

Socialist Worker



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SINK IRISH WATER - SINK THE GOVERNMENT



Mario Rosenstock



Joan Burton

Conservation bribe

So the Government turned to the bribe of the 'conservation' grant but it wasn't even an effective bribe because you could get it without paying. But they couldn't make it conditional on paying for fear of its effect on the Eurostat ruling. But Eurostat ruled against them anyway because of the level of non-payment! Omnishambles!

The Government's only hope is to survive to the next election. But things are looking bad for them on that front too.

Fine Gael and Labour are falling out with each other over who to blame for each new disaster.

And Joan Burton has driven another nail into Labour's coffin with the absurd threat to prosecute the Jobstown 23 with a range of offences including 'false imprisonment, criminal damage and public order' over a sit-down protest nine months ago.

Obviously this threat is highly menacing for the people involved and must be strongly contested but it's also, as Paul Murphy TD has said, 'absolutely farcical' and hardly likely to help Labour in its more or less

hopeless quest to regain some support.

Government heading for defeat

According to the latest poll Fine Gael are at 27% with Labour on just 6% - way below what they would need to get re-elected.

And as we go to press international capitalism seems on the brink of another collapse as global share prices tumble in response to China's economic slow down and falling stock market. And if the system does return to recession it will put paid to the Government's neoliberal strategy for 'export led' recovery.

All of this makes it very clear what the movement and the people need to do.

Keep up the pressure on the streets and in the estates. Don't pay the second bills - even if you paid the first time. Clear out the Fine Gael/Labour Government and the other pro-water charges, pro-austerity, pro-capitalist parties like Fianna Fáil and Renoua.

But of course this raises the question of 'what is the alternative?'

As everyone knows Irish Water is on the ropes and the Fine Gael/Labour coalition is in disarray.

At least 57% of the people are not paying the charges and Irish Water are still unable to install meters in many areas.

On top of that there has been the Eurostat ruling that Irish Water doesn't qualify to be treated as 'off the government's books' and the fiasco over the so-called 'conservation' grant.

It's one debacle after another - omnishambles all the way.

And it all has a common root: the fact that Water Charges, as the lightning rod for anger at austerity as a whole, were met with largest, deepest movement of mass resistance in the history of the state.

It is people power that has done it. That is what the Government didn't reckon with and that's what they haven't been able to cope with.

When they faced hundreds of thousands on the streets in October and November of last year, not just in Dublin but in every town in Ireland the Government retreated on their threats to turn off people's water.

But this left them with no effective sanction against non-payment and they still haven't got one.

No one needs to pay and no one needs to be afraid not to pay.

For a Real Radical Alternative

As the fate of Syriza in Greece shows it is not enough to say you are anti-austerity to be able to deliver an alternative. The example of Sinn Féin in the North proves the same point.

It's not a question of sincerity. If you accept the logic of the system and agree to work within it the system will force you to implement austerity and cutbacks no matter how much you don't want to do it.

To change Ireland we need a radical alternative that is prepared to challenge and break with the system that says profits and market viability always come before the needs of the people.

We need an alternative that will cancel the so-called 'national' debt and stop paying out €8 billion a year in interest payments while families are homeless on the streets, and is prepared to do it whatever the Troika says or threatens.

We need an alternative that will make the super-rich and the corporations pay their taxes not bow down to their economic blackmail while children are going to school hungry.

We need emergency action to tackle the housing crisis including immediate rent controls and an urgent social housing programme.

We need women's rights and equal rights across the board - no to racism, sexism, homophobia and scapegoating.

We need an Ireland whose foreign policy is not driven by the US military or Fortress Europe but independent, anti-imperial and based on the common interests of working people in Ireland

A Radical Alternative Vision for Ireland -

Conference organised by People Before Profit

18/19/20 September

Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1

This is an opportunity to contribute your ideas for an alternative Ireland. Meetings on Greece, Spain, Ireland - debt, austerity, resistance; for a woman's right to cooese; an alternative economic agenda; where next against water charges; building a new left and much more.

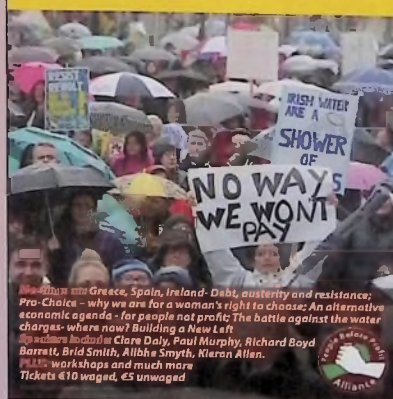
Speakers include: Clare Daly, Paul Murphy, Richard Boyd Barrett, Brid Smith, Ailbhe Smyth, Kieran Allen, Mike Gonzalez and many others.

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Entry €10 waged/ €5 unwaged.

Accommodation available with PBP supporters (bring sleeping bag). If crèche facilities needed please contact us. Phone +353 872839964 email: info@peoplebeforeprofit.ie

A Radical Alternative Vision for Ireland

18/19/20 September
Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square West, Dublin 1



and intentionally. We need an alternative based on people power and rooted in the movement in the streets, communities

and workplaces. This is why Socialist Worker supports People Before Profit and why People Before Profit is in discussion

with the Anti-Austerity Alliance with a view to presenting a real radical alternative to the Irish people at the coming election.

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Is Europe threatened by 'migrants'?

It is also why People Before Profit is holding a public conference on 18-20 September to discuss, expand and flesh out these policies.

Women's right to choose: North and South

Repeal the Eighth

Goretti Horgan

Abstortion rights are again very much on the agenda in Ireland, North and South. As elections approach in the South, most political parties look forced to agree to a referendum to repeal the Eighth Amendment. Without such a referendum, no progress can be made in advancing basic rights for women, such as the right to health and life, still less the right to choose what to do with their own bodies.

Roll back

In the North, anti-abortionists are in government and doing their best to roll back rights won in the 1930s for women. The most recent (2013) version of Guidance on Abortion for doctors published by then Minister for Health, Edwin Poots, ignores the fact that the Bourne Judgement of 1938 applies in the North. That judgement said that a woman has the right to abortion if continuing the pregnancy would leave her "a physical or mental wreck", while Poots's Guidance says abortion is legal only to save a woman's life. While abortion used to be available for reasons of foetal abnormality, now even those who have a diagnosis of a fatal foetal abnormality are being forced to go to England. After Sarah Ewart went public about her experience of having to travel and find almost £2,000 at short notice, many politicians including First Minister Peter Robinson expressed sympathy with



her plight and promised to ensure that no other woman would have to travel for reasons of fatal foetal anomaly. Yet, when Justice Minister David Ford held a consultation on legalising abortion in such cases, Peter Robinson said any such move was

"doomed" as it would be opposed by the DUP. **Mother charged** Now a mother in Belfast has been charged with obtaining abortion pills to help her underage teenage daughter.

Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment

Second Annual Conference: What do women need? Why we must repeal the 8th Amendment

Saturday 12 September 9.30am
The Gresham Hotel, Dublin 1.

She is charged under Section 59 of the 1861 Offences Against the Person's Act with "procuring poison...to cause a miscarriage". The prosecution is perverse and unjust. It is perverse because so many women have used these very safe pills year in, year out, in Northern Ireland for the past ten years. It is unjust because the mother was doing what any mother would - trying to protect her daughter and stop her becoming a mother before her time. This case really exposes the class nature of the abortion law in Ireland, North and South. Women who have money can travel to England and pay for a private procedure - flights for a mother and daughter, plus the cost of a private abortion would amount to c£600/€820. For those who cannot get £600/€800 together, the choice is to continue the pregnancy or to get pills from a feminist website like WomenHelp.org or Women

on Web for a donation of £50/€70. **Campaign** It is two years since over 100 women, and some men, published an open letter saying that they had taken the pills to cause an abortion, or had helped someone to procure the pills. Not only were none of signatories charged, none of them was even approached by a police officer. News of the mother being charged led to over 200 people, mainly women, signing a new open letter saying that they, too, have helped obtain abortion pills to end a pregnancy. There is huge anger that the state overlooked a law being broken week in, week out for years and then suddenly turns on someone who is unfortunate enough to present as an "easy target". Petitions calling on the PPS to drop all charges against the mother have been welcomed on the streets of the North. As there is no sign of charges being dropped, this month women are to start handing themselves into

