

Socialist Worker



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The Left Unites:

AAA - PBP form alliance

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Owen McCormack on The New Corporate Landlords

The two main parties on the Irish radical left, the Anti-Austerity Alliance and People Before Profit, have joined forces to form a common front for the coming general election.

The new alliance has the backing of four TDs (Richard Boyd Barrett, Ruth Coppinger, Joe Higgins and Paul Murphy) and 27 councillors. In the election AAA-PBP will field over 30 candidates and hope to considerably increase the representation of the Left in the Dáil.

AAA-PBP will campaign to expose the sham 'recovery' falsely touted by the government parties and their friends in the media. The super-rich are getting even richer but there is no recovery for the vast majority of ordinary people.

Two great crises facing the country reveal the real nature of this 'recovery': the housing crisis and the hospital trolley crisis. If there is a recovery why is the housing shortage getting worse and the homeless still dying on the streets?

If there is a recovery why is our health service descending into chaos? (See *Our Health Service in Crisis* page two) And why do our nurses have to go on strike against overcrowding? (See page two)

The answer is clear: because this is a recovery for the 1% not the 99%.

Water Charges - Still the issue

Both the AAA and PBP fought the unfair water charges from the beginning and have campaigned strongly for non-payment. Both stand for the complete abolition of Irish Water and they urge everyone in the anti-water charges movement to support them in the election.

People Before Profit Cllr Brid Smith says, 'The serious charges brought against the Jobstown 27 for a simple sit down protest and the prosecution of the Crumlin 13 for peacefully resisting water meters show that the Government is still in disarray on this issue. It is vital we all defend the right to protest and stand in solidarity.'

Core Principles

The AAA- PBP alliance have agreed a programme of core principles on which they will campaign.

These are:



- Abolish water charges and home taxes - scrap the USC for low and middle income workers.
- An emergency programme of council housing construction and rent controls.
- Reverse the cuts and increase in health, education and public transport - no to privatisation
- Decent work and a living wage
- Reverse all social protection cuts affecting lone parents,

- job seekers, child benefit, pensioners and the disabled
- Tax justice - make the super-wealthy and corporations pay their fair share of tax.
- Stop paying the odious debts of bankers and speculators
- Repeal the 8th Amendment - for a woman's right to choose
- Solidarity with refugees - no to racism and fortress Europe

- US Military out of Shannon - no to war and militarism
- People Before Profit and the Anti-Austerity Alliance are committed to campaigning for these principles inside and outside the Dáil.
- The new alliance is a highly significant development which can pave the way for a much stronger socialist left in Ireland and fight for the radical transformation of this society.

The Carrickmines Tragedy and State Racism

Socialist Worker has received this powerful statement from Brigid Quilligan, Director of the Irish Traveller Movement.

The Irish state and consecutive governments since the formation of the state have failed Travellers. Our state knows we are subjected to racism. They know our lives are seriously negatively impacted by the opposition we face at every level to live the same quality of life as any other Irish citizen.

Our state makes us justify and prove our ethnicity. We constantly have to validate our very existence. For 50 years we have worked with our state to improve the quality of our lives. The foundation of that has always been recognition that we are Travellers, we have our own way of life, our own language, our own history.

The state sees us a problem, they see us as failed settled people and respond accordingly. For 25 years we have sat at the tables of power, yet never held any power. We are powerful people but the structures set up 'to facilitate' consultation and dialogue between Travellers and the state will never empower us.

We sit on committees such as the Local Traveller Consultative Committee and the National Traveller Consultative Committee, both toothless, because while Travellers bring up the issues of dangerous accommodation, and lack of delivery of accommodation, we are stonewalled by local councillors. They are there with one agenda: to use their position to block development of Traveller accommodation.

In the aftermath of the tragedy in Glenamuck, we struggle as a community to come to terms with the needless loss of life. We do not yet know for sure what caused the fire. What we know is that those people were failed by the state - failed by racists and those willing to represent the views of racists.

