following day she was transferred to the Mater.

Her partner, Abiola Adesina, has said that her complaints of pain were perceived as being overstated by the midwife, who allegedly

said Ms Onanuga was "faking".

Ms Onanuga died on 4 March in the Mater's ICU.

Sadly the allegedly world-class perinatal care in Ireland has failed yet another woman.

## What socialists say



### LGBTQ people demand full equality

By Sean Egan

IN 1998 the Equality Employment Act was passed.

This legislation was supposed to protect workers from discrimination in the hiring process as well as ensuring equal pay and establishing a mechanism to defend and compensate victims of discrimination in the workplace.

However the legislation contained a deeply worrying exception clause (Section 37.1) which allows institutions with a religious ethos to take action against any employee that "undermines" its ethos.

This is extremely problematic in a country in which many state-funded essential services maintain strong links to Catholicism.

This means schools and hospitals (as well as many other place of work) across the country have the formal right to discriminate against workers not living by the Church's archaic standards.

This poses a distinct and ever-present threat to LGBTQ workers.

Various attempts to rid the act of the bigoted section 37.1 have been voted down.

This shows that in an era characterized by political organisations paying lip-service towards LGBT rights (including the deeply conservative and backwards Fine Gael) few politicians are prepared to take a stand against institutional discrimination.

The establishment parties refuse to purge the State's legislation of the oppressive remnants of utter religious domination.

#### Marriage equality

We've recently witnessed ultra-reactionary mobilisations against even minimum reproductive rights legislation proving that a deeply bigoted element still exists in churches, our government and our media.

The upcoming media spectacle that will be the debates surrounding marriage equality will give some of Ireland's most outspoken homophobes (Dana for example) a chance to air their hateful views.

Despite assertions to the contrary, Ireland is still not a hospitable place for LGBTQ people, - with the refusal to protect our employment rights further evidence of this.

Advocacy for LGBTQ equality needs to move out of the offices of lobby groups and onto the streets to pose a direct, resolute challenge to the government's odious apathy.

To affect change this movement needs to be a broad, Trans\* inclusive coalition of LGBTQ people and our allies involving the trade union movement and the community sector.

This can be a movement to change minds and carry forward the will of the majority of people for an Ireland devoid of anti-LGBTQ prejudice.

As socialists we want complete LGBTQ liberation, and the revolutionary dismantling of all oppressive gender and social constructs that divide working-class people.

# Councillor exodus as Labour disintegrates



By Michael Wallace

THE Labour Party is in spectacular meltdown.

In the space of just a week, three more Councillors have quit the party in protest over the leadership's continued support for austerity, another ruthless budget and complete capitulation to the Fine Gael agenda.

A total of 26 Councillors, or nearly 10% of its total number and six members of the parliamentary party have now resigned from Labour since entering government in 2011.

Among the latest members to exit is one of the country's longest serving town councillors, Sean O'Grady.

The Councillor from Killarney, a senior and respected figure inside Labour, accused the party's leadership of "crossing any red line any time they want."

If it costs lives, they're not worried



about it."

He cited the savage axing of the bereavement grant and telephone allowance for the elderly as the final straw, saying, "Labour are 'manna' to Fine Gael."

There are more right-wing proposals and policies emanating from this government than any I can remember,

and Labour have assisted magnificently in this regard."

Also leaving in the same week were Paddy Bourke, a Dublin City Councillor and former lord mayor and Jimmy O'Shaughnessy, Chairman of Wicklow County Council, who accused Labour of broken election promises and claimed the latest cuts were a 'step to far'.

Other former Labour representatives who could no longer stomach their party's betrayal echoed these opinions: Former Labour Councillor Tom Fortune (Wicklow): "The party has totally lost touch...their credibility is gone."

Ex-Labour Dublin City Councillor Steve Wrenn: "We've an absent leader; he's no good to the party."

Former Labour TD, Patrick Nulty: "The leadership of the party and in particular the Cabinet ministers...have brought the entire political system into disrepute."

#### Wider disintegration

Yet this is nothing compared to the rage felt by the wider population.

Labour's internal disintegration is matched by its collapsing support base.

The latest Ipsos MRBI poll showed Labour at just 6% in the polls - its lowest level in 26 years.

