

Socialist Worker

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Ireland's Shame – the Housing Crisis

Everyday the politicians, RTE and the newspapers tell us the Irish economy is in 'recovery'. We are all supposed to be getting better off. Every week some Government Minister leaks new information about some give away they have planned to bribe the electorate, who they've been robbing for five years, in the pre-election budget.

And everyday, every week, the housing and homelessness crisis gets worse and worse.

You see it on the streets of Dublin. You can read it in the language of statistics. The Simon Community says that there are now 3,372 adults, 707 families and 1,496 children in emergency accommodation. This is a 76% increase since January alone.

You can read it in the tragic headlines. Nearly a year after the terrible death of Jonathan Corrie in a doorway within metres of the Dáil another young homeless man dies in almost the same spot.

Yet nothing has been done.

Warnings

For years now Fr Peter McVerry, Focus Ireland, Sister Stan and every other homeless charity and campaign has been warning of the impending disaster. So has Richard Boyd Barrett, Ruth Coppinger, Brid Smith, Tina MacVeigh and every decent and progressive TD and councillor.

It has fallen on deaf ears. Shame on the Irish Government!

Let's be clear. A half way decent society – one that cared for people more than developers' profits – would never have let this problem arise. And a decent society could solve the immediate crisis now, in weeks or months... if there was the will.

And a decent society would start now on tackling the underlying problem, the



lack of social housing. Instead we have had the Gardai taking urgent action – to close down a Soup Kitchen on Grafton St!

What needs to be done is not rocket science, it's obvious.

Emergency

The Government should declare a National Emergency so that special measures can be taken.

The houses that stand empty across the country and especially across Dublin should be taken over and occupied. In 2012 the

Deutsche Bank reported that there were 289,451 empty houses in Ireland, and the figure for Dublin alone currently stands at over 20,000.

There are large numbers of empty warehouses. They could easily be refurbished and used.

Rent supplements should be raised and rent controls should be imposed. We must stop pricing people and especially families with children out of accommodation. At present rents are going through the roof and making it impossible for tens of thousands

of people to get a home.

These emergency measures should be backed by a massive programme to build and provide proper affordable social housing for people.

And it should be paid for with the €4 billion reserves being held by NAMA.

So why are these things not done? There are many answers.

NAMA and the developers (as reported in last month's Socialist Worker) prefer to concentrate on the luxury homes end of the market, where there's more money to

be made.

Councils are mired in red tape and bureaucracy, moving at a snail's pace to deal with so-called 'voids' (empty properties) when emergency action is needed. The Deutsche Bank report estimated that at the present rate it would take 43 years to fill these 'voids'!

Politicians keep looking for 'market solutions', like Fine Gael Housing Minister, Paudie Coffey's proposals to give tax breaks to landlords as an incentive when what is needed is strong government action.

But all these answers build down to one thing – we have a political system and an economic system and a government geared to putting profit before people.

Housing is a right

If housing is treated not as a human right but as just another commodity on the market, the housing crisis will never be solved. In the so-called 'free' market production, including housing provision, is for profit and so is provided for those who have the money to pay for it, especially those who have lots of money.

By definition the homeless will not have money and in a competitive market situation people in poverty and on lower incomes, who have had their wages and welfare benefits cut through austerity, will always lose out in the race for housing.

That is why we need to keep up the pressure on the Government. That is why there will a Right2Housing demonstration at the Dail on December 1, the anniversary of Jonathan Corrie's death.

And that is why at the next election we need to clear out the establishment parties, who are all committed to maintaining this unjust system.

Europe's Shame – the Refugee Crisis

Socialist Worker is deliberately putting the refugee crisis on its front page along side the housing crisis, as well as discussing its roots on p4-5 inside.

We do this knowing full well that that there will be people who will say, 'How can we welcome refugees when we can't house our own?'

We believe that the resources exist in Ireland, and even more so in Europe as a whole, to solve BOTH the housing crisis AND the refugee crisis.

The problem in both cases is the same – those resources are monopolised by a tiny minority of the super rich and the giant corporations and the system is focused on their needs not the needs of the poor and homeless, whether they are Irish homeless or refugee homeless.

In 2014 there were 468 billionaires in Europe with a total net wealth of \$1.95 trillion.

When it comes to millionaires there are 1.43 million households worth a million euros in Germany, 1.33 million in France and 796,000 in the UK. Switzerland, alone, has over 500,000 millionaire households.

The idea that this immensely rich continent cannot afford to open its borders to people fleeing for their lives from wars which the EU and Ireland have directly fomented or aided and abetted through the arms trade is grotesque.

The EU is promising to give €1 billion aid to help the refugee crisis – to help keep the refugees out, that is. The EU's annual expenditure on arms is €281 billion. That's 281 times as much spent on creating the problem as spent on trying to solve it.



The big picture

When we look at the overall picture it is clear that the reasons for the housing crisis and the reasons for the refugee crisis are closely linked and that those responsible for both crises are the same governments, the same neo-liberal policies and the same profit-focussed system.

The politicians and developers who don't care if homeless people die on the streets

are the same people who don't care if they drown in the Mediterranean.

The politicians who close their borders and erect razor wire fences to keep out refugees are the same who preside over evicting people from their homes because they can't afford spiralling rents or mortgage arrears.

That's why we argue that housing rights and refugee rights are part of the same struggle

for a decent society, not one dominated by greed, private property and profit.

And that's why we believe that if we do welcome refugees to Ireland they will enrich our society economically and culturally, not damage it or be a burden.

And many of them will also join and strengthen our fight for social justice here.

That is why we are proud to say 'Refugees Welcome Here'.

Inside other pages:

Pages 4-5:



Refugees: Roots of the Crisis: Memet Uludag

Page 7:



Marnie Holborrow on Greece after the elections

SOLIDARITY WITH JOBSTOWN 27 - CRUMLIN 13 DEMONSTRATE AT COURT 2 NOVEMBER (SEE P. 3)

THE RIGHT2 CHANGE ROAD SHOW

Right2Change is the political initiative created by the five (now six) trade unions who broke with the Labour Party to take part in the Right2Water anti-water charges movement.

Its leading lights include Brendon Ogle of UNITE, John Douglas, President of ICTU and General Secretary of Mandate and Dave Gibney, also of Mandate.

Having organised two conferences earlier in the year to draw up a statement of basic principles which they would expect a progressive government of Ireland to adhere to, Right2Change are taking those principles on the road to be discussed at a series of public meetings round the country.

It is possible this may lead to Right2Change endorsing progressive and radical election candidates who sign up to these principles.

Socialist Worker welcomes this development and urges its readers to attend these meetings and take part in the ongoing discussion.

We would particularly want to advocate at these meetings solidarity with the Jobstown 27, Crumlin 13, and all victims of political policing, a voter registration drive in working class areas and the holding of another day of mass Right2Water demonstrations when the Election is called to put the water charges issue centre stage in the election campaign.



Your body, your life, your choice! Time to repeal the 8th



A section of the 26 September demo.

Madeline Johansson

About ten thousand people took to the streets for the annual March4Choice on Saturday 26th September – it was a brilliant turn out.

This reflects the increasing pressure to repeal the 8th amendment. Recent polls have shown that over 80% of people in Ireland want to see a liberalisation of abortion laws. As many as 45% favour abortion under any circumstances. However, any change to abortion laws, even modest ones such as the inclusion of abortion in cases of rape and

fatal foetal abnormalities require the removal of the 8th amendment.