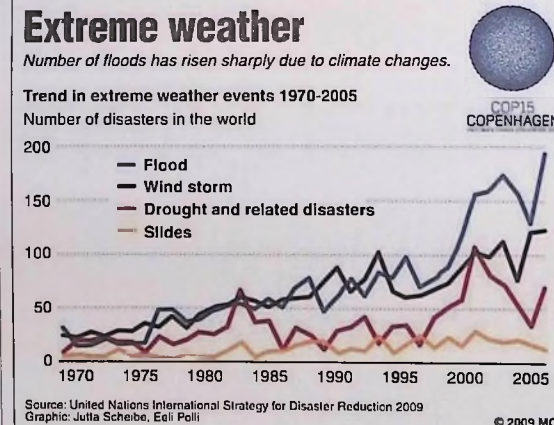
the police to "confess" to obtaining pills. If these are charged, group after group will present themselves to the police until the charges against the mother are dropped. **Welfare cuts** All this is happening at the same time as plans for welfare cuts in Britain will cap the number of children for whom a family will receive child benefit, tax credits or any kind of benefit to two. The only exceptions will be if the mother can prove that a third child is the result of rape. North and South, austerity means that many families cannot afford to have a child or another child - yet there is no right to end an unplanned pregnancy. The lives of women in Ireland, North and South, are still ruled by a law from 1861. It is time women's rights came into the 21st century; we need free, safe and legal abortion and the housing, childcare and other supports that would allow women to have the children they want.

As climate change accelerates, will Paris talks make a difference?

Owen McCormack

The Pope, Obama, and the Chinese premier have all recently talked up the necessity of global action to curb CO2 emissions. The EU has trumpeted its commitment to a 40% reduction in emissions. This suggests the ruling elite are now aware of the devastating consequences of climate change? As the latest round of UN talks at Paris in December looms, climate activists and various NGOs are talking up the historic nature of the conference as the last chance to save the planet from runaway warming and limit temperature rises to under 2 degrees C. The failure of previous talks in 2009 in Copenhagen produced a widespread sense of dismay among many NGO activists; this time many are reading the statements from various world leaders as a hopeful sign that a binding treaty that commits nations to serious plans to cut emissions from fossil fuels will be agreed. **Uncharted waters** The recent moves are an acknowledgement that humanity is in uncharted waters and continued rises in CO2 levels will unleash catastrophic climate swings across

the planet. The scientific debate on what is happening ended decades ago and has only continued to the extent that fossil fuel corporations and neoliberal think tanks have funded dubious 'academics' to produce poorly researched and completely unscientific "contrary" opinions. Climate records around the globe are now broken every month and year. Record droughts in the US are matched by record rainfalls elsewhere while global land and sea temperatures edge up year on year in a pattern predicted by numerous computer climate models. Much of the earth's population are now subject to wildly oscillating and extreme weather events with terrible consequences especially for the poorest sections of society. Heat waves, intense storms, floods, and melting ice caps are now occurring at a rate that even our rulers find hard to ignore. **Paris not enough** Even if some form of a binding treaty is secured at Paris it won't stop climate change or arrest the devastation that the poorest across the globe will suffer. Any agreement to limit emissions will rest upon market mechanisms of various kinds such as Obama's Clean Coal



plan which is based on a cap and trade system similar to Europe's carbon trading system. This has failed spectacularly to halt the rise in emissions from Europe, with widespread fraud and scams in the carbon market. Claims that such market tools can work ignore a number of facts. Declines in the rate of increase in some European countries have nothing to do with carbon trading but other factors such as the decimation of Britain's coal mining industry by Thatcher or other

nations' large scale switch to nuclear power. Ireland's claim to have reached its Kyoto targets has nothing to do with a planned reduction but is simply the consequence of the recession. Emissions are rising again as the Government seek derogations from any binding targets for their friends in industry and the beef barons. Small measures such as forcing builders to build houses with better insulation to reduce energy usage are dropped lest they annoy industry. The wider problem with market

based solutions is that they rest on a falsehood; that we can reduce carbon emissions while leaving the logic of capitalism unchanged. Estimates of our global carbon budget suggest that at present or even reduced usage of fossil fuels, we will reach a tipping point within decades where limiting temperatures to a two degree increase will be impossible. Even if Paris commits nations to a binding target, and even if Obama and China's targets are delivered, this carbon budget will still be exceeded in decades. Capitalism insists that everything must be both commodified and priced. Hence the specious hope that pricing carbon will allow the market to adjust and incentivise its reduced usage while increasing the use of carbon free renewables. However capitalism also rests on never ending expansion. Accumulation for accumulation's sake as Marx said. The use of fossil fuels had been central to that expansion. Any saving or increased efficiency in one sector will lead to the expansion of that sector as investment pours into potentially profitable areas. There can be no solution to climate chaos within the capitalist economic system, regardless of innovations or technological

advances. The store of proven reserves that oil and gas corporations have and intend to drill and mine means any attempt to stop climate chaos has to start with a challenge to these corporations' power and profits. Getting emissions down to the levels needed requires leaving these reserves in the ground and aiming for zero or carbon neutral rates within decades. Capitalism as a system based on growth and profit simply cannot accommodate these measures. As Naomi Klein puts in her latest book, "climate change means changing everything about our profit driven economic system". Paris will not alter that. Many activists are gearing up to what promises to be the biggest climate change protest yet around the Paris conference in December, with parallel protests across many cities around the world. The aim is to have a "Seattle for climate" - a reference to the protest against the WTO in Seattle in 1999 that sparked the international campaign against neoliberal globalisation. It is in the protests on the streets of Paris and other cities that real hope lies and in the ability of activists to bring the climate issue into the workers' movement globally.

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WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR

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.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION

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

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH

We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Cameron government.

FOR WORKERS' GAIN.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To win socialism we need to organise in a revolutionary party.

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

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

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

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE SOUTH

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

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Housing and homelessness crisis escalates

The housing crisis is getting worse by the day.

On Monday 24 August it was reported that about 556 homeless families, including 1,185 children, were in emergency accommodation in Dublin. Focus Ireland estimates that there are up to 5,000 people at any one time who are homeless in Ireland.

There has been a housing crisis in Ireland for years but in the last six months it has got dramatically worse. The immediate causes are a huge increase in rents – up 15% in the last few months – which are driving people out of their homes and bank repossessions combined with a persistent failure to build social housing.

And as students return the pressure will only increase.

Below we publish two articles that show the dreadful and obscene nature of the official responses to this disaster.

What we need is emergency action now!

The Government, and specifically Joan Burton's Ministry of Social Protection,



should lift rent caps that prevent homeless people renting accommodation.

As Fr Peter McVerry has said there should be an emergency freeze on rents. Or does the fact that about 30% of TDs are landlords stand in the way of this obvious measure?

We need an emergency state driven programme of building social housing – no waiting for the market to react. We need to stop the buying up of NAMA properties by investment corporations – they should be taken over for emergency occupation.

Other vacant industrial properties should be commandeered and repossessions should be stopped.

The Right 2 Housing Campaign is organising banner drops on empty properties nationwide on **Sunday 6 September** to say 'This could be someone's home'. This will be followed by a protest at the **Dáil on 22 September at 6pm**. To get involved with Right2 Housing ring Cllr Tina MacVeigh 086 8715293 or email right2housingireland@gmail.com.

As crisis worsens NAMA funds luxury homes

Owen McCormack

With over a hundred thousand households still in need of social housing the real priorities of the Government and state can be seen in the workings of NAMA.

In an extraordinary scandal the state agency continues to fund bankrupted developers who specialise in luxury homes for Ireland's wealthy.

This coincides with a 'tsunami' of house repossessions as the housing crisis worsens for ordinary people.

Thirty luxury five bedroom homes, each selling for over €1.5 million have been built in Howth by Cosgrave developers.

The landscaped gardens alone cost €40,000 each. The Cosgrave Brothers had loans of over €500 million taken over by NAMA (i.e. paid for by the state's citizens), yet the development was part funded by NAMA (i.e. us!).

When the property bubble burst in 2008, the Cosgrave brothers had built a property empire that included commercial property worth over €800 million in the UK.

Like most of the politically connected developers they were

happy to shift their loans to NAMA while simultaneously transferring some of their assets to wives and siblings in an effort to keep their wealth and avoid paying their loans should they be pursued or forced into receivership.

They need not have worried as NAMA looked after them.

They continued to earn rent worth millions that was paid by the state for the use of offices in their Blanchardstown development even as they owed the state over \$500 million.