And this poll was taken before Budget 2014, where Labour ministers outdid their Fine Gael allies in vigorously pushing brutal cuts onto young jobseekers and the elderly in particular.

In pandering to the demands of the ruling class by attacking workers and the welfare state, Labour has forever thrashed their so-called 'core party principles' of Freedom, Equality, Community and Democracy.

Like so many social democratic parties Labour has never been true to the revolutionary traditions of James Connolly but now its credibility is totally decimated.

Moreover, Labour's road to catastrophe has a familiar look to it: pre-election promises to protect workers and the vulnerable followed by a complete sell-out to the right-wing agenda of Fine Gael in government and the tyrannical demands of 'the market.'

The party of Gilmore & Co, now standing for Austerity, Injustice, Inequality and Slave Labour are clearly heading for oblivion.

#### Opportunity

As a result, an opportunity has now arisen in which to grow a genuinely socialist, fighting party of the working class: a revolutionary alternative to Labour's shameful treachery and obedience towards the elite and their rotten system.

This also means building a mass social movement that can defeat the attempts of the bankers and bosses to make us pay for their crimes and to roll back the vicious cutbacks that the Labour Party were so complicit in pushing through the parliament.

People Before Profit can start to become this alternative and already the movement has around 40 people standing against Labour in the up-coming local elections.

## Open Letter (People Before Profit. Waterford)

### Pylons and sustainable energy

Global warming and climate change are spiralling out of control.

According to the latest International Panel on Climate Change, at least 95% of global temperature increases are caused by human activity, particularly the burning of fossil fuels.

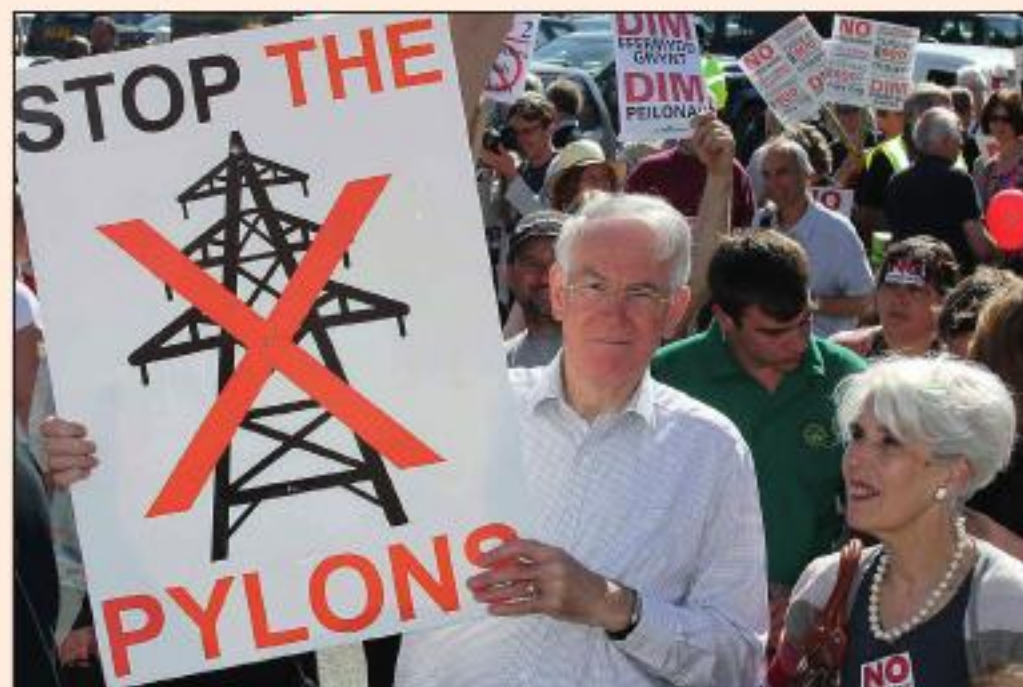
In this context it is vital that the Irish government develops a comprehensive sustainable energy policy.

Instead they seem to be allowing big energy companies to ride rough shod over communities in the interest of profits.

The Waterford branch of People Before Profit calls on Eirgrid to put their planned 250km route of high voltage cable lines underground, rather than using overhead transmission power lines.