The marriage equality referendum showed the decline of the stranglehold of the Catholic Church over Irish society. The high Yes votes in working class areas such as Ballymun and Ringsend breaks the myth that LGBTQ issues or women's issues are 'middle class' issues.

On the contrary abortion is very much a class issue. Rich women with the ability to travel can easily avail of an abortion abroad. Women without the financial means to travel or migrant women

with travel restrictions are forced to carry pregnancies to full term regardless of their own wishes.

Winning a referendum on abortion will not be the same as marriage equality.

Opposition

The opposition will be stronger and the establishment will not be on board.

The pro-choice movement need to work to win the population politically to the right to choose.

This needs to include winning the trade union movement. ICTU's support for the 'Coalition

Dún Laoghaire harbour is not for sale

Paul O'Brien

The proposed development of Dún Laoghaire harbour has outraged everyone in the area, as it appears that a small group of business people are making decisions that will affect the future of the harbour and the town.

The recent ending of the Ferry Service to Holyhead means that Dún Laoghaire harbour is facing an uncertain future.

The Harbour Company propose to stake everything on developing the harbour as a Cruise Ship terminal for the super sized ships of the future followed by a €200m commercial development of apartments, retail outlets, and offices, within the confines of the existing harbour.

This proposal was put forward without adequate consultation with either the local councillors or the people of the town.

At two big public meetings and at a demonstration in Dún Laoghaire, organised by Save Our Seafront, the people of the town have made clear their opposition to this development. Save Our Seafront has the active support of People Before Profit and local TD, Richard Boyd Barrett.



The Government has recently published legislation to transfer the ownership of the harbour from the Minister for Transport to Dún Laoghaire Rathdown County Council.

The County Council is in favour of setting up another quango to run the harbour despite the promises of this Government to abolish these undemocratic and unaccountable institutions.

Save our Seafront think this is an ideal opportunity for the Council and the Government to dissolve the Harbour Company and ensure that our harbour is finally brought under

the democratic control of the local Council for the benefit of the town as a whole.

The Dublin Port Company is investing €230 million to redevelop the Alexandra Basin that will include a twin berth Cruise Ship facility beside the Point Depot. Two large and expensive cruise ship facilities within five miles of each other make no sense.

This was a plan that was hatched by a small group of people and the Harbour Company executives to save their well paid jobs and set up the harbour for privatisation at some time in the future.

to Repeal the 8th is an important step forward. Where the trade union movement has been part of winning abortion rights, in Britain for example, those rights are much stronger than in places where it was won through the Courts such as in the US.

While fighting for free, safe and legal abortion we must also demand a health service that is capable of delivering access to abortion for all.

This means a complete overhaul of the current two-tier health care system through the establishment of fully funded public health care paid for by progressive taxation.

Only such a health care system can guarantee access to abortion services for those on low incomes and in rural areas.

In addition, we must fight for the right to have a child for those who want to. Real choice includes the removal of financial restrictions on families.

Instead, lone parents must be supported, child benefit has to be restored and increased, and we need to increase parental leave including paternity leave.

Most importantly, big changes are required in the area of childcare. Ireland has the most expensive childcare in Europe, we must demand a publicly funded childcare system to ease the burden of families and lone parents.

In order to have access to free, safe and legal abortion in Ireland we must begin by repealing the 8th amendment. But we must also fight for a different type of society, one in which all choices are valued equally and supported, whether that is the decision to have an abortion or the decision to have a child.

The cruise ship proposal and the commercial developments in the harbour area would destroy the historic aspect of the harbour and would be a financial disaster for the town.

Save Our Seafront has put forward a different vision of what a low impact development of the harbour would look like. Dún Laoghaire has always been a working harbour.

Save Our Seafront is proposing that any development should include ferry services, fishing, and small cruise ships that can utilise the existing facilities in the harbour.

The Harbour Company Plan takes little account of the impact on existing users of the Harbour, the local community, or of alternative ways the harbour could be developed to safeguard its future.

Save our Seafront recently launched a twelve page booklet *An Alternative Vision for Dún Laoghaire* which outlines an alternative way forward, not just for the harbour but for the town itself, which is being widely distributed.

A demonstration has been called on the 10th of October where we hope to unite all those opposed to Harbour Company development.

WILL DEFEND YOU?

employment and cuts in peoples' services in communities like this? Who in Government will protect by...
 Child Benefit
 large on modest incomes
 advances in the public services
 and balanced government is
 the biggest challenge ever to it.
 a must for Governments (UK) - essential to restoring employment, housing, rights to be in Government to a central role

monn No 1
 No 2 Labour

EAMONN MALONEY T.D. – MAN OF PRINCIPLE

Dublin South West Labour TD, Eamonn Maloney has resigned from the party and announced his decision to run in the general election as an independent.

In a statement issued as Socialist Worker was going to press he said:

"After 30 years as a Labour TD I just couldn't stomach it anymore.

"For years I have been forced to stand over policies which hammered the very working class people I was supposed to represent.

"It all mounted up: the cuts in child benefit and lone parents allowance, the cuts in SNAs, and community services, the property tax which pretended to be progressive but hit ordinary families, the growing inequality and the toadying up to the corporations and refusal to tax the rich, the water charges fiasco.

"The final straw was when they decided to prosecute the Jobstown 27 over a sit down protest. These are my constituents they are trying to criminalise."

CORRECTION: We have just been informed that the above statement is a malicious rumour put about by Trotskyist trouble makers.

The real reason why TD Maloney has resigned is that he disagreed with the Labour Party's two-candidate strategy in the seat which he thought damaged his chances of getting elected.

Socialist Worker apologises to Comrade Maloney for any offence or distress we have caused him.

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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 Grant 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

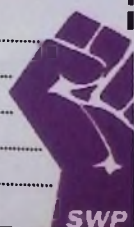
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SWP

Jobstown, Crumlin – Political policing goes to new level

James O'Toole

The decision to charge the Jobstown 27, including Paul Murphy TD, is a clear escalation in the level of political policing that has marked the entire water charges campaign.

The fact that it comes now, almost a year after the alleged offence and in the run up to an election is clear proof of this.

So too is the fact that it coincides with the decision to prosecute the Crumlin 13, including Joan Collins TD.

Then there is the nature of the charges. 'Unlawful imprisonment', which carries a possible life sentence, is obviously a completely over the top and absurd response to a mass sitdown protest.

Similarly the prosecution of the Crumlin 13 is for an action – standing peacefully on the pavement blocking water meter installation – which is entirely legitimate and has been taking place on estates across the country for more than a year now.

This comes on top of the conviction of Brian O'Boyle of People Before Profit in Sligo on the ludicrous charge of 'threatening behaviour' simply for arguing with an Irish Water employee.

And it goes hand-in-hand with Operation Mizen, a team led by Detective Superintendent Jim McGowan, husband of Garda Commissioner Nóirín O'Sullivan, which has spent six months spying on campaigners compiling profiles on them and their whereabouts.

Paul Murphy Anti-Austerity Alliance TD says:

"The development of the anti-water charges movement has shown the power of the 99% in this country over the last year.

"We are on the brink of a major victory against water charges, because of a mass protest movement and because a tactic of civil disobedience, of mass non-payment, was adopted by a majority of people.

"The serious criminal charges and extensive use of police against protesters represent an attack on that movement and an attempt to intimidate people from challenging the establishment in the future. It won't work."