Why when Dun Laoghaire Rathdown sent back unspent money allocated to Traveller accommodation, and did not seek any funding this year, did these families have to live in such cramped, overcrowded conditions? Racism.

Politicians like Josepha Madigan, who lobbied against the development of Traveller accommodation are opportunists. They are grasping to raise their profile and build a career on issues they hope will win votes. The nature of Irish society and the deep rooted anti

Travellerism is the issue which needs to be addressed.

To do this we must first be recognised as an ethnic group. Our state must protect us. But like any rights we have secured, we have to fight for that. In doing that we as a community have to mobilise.

We have to honestly ask ourselves if we are colluding in our own oppression by sitting at tables of power where even if we make ourselves heard, decisions are made over our head, without us. I, for one, am having a hard look at my own engagement.

Ten lives are lost. There are sites all over Ireland in worse condition; they are all accidents waiting to happen. We knew this before; we advocated, we shouted, we screamed, we strategised, we collected data, we supported a collective complaint to Europe but we still couldn't create the change we needed.

Ten lives are lost. We are devastated, we are angry and we know we have been failed. Travellers are united in our grief and we will be united in our response.

■ Socialist Worker's full report on the Carrickmines tragedy is on page 3.

Marxism Festival



Ireland's Revolution, 1916, the fight against racism, debates and more. Speakers including Richard Boyd Barrett TD, Sanaul Khatun, Greek socialist, US actress, Egyptian revolutionaries.

Fri Nov 13th to Sun Nov 15th.
Teachers Club 36 Parnell Square East.
MarxismFestival www.socialistworkeronline.net

Hosted by the Socialist Workers Party. Join the SWP. Text JOIN to 0863074060

SOLIDARITY WITH JOBSTOWN AND CRUMLIN!

HEALTH SERVICE SINKS IN CRISIS

ASHLING MERRIMAN, the People Before Profit candidate in North Kildare, works as a Nurses' Aid and witnesses the catastrophe currently overtaking our health service at first hand. She writes:

The eight austerity budgets inflicted on us since 2008 have played a major role in producing higher and higher levels of sickness in the population.

The pressure on people who are struggling to pay their mortgages, or who have lost their jobs, or who cannot afford to pay their increasingly high rents and are threatened with homelessness; who cannot afford to pay for their prescription drugs, who cannot afford to pay to visit the GP or who have had their medical cards taken off them.

This is the basic reason why over the last number of years we have an increasing number of patients attending hospitals.

Our present Fine Gael/Labour government and the previous Fianna Fail/Green government have a lot to answer for in the deterioration of our health services.

The latest official figures confirm that the total number of nursing/midwifery posts, in the public health service, as at the end of July 2015, was 34,970. This is 4030 less than the 39,000 posts in the system at the beginning of 2008.

The embargo on recruiting nurses over the last few years has only just been lifted. In addition the pay, hours of work, workload and other terms and conditions available in the HSE are simply not attractive when compared to other countries - particularly the UK, Australia.

This has led to the large scale emigration of health care professionals of all kinds with the result



being massive staff shortages throughout the system.

The Lansdowne Road agreement also did our health service us no favours. It meant staff in our hospitals taking massive wage cuts with some having to work even longer hours as a result of the embargo on recruitment. This, combined with the increasing demand on services and general understaffing, has been a cause of increasing stress and sickness among the staff supposed to caring for others.

Consequently staff moral has dropped to a very low point over recent years and the whole situation has turned into a vicious downward spiral.

The more recent Haddington Road agreement only gave us back a few crumbs with much the same terms and conditions as Lansdowne Rd so this has done nothing to remedy the situation. All staff are faced with intolerable workloads day in, day out which is taking its toll, physically, mentally and emotionally.

Closures

The closures of beds, lack of funding and staff shortages have had a major impact on patients. Our Hospitals are having to cancel day to day procedures on a regular basis to cope with the overcrowding of A&Es which has reached crisis

proportions.