Now things are truly looking up for the Cosgrave's and many of the very developers whose greed has left Ireland with the current housing crisis.

The Cosgrave's specialise in "up-market" developments and NAMA are very keen on this kind of housing.

Sales of homes worth over a million have jumped to over 117 so far this year as the Irish rich see their wealth increase and "confidence" in the high end of the housing market returns.

In contrast NAMA has handed over a miserable 1,100 housing units for social housing to local authorities since 2012. The agency



NAMA funded luxury home

took control of over 15,000 housing units from failed developers and many more sites and unfinished units that could have been used to house the many people in chronic housing need.

Another 5,000 homes offered

by NAMA were rejected by local councils because of their poor standard and location and a lack of willingness by Local Authorities to commit to social housing even at a time of unprecedented need.

One report suggests that some

houses offered by NAMA would require thousands of Euros to be spent to bring them up to acceptable standards. But Local Authorities will not be given the funding needed by the Government. The few social houses that NAMA have

delivered tend to be small parts of larger developments that the agency has handed over to corporate landlords known as REITs (Real estate investment trusts).

These vulture capital firms are making huge profits on the back of the housing crisis as NAMA sells them finished apartment and houses at knock down prices that they can then rent out or sell while paying no tax on their profits.

NAMA's remit is supposed to include supporting developments that are in the public interests, yet its slowness in providing significant social housing while bankrolling the very developers that caused the crash shows where its real class interests lie.

It is a key part of an agenda that wants to see property prices rise again and has lavished loans and consultancy payments to a few dozen key developers.

Its sale of property and land banks is shrouded in secrecy but as the scandal involving the sale of a portfolio worth €1.2 billion in the North shows the agency is enmeshed in dodgy deals that are proving hugely profitable to a well-connected political, legal, and property elite.

Housing Crisis, the US General and the New Goldman Sachs

Owen McCormack

Just how far has the Labour Party travelled on the road to worshipping at the neoliberal altar can be seen in Minister Alan Kelly's housing strategy.

Kelly has accepted the general neoliberal law that Governments can't provide any service, be it health, education or housing, for their citizens without enlisting the expertise, dynamism and efficiency of the Market.

Thus, his housing strategy relies completely on both the private rented sector for the bulk of its provision with private speculatively built housing by developers meant to provide the rest. Local Authorities will remain underfunded, and the stock of social housing will remain marginal.

Just how bankrupt this reliance on the market is illustrated by the Government's announcement of a new fund worth €500 million that will lend to developers for private build (i.e. for profit) housing. When

the market is shown incapable of providing a basic necessity like housing, the solution is obviously for the Government to... look to the market for solutions. As banks fail to lend to developers, this new fund will step in with €325 million stumped up by our old pension reserve fund (now renamed the "Ireland Strategic Investment Fund") and the rest provided by KKR Capital.

Swoop

Who? Well KKR Capital are a private equity. The outfit started life in the US, where it specialized in what is known as "Leverage buy outs" of various companies in the 1980s and 90s.

This is where KKR would swoop on a troubled firm; borrow the money to get control of it, then asset strip it to pay off the debts while savaging the jobs and wages along the way. In the Reagan and Thatcher era this provided rich pickings for various vultures like KKR. Think Gordon Gekko and "greed is good" and you



General Petraeus - friend of the homeless

get the picture. KKR has grown it now has €100 billion in assets and shares in firms worth over €200 billion. The recession has been good to KKR; they have diversified into energy, transport and now sprawl the globe picking up firms and debts and lending to companies that can't access money

from conventional sources. One recent financial report called KKR and other private equity firms the "New Goldman Sachs"

So eager are KKR to spread their wings that they are eyeing up Kazakhstan for its huge energy resources. Thus they appointed the former CIA chief General Petraeus,

of Iraq and Afghanistan fame, to head up their Global Institute and to "open doors" and court the country's "political elites" according to a gushing New York Times article.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev is Kazakhstan's virtual dictator presiding over a country with vast energy reserves vast poverty and an appalling human rights record..

Abu Ghraib

Labour activists are routinely tortured and imprisoned - the ideal location for the former General Petraeus, who presided over Iraq's Abu Ghraib prison, to help KKR unlock the potential hot investment opportunities in the oil and gas rich state

Back in Ireland, various Government drones have been touting the idea that this fund could finance over 11,000 homes. It will of course do nothing of the sort. At best it might finance 2,000.

Nothing of course could go wrong with such a policy. Developers always

pay their debts and KKR will most likely shoulder most of the risk, renowned as they are for wanting to help the homeless.

The recent scandal where KKR are alleged to have overcharged their clients by some \$100 million is probably just an exaggeration by those leftist reporters at the Wall Street Journal.

Pretty soon the housing crisis will be ended by vulture capital outfits, retired US army generals, and Alan Kelly. Indeed.

Kelly described this new fund as hugely significant. It is, but not like he thinks. It shows the utter bankruptcy of Labour. It means relying on a giant vulture capitalist to lend to a corrupt developer class to build houses for profit.

That the vulture capitalist comes dripping in blood from deals with dictators and torturers or with a recent past as a destroyer of countless workers' livelihoods makes no difference to the defenders of the efficacy of the market.

#socialism 1.01

John Molyneux

Jeremy Corbyn set for victory



All the evidence is pointing to left wing candidate Jeremy Corbyn winning the contest for the leadership of the British Labour Party, results of which are due to be announced on 12 September.

To say this is surprising to the British political establishment is to put it mildly. Corbyn had hardly any support among Labour MPs. They only agreed to put him on the ballot paper because they thought they should give the appearance of a fair debate.

Initially the bookies had him at 100/1 and its doubtful that even Corbyn himself thought he had a chance.

But from the very first TV debate the surge of support was spectacular and unprecedented. Now Corbyn stands clearly ahead of all the three 'mainstream' (i.e. right wing) candidates by every available measure: nominations from Constituency Parties, backing from trade unions and crucially voting intentions of individual members. Paddy Power have said they think its all over and willing to pay out to those who bet on Corbyn!

Particularly important is that he has addressed a series of overflowing mass meetings across Britain - 1000 in Liverpool, 2000 in Camden Town, 2000 in Newcastle and so on - meetings of a size no other politician could command. Cameron would only get 2000 out to protest against him.

Faced with the Corbyn surge all the old Blairite 'big beasts' of the Labour establishment have come out attack him, warning in the direst

terms against Labour Party members having the temerity to vote for such a dangerous radical. One after another Tony 'war criminal' Blair, Peter 'Prince of Darkness' Mandelson, Alastair 'spin doctor' Campbell and Neil 'I betrayed the miners' Kinnock spouted the mantra that Corbyn is 'unelectable'. The only visible effect has been to increase Corbyn's support. Actually polls show that Corbyn is not only leading with Labour members but also the most popular candidate with the wider public.

There is no great mystery to all this. Internationally this year has seen a wave of popular rejection of austerity and the neoliberal capitalism that underpins it. From Syriza in Greece, to Podemos and other left candidates in Spain, to the SNP in Scotland and the rise of the Left in Ireland we have seen a wave of support for political forces who have offered an alternative to mainstream business-as-usual.

Even the US has not been immune to this with the self described socialist Bernie Sanders doing well in the contest for the Democratic Presidential nomination and even leading Hilary Clinton in the polls for the New Hampshire Primary.

What Corbyn has done is simply express what millions of people are feeling: anger at the way they have been made to pay for the crisis of the bankers and capitalists and yearning for a better alternative.

None of the other candidates for the Labour leadership were willing to do this. They were convinced that to

win they had to sound 'moderate', 'sensible' and 'pro-business'. The candidate who embodied this most was Liz Kendall, the pick of the true Blairites, and she stands last in the polls.

Jeremy Corbyn's real problem is not winning the leadership contest but what happens when he wins. He will face a parliamentary LP overwhelmingly opposed to him. In all likelihood they will try either to undermine him or tame him, i.e. make him sell out, or both at the same time. How will he both 'maintain party unity' and not bitterly disappoint his own supporters? For example, will he really commit to getting rid of Trident or leaving NATO?

It would be even more difficult if Corbyn actually wins a general election and forms a government. As the experience of Syriza shows he would then be faced with immense hostility and economic terrorism from those whose interests really rule our society - the 1% of bankers, billionaires and industrialists and the likes of the IMF and the ECB. There would be no chance of them respecting the democratic vote of the British people. They would set out to destroy a Corbyn government.