We also call on them to engage in transparent and meaningful consultation with all of the communities affected by their proposal.

This consultation has to include people's concerns about their health, and the environmental impact.



#### Long term savings

Any cost-benefit analysis of the underground alternative should include long term cost effectiveness; including savings to successive governments in the prevention of health consequences (for example research by Professor Draper of Oxford University relates high voltage overhead lines to childhood leukaemia).

Delays in planning are also much more likely for overhead lines, adding to the long term cost, whilst long term maintenance should also be factored into the initial costs.

Recent evidence from the UK also proves that underground cables are more likely to escape the effects of bad weather, therefore improving the reliability of the

local electricity supply.

#### Wider battles

In addition to the fight against high voltage overhead power lines, People Before Profit are calling on all concerned citizens to hold the government to account in developing a national energy strategy focusing on conservation.

Over the last twenty years successive governments have sanctioned the sell-off of Ireland's fossil fuel reserves to foreign multi-nationals.

Currently the Irish tax-take on any profits is the lowest in the world.

Burning fossil fuels is not sustainable long term, but the revenues generated could allow Ireland to move towards wind, wave and tidal sources, solar and geothermal energy.

It could also allow investment in sustainable housing by upgrading existing housing re-insulation, solar panels etc and investment in public transport.

All of these measures together would create thousands of jobs and put money back into the real economy.

## What socialists say



### Direct Provision: Asylum Seekers' Hell

By Joe Moore

DIRECT provision is the name given to the institutional accommodation for asylum seekers in Ireland.

The system consists of thirty four centres scattered around the country.

The majority are former hotels, hostels and guest houses.

The remainder consist of two former convents, a caravan park, a former holiday centre and three custom built centres.

The conditions under which people are forced to live in these centres are horrific.

In the majority of the centres single people must share accommodation, with sometimes 3 and 4 people living in the same room.

Two single parent families with one child each also share a room and toilet facilities.

#### Poverty

The food provided is often sub-standard and out of date.

Meals are available at set times and if people miss them, they go hungry.

Residents have no input into what is on the menu or how the food is cooked.

While in direct provision asylum seekers are expected to live on €19.10 per week per adult, with each child getting €9.60.

Asylum seekers are denied the right to work and cannot access third level education.

Many people are enduring these conditions for up to eight years.

The immigrant support NGOs are calling for this system to be reformed.

Their proposals include the demand for a single refugee application process which would take six months to process.

While this might sound good, it still envisages asylum seekers living in institutional accommodation.

Anti-Deportation Ireland (ADI), the only national network campaigning against deportation is demanding the complete closure of the direct provision system.

ADI argues that the reason for the continued existence of direct provision is because of the state's deportation policy.

If the state did not deport people then direct provision would not exist.

There are two main reasons for this.

One, by keeping people in centres, it makes the job of

the Garda National Immigration Bureau easier when they carry out their pre-dawn raids in order to deport people.

The second reason is that if asylum seekers were living in the community, local support groups would be set up in solidarity with people facing deportation.

This is something that politicians want to avoid at all costs.

When it comes to deportation, the NGOs are for the most part silent.

Those that have commented, state that deportations should be carried out humanely.

How can you pull men, women and children from their beds in pre-dawn raids and forcibly deport them, in a humane manner.

It cannot be done.

It's because NGOs accept deportation that they cannot call for a total end to direct provision.

#### Fortress Europe

On October 3, a boat carrying 500 asylum seekers sank off the island of Lampedusa, with the loss of 350 lives.

People are forced to use such precarious means of transport because of the militarized external EU border.

This border, referred to as Fortress Europe is designed to keep out people from Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

Ireland is an integral part of Fortress Europe.

Each year 2,000 people are prevented from entering the country to claim asylum.

This is a denial of people's basic human rights.

It is these policies that lead people to make journeys like that which resulted in such massive loss of life in the Mediterranean.

The Socialist Workers Party is opposed to immigration controls which are always racist.

We demand the right for people to travel freely throughout the world.

After all if the capital of the rich can move across borders then why can't human beings.

Immigration controls are only in existence for less than 100 years.

As long as border and immigration controls exist, we will continue to have tragedies like that off the island of Lampedusa.