And Cllr Brid Smith of People Before Profit comments:

"It is obvious that having failed to persuade the Irish people to accept or pay water charges and failed to get the great anti-water charges movement to go away the government is now resorting to coercion and intimidation.

Their aim is to demonise water charges protesters with the aim of dividing the movement and driving people away. At the same time



they want to criminalise all forms of peaceful civil disobedience."

Nothing new.

This is far from being the first time the Irish State has used the Gardaí in this way. In reality we have a long history of using the police to intimidate activists and criminalise dissent.

The official narrative is that the Irish State was founded by brave revolutionaries – when in fact it was founded by the counter revolution who reacted against the revolution that ended British rule in the 26 counties.

The first Irish Government – Cumman na nGaedheal – was deeply conservative.

They set themselves the task of consolidating the Irish State machine and bringing the social revolt of the revolutionary years to an end.

Seventy seven Republican and anti-capitalist agitators were shot without trial, and army pensioners were used to break up strikes. When the Minister for Justice Kevin O'Higgins established the police force they were immediately set to work intimidating Republican activists

and striking workers.

This new elite saw the State treasury as a source of the capital necessary to kick start their business empires.

Tight networks developed between the political dynasties, the economic elite and the State.

Cronyism and corruption are built into all capital societies but particularly in Ireland given the history and development of the State.

The Irish State therefore built up an apparatus of surveillance to monitor threats to the elite Golden circle.

The excuse was that they had to keep an eye on the IRA – but once such a system of police spying and intimidation existed it could be turned on all those who opposed the system.

The recent GSOC scandal gave a glimpse under the rock. The Garda Ombudsman – where people take complaints against police criminality – was being spied on. Garda Special Branch, the Defence Forces Intelligence Branch (G2) and the Revenue Commissioners all have legal powers to engage in surveillance.

Cases of police intimidation of activists are numerous – from the shooting of activists after the War of Independence to the beating of Shell to Sea protesters in Mayo.

Time and again the courts have been used as a weapon to slap injunctions on striking workers such as the Greyhound workers and the MTL dockers.

Fightback

But we don't have to sit back and take this. What our rulers fear most is masses on the streets.

The water charges movement forced the Government to concede ground massively and it can do so again. We have to respond to the court cases with the mobilisation of all those involved in the Right2Water movement.

This means a mass demonstration at the court when the Jobstown and Crumlin cases both come up on Monday 2 November. If anyone is jailed the protest movement will need to be stepped up even further.

The water movement has given people confidence and the 57% non-payment testifies to the strength of opposition to Irish Water. While supporting those under threat from the State we have to continue to build mass non-payment in our communities.

We also have to challenge the political elite in the coming election by voting for radical left candidates who will build the movement on the streets and continue this fight until we dismantle the repressive mechanisms of the Irish State.

Can Corbyn stand his ground?

John Molyneux

From 200/1 at the beginning Jeremy Corbyn came through to achieve a stunning victory in the British Labour election contest.

Not only did he win but he won absolutely decisively, polling 59% to his nearest rival's 19% with the most right wing and Blairite candidate, Liz Kendall, finishing last with only 4.5%.

There is no mystery as to how this was done. Corbyn expressed the yearning of rank-and-file Labour party members and millions of others in British society for a progressive alternative to the consensus neo-liberal politics which has seen the establishment inflict brutal austerity on ordinary people for years.

They were simply fed up to the back teeth with politics of spin, deception and manipulation which characterised all the main parties while increasing inequality and hitting the poor to protect the rich.

Mood for change

In this they shared the mood that brought Alexis Tsipras and Syriza to power in Greece in January, which saw millions rally to the new Podemos Party and the left in Spain, that gave the radical sounding SNP a landslide in Scotland, and is fuelling the unprecedented success of the self-described socialist, Bernie Sanders, in the US primary elections.

And it is the same mood that produced the great demonstrations and mass non-payment of the water charges campaign in Ireland, and will hopefully see the Irish left achieve its best ever result in the upcoming election.

What made Corbyn able to represent this demand for change was that unlike the Tories, the Liberal Democrats and his Blairite rivals he clearly had some genuine socialist principles.

For forty years he had been an active campaigner for progressive causes, against imperialism and war, and for trade union and workers rights.

He was different.

Corbyn's problems

Unfortunately Corbyn's real problems began after he had won the leadership. Just as Tsipras and Syriza came up against the 'economic terrorism' of the EU so Corbyn ran into the 'media



terrorism' of the British press and TV.

His victory was greeted with a storm of media attacks on his family, his personal life, his dress, his choice or not of tie, his supposed anti-semitism (an utterly false allegation based entirely on his support for Palestine) his failure to sing the national anthem and whether or not he would kiss the hand of the queen.

There was a coordinated attempt to destroy or permanently damage him at birth as it were.

And while much of the assault was just gutter journalism and drivel (did he have an affair twenty years ago) some of it had a sharp political edge, probing the issue of his 'loyalty' to the British State.

This creates a difficulty for Corbyn because he will be surrounded by advisors telling him to accommodate to all this stuff, because he will fear the affect on public opinion of challenging the traditions and rituals of the British monarchy and imperial State and because, at bottom he hopes to use that State to bring social change to Britain.

But the more he does accommodate, especially on issues

such as membership of NATO and the retention of Trident nuclear missiles and support for the EU, the more his radicalism will be eroded.

The fact that Corbyn promptly resigned from being Chair of the Stop the War Coalition is hardly a good sign.

Then there is the problem created by his own party.

Hostile

Very few – twenty at most – of the MPs in the Parliamentary Labour Party actually support Corbyn or his policies.

Many of them are implacably hostile.

Most of them won't say this openly at the moment but they will work to undermine him and have already started doing this.

The first thing Corbyn had to do was appoint his Shadow Cabinet but he did not have enough allies in the leadership of the Party to pick a Shadow Cabinet of his supporters.

Instead he had to appoint a number of old Blairites to key positions.

One of these was Hilary Benn as Foreign Secretary.

Benn immediately gave an interview saying the Labour Party would not need Corbyn's agreement to support US bombing of Syria.

A leader with strong support would have sacked Benn for this disloyalty but Corbyn can hardly do this having just appointed him.

The Cameron #piggate scandal took the heat off Corbyn for a while but we can be sure it will return.

The pressure on him to compromise his beliefs will be immense. His difficulty in resisting this pressure is not personal weakness or corruptibility.

It is very much his lack of organised and politically clear support in a Labour Party whose upper ranks have been deeply affected by Blairism and neo-liberalism, and his own ambiguity on whether or not he wants to 'improve' the system or overthrow it.

This is why revolutionary socialists in Britain will argue that the best way to sustain Corbyn and strengthen his hand is to build the mass movement on the streets and in the workplaces and developing socialist ideas within that movement.

#socialism 1.01

John Molyneux

What is reformism?



Pablo Iglesias and Alexis Tsipras

For more than a hundred years the socialist movement has debated the issue of reform or revolution. Some people say the debate is 'old hat' and 'boring' and we should 'move beyond it'.

In fact many recent developments, including the election of the Syriza government in Greece followed by its capitulation to the demands of the EU, and now the election of Jeremy Corbyn as leader of the British Labour Party, have shown that the question remains relevant.

So what is the debate about? It is NOT about whether it is necessary to campaign for reforms i.e. for immediate and concrete changes that will improve the lives of working class people, such as housing for the homeless or the abolition of water charges or a wage increase at work.

EVERY serious socialist and revolutionary – Marx, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky, Connolly, Larkin – all of them, fought for reforms and so does Socialist Worker today. No the real debate is about whether it is enough to fight for reforms and how and within what perspective we fight for reforms.