This is why revolutionary socialists in Britain want Corbyn to win but say just voting Corbyn is not enough. The campaign to support Corbyn also needs to build active resistance to the Tories on the streets and in the workplaces and lead to a genuine socialist alternative to the Labour Party which has now governed Britain ten times but never done anything other than run capitalism.

Is Europe 'threatened'

Throughout the summer of 2015 politicians and media across the continent have pushed a narrative of Europe being threatened by 'swarms' of 'marauding' migrants - people who at all costs must be kept out lest they 'overwhelm' our meagre resources.

The result has been horror from thousands drowning in the Mediterranean, to dreadful scenes of suffering and repression in Kos, Calais and Macedonia.

Whether applied to Europe or Ireland this narrative is a tissue of distortion, propaganda and bigotry from beginning to end.

First, we are not actually talking about 'migrants' at all but **refugees**. These are people fleeing from the most extreme inhuman conditions of war and famine. Look at the countries they are coming from Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan etc. That is what makes people desperate enough to set out across the Mediterranean crammed on a totally unsafe inflatable.

But calling refugees refugees implies an obligation to help them. Calling them 'migrants' has associations, cultivated over decades, with 'illegal immigrants' who should be kept out.

Second the governments mobilising to defend their borders and repel 'the invasion' have all been up to their necks in directly inflicting, or collaborating in, the invasions, occupations and wars that have so devastated these countries.

This includes most obviously Britain and France but also Ireland with its allowing the US military to use Shannon.

Even as this is written, Saudi Arabia with US and EU collaboration and weapons, is inflicting horrendous suffering on the Yemen and creating famine conditions.

And its all about maintaining Western power and controlling oil supplies in a complex game of inter-imperialist rivalry that ruthlessly sacrifices the lives of ordinary people.

Third it is a myth that 'all these migrants' are coming 'over here' whether 'here' is



Ireland, Britain or Europe. On the contrary by far the largest numbers of refugees are being located in the countries adjacent to the war zones.

Thus the European country that has received the highest inflow across the Mediterranean is Italy with 174,000 arrivals. But the war creating most refugees at present is that in Syria which has displaced half the country's population.

Of these 1.8 million are in Turkey, 1.2 million in Lebanon, 625,000 in Jordan, 250,000 in Iraq, and 135,000 in Egypt. (Think how desperate you would have to be to flee to Iraq not from it) In the light of these figures the offer of Ireland, a much richer country than any of these, to take 600 speaks for itself.

Of course from the standpoint of humanity and solidarity Ireland and all the EU coun-

War drums beating in

In a dangerous new development Turkey has bombed Kurdish PKK camps and restarted a long war. Memet Uludag explains the situation.

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) has ruled Turkey since 2002 and enjoyed a number of local and general election victories.

One of the reasons for the success of the AKP was the 'Kurdish peace process' that was supported by a significant majority of the Turkish and Kurdish population in Turkey.

It was a first time in the history of the more than 30 years armed conflict between the Kurdish PKK and the Turkish state that the state felt the necessity to recognise Kurdish national and democratic demands and came to understand that military force would not be able to destroy the ever growing Kurdish movement.

Among other things, AKP had come to power - and increased its popular support - by promising an alternative approach to the Kurdish question.

In 2009 the government started active direct talks with Abdullah Öcalan, the jailed leader of PKK.

Shortly after that, a long and very fragile peace process was announced.

Some progress was made during the following years including regular meetings between the HDP MPs (HDP is the political wing of the Kurdish movement), the government and Öcalan.

Despite many difficulties a cease fire was in effect and hopes were high among the ordinary people that the peace process would conclude with a permanent solution.

Early 2014, a joint declaration between the AKP government and HDP negotiators - with the blessing of Öcalan - was announced to take the process to the next phase.

But it all changed in 2015, in the period leading to and following the general elections in June.

Current Turkish president (since 2014) and former AKP Prime Minister Erdoğan had political ambitions of changing the constitution to become a US style executive president.

Uneasy

Having survived the Gezi protests and very serious corruption allegations the AKP government also became increasingly uneasy about the political and military gains made by the Kurds in Syrian Kobane and Turkey.

On top of this, the Kurdish HDP for the first time, decided to run in the elections as a political party instead of individual candidates as 'independents'.

Historically Kurdish candidates had run as independents since any party running had to win minimum 10% of the national votes to get any seats in the parliament.

The government increasingly became hostile towards HDP and the Kurds in Syria.

Fearing a regional permanent Kurdish structure and the Kurds advancing their positions in northern Syria and declaring autonomous regions the AKP government ended its commitment to the peace process.

During the election campaign the peace process came to a halt and localised fights broke out. Erdoğan targeted the HDP and declared the joint peace



declaration null and void.

But the HDP won 13% of the votes and 80 seats - a great victory for them.

This result blocked AKP from winning enough seats to form a single party

ned by migrants'?



joined.
This has been at every level: through building roads, railways and houses, through literature, music and sport and, very importantly, by participating in the labour movement like James Connolly in America or many trade unionists in Britain.

In fact the whole of human history from its origins in Africa has been a history of migration, of people moving round the world – just think of the entire population of the United States and South America for example – and without this human development would have been impossible.

But how can you talk like this, some people will say, when there's an acute housing crisis and we can't even house our own people?

This is an understandable and in the present circumstances inevitable objection but it is also profoundly mistaken.

Homelessness and the housing crisis are not being caused by 'migrants', 'foreigners' or 'refugees' of any description.

They are caused by the lack of social housing, high rents and bank repossessions.

And refugees could easily be drawn into being part of the solution to this problem by taking part in the construction industry.

If, on the other hand, entirely justified anger about homelessness is diverted into attacks on 'foreigners' and refugees it lets the government, the bankers and the rest of the 1% off the hook.

And this is precisely why the establishment politicians right across Europe and their capitalist media friends always stoke up fears about 'floods' of immigrants.

They have been doing it for decades now and it is particularly a trademark of the racist and fascist right from Enoch Powell to Marine Le Pen and the Front National.

Their aim is always the same: divide and conquer.

In contrast the left, socialists and the working class movement should stand for unity and solidarity and say 'Refugees are welcome here'.

tries should be doing much more to help these poor people, not just by saving them from drowning but by extending the hand of friendship and allowing them to settle.

come to Ireland, or Britain or France and were allowed to work they would actually contribute to our societies and help to improve them.

Irish people are in a strong position to understand this because – driven by famine, poverty and unemployment – they have provided 'migrants' all over the world and without exception made huge positive contributions to the societies they have

Fundamental

But there is an even more fundamental point involved here: neither refugees nor migrants are actually a threat at all.

On the contrary if they were allowed to

an Turkish Kurdistan



against ISIS Turkey used the opportunity to bomb the PKK camps in Iraq.

The peace process and the ceasefire were effectively over.

During the last five weeks at least 100 PKK fighters and Turkish soldiers/police have been killed.

HDP proclaimed its commitment to the peace process and called on both sides to cease fire but this has not materialised.

Since the elections in June no party has been able to form a government and Erdogan has announced new elections in November.

Support

The majority of the people in Turkey still support the continuation of the peace process but the political crisis in the country, the Kurdish situation in Syria and AKP's significant losses in the elections have created an atmosphere of war.

The next elections will effectively be a referendum between 'back to old war days of 90's' or 'peace'. AKP's propaganda is that without their rule there will be no peace.

With the war drums beating in Turkey, and the Turkish-US military agreement on US bombing ISIS and Turkey bombing the PKK the current situation is extremely critical and worrying.

The last thing Turkey, the Kurds or the region need is another war. The horrors of 1980's and 90's are still fresh in the memories of ordinary Turkish and Kurdish people.

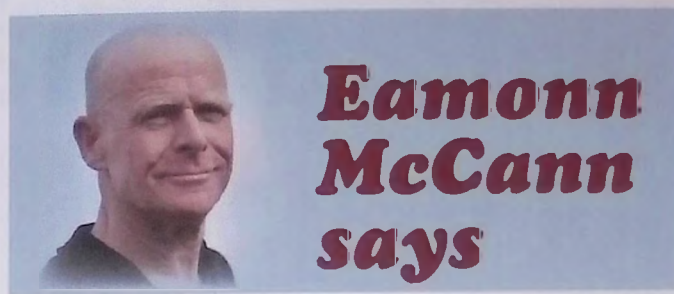
The only solution to the AKP hostilities and escalating fighting is to build a popular peace campaign in Turkey which also defends Kurdish rights.

government and change the constitution to enable Erdogan to become an executive style president.