Moreover, until the Irish state brings down its borders it cannot claim to oppose all forms of institutional racism.

(Joe Moore is a member of the Socialist Workers Party in Cork and Anti-Deportation Ireland)

# Roma family target of state racism

By Nicky Coules (People Before Profit Candidate in Tallaght South).

THE recent cruel incident of the snatching of a Roma child from her family in Tallaght by local Gardaí raises the question of racism in the institutions of the state.

The existence of racism in Irish society, a regrettable fact, is carefully fanned by the powers that be to divert people's attention from the mess that is Ireland.

It was against this background that the Tallaght branch of People Before Profit held a demonstration at the Garda station on Saturday Oct 26.

Around 20 protesters held placards calling for an end to racial profiling and Garda support for racism.

It was noted that these attacks on families were taking place at a time when child welfare was being slashed.

Protesters were heartened by the huge support shown by people going to and from the Square.

Many people must be wondering if the children of the Gardaí at the centre of this monstrous incident shared the same complexion and hair and eye colouring as their parents.

Of course it may just be open season on those who don't fit with Garda prejudices.

#### Maria

All of this comes against the backdrop of a case in Greece where police snatched a girl, known as Maria, during a raid on a Roma community last month because she also had blonde hair.

The case sparked racist scare-mongering about Roma "stealing" children.

In fact it shows that Roma families are more likely to have their children taken from them. Maria's biological mother, Saska Ruseva, is Roma and lives in Bulgaria.

She said she left the child with a Roma couple in Greece because she couldn't afford to care for her. Yet the Roma couple are now in custody in Greece, charged with kidnapping.



And Bulgarian police are investigating Saska and her husband on suspicion that they illegally sold Maria. Maria won't live with her biological parents in Bulgaria as

the authorities have deemed them too poor.

Instead she'll be handed over to a foster family.

Emil Todorov is director of the

Children Protection Department of Bulgaria's Agency for Social Assistance.

He said social services would "work with both parents, so that they can expand their parental potential".

## Scrap the property tax – Tax the wealthy instead

By John Lyons (People Before Profit Candidate in Beaumont Donaghmede)

THE fight against the property tax is not over.

Whilst a majority of people paid the half year for 2013, many felt intimidated, coerced and bullied into handing over money they so desperately needed to pay for more important items: food, heating, clothes, mortgages and car repayments, etc.

As a result, the anger at this tax is intense and deeply felt by thousands of people across Ireland.

It is clear to all now that the property tax is not a wealth tax in any way, shape or form.

Rather, it's a tax on the family homes of the majority of the population who have endured so much since the onset of the global crisis in 2008.

It is an attack on a people who



have paid too much and are being punished for the greed and recklessness of Irish bankers, speculators, developers and their politician-friends in Fianna Fail and now Fine Gael and the Labour Party.

#### Doubling of the Property Tax

Having endured so much unnecessary pain and suffering

through seven austerity budgets, workers, the unemployed and pensioners alike are now faced with a doubling of the property tax for 2014.

This is too much.

Payment of this tax will push many thousands of people into poverty and mean life for tens of thousands of others will be that much more of a struggle.

And for what?

#### Taxing Your Home to Pay for Your Water

Minister for the Environment, Phil Hogan, recently admitted that the money raised from the property tax this year will be directed toward the establishment of Irish Water, the new private body responsible for charging us for water.

The money is not going towards the maintenance and improvement of our local services and infrastructure as previously promised.

They are literally taxing our homes so as to charge us for water.

We've paid too much, endured so much and now we've heard enough: it's time we came together again to fight back.

The People Before Profit Alliance is dedicated to reversing this unjust tax on the family home.

Moreover, all our Local Elections 2014 candidates are pledged to the scrapping of this most hated of taxes.



# Protests defy Egyptian army in bid to take back the streets

*Revolutionaries are fighting back against anti-protest laws to demand bread and freedom, writes Judith Orr*

**D**emonstrators defied Egypt's military government and took to the streets in central Cairo on Saturday 2 November to oppose a proposed "anti-protest" law.

This would give police the power to cancel, postpone or change the location of a protest.

It would also create zones around public buildings where all protests could be banned.