Reformists limit themselves to campaigning for reforms. Revolutionaries campaign for reforms as part of and stepping stones to building a revolutionary movement to overthrow the capitalist system.

Two reformisms

There are two main kinds of reformism: right-wing or 'mainstream' reformism and left reformism.

Mainstream reformism accepts the basic structure of capitalist society but aims to improve the running of the system by various laws and measures. Their claim is that they will be able, if they are elected, to manage capitalism in a more humane, progressive way than

the mainstream right. Crucially, if they are a traditional reformist party like British Labour and Irish Labour (before it went into coalition with Fine Gael), they claim that they will protect working class interests while doing this.

Historically there are many examples of this kind of reformism – Willy Brandt and German Social Democracy since 1914, the French Socialist Party under Mitterand and Hollande, the British Labour Party for most of its history, and Dick Spring and Eamonn Gilmore and Irish Labour in the past.

Left reformism, aims or claims to aim to transform capitalism into socialism by means of reforms and without a revolution. They say if elected they will pass laws and make such changes as will gradually alter the basic structure of society in a socialist direction. Importantly Left reformists usually call for mass movements and trade unions to mobilise to back them in this endeavour.

Examples of left reformism range from German Social Democracy before the First World War and Salvador Allende and Popular Unity in Chile (1970-73), through Tony Benn in British Labour and Syriza, Podemos and Jeremy Corbyn today.

Left reformism can sound much more radical than ordinary reformism and the pro-system politicians and media usually fiercely denounce it as 'extremist', 'loony left' and communist as they are doing now with Corbyn. But Left reformism and mainstream reformism share two important things in common.

First they both propose to change society for people, on their behalf, rather saying that working people must do it for themselves. Second they both propose to use the existing state structure – parliament, administration, civil

service, courts, police, armed forces etc – to carry out this change.

Quite often Left reformists qualify this by calling for mass movements to exert pressure from below on the state by means of demonstrations and so on. And sometimes they say they will gradually transform the state by using one bit of it, parliament, to change other bits of it – civil service, police, judges etc.

Does it work?

The reason revolutionaries differ from this strategy is not that we don't want reforms, nor that we are too impatient to wait for gradual change, still less that we have a yearning for violence.

On the contrary if a left-wing government could transform capitalism into socialism through parliament that would be wonderful. It is that experience has shown time and time again that the reformist strategy doesn't work.

The MOST that happens is that when the capitalism is booming reformism makes a few very limited improvements while the system with its exploitation, class divisions inequality and unfairness remain intact. When the system is having problems or in crisis, as at present, not even these limited reforms are achieved even by the most left-wing reformists.

Sometimes, as with Allende in Chile in 1973, the reformist experiment is smashed. More often, as with Syriza and Tsipras in Greece, the reformists are pressured into collaboration with the system. And they give way to this pressure. Moreover, the reformists often act as a break on the very movement from below which is supporting them.

What the revolutionary alternative is to this dismal scenario will be outlined in this column in next month's issue of Socialist Worker.

The Roots of the

Refugees are fleeing countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, E
brutal dictatorial regimes and chaos c

Memet Uludag of United Against Racism examin

Just three days after the announcement of the European Commission's 'Refugee Resettlement Program' of 120,000 refugees, an emergency summit of EU heads of states, held on 24th September, ended in disarray.

Fortress Europe

The EU leaders could not agree on anything other than making sure that the closed borders ("Fortress Europe") policies are intact and everything possible is being done to deter the refugees from coming to Europe.

The summit was a long session of divisions, accusations, blame and numbers games between the EU leaders who were competing with each other in order to take the least possible responsibility for the care and wellbeing of the already much suffering refugees.

Since the beginning of the current refugee crisis in 2011, the European leaders have continuously ignored the real reasons why people were fleeing to Europe and instead manufactured excuses and lies to justify their racist policies and the inhumanity of condemning thousands of refugees to death. For four years they have watched people dying in the Mediterranean.

In 2015 the situation got worse. The number of deaths increased dramatically thanks to the EU governments ending their rescue missions.

Waves of support

But constant reports of refugee deaths were followed by waves of support for refugees from ordinary European citizens. The previously indifferent leaders were cornered and had to be seen as doing something about the crisis. For a while they made humanitarian speeches and told the world that "something has to be done".

The pictures of 3 year old refugee child Aylan's dead body on the beach made the EU leaders cry. But soon, after their fake tears had dried, they returned back to their original agenda of keeping the refugees out.

The latest Refugee Resettlement Program is a sinister part of this agenda. five years later, by taking in the tiny number of 120,000 refugees over a long period time, without any guarantees of long term protection and care, they are in fact condemning the remaining hundreds of thousands of refugees that will be kept out of Europe to immediate and long lasting misery.

The aim of the EU leaders is clear: Instead of taking the necessary actions to welcome the refugees, they present the EU and the European countries as innocent 'victims' of the refugee crisis and the 'massive influx of refugees'.

The truth is far from that.

The EU as a whole and the EU governments are not innocent 'victims' that are at the receiving end of the refugee crisis. In fact they are one of the key architects of the root-cause of the current and previous refugee crises..

The 3 year old Aylan was not the first or the last child to die in search of a safe life. Since 2001 there have been thousands of similar deaths of innocent refugees, including many children. Over the last 10 years, the Mediterranean has turned into a mass grave.

Origins of the crisis

Today's crisis did not start in 2015. In 2001 the invasion of Afghanistan as part of the 'war on terror' agenda of the Western imperialist powers created over 5 million refugees. Hilary Clinton promised freedom and democracy to Afghani women but after billions of dollars spent on the war and 15 years later there are still more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees, many of them women.

All NATO member states had contributed troops to this US and British led imperialist war. These included



Refugees from Syria arrive in Greece

many of the European countries, such as Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, and Italy etc. Before Syria overtook it Afghanistan was the world's biggest source of refugees.

But the wars and invasions of the Western powers in the interest of regional control and controlling oil supplies did not stop with Afghanistan. In 2003, the US-UK led war in Iraq, was again supported by many of the EU and NATO countries.

The war caused the death of hundreds of thousands of civilians and created more than 2 million externally and 1.7 million internally displaced refugees. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi refugees could not return home due to the ongoing sectarian conflicts as a direct result of the Western invasion.

In 2004, the chaos and war in Afghanistan spilled over to Pakistan which resulted in up to 1 million refugees.

In 2011, the military intervention in Libya by EU/NATO countries in order to protect their own interests there, under the pretext of 'getting rid of the dictator Gaddafi', destroyed the country completely. The intervention and the ongoing chaos in Libya has caused up to 300,000 refugees.

War in Syria

In Syria in 2011, the brutal Assad regime responded to the popular and initially peaceful revolt with brutal military force. Soon after the start of armed conflict between Assad and Syrian opposition forces Syria was turned into a

zone of proxy wars.

The US, Britain and their loyal allies in the region such as Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Turkey on one side, Russia and Iran on the other side have supported and aided various warring factions and further fuelled the war. None of the above forces intervened in Syria for the sake of ordinary Syrian people but to advance their imperialist political and economic interests in the region.

At the beginning of 2012 Syrians started fleeing the country. Today, as the entire country is torn apart by Assad's army, ISIS and other reactionary forces and the ongoing US bombing, there are now more than five million Syrian refugees.