In the days after the elections more fighting broke out and at the same time

AKP government made an agreement with the US to use the Incirlik US airbase against ISIS and other terrorist organisation.

As the US intensified its air strikes



Tory hypocrite condemns 'violence'

It's sometimes hard to tell whether Northern Ireland Secretary Theresa Villiers is a sinister knave or a silly fool.

We should probably go with sinister, her being a Tory.

Many people on the Left now lionise the late Aneurin Bevan, the man who, as Minister for Health in the post-war Attlee government in Britain, introduced the National Health Service.

But although the creation of the NHS was a positive development, Bevan had negative qualities too – aside and apart from being a leading member of the British Labour Party.

He was given to standing up in public and insulting animals. "Tories are vermin," he is said to have said.

If rats could sue they'd have descended on the courts in heaving packs, scratching at the doors.

If you are a member of a secret organisation, your membership has to be kept secret. If asked, you have to say no. If asked whether the organisation was responsible for this or that action, you have to say no – unless the action is something the organisation wants to claim credit for.

This wouldn't include the Northern bank robbery, the knifing of Robert McCartney, the shooting of Kevin McGuigan.

Into this tangled mess stepped Theresa Villiers.

She was very concerned.

If it emerged that the Provos had killed Kevin McGuigan, the consequences would be serious.

She didn't threaten actually to pull the Stormont institutions down – but she conceded, as she had to, that this was one of her options.



Northern Ireland Secretary Theresa Villiers

demanding a retraction.

For this reason only, Villiers won't be called vermin here. But "evil nonentity" seems reasonable.

In the immediate aftermath of the killing of Kevin McGuigan in Belfast on August 12th, controversy raged about the role, if any, of the Provisional IRA.

Had Provos pulled the trigger and, if so, at what level had the killing been "authorised".

Naturally enough, Sinn Fein spokespersons seethed.

The PIRA had shut up shop twenty years ago, gone away, retired from the field of battle, they insisted.

The volunteers were all now working selflessly for their communities and striving to consolidate peace.

Actually, this is true of many ex-prisoners and other former paramilitaries. But it is not true of the Provos as an organisation.

The "army" still exists, its command structure essentially intact. Its chief purpose now is to provide disciplined support for Sinn Fein.

This is much more the case in the North than in the South. But then, SF assures us that it is an All-Ireland party with a single perspective and purpose.

The other reason for keeping the organisation in running order is to maintain a dominant presence in Catholic working-class areas – and to ensure that their volunteers aren't easy meat for armed rivals.

This doesn't mean that the Provos killed Kevin McGuigan, officially, unofficially or in association with others.

It does mean that we cannot take their denials at face value.

After all, everything the Provos do has to have deniability. The IRA is an oath-bound secret organisation.

"Violence can have no part in the political process," she trilled.

This woman is a leader of a party which is never happier than when shooting and bombing lesser breeds to bits.

But even leaving aside the way her class of Brit has whooped and hollered its approval of enslavement and massacre down through the ages, she is currently constitutionally responsible for the activities in the North of the notorious murder gang, MI5.

One example: MI5 was jointly in control – with the Force Reaction Unit – of the massive operation in the 1980s whereby Loyalist paramilitaries were given carte blanche and practical assistance to kill Catholics.

The solicitor Pat Finucane was their most high-profile victim.

Whatever about the Provos, MI5 certainly hasn't gone away.

Indeed, the outfit now has "primacy" in all policing matters which touch on "national security".

And who is it who decides what comes under the rubric of "national security"? Why, MI5.

It is a fact, not a rumour or unhelpful speculation, that MI5 is undemocratic, unaccountable and steeped in innocent blood.

But Theresa Villiers thinks they are just the chaps to supervise law and order.

There may be people in the upper echelons of Sinn Fein who talk out of both sides of their mouths.

But when it comes to lying, cheating and defending the murder of people on their doorsteps or in their living rooms as they sit down with their families for a meal, the Provos are in the ha'penny place compared with moral sleazebags like Villiers.

Syriza's betrayal – a wake-up call for the left

Marnie Holborow

Eurozone finance ministers approved a third bailout worth up to €86 billion euros to keep Greece in the single currency in return for an austerity package that the Syriza government had previously rejected.

The Greek parliament a few days earlier passed the accord following a bitter all-night debate on the conditions which will worsen, still more, everyday life for people in Greece.

The package was approved with 229 votes in the 300-seat chamber. There were 64 votes against it and 6 abstentions, including people from Syriza's Left Platform.

To get it through, Tsipras required the support of the right wing and centre parties – who had supported a yes to austerity in the referendum.

There is an overwhelming sense of betrayal both in Greece – and across Europe among those who looked so optimistically to what Syriza seemed to offer.

How did it come to this?

This is no mild capitulation. The terms of the new programme are even more severe than the previous memoranda agreed by PASOK and New Democracy.

It requires Greece to conform to privatisation and deregulation, allowing Greece no room to decide itself how this should happen.

The detail given by the Troika is quite extraordinary. Sunday trading will be introduced and pharmacy ownership reviewed.

The electricity transmission network will be privatised and VAT will be increased to 23%.

It completely discards parliament's right to decide its own legislation.

It stipulates that collective bargaining, industrial action and collective dismissals must be reviewed and early retirement agreements annulled.

An extensive privatisation

programme – to cover the sale of beaches, stadiums, thermal springs, ruins, airport, ports – will be established 'under the supervision of the relevant EU institutions'. €25 billion of this €50 billion programme has to go straight back to paying the creditors and banks.

This seems like neo-colonialism, with the Troika as emperors.

Contrast

The contrast between this and Syriza's own pre-election promises is stark.

The Thessaloniki Programme, drawn up in September 2014, which Tsipras said before the elections was 'not negotiable', called for a moratorium in debt servicing to save funds for growth.

It committed a Syriza government to an immediate €4 billion increase in public investment and for the restoration of salaries and pensions.

Ironically, Syriza's manifesto accused the then Samaras government of being 'too ready to accept the decisions of the creditors'.

Nor have Syriza's betrayals been confined to its capitulation to the Troika.

On the foreign policy front it has collaborated with the bloody Egyptian dictator, Al-Sisi, announced a deal for military training cooperation with the even more blood stained Israeli government and responded badly to the refugee crisis in the Mediterranean.

Tsipras's alliance with the right wing ANEL (Independent Greeks) is proving to have been more than just a matter of parliamentary arithmetic but rather the acceptance of a Greek nationalist agenda.

Anger from the voters against those who break election promises, as we know in Ireland, is unforgiving. In Greece, this has brought down two governments, first of the left and then of the right.

Syriza's popularity has not yet waned but this could change when the government starts to implement the memorandum.



Lessons for Ireland

But already there are lessons for us in Ireland as we too approach elections.

First, the fatal flaw of the Syriza strategy has to be recognised. Being anti-austerity within the austerity framework of the Eurozone simply cannot work. The EU institutions are a bosses' club committed to the interests of the 1%. They are not the 'partners' of the Greek people or the people of Ireland.

Secondly, Tsipras's strategy ignores what brought Syriza to power – the resistance of Greek workers themselves – and springs from a top-down approach to politics that is imprisoned within the logic of the system.

This came out clearly when Tsipras admitted that the massive anti-austerity vote delivered by the Greek people, was no more than a bargaining tool in his negotiations with the Eurogroup. For those of us in trade unions, this cynical use of mass resistance reminds us of those union leaders who so many times have marched us up to the top of the hill only to march us down again.

Thirdly, the whole debacle has

showed how much Syriza puts being in government before everything else. Power before principles, is how the Blairites put the argument against Corbyn, and Syriza says something similar, even if the language they use is more left wing.

The Syriza government, is caught in a political trap.

They say they will solve certain urgent problems by complying temporarily with the logic of the existing financial order, promising to gain strength later and press home their real aims.

They forget that in taking on the administration of capitalism they do not gain strength but lose it.

The right of all hues have been quick to press home their victory – from Wolfgang Schäuble and the Eurogroup to our own Fine Gael TD Brian Hayes who has claimed that the left need to learn from 'Syriza's folly'.

In this situation Syriza has exhausted its anti-austerity credentials though it will try to manoeuvre to restore its image. Tsipras has promised a special congress of Syriza which will be used as an argument against a split by the Left Platform. The government

has now called a snap election in September – in which loyalty to the Syriza government will be the theme.