## Revolutionary Front

The protest was organised by the Revolutionary Front, which unites the Revolutionary Socialists (RS) and other activists.

"The protest in Talaat Harb Square turned into a march of over 1,000," RS member Gigi Ibrahim told Socialist Worker.

"We roamed the streets for two hours and ended up in Mohammed Mahmoud Street.

We haven't been able to march there for months." Mohammed Mahmoud Street off Tahrir Square is a symbolic site for activists.

Its walls are an ever-changing chronicle of the struggle of the revolution in graffiti, paintings and tributes to martyrs.

Next month is the second anniversary of violent clashes there when the military killed 50 protesters.

The Revolutionary Front wants to galvanise political forces who oppose the military and who campaigned against the ousted president Mohamed Mursi.

The demonstration was part of that



*Marchers in Talaat Harb Square, Cairo (Pic: Hossam el-Hamalawy)*

struggle to build unity and keep fighting for the demands of the revolution.

"People chanted for bread, freedom and the cleansing of the ministry of the interior—which rhymes in Arabic" said Gigi.

Under the banner "the street is ours" workers, students and other activists

denounced the military, police brutality and chanted against the return of Mursi. Sacked textile worker Rageb el-Shimey joined the demo.

He was victimised when he was part of a struggle to renationalise his factory after it was privatised under former dictator Hosni Mubarak.

He said, "This government has no will to do anything about social equality." Gigi described people's frustration at the lack of real change in their lives.

The economy remains in crisis and the minimum monthly wage still stands at approximately only €70.

Organised workers have played a criti-

cal role in key points in the revolution.

## Minister for Labour

When the military took over after Mursi's fall it appointed former independent trade union leader Kamal Abu Aita as minister for labour.

His appointment was a sign that the military recognised the threat that workers' organisation posed against their hold on power.

They clearly hoped to placate trade unionists by offering them one of their own in government.

But the regime also wanted to use him to more effectively hold back workers' struggles and demands.

Abu Aita has issued statements against strikes, saying Egypt needs "national reconstruction".

But workers are not so easily fooled.

As he demonstrated Rageb said, "Kamal Abu Aita is the one who taught us how to organise a protest outside the labour ministry.

Now he is acting exactly like those in the office before him.

He is denouncing all of us who want to fight."

The Revolutionary Front has pledged to hold more protests against the new law in other cities.

The campaign is part of the wider struggle against the military government and its attempt to depict itself as the saviour of the revolution.

As Rageb said, the demands of the revolution still have to be fought for, "People do not have enough bread to eat. We are not free."

## Anti-racists in Greece say 'united we can beat the Nazis'



*Anti-fascists in Greece march on Sunday 3 November to the spot where Pavlos Fyssas was murdered*

*(Pic: Thanasis Kambyssis)*

by Dave Sewell

**A**nti-fascists from across Europe met in Greece last Sunday at the spot where musician Pavlos Fyssas was murdered by a member of the fascist Golden Dawn.

They called for an international day of action on 22 March next year against fascists and the racism that feeds them.

## Keerfa

Petros Constantinou is an Athens councillor and coordinator of Keerfa, Greece's leading anti-fascist organisation.

"We want to see mass demonstrations in every capital city," he told Socialist Worker.

"This is an appeal to everyone to join

the struggle against fascism."

Keerfa was central to organising protests after Pavlos' murder.

It helped build a march of 50,000 on Golden Dawn's office, and an anti-fascist general strike in the public sector.

Hundreds of people across Greece signed up to its conference, which was broadcast live on ERT, the state broadcaster which workers have occupied.

## Doctors

Petros said, "People were very proud of how their protests had forced the government to crack down on Golden Dawn.

"There were reports from huge mobilisations all over Greece against Golden Dawn's attempts to open offices.

"Hospital doctors talked about how they

put their bodies in the way of Golden Dawn racists who tried to give blood 'only for Greeks'.

"One doctor told them, 'Your blood isn't worth anything to us, even to collect from the pavement.'"

The Greek police arrested leading members of Golden Dawn after Pavlos' murder.

But there is huge anger at the way the authorities had previously protected them—and implemented the racist policies the party feed off.

Since the murder, a judge has revealed the names of Golden Dawn whistleblowers to the party's lawyer.