Currently, the US, NATO and EU backed Saudi regime is bombing Yemen. According to a UN report 20 million people are facing food shortages. The ongoing war is likely to create more hundreds of thousands of refugees. The Saudis are getting their weapons and support from the West.

Globally there are 5 million Palestinian refugees. Because of the ever expanding apartheid Israel, Palestinians continue to become landless. The ongoing siege of Gaza has created horrific conditions for 1.8 million people. Recently a UN report warned that by 2020 Gaza may be uninhabitable. All of this is the making of the US/EU/NATO backed Israeli state.

The total global refugee numbers have reached 60 million. All of these are due

The Refugee Crisis

...trea, Yemen, Libya, Mali, and Sudan in order to escape from wars, created by foreign military interventions. ...s the EU response and the background to the crisis.



to wars, conflicts, murderous oppressive regimes together with environmental disaster caused by ongoing climate change.

The EU is not the victim of influx of refugees; it is one of the creators of this current crisis and crises in the past.

Europe's response
As the richest continent in the world, Europe does not share any significant percentage of the world's refugees. The 28 EU countries between them don't even make it to the top 10 refugee hosting places on earth.

Ireland was never crushed under the weight of asylum seekers and refugees.

The Irish state has always had a very low rate of granting refugee status to asylum seekers. It has been maintaining the inhumane Direct Provision System for more than 15 years.

Going back a decade, the Western/EU leaders have had many summits to plan their wars and interventions in the Middle-East, Africa and other places. The imperialist interests and interventions of the western capitalist powers have destroyed many regions.

The refugee crisis is set to continue and it has also turned into a political crisis in Europe. The response of ordinary European citizens has generally been

magnificent – much better than that of their governments. There are many refugee support initiatives across Europe.

But we also need to have a firm political response to our government and combat misguided racist arguments in political campaigns, communities etc. aimed at dividing the ordinary people on this issue and giving rise to refugee-migrant hate and racist attacks.

It is the Denis O'Briens and Joan Burtons, the bankers and developers, the David Camerons, Angela Merkels and their corporate friends who are the problem when it comes to 'looking after our own', not the refugees.

UNITED AGAINST RACISM

Public Forum:

Dealing With Racism in Ireland

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER | 7.30 PM | WYNNS HOTEL, DUBLIN 1.

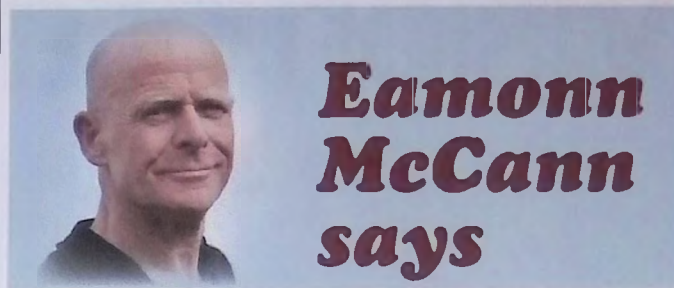
Perspectives and analyses from a broad range of speakers followed by a discussion on combating racism ...

SPEAKERS include

- Brigid Quilligan, Director of the Irish Traveller Movement
- Fatin Al Tamimi, Palestinian Immigrant, Activist
- Haider Algami, African Immigrant, Former Asylum Seeker
- Happy Agamah, Black Taxi Driver, victim of racist attack

All Welcome!

Organised by United Against Racism



Eamonn McCann says

How the US fans the flames

The United States has signed an agreement with new Afghan president Ashraf Ghani to retain nine major military bases and 10,000 troops in the country.

There are still 1,600 US troops in Iraq. Obama has asked Congress for funding to deploy 1,500 more, to expand its Joint Operations Centre in Baghdad and a base in Ebril in Iraqi Kurdistan, and to build new bases in Baghdad and Anbar Province.

America also maintains bases in every country in the Persian Gulf except Iran – Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. The purpose is to control the flow and price of Middle Eastern oil and generally to sustain US geo-political dominance.

There are 17 US bases in Turkey and a huge facility in the Indian Ocean island of Diego Garcia, a

quarter of a million Yemenis have sought refuge across the Red Sea in...Somalia. That's twice as many refugees in Somalia, one of the poorest countries in the world, as the total number to be allowed into Europe.

On September 5th, Saudi dictator "King" Salman met Barak Obama in the White House to express concern about the US-Iran rapprochement. As reassurance, Obama gave the man who presides over the subjugation of women, the flogging of journalists and the crucifixion of teenagers and which has carried out more beheadings this year than Islamic State, a pledge that the US would provide "whatever political and military support" he needed to calm his nerves. A number of F-35 fighters have been delivered and are possibly already being used



"sovereign" British Territory from which the entire native population was kicked out and dumped in destitution in Mauritius to provide space and "security" for the B1s, B2s and B-52 long-range bombers.

The Pentagon operates major installations in Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and the Seychelles. Plus Pakistan, Bulgaria, Romania and Kosovo. And we could go on and on.

US hegemony

The very presence of US military in the Middle East has been a major factor in generating the fundamentalist anger which gave rise to Al Qaeda, Islamic State etc.

It was the "infidel" occupation of the holy land of Mecca and Medina which set Osama bin Laden on the path to Islamist terror.

The bases are used not just to make war on regimes which stand in the way of US hegemony but also to prop up the pro-US dictatorships which grind the plain people down. Saudi Arabian bombers are blasting Yemen to bits with US-supplied bombs dropped from US-supplied bombers.

On August 19th, the US network ABC News quoted the UN World Food Program saying that Yemen was "on the verge of famine" adding that "the scale of human suffering is almost incomprehensible."

The suffering is such that around

to destroy hospitals, schools and residential areas.

At the same time, Obama has promised to beef up the air power of the thug government of Egypt and of the racist mass-murderers who run Israel.

It is a measure of the craven timidity of Irish politicians – with the exception of a small handful of Left-wing TDs – that although all of these facts are well-known and readily available, there is no hint of concern, much less of condemnation, from the political and media mainstream.

They are as timid as church mice when it comes to the war crimes of the US and its allies, while roaring their anger at fundamentalist terrorism or the imperial adventures of Putin's Russia.

Come next March, the path to the White House will be trampled down by Irish politicians shouldering their way into the queue for the annual Patrick's Day party. The "anti-imperialist" Sinn Fein will use its elbows and boots if necessary to get to the front.

The US, on its own or through its regional satraps, kills thousands of innocent people every year.

They are by no means the only killers stalking the world. But they are only ones hail-fellow-well-met with politicians here who would like us to believe they represent something akin to decency in public life.

Vision of a Different Ireland



Top: Richard Boyd Barrett, Paul Murphy, Ailbhe Smyth, Fiona NicFhearghais and Gerry Carroll address the conference, inset: Kieran Allen, Kevin Owendon and Sean Mitchell on austerity and resistance

Michael Wallace reports on the recent People Before Profit policy conference held in Dublin on the 19/20 September.

In contrast to the establishment parties' recent 'think-ins' conducted behind closed doors, the **People Before Profit Conference on a Radical Alternative Vision for Ireland** was open to all. And it gave people the opportunity to discuss, debate and contribute ideas to form PBP policies in the lead-up to the general election.

The well-attended conference promoted a strategy based on people power and a radical Left alternative to challenge the pro-austerity and water charges parties.

The opening session was on **Pro-Choice - a woman's right to choose**. While a cowardly government refuses to face up to the tragic consequences of the deaths of Savita and other victims, there is a real momentum to repeal the 8th Amendment that equates a woman's life with that of a foetus.