Need for an alternative

In this election it is vital that there is a clear anti-austerity left alternative to Syriza. Hopefully this will be provided by the former Left Platform of Syriza who have founded a new party, 'Popular Unity', together with the revolutionaries of Antarsya, including SEK (Socialist Workers Party). And electoral opposition to austerity has to be closely linked to working class resistance from below.

Panos Garganos of SEK argues that if such a radical left force breaks with the logic of being part of the Eurozone, and stands on this platform, then the election could become a confirmation of the political crisis and possibly mean the government collapsing as a result of going against the majority who voted no to austerity.

All the signs are that if pensions are cut, the trade unions and workers will mobilise. Even in the month of August, usually

very quiet, there has already been a shutdown of the railways by workers fighting privatisation as well as a strike against sackings at one of the main private TV channels.

Greece's economy cannot recover with all these cutbacks and its level of debt, which even the IMF recognises, is unsustainable. Implementing the memorandum is very different to merely passing it in the parliament.

All those that have repeatedly voted 'no' to austerity, including many of Syriza's supporters, will not be able to take further cuts. The first major demonstration, traditionally called by the unions on the first Saturday of September, is when the prime minister always opens the Thessalonica fair – this time Tsipras may be the one who is booed.

For the left, including the left in Ireland, two conclusions stand out: 1) there needs to be a clear commitment to cancel the debt, unilaterally if necessary; 2) it is not possible to implement an anti-capitalist policy in collaboration with the capitalist state – it can only be done by relying on mass struggles from below.

Ireland to test new military weapons

Maeve McGrath

Minister for Defence, Simon Coveney, is planning to make Ireland a 'testing zone' for 'advanced military and weapons guidance systems, including drones, submarine drones and other such high-tech hardware'.

He spoke to journalists about his 'white paper' outlining the scheme whereby the international defense industry is to be granted far greater access to this country to test out their weapons.

Coveney wants to open up our public defense forces to serve private, foreign companies. Our military currently works with private arms companies like Moog and Reamda.

We also work with EU and other militaries and allow the US military use of Shannon airport – thereby facilitating their various interventions in the Middle East.

Given revelations from whistle-blower Edward



Snowden about the reality and horrors of drone warfare – the detached murder of civilians in Afghanistan and Pakistan – we need to reject Ireland becoming a servant of the Western war machine.

Irish troops have been sent to training exercises as part of EU battle groups. 55 vehicles and 158 Irish troops went to Sweden last year as part of an 'elite' training programme.

"In total, 2,500 troops

will take part in the exercise and they will include personnel from Ireland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Finland and Ireland which are members of the EU's Nordic Battlegroup," Lt Col Carey said.

During last summer when Israel massacred thousands of Palestinians with their "Operation Protective Edge"; medical personnel on site described injuries that were indicative of new, experimental technology as

well as banned weapons such as DIME bombs (Dense Inert Metal Explosives).

Although the plans for Ireland are not to test rockets, but targeting drones and missile guidance systems; it still raises serious concerns about facilitating private concerns to gain profit from the destruction of lives across the world while our Government moves us into a closer relationship with the Western war machine.

Obituary: Seamus O'Boyle (1957-2015)

Rest in peace Seamie – a hero of the working class.

Seamie O'Boyle was a working class hero. His life was a testament to everything good in the human spirit.

Seamie had it hard growing up. He was born an orphan in the 1950's and spent many nights on the streets. For some people this start would understandably have been too much, but Seamie came to a political conclusion – life is not fair but it can be changed with courage, honesty and human decency.

Seamie had all of these qualities in bucket loads. He spent his life building a family, solidifying friendships and fighting for the working class.

People loved Seamie for this and his passing has left a void that will never be filled.

Other people have their own memories of Seamie, but People Before Profit met him six years ago in the middle of the economic crisis. From the start, Seamie knew



two things instinctively. Working people didn't cause the crisis, but they would be forced to pay for it without a fight back. Seamie spent his last years building this fight back.

He joined the Sligo Workers Alliance in 2009 and People Before Profit in 2013. We took this as a genuine badge of honour. Whether it was

a campaign for home help workers, a fight for marriage equality or a campaign against water charges, Seamie was always in the thick of it.

His politics were simple and progressive – for people power, democracy and social justice against discrimination, inequality and scapegoating.

These are just some of the reasons that people elected Seamie to the council last year.

Seamie was incredibly proud to have been elected and he threw himself into his council work with gusto. This is only one small part of Seamie's legacy.

He leaves a loving family, lifelong friends and a reputation for decency that will live on in his community.

We salute a fallen friend and comrade. The fight goes on for a fairer Ireland and Seamie will be there with us every step of the way. Rest in peace comrade – our future struggles will be made in your memory.

People Before Profit Sligo.

The plain necessity of revolutionary change

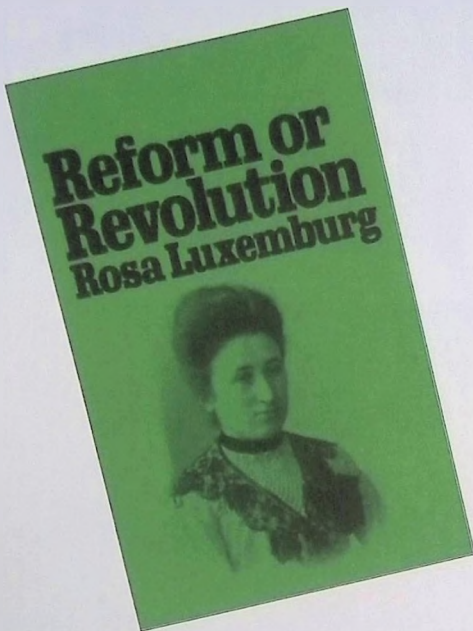
Rosa Luxemburg's *Reform or Revolution*

This classic Marxist text is reviewed by James Grannell who argues it is very relevant today.

With the recent rise of reformist parties, such as Syriza and Podemos in Europe and Sinn Féin here in Ireland, Rosa Luxemburg's *Reform or Revolution* text from 1900 is once again essential reading for socialists everywhere as it provides the clear theoretical framework through which to understand the unworkability of the reformist doctrine.

Luxemburg wrote this remarkably insightful piece at the turn of the last century in response to fellow German Social Democratic Party (SPD) member, Eduard Bernstein's arguments in favour of reformism (or revisionism, as it was then known).

Bernstein argued that capitalism had overcome its tendency towards crisis (as described by Marx) and, as a result, the antagonisms between workers and capitalists had diminished. This, he said, meant that the socialist movement should push for piecemeal reform, rather than the revolutionary overthrow of the capitalist system. However, Luxemburg, had a



clear understanding that while revolutionaries had to fight for reforms, this fight could not be an end in itself. Rather, revolutionaries must bring the most militant methods of struggle to the fore during these struggles for reform and, as a result, help the working class to develop the self-confidence and the organisation necessary to make revolution. Luxemburg also argued, quite rightly, as history has shown, that the

capitalist system cannot be reformed, therefore the goal of the working class must be to overthrow it.

Reformists sought, and still seek, to build socialism by means of the progressive extension of social control and the gradual application of the principle of cooperation within the existing capitalist framework. This idea of the gradual reform of the system is as popular today as it was in Luxemburg's own time.

However, Luxemburg maintained that this move away from the scientific and revolutionary basis of socialism, towards a gradualist approach, represented not only a rejection of the Marxist principle that capitalism, by its nature, moves towards its own eventual collapse, but actually, in arguing thus, removed any necessity for the existence of a socialist movement at all.

In wonderfully pithy fashion she exposed the utopian ideas that underlay the reformist ideology when she reiterated the Marxist position that, 'the present state is, first of all, an organisation of the ruling class.'

Therefore labour legislation is enacted as much in the immediate interest of the capitalist class as in the interest of society in general.

Potential

Those today who wax lyrical about the potential for left government or the potential for progressive social change through parliament would do well to turn to this piece, especially the section on capitalism and the State.

Here Luxemburg correctly asserts that, 'in this society, the representative institutions, democratic in form, are in content the instruments of the interests of the ruling class.'