And department of public order minister Nikos Dendias is prosecuting Petros for his anti-fascist activities.

"We don't believe the government

and the courts can put an end to Golden Dawn," Petros said.

"The prosecution needs to come from the anti-fascist movement, not the state.

## Escalation

"We want to escalate our own demands.

Close their offices, cut off their subsidies, investigate and prosecute the bankers and business people who funded them.

"And Dendias and prime minister Antonis Samaras need to go."

Petros hopes the struggle against Golden

Dawn can inspire anti-fascists everywhere.

He said, "There's lots of enthusiasm for people to organise in their local unions to shut down the fascists in their neighbourhoods, schools and workplaces.

"But they also want to shut down racism—close camps where migrants are mistreated, stop police raids and legalise migrants who have been denied papers.

"There's a new atmosphere of struggle.

People believe we can link up with the workers' struggle against austerity—and bring down the government."

## Greek workers disrupt Troika visit but police attack ERT occupation

GREECE'S international creditor organisations came to Athens to inspect the government's progress in making cuts last week.

But their visit was disrupted by a general strike against mass sackings on Wednesday 6 November.

Hundreds of thousands of workers walked out across Greece, shutting down both the public and private sector.

Thousands marched in Athens despite torrential rain.

The previous day officials from the Troika—the European Union, European Central Bank and International Monetary Fund—even had to flee the finance ministry through the basement with a police escort.

The ministry's workers chased them, booing and chanting.

## Raid

Greek public TV service, ERT, has been broadcasting under workers'

control for almost five months since the government tried to close it in June.

But the occupation was broken up in a police raid in the early hours of Thursday November 7.

"They picked a moment in the middle of the night when there weren't many people there, and they broke down doors to get in the building," ERT journalist Maria Kodaxi told Socialist Worker.

"They stopped the radio that had been broadcasting.

We went down to rally outside and the police were very violent—using tear gas and pushing the workers who tried to get in."

The raid has provoked outrage, and is seen as an authoritarian clampdown by a desperate government.

There have been more than 30 general strikes in Greece since 2010, and the government has been unable to push through the sackings that the Troika demand.

# Nigerian military kills hundreds in 'war on terror' says Amnesty



by Ken Olende

THE Nigerian military has killed over 950 people in custody this year as part of its "war on terror" against Islamist group Boko Haram.

Most of the deaths occurred in

detention centres run by the military's Joint Task Force according to the senior officer, who leaked details to Amnesty International.

People accused of being associated with Boko Haram are rounded up and kept in appalling conditions.

The majority of deaths have taken place in military bases including Sector Alpha, commonly known as "Guantanamo".

They are all in the north east of the country where the government is trying to suppress the insurgent

movement.

Many deaths are due to overcrowding, starvation and beatings.

Amnesty has interviewed people who say that other suspects are executed without trial.

Boko Haram has attacked targets,

including schools, to establish a "pure" Islamic state that rejects Western values. It recruits among masses of desperately poor young unemployed.

Its propaganda attacks the corrupt government for stealing the country's oil wealth.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Nazis win a by-election in France

THE fascist Front National (FN) won a by-election last week in Brignoles, southern France.

It took more than 40 percent in the first round vote and 54 percent in the second.

It also leads the most recent polls for next year's elections to the European parliament.

The Communist Party, which dominates the left wing Front de Gauche, made a pact with the Labour-type Socialist Party of President Francois Hollande.

Its candidate came third with a dismal 15 percent in round one.

Voters punished the left for backing the unpopular Socialist

Party government.

The low vote also reflected the left's failure to confront the racism that the FN feeds upon.

Hollande has called for opposing "extremism" and "populism" by defending the European Union—including its ability to "protect France from immigration".

He also blamed "relations with Islam" for the FN's rise.

But for opposition to fascism to be effective it must be independent of the austerity that has made Hollande and the EU so unpopular.

And it must expose racist myths rather than pandering to them.

### Driving Force of the car lobby

ANGELA Merkel continues talks with potential coalition partners in Germany.

On the day that she held talks with the Green Party; it emerged that her party received a large donation from three major BMW shareholders. Days later Germany blocked the introduction of tougher EU emissions rules for cars.