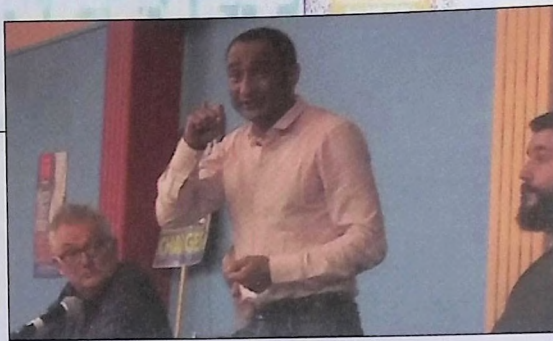
Clare Daly TD told the audience in Dublin's Teachers' Club the 8th amendment in the constitution was a barrier to the bodily integrity and autonomy of women in Ireland. She condemned the continued criminalisation of women and repressive laws that have driven 160,000 women to access a routine medical procedure normal in other countries.

Women, she said, are dying and suffering horrendous abuse while this government is in breach of its human rights obligations. The way forward is to "build a grassroots movement and empower ordinary people to deliver social change".

Fiona NicFhearghais, PBP organiser and Pro-Choice activist in north Belfast said that many people in the South were unaware that abortion is still illegal in the North and that "Women can never have full equality without bodily autonomy and we cannot wait for Stormont. It's time for change and we need to galvanise a mass movement on the streets that needs to be all-Ireland because women in the North and South are suffering."

Ailbhe Smyth, a leading figure for many years in the struggle for abortion rights in Ireland and Convener of recently established Coalition for Repeal of the 8th said it was vital to mobilise and bring vast numbers with us on this issue. It was also vital to get and win a referendum and to hold a united position and that "we need respect for women's health and choices and for a free, safe and legal abortion in this country."

In the session on **Debt, Austerity and Resistance in Greece, Spain and Ireland**, PBP activist in Belfast, **Sean Mitchell**, said that the current Stormont crisis didn't begin with the murder of Kevin McGuigan but



with the neoliberal Stormont House Agreement which cut welfare and corporation tax, sacked 20,000 public sector workers and privatised public assets. The big parties in the North were now on the run and working class people were fighting back against austerity. "There are now 14,000 millionaires in the North and 100,000 children living poverty at the same time. A sectarian and neoliberal Stormont has failed but working class unity and people power can deliver." **Kevin Owendon**, a socialist activist living in Greece, talked about the massive social resistance by working people that changed the politics of society leading to Syriza's breakthrough. Despite the capitulation of Syriza to the bullying EU the fighting capacity of the movement still exists.

PBP National Organiser **Kieran Allen** said that a serious radical Left was emerging in Ireland. In contrast to Syriza, PBP gives a revolutionary backbone that will make corporations pay and use money to get rid of property tax, water charges and USC. PBP should not participate in any government with likes of FF, FG and Labour or any government that refuses to write down the debt. Unilateral writing down of the debt would mean the Irish people would decide - not the EU. "If the EU comes after us with economic terror tactics, we need to make those people pay who the EU backs - the corporate rich to subsidise working people so they don't pay for the crisis."

Battle Against the Water Charges: Where now?

We've seen the biggest mass movement against any government ever in the history of the State. But where is the movement now? **Kay Larry**, member of PBP on the Dublin North side, and involved in resisting the installation of water meters, said the movement began with "ordinary people coming together to stop the privatisation of our water" and, despite vilification from the media, attempts by the state to intimidate had not worked but made communities and the movement stronger. "It's also important to continue to build the boycott, stick together and also support the Left candidates in our area."

Clr Brid Smith, PBP general election candidate for Dublin

South Central said it was important to maintain the mass boycott campaign, stay united in Right2Water, and continue peaceful civil disobedience and mass mobilisation on the streets. On the political policing of the movement, **Brid** said that "we need as many people mobilised as possible when water activists appear in court on the 2nd November and when the government calls an election to have a massive national demonstration in response."

In the closing session on **Building a New Left**, **Paul Murphy TD** of the Anti-Austerity Alliance talked of the historic opportunities opening up for the Left in Ireland as never before. "There is a definite space to the left of Sinn Fein for the Radical Left carved out by the water charges movement" and that the serious repression witnessed is a sign of rising fear from the establishment.

Richard Boyd Barrett TD said that while there had been a recovery for the rich, there was a race to the bottom for the rest of us. "We need a political force with the courage to say we're going to take that money and resources off the wealthy to invest in health, schools and public infrastructure." On the movement on the streets, he said that people were fighting back and it was vital to "harness the energy and aspirations of an unprecedented rebellion on the streets and give it a political form." This would deal a decisive political blow to the establishment and that the "unity of working class mobilisation is the key to bringing these changes about."

There were also policy workshops on Equality, the Arts, Disability, the Environment, Imperialism and Racism. In many of these PBP members and supporters made very useful for proposals for policies that should be taken up and campaigned for such Travellers' Rights and disability access.

The workshops on Education, Housing and Health discussed a pattern of corporate dominance with the running down of public services for the purposes of privatisation. To combat the neoliberal agenda, policies included building 10,000 council houses over the next five years; the creation of a National Health Service that treats people according to medical need and not the size of their wallets and for the abolition of large class sizes, large scale school building and reversal of all cuts to special education.

Following the Conference, **Richard Boyd Barrett** said that it had "been a brilliant coming together of grassroots activists to develop a people's manifesto that really reflects the aspirations of the people we've seen on the street over the last year in the unprecedented movement against water charges and austerity. And the challenge arising out of this conference is to translate the thirst for fundamental social, economic and political change into a political movement that is going to seriously challenge the establishment at the elections and beyond."

A World to Win: the Communist Manifesto

In our series on socialist classics, **James Grannell** reviews what may be the most influential political pamphlet ever written.

'A spectre is haunting Europe — the spectre of Communism.' These were the opening words of the Communist Manifesto written by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in early 1848.

This short, yet marvellous, pamphlet emboldens the modern reader as much as it did the nineteenth-century one. Throughout the work Marx and Engels present an analysis of the class struggle and the problems inherent in capitalism and the capitalist mode of production, grounded in historical materialism.

Marx and Engels did not attempt to predict the future in any detailed way. Instead they sought to summarise their theories about the nature of society and politics and outline how capitalist society would eventually be replaced by socialism, and then communism. As the great powers of Europe quaked at the rise of communism, Marx and Engels set out to openly publish 'their

views, their aims, their tendencies, and meet this nursery tale of the Spectre of Communism with a Manifesto of the party itself.'

Marx and Engels outline their theory that, 'the history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles.' They praise the bourgeoisie for the titanic advancements that they have accomplished — they brought an end to feudalism, developed infrastructure, ushered in a global epoch where neither economic nor intellectual speculation are confined by arbitrary national borders.

However, the bourgeoisie have also created an economic system that is comprised of two powerful forces, or as Marx and Engels put it, 'two great hostile camps', that are facing each other. These are the bourgeoisie (those who control the means of production) and the proletariat (those who work to live and who produce profit for the bourgeoisie). Since the bourgeoisie have, in their revolutionary fervour, stripped away the sentimentalism

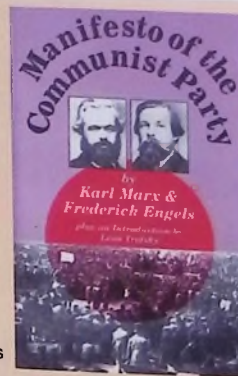
of politics and religion and replaced it with 'the icy water of egotistical calculation,' they have laid bare the 'naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation' that drives their obsession with the one true freedom of the age — the free market.