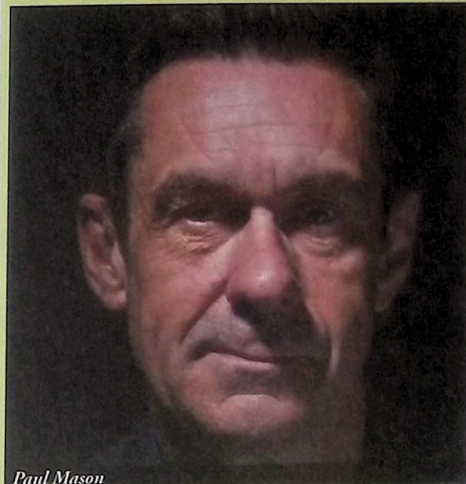
Luxemburg's rejection of bourgeois liberalism allowed her to see that as soon as parliamentary democracy threatens the interests of the ruling class it is curtailed, shut down, and reigned in by that same class. Think of the European Union's recent treatment of Greece, Denis O'Brien's attempts to shut down Dáil debate, or David Drumm's refusal to come before the banking enquiry in person.

Charles Fourier, the utopian socialist, believed that it would be possible to turn the sea into lemonade.

Throughout *Reform or Revolution* Rosa Luxemburg demonstrates again and again that the reformists who are proposing to change the sea of capitalist bitterness into a sea of socialist sweetness, by progressively pouring into it bottles of social reformist lemonade, presents an idea that is merely more insipid but no less fantastic.

Socialists should read Luxemburg's fine work and be ready, like her, to argue at every meeting and on every street for the plain necessity of revolution. *Reform and Revolution* is as pertinent today as it was over one hundred years ago when it was written by this great socialist who gave everything, including her life, for the revolutionary cause.

Can technology lead to a new system?



Paul Mason

Paul Mason, *PostCapitalism – A Guide to Our Future*, Allen Lane, 2015

By Dave O'Farrell

The latest offering from Channel 4 economics editor Paul Mason has been generating considerable debate.

His basic premise – that capitalism is reaching the limits of its abilities to adapt – is fairly standard fare for left wing writing, at least post the financial crash of 2008.

What sets Mason's book out from the crowd is his view on the role of technology in bringing this situation about and, more intriguingly, how technology can lead to a new system – which he terms postcapitalism – and how it can help to bring this new system into being.

There is much in the book to potentially interest readers: an account of the crisis of 2008 and its causes; discussions on the history of capitalism and its theorists, from Smith and Ricardo through to Marx and Keynes and onto the neoliberal period of Von Mises and Hayek, and the attendant treatment of markets at each turn; and analysis of capitalism as a series of long cycles in which Mason places us in a "stalled" fifth long cycle which is failing to take off, in large part due to modern technology.

While the discussions of how modern technology can push the costs of reproducing information (take for example an .mp3 file) essentially to zero it is here that some of the arguments begin to look shaky.

While it is true that information in the sense of an .mp3 or software can have essentially zero cost of reproduction and the discussions of the responses to this – ranging from free and open source software movements to Apples strategy of monopolising its market – does highlight examples of capitalism running into a serious obstacle it seems to ignore the reality that most goods are not "information" in this sense – unless you plan on eating what you can grow on farmville – and is still a long way off showing that

"information" has ended capitalism's ability to adapt.

As Lenin put it, the capitalists can get out of any crisis if they can walk far enough on the backs of the working class!

Yet the main criticism of Mason's book lies with his proposed solution and – crucially – how we are supposed to get there.

Following a long line of theorists who have announced the working class was either dead or so radically altered it could no longer challenge capitalism we are treated to a nebulous vision of the new agent of change in society – the networked individual.

The descriptions of these individuals range from fellow commuters on smartphones to suggestions that it could encompass the vast majority of humanity.

Agents

If the agents of change are poorly defined then the discussion on how to achieve a postcapitalist society is even more so. Mason's call for a "radical reformism" seems deeply confused and appears as an eclectic mix of appeals to utilise the state and market forces to push this transition to postcapitalism while also building up alternative structures within capitalism.

While the repressive power of the state is mentioned, he does not propose any strategy to overcome this.

Revolution it seems is off the table. Indeed even when comparing the emergence of capitalism from feudalism – in many ways an easier process given that capitalist social relations could exist within feudal relations in a way that socialist or similar relations cannot exist within capitalism – there is no emphasis on the revolutions (such as the Dutch, English and French) that were needed to establish capitalism as the dominant system in society.

While Mason has produced an interesting and at times engaging read ultimately his search for a replacement for the working class undermines any chance of actually achieving a system which is postcapitalist in any meaningful sense.

What Happened Miss Simone?

Linda Kehoe reviews a new Netflix documentary about the great anti-racist singer and activist, Nina Simone.

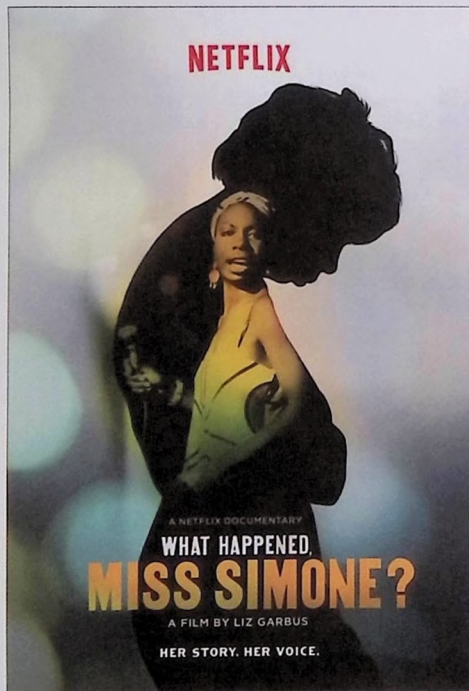
You could tell her story in a hundred different ways – with a dramatic tagline "superstar singer-songwriter with the violent controlling husband" or the romantic "Queen of Soul with hidden personal sorrows" or the sensational "young, black girl from small town USA conquers the musical world and sets out to conquer racism".

Any of these taglines would make a movie – and today there is such a huge interest in her story that two more films are set for release in the next few months. *What Happened Miss Simone?* is a documentary combining video & audio clips, diary extracts and interviews with those who knew her – family, friends, musicians and activists. Nina's daughter was one of the producers, and Nina's story is told in full. The good and the bad, laid out in *Black and White*.

The story starts with little Eunice Waymon born in 1933 in North Carolina, who knows she is black, and that it means she should always be cautious but hasn't fully realised what it means.

Her skill at piano is recognised and she is encouraged, supported and trained.

She loves Bach, dreams of becoming a classical pianist, goes to Juillard and reaches for the dream but gets pushed back by 1950s racism. Need – need for money to support her family and her need to play music – led her to jazz bars and to sing



and to becoming the world-recognised superstar she was.

This film shows us – first in black and white, then in colour – that Nina was unable to hold anything back in life, on stage or in her music. She radiated energy and it took a toll on her physically and emotionally.

Depression

We learn facts about domestic abuse and depression, the good and the bad choices she made and about her actions – and are left to form our own opinions.

The interviews are balanced well with the audio

and film clippings, giving the background which allow us to take a more educated guess at what is going through her mind while she powers through those incredible stage performances.

Her husband Andy never alludes to his violence towards Nina, though the other interviewees do and we see Nina had written of it often, and this seems like an omission.

The Civil Rights movement is the secondary storyline in this film and Nina's rise to fame mirrored the rise of the movement. Malcolm X and Betty Shabazz were her friends and neighbours and she reportedly told Martin

Luther King that she was "not non-violent". Her husband/manager Andy thought her activism kept her from performing (money-making) while for Nina "singing to help my people became the mainstay of my life".

Her talent, her status and her willingness to vocalise her anger about the treatment of her people did hurt her career, but it helped the civil rights movement. And when she felt something – she sang it. Following the murders of four black girls in a church in Alabama – she wrote and sang "Mississippi God Dam" – she dared to say what no one else would, and she had an audience. As she became more politically active her per-

formances changed and her clothing changed; becoming more African Queen and less fitting-in-with-the-white-world. *Young, Gifted and Black* became an anthem of the Civil Rights movement. Her fall from stardom mirrored the decline of the Civil Rights movement – though we may have expected that less activism would help her career – but Nina seemed to need it and to be broken by its demise. She walked out of her own life and went to Africa "to be happy and free" and from there she came to Europe – and reached the low-point of her life.

The film then gives us an explanation for some of her quirks and actions, and how Nina lost some of her music but regained her ability to thrive.