The Christian Democratic Union had received €690,000 from Susanne Klatten, her mother Johanna Quandt and brother Stefan Quandt. The Quandt family holds almost half

of the shares in BMW; whose luxury cars on average emit well over the proposed limit of 95 grams of carbon dioxide per kilometer.

Merkel's party insisted there was no link between the donation and the pressure that her government put on other EU states to hold off on the emissions deal.

They claimed that "the Quandt family has supported the CDU with private donations for many years, independently of whether the CDU was part of the government or in opposition."

### Workers and students fight for education in Spain

EDUCATION workers and students across the Spanish state took part in a second "general education strike" against education reforms last week.

Workers struck on Thursday November 7 and students joined them with a week of protests to

defend education.

Up to 83 percent of workers and 90 percent of students took part, according to unions.

More than half of young people in the Spanish state are unemployed.

## CULTURE ZONE

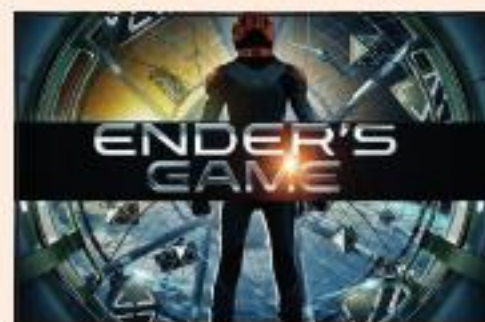
### "Ender's Game": Endless war

By James O' Toole

IT is fifty years into the future and an alien invasion has led to the militarisation of every aspect of life on Earth.

Children are raised on a diet of war hero's and military training to prepare them for endless war against the alien Formic Race. Their lives are constrained and suffocated with the ever present pressures of an alien attack.

Ender is an exceptional kid in this world of engineered brilliance. Ruthless enough to win but empathic enough to predict an enemy's strategic in-



tentions. Ender seems perfect for the military's aims.

So far so clichéd you might be thinking, but things are not so simple.

### Savita: The tragedy that shook a nation

Reviewed by Dette Mc Loughlin and Breege Burke (Galway pro-choice)

IN "Savita: The Tragedy that shook a nation" Kitty Holland relates the compelling story of Savita Praveen Halappanavar, a 31 year old Indian dentist who died in University Hospital Galway in 2012 after being denied an abortion.

Holland is the Irish Times reporter responsible for initially breaking the story.

In her book, we discover who Savita was, her background and how the heretofore healthy woman came to be admitted with severe back pain on 21 October 2012 to a hospital in Ireland, only to be told that she was miscarrying and that it would all be over in a few hours.

Having asked repeatedly for a termination but refused because "this is a Catholic country" and the foetal heartbeat remained, she went on to endure days of "agony".

The foetal heartbeat finally stopped on Wednesday 24 October.

The womb contents were removed thereafter and Savita, having contracted septicemia and E coli, died just after 1am on Sunday 28 Oct.

**Compassionate**  
This is a compassionate exploration



family and friends.

They could not comprehend why basic medical treatment was denied to Savita in a modern European country.

This exposed the legal and political situation in Ireland, and a health service so heavily influenced by Roman Catholicism that such an occurrence could take place – one that her widower Praveen described as "horrific, barbaric and inhumane".

The story continues with Praveen's pursuit for truth and justice for his beloved Savita.

The extent of Kitty Holland's research is quite staggering. She spoke to Praveen Halappanavar in India by phone, 4 days after Savita had been cremated.

Ender's constant struggle with what he's being forced to become, his battle to be the ultimate strategist whilst simultaneously resenting his commanders are central to the thrust of the movie and it's tragic conclusion.

Amidst the fast paced action, Ender's Game grapples admirably with the theme of stunted childhood in an oppressive society full of bullying and manipulation.

This makes it stand out from other run of the mill action fantasies and leaves you thinking about the challenges of growing up in our own oppressive society.

A gentle, heartbroken man told her the story, which then went global.

Praveen explained: "I'm talking about this because it shouldn't happen to anyone else... How can you let a young woman go, to save a baby who will die anyway?"

Holland also flew to India to visit Savita's family.

Andanappa Yalagi, speaking at an anniversary function of his daughter Savita's death, showed the 300-page book to the audience, lauded Kitty Holland.