Marx and Engels assert that the very advances of the bourgeoisie will lead to their downfall. As they march on with relentless drive in their search for profit, they drive the workers further into intolerable pauperism. Marx and Engels put it powerfully when they state that, 'society can no longer live under this bourgeoisie, in other words, its existence is no longer compatible with society.' The bourgeoisie have become their own grave-diggers.

In the section on the proletarians and the communists Marx and Engels, with the vim of perspicacious reporters, address the various objections to communism that were, and still are, prevalent among the reactionary classes. They assert the importance of the communists, by which they mean revolutionary

socialists, in the class struggle by pointing out that they 'bring to the front the common interests of the entire proletariat, independently of all nationality,' and in every stage of the working-class struggle they represent the interests of the whole.

This is why socialists stand against racism, against sexism, and against oppression in all of its guises. It is the socialists who must push forward the movement for real change, working tirelessly to unite the workers against their true enemies, the capitalists. It is capitalist private property that the socialists wish to abolish and in so doing to enrich the entirety of society. Whereas capitalism turns men into mere appendages of machines, socialism, by wresting the means of production from the few, will transform society along lines that allow for the full flowering of human



civilisation. This is the battle for democracy and it is a battle that the working class must win or it will be destroyed.

This powerful work by Marx and Engels is worthy of an entire volume of analysis and it impossible to do it justice in these few lines. It should be read and reread by socialists everywhere. Its clear

insightful points are as relevant in 2015 as they were in 1848. As the spectre of revolution and leftism once again haunts Europe, and indeed not just Europe, but the entire globe, we must, as Marx said, 'd disdain to conceal our views and aims. We must openly declare that our ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions. Let the ruling classes tremble at the Communist revolution. We have nothing to lose but our chains. We have a world to win.'

Greece: a different strategy needed to stop austerity

Marnie Holborow

In January this year, when Alexis Tsipras gave his speech following the magnificent Syriza election victory, he said: 'Greece is turning the page. It is leaving behind austerity and five years of humiliation so that people can live in hope and dignity. We shall end the vicious circle of austerity because the verdict of the people makes the Troika a thing of the past'.

Just eight months later, on September 21st, the contrast was stark. With his party now pro-memorandum, and having won enough votes to get back into government, Tsipras's speech could almost have been written by the Troika itself. He directed his words not against the EU, but only the old corrupt ways of the Greek political system. It was tough times ahead and the Greek people would have to rise to it.

The third memorandum, agreed by Tsipras in July, is the toughest yet. The Syriza government has committed itself to implementing a programme that cannot succeed. The fresh dose of measures in Greece's new €86bn bailout programme will make worse an economic depression, as severe as that in Germany and the United States in the 1930s. The Greek economy has contracted by 29% since 2009 and is still shrinking.

Greek voters took what they saw as the least bad option but did not swing back to the right. The right wing New Democracy came well behind Syriza showing that it is still tainted by its role in the austerity coalitions since 2011. Pasok managed to improve on its January performance, but still only got 6%. A number of factors explain how Syriza came through to win.

Disorientation

First, 45% of the electorate didn't vote. It was the lowest turnout in a Greek election since 1945 and Syriza lost almost half a million voters since January.

For many poor and unemployed people, having to travel for the third time within a year to vote for mainly pro-austerity parties didn't seem worth it.

Secondly, Popular Unity (PU), the anti-memorandum left split from Syriza, failed to offer a clear alternative. They only managed to get 2.8%, not enough to get parliamentary representation. One Antarsya supporter claims that PU were too paralysed by



Above: Alexis Tsipras greets ANEL leader, Panos Kammenos, Below: Golden Dawn - waiting in the wings?



a 'nothing can really change' mentality and believed that Tsipras's call for a "second chance" would be better than letting New Democracy oversee the memorandum.

The statement from SEK, the Greek Socialist Workers Party, points out that Popular Unity were reluctant to align themselves clearly with the rest of the left - the Communist Party, who got 6% of the vote, or Antarsya who got just under 1% - because as they were afraid of appearing too radical.

Yet united, the left could have secured around 9% of the vote which

would have provided a clear anti-austerity voice in the parliament.

Plan

Tsipras had a plan. He had his coalition mapped out in advance, with scant regard for the politics of his chosen partners. The day after the election, he welcomed the right wing Independent Greeks (ANEL) leader Kammenos into his government. Their racism didn't take long to come out: a leading ANEL member also called Kammenos, tweeted anti-Semitic remarks and was forced to resign.

Syriza's calculation was that having

them ANEL in government would diffuse one strand of their opposition while Syriza dealt with the main issue of austerity. This thinking stemmed from Syriza's Eurocommunist politics. Eucommunists in the 1970s - in Greece, in Spain and in Italy - advocated the 'historical compromise' of communists sharing power with traditional right wing parties.

These coalitions eventually weakened the left in these countries and today, too, being in government with ANEL weakens the fight against austerity. Kammenos - the ANEL Minister of Defence - has allowed

military spending to remain outrageously high. The ANEL presence in government is very dangerous. The refugee crisis will require a strong anti-racist stand if it is not going to be used as a scapegoat to deflect the fight against austerity away from the system. ANEL's presence points in the opposite direction.

Negotiating ploy

Syriza's capitulation to the Troika did not come out of the blue. At every turn, Syriza believed it could outperform its enemy within the rules of capitalism. It could use the huge 'No' victory in the July referendum, not as indication that they should strengthen their anti-austerity stand, but as a negotiating ploy to secure a better deal from the Troika. Even now, Syriza somehow believes it can present itself as austerity-lite when implementing the memorandum will mean the harshest of measures. Its contradictory strategy arose not mainly from its 'Europeanism', but rather its reformist politics and its constant appeasement of the rulers of capital.

The greatest mistake that Syriza made was to believe that being an elected government was enough to take on austerity. It rated government over mass mobilisation. Its whole approach has been to put its faith in negotiation and rational argument. But the capitalist institutions of the EU had no respect for democracy.

Syriza's predicament is not new. Left wing governments have always found that once in power, they are put under enormous pressure to cede to the capitalists. In the Chile in 1970-73, Salvador Allende thought a left government could achieve more than workers' mass action. His faith in constitutionality was so great he invited General Pinochet into his cabinet and Pinochet repaid him with the most brutal military coup.

Syriza thinks along the same lines. It has a working class following but a leadership that responds to the priorities of capitalism. Yannis Varoufakis, the former Greek finance minister, points out that under this memorandum, the Greek ruling class benefits. The memorandum proposes further public procurement - i.e. outsourcing and privatisation - which will be a windfall for Greek big business. The shipping magnates will continue to generate huge profits and avoid paying taxes.

The understanding of the fight against austerity in class terms will

be vital now. The implementation of the third memorandum will hit the working class and their communities very hard and, whether Syriza likes it or not, there will be battles ahead.

In the election Tsipras claimed he would be able to soften the measures of the Troika. But the terms of the memorandum rule this out: they stipulate that the Greek government must agree with the Troika 'any actions relevant to the memorandum'.

A massive wave of privatisation - including the ports - will be overseen by an outside body which will hold the funds. Pension 'reforms' (once a "red line" issue for Syriza) will scrap early retirement agreements and the welfare benefit system is to be 'reviewed' (by the World Bank). Industrial action and collective bargaining agreements will be rewritten and households will have to pay outrageous property taxes on apartments and shops that they cannot even sell.