El Lissitzky at IMMA

Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge

The Irish Museum of Modern Art in Kilmainham is currently showing an exhibition on the work of the Russian revolutionary constructivist artist, El Lissitzky.

El Lissitzky is best known for his iconic *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge* from the period of the Civil War.

Socialist Worker

DEFEND PUBLIC ASSETS IN NORTHERN IRELAND

Sean Mitchell

The sell-off of public assets in the North is in full swing. The latest resource on the chopping board is the Waterfront and Ulster Hall, two Belfast City Council run venues in Belfast.

On Friday 21st August, at the Council's Strategic Policy and Resource Committee, a majority of councillors voted for the creation of a "Council Owned Company" to oversee the running of the Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

What this means, in essence, is that these venues and public assets will no longer be run by Belfast City Council but instead by an unelected "Board of Directors".

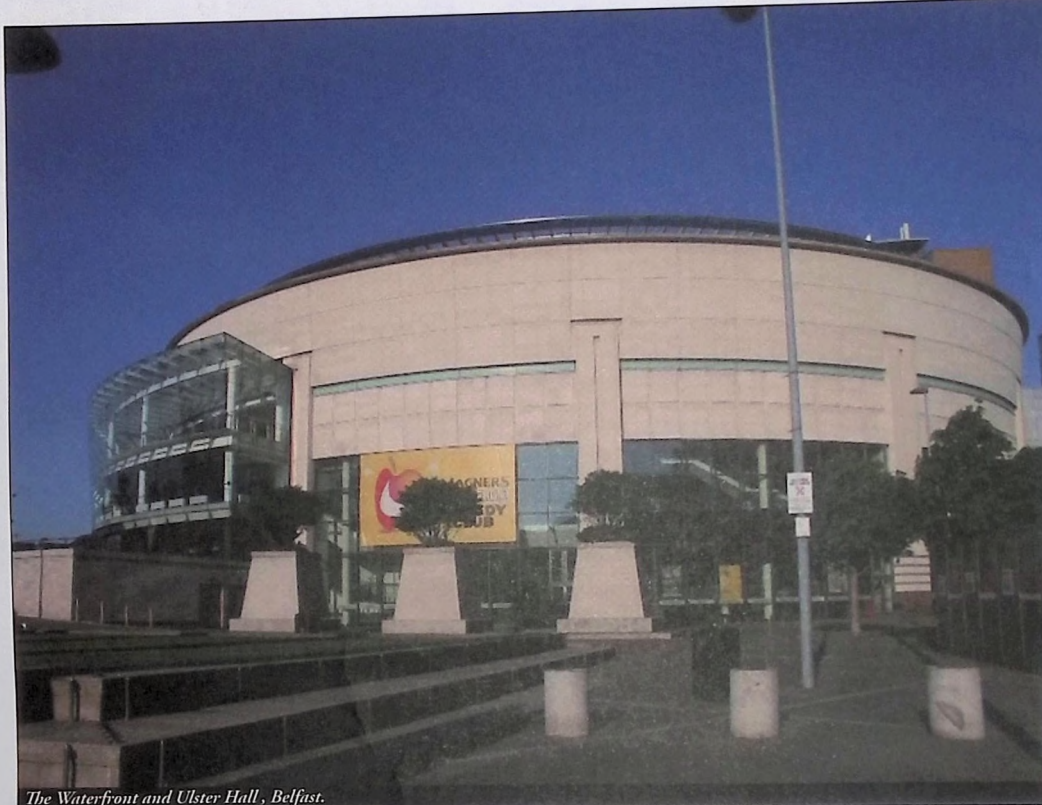
Whilst it is not a full privatisation of the sites, this move would be a clear step in that direction.

There is no evidence to show that outsourcing these sites will bring any tangible benefit to the Council and the public. Instead, the decision has been driven by an increasingly neo-liberal consensus amongst the big parties here: that public services should be allowed to run down and a more "commercial" approach taken towards the sector.

Both the Waterfront and Ulster Hall have benefited from huge investments of public money over the years.

With this proposal, what little influence the public had over these sites will be lessened further.

Those that work in the venues, some



The Waterfront and Ulster Hall, Belfast.

for many years, will no doubt worry their terms and conditions will be under attack at some stage in the future.

The case of the Waterfront, however, is not an isolated decision.

It is part of a wider agenda to hand over services, venues and assets from both local councils, and the Stormont

Assembly itself. In Belfast last year, control of leisure facilities was outsourced to an unelected private organisation, GLL.

Impact

This move has had a detrimental impact on workers in the service, with ongoing attacks on their pay and stand-

ards at work. Undeterred, Belfast City Council now plans on pushing through the same proposal for the Waterfront and Ulster Hall.

Stormont too has its eye on selling off of public assets. Belfast Harbour is one of the largest earmarked to go; with over 700 firms employing around

21,000 people on the estate.

The area was valued three years ago at £850m, but a price tag of less than half that has been discussed at Stormont.

NI water has also been suggested as a possible revenue raiser, with DUP the Finance Minister hinting that water charges may be inevitable.

Another service earmarked for privatisation has been Translink.

With roads and transport suffering cutbacks of 20%, and bus and rail routes set to close across the North, politicians have suggested public transport might be better run in the hands of a private company.

The problem is, of course, that privatisation only ensures one thing: profits for those in charge.

The good news is that we have time to stop this.

The decision to hand over the Waterfront and Ulster Hall has to be ratified on September 1st by a full meeting of the Council. Trade Unions are currently engaged in industrial action short of a strike against these proposals.

We need more of this, and we need to go further to full strike action if necessary. But we also need a wider movement that links all these different issue together.

Whether it's the Waterfront, welfare cuts or the privatisation of public services, we need feet on the street to take on the politicians. People Before Profit intends will do all it can to build such a movement.

Belfast SWP Statement on murder of Kevin McGuigan

The recent killing of Kevin McGuigan in Short Strand, almost certainly in revenge for the murder of former IRA commander Gerard 'Jock' Davison in the Markets area three months earlier, has raised fears of escalating violence in nationalist areas in Belfast and laid bare a sharply deteriorating political situation across the North.

17 years after the signing of the Belfast Agreement, the Assembly at Stormont is locked in near-perpetual crisis, paralysed by communal division and driven to the edge by the deadlock over Tory-imposed 'welfare reform'.

There has been much speculation about the circumstances surrounding the McGuigan shooting, including an extraordinary, convoluted political intervention by PSNI Chief Constable George Hamilton. The southern establishment, desperate for an opportunity to reverse Sinn Féin's rise in the polls, has followed the lead of the most sectarian elements in northern Unionism, with the southern press outdistancing the PSNI in attempting to pin the murder on the Provisional IRA and insisting that their involvement rules out any possibility of Sinn Féin serving in government in the South.

Socialist Worker does not intend to add to the rampant speculation surrounding the McGuigan murder. We are very clear, however, that these killings cannot be justified and should



Kevin McGuigan

stop now. Socialists are opposed to paramilitarism and to the meting out of "justice" through the barrel of a gun. We are as concerned as anyone about these murders, and about the dangers of an escalation of paramilitary violence in working class communities in the coming weeks. There are dangers, as well, that the sectarian agitation emanating on a weekly basis from Stormont will bolster the standing of a small minority in both main communities who relish a return to armed conflict, and could potentially

drag us backwards.

Above all, however, we are concerned about the way that powerful political forces—including the British government—are attempting to use this crisis for their own nefarious ends. The sickening sight of Tory Theresa Villiers lecturing people about commitment to peaceful means is hard to stomach. There have been increasing calls—particularly from within the ranks of Unionism—for Sinn Féin to be excluded from the executive. Socialists have to be very clear on this question.



Gerard 'Jock' Davison

We do not side opportunistically with those who now wish to exclude SF from the executive.

'Dirty War'

Nor do we accept that a police force steeped in the traditions of the 'dirty war', a force which continues to play an obstructionist role in blocking attempts by victims of state violence to uncover the truth, has any moral standing or legitimacy as an independent arbiter of justice.

Just as ordinary people in the recent

past played a central role in bringing the conflict to an end, socialists have to stand with working-class people in the Markets, the Short Strand and elsewhere to issue a clear call for an end to the latest round of paramilitary murders. Beyond that we have to organise independent of Stormont and wider state forces to build a movement that can uproot the poverty that fuels violence and challenge a system that thrives on murderous sectarian division.

See also Eamonn McCann's article on this topic on p.5