Throughout the book Kitty is scrupulously fair, giving ample space to the 'anti-choice' side, who were, in the main, apoplectic at the sea-change in mainstream opinion that occurred after Savita's death – a change that occurred largely because the savagery of Irish law in relation to women's reproductive choices was highlighted with such appalling clarity.

Yet in the end the author comes down firmly on the side of women.

Whatever else may have occurred the "heart of the matter...is whether a woman has the right to choose".

Kitty's book makes this point brilliantly clear and leaves us with a unique and accurate testament to a piece of Irish history.

"Savita: The tragedy that shook a nation."  
Author Kitty Holland

# Socialist Worker

## As the politicians bicker... Time to restart the fightback

POLITICS in the North are at an impasse.

Loyalist flag protests, communal spats at Stormont and the ongoing issue of parades threaten to drag us all backwards.

This renewal in sectarianism takes place against a backdrop of falling living standards and austerity.

Unemployment is still rising, wages are stagnating and the prospect of job and benefit cuts loom large.

Still, Assembly politicians continue to bicker amongst themselves, a case of 'Rome burns while Stormont fiddles'.

### 'Haas talks'

The on-going 'Haas talks', aimed at finding a solution to the resurgence of sectarianism, has nothing to offer ordinary people in the North.

At best they will offer another fragile agreement which will paper over the real divisions at Stormont, only to collapse again when politicians revert to communal point scoring.

Nor will they deal with underlying issues fuelling riots and flags protests.

All of the main parties here continue to be committed to a programme of cuts and privatisation.

This strategy clearly has the potential to make things worse.

There are, however, renewed signs of a fightback amongst workers.

This month University staff took strike action across the North.

The walkout by UCU, Unison and Unite members saw strong turnouts across a number of campuses.

The dispute centres on a 1% pay increase offered to college staff.

In real terms this measly offer amounted to a substantial pay cut when inflationary price rises are taken into account.

Unions say workers have suffered a real terms pay cut of 13 percent since 2008.

### Casualisation

Workers also stressed that the strike was about much more than pay.

University staff are facing increasing workloads, casualisation, and outsourcing at campuses across the North.

Many workers on picket lines linked



the action with wider defence of education against Assembly cuts.

Despite minimal news coverage of the strike there was strong picket lines at Queens, University of Ulster and St Mary's College.

Unions have declared that further strike action will be held again in Universities later this month.

Dates should be set for these strikes and mobilisations should be organised in solidarity.

Student unions should build solidarity for the strikes amongst students and joint staff/student protests should be organised.

Other unions should be called out too.

A serious campaign involving teachers, lecturers, students and other staff to defend education is now a serious possibility.

### Royal Mail

Royal Mail workers in the CWU were poised for strike action themselves last week against cuts to pensions and terms and conditions.

However the CWU leadership called off the action having forced some concessions from Royal Mail who were fearful of the prospect of industrial action.

It said that the agreement between the Union and management will include legal protections for employees that extends beyond the current three year offer, an improved pay and reward offer and a separate pensions agreement.

However the full details of the deal are still unclear.

The CWU should continue to put pressure on management rather than

relying on negotiations alone.

As one CWU rep put it "We've always won more by going on strike," These actions need to be built upon.

Unions in the North need to become more proactive in resisting cuts and austerity.

It is clear that when given a lead workers are prepared to fight.

The militant protests around the

defence of the Exploris Centre in Strangford show a clear willingness on workers behalf to come out and fight to defend services.

Actions like these have the potential to kick-start the fight against austerity in the North.

They also have the potential to undercut sectarianism and expose the idea that the 'two communities'

cannot unite.

The bright glare of the 'new dawn' may have dimmed, but the spark of resistance remains.

The Stormont parties offer no way out of the impasse.

Only a renewed struggle of working class people has any hope of challenging sectarianism and the implementation of austerity.

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# IMR

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Paul O'Brien on Seamus Heaney  
Michael Taft on 'Austerity Ireland'  
Sinead Kennedy on Nancy Fraser  
James O'Toole on Browne's 'Band'

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## United for Education

# Fair Pay NOW!

UNIVERSITY STAFF = 13% PAY CUT  
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