The only way to take on the implementation of the memorandum will be through mass mobilisation and building networks of direct democracy from below. Working class communities and workplaces need to draw on their experience of the last five years. The battles that the workers of ERT gave when the government of Samaras and Venizelos shut the public national broadcaster down can be repeated by the Dockers, the electricity workers, hospital workers, and teachers. Now is the time to build an anti-austerity movement on the ground - through strikes, occupations, protests and demonstrations.



Immigrants lead a protest against Greek fascists of Golden Dawn

The anti-fascism campaign also provides lessons for how to fight in the future.

After the elections, it is not surprising that activists are debating the lessons for the movement. But it must be remembered that the implementers of austerity - now including Syriza - face both an embittered working class and a faltering world economy. There will be new battles ahead.

Letter from Iran

Socialist Worker reporters, Linda Kehoe and Dave O'Farrell are visiting Iran. They sent us this report about how their actual experiences conflict with the stereotypical image so prevalent in the media.

The image many have in their minds of Iran is often less than positive.

A country of Ayatollahs and fundamentalists, intent on developing nuclear weapons and infused with a hatred of "the west".

The facts on the ground couldn't be more different.

Travelling around Iran people are friendly beyond any normal expectations.

Someone is always quick to help with directions or advice but the welcome extends well beyond that. It is not uncommon for people to invite you to join them for food, whether you

have simply wandered past them picnicking in a park or met them in the courtyard of a mosque after prayers.

The practice of Taarof where you may have to insist on paying for something up to three times would put Mrs Doyle to shame.

Beyond the welcome and helpfulness Iran is also very safe, from busy tourist areas to late night in Tehran it is hard to not feel completely at ease.

When you encounter those with better English they are quick to ask what you think of Iran and are keenly aware of the image of Iran that is prevalent in the world media and will enquire as to your views on the subject.

Critical

The phrase "Iranophobia" may even be mentioned.

This is not to say

that Iranians are not - justifiably - critical of their government.

Many are envious of the freedoms they see in the West yet stories from Ireland of cronyism in government and business often chime uncomfortably.

A common subject of conversation with female tourists is the wearing of the headscarf and it is clear many Iranians object to the compulsory nature of the policy.

Iran is often criticised - often quite rightly - for its poor record on women's rights yet it is no Saudi Arabia and Iranian women are often shocked when they hear of Ireland's past and recent history in this regard.

Abortion

Our blanket ban on abortion is particularly shocking for many, along



Young Iranian women in their hijabs

with the difficulties of obtaining a divorce.

Many in Iran are familiar with much western popular culture and speaking with

school girls can easily lead to a discussion on Justin Bieber!

Iran is a very different country on the ground

from what many might expect and we should not let the difficulties of governments clashing colour our views of

an entire country or the increasing tide of Islamophobia lead to a negative view of Iranian people.

Socialist Worker

Stormont in Crisis - Fight the Cuts

Seán Misteil

Stormont's political crisis has created tremendous uncertainty but cuts in the North to vital public services and jobs are gathering pace.

The Stormont Executive and the future of the Northern Ireland Assembly has been thrown into crisis once again since Unionist parties cynically exploited the murder of former IRA member Kevin McGuigan.

Mike Nesbitt's Ulster Unionist Party led the way by resigning from their one ministerial position in the Executive claiming continuing paramilitarism was unacceptable.

With all eyes firmly fixed on the Assembly elections within the next year, the DUP's Peter Robinson, in an attempt not to be outflanked by their Unionist counterparts, 'stepped aside' from his role as Northern Ireland's First Minister.

All DUP ministers then resigned from their ministerial positions.

The parties at Stormont are now locked in negotiations addressing paramilitarism, and specifically whether the IRA structures continue to exist.

However, the DUP also made it clear the negotiations were geared towards resolution of Welfare Reform in the North.

Welfare Reform was included in the Stormont House Agreement (SHA) but strike action by trade unions in March forced Sinn Fein reverse its support.

Since Sinn Fein's main campaign message North and South of the border is opposition to austerity, they claim they never intended to support the introduction of Welfare Reform here.

However, even allies of the party argue there is no other way to interpret the finances included in the agreement.

Nevertheless, Sinn Fein's overall support for the SHA, which included massive public sector lay-offs, cuts to services and the lowering of the Corporate Tax rate, contradicts their commitment to opposing austerity.

The real source of crisis for all the political parties in Stormont, and particularly Sinn Fein and the DUP, is opposition to austerity in the North.

The running down of public services, job losses and fears for further



Top: Martin McGuinness speaks to the press in the Great Hall at Stormont, Above: Peter Robinson announces resignation as First Minister

cuts is breeding disillusion.

This is forcing political parties to jockey for position in advance of coming Assembly elections.

Ironically, while Unionism at-

tempts to point the finger at Sinn Fein, a massive storm has gathered over DUP leader Peter Robinson's participation in the sale of NAMA holdings in the North.

The NAMA property loans were sold off to the American firm Cerberus for £1.2bn, a figure far below the holding's actual worth.

It has been alleged that politicians

involved in the NAMA deal received millions in offshore accounts to secure the deal.

The DUP will face a tremendous crisis if investigations prove these allegations of corruption.

However, while Stormont might be paralysed for the time-being and its future is uncertain, cuts are continuing across the North.

Universities are one casualty of this ongoing austerity.

Earlier this year the Department for Employment and Learning cut funding to Queens University by £8m, leading to the loss of 1,010 student places and 236 posts in 2015/16 through a 'voluntary' redundancy scheme.

Now, however, QUB bosses are saying that further job cuts will have to be made.

Ulster University, too, has seen its budget cut leading to the axing of 1,250 student places, numerous courses and departments, and more than 200 staff jobs cut across its four campuses as a result of the Northern Ireland Executive budget cuts to higher education.

The uncertain future of many Residential care homes is another case in point.

A consultation is currently underway that would lead to the closure of more than half of the North's last remaining NHS run care homes.

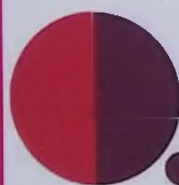
Ten homes in all are under threat, leading Unions, residents and supporters to step up their campaign to save them.

Despite regular protestations by Stormont politicians that they have protected the vulnerable, their record says otherwise.

It is clear that amidst Stormont's political deadlock, continuing and escalating resistance to these cuts is crucial.

Whether the Assembly is functional or not, trade unions, community groups and political parties genuinely opposed to austerity must take the lead in organising and encouraging resistance to public sector cuts, job losses, Welfare Reform and the lowering of the Corporate Tax rate.

In opposition to the frustration, despair and sectarianism generated by the Assembly, we must refocus efforts on building a political alternative putting the needs of all communities before profit.

 **THINK LEFT**
A BAY OF DEBATE AND DISCUSSION

Saturday 10th October, QUB Students Union

Speakers include Eamonn McCann, Terry Eagleton, Bernadette McAliskey, Gerry Carroll, Goretti Horgan, Tommy McKearney and many others

Sessions on Racism, State Repression, the New War on Women, Why Karl Marx was Right, Antonio Gramsci, Rosa Luxemburg, Human Nature, Strategy after Syriza, Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ireland.

And a Panel on Building the Left in a Divided Society 11am - 9pm
Tickets £5, concessions £3. To book: text "ticket" to 07927688875.