As a result people are waiting months and in some cases years to have procedures done that can be essential to their daily activities. It also inevitably has a damaging impact on the detection and diagnosis of serious problems that can make the difference between life and death.

The stark fact that I see everyday at work is that the deterioration of the health service has now reached crisis proportions. It is a direct result of the austerity policies of successive right wing governments and it's a time for a change. In fact change is literally a matter of life and death!

mean many will not stay in Ireland once they qualify.

One nurse told Socialist Worker that the issue wasn't just about EDs, but the entire hospital system. "Chronic understaffing is rampant in wards and all across the health service. The union's campaign while welcome needs to be just the start of a national campaign that deals with all of the issues affecting health workers".

There is huge resentment and anger among nurses that is forcing their union to take some action.

This anger also relates to the continued use of the Haddington Road agreement to bring more flexibility and productivity from workers already pushed to the edge. One INMO member told us "Nurses continue to be forced to effectively work one shift per month for free under the deal which was pushed by the union's officials. We can't deal with understaffing and overcrowding in hospitals unless we fight for decent pay and conditions for those who work there."

increase the numbers of beds available. The ratio of beds available fell from over 5 in the 1980s to just 3.2 per thousand in 2010, in comparison the figure for Germany is over 8 per thousand.

Not only is the crisis endangering vulnerable patients, but it is placing a huge burden on frontline workers. Despite claims from the Government, the actual number of

nurses and midwives employed has fallen by some 10% since 2008. This has meant that nurse now have a huge increase in their workload leading to stress and high burnout levels among workers. Alongside this has been an increase reliance on temporary, agency staff, a practice that actually costs more than employing full time nurses. The savage cuts to new nurses pay rates and scales also

Growing pay revolt should be supported by all workers SUPPORT THE TRAIN DRIVERS PAY FIGHT



Socialist Worker industrial correspondent, OWEN McCORMACK reports on important current disputes.

Irish rail workers fight for a pay increase should be supported by all workers. Its been over seven years since the train drivers received any pay rise while they have accepted numerous cost cutting and productivity deals worth over €75 million in savings.

The most recent deal in 2014 saw a pay cut of around €1000 a year alongside extra work loads, new safety responsibilities and the operation of new services.

Despite these sacrifices, drivers are facing renewed demands for more productivity before they receive what the Irish Rail management already owes them. Behind the company's tough talk lies a government and employer strategy to dampen down any demands for pay rises from workers nationally.

While the media and government talk of the company losing millions of Euro, this is an attempt to mask the fact that this is caused by government cuts in investment in public transport service, not workers.

The government has savaged the funding to public transport since the recession began in 2008. Its Public Service Obligation (PSO) funding to the whole CIE group has fallen from €303 million in 2008 to just €212 million last year.

Workers said the public have had to suffer the consequences. Fares have risen dramatically in all three transport companies; bus services have been reduced and amalgamated while workers

have faced worsening pay and conditions.

The hysterical media attack on rail workers is laughable. The claim that they are threatening the "national recovery" should be seen by all workers for what it is: a naked attempt to keep all workers down while the recovery continues in the profits and wealth of a tiny minority.

If this dispute is to win, rail drivers will need to pressure their union leaders to escalate action beyond one day or three hour stoppages. Action among CIE workers should be coordinated and a clear message sent that the days of bullying workers into accepting austerity are gone.

The rail dispute is the first of a number of impending pay disputes that show workers are beginning to recover some confidence after seven years of cuts and austerity.

Dublin bus workers and Luas drivers are also threatening strike action over pay rises. Rail workers voted by over 95% for strike action, ballots in Dublin Bus would almost certainly return huge votes for similar action.

The only way workers will see a real recovery is to take action similar to the rail workers and demand decent pay rises and an end to the cuts and austerity era.

The employers and media are desperate to make sure that no group of workers win such a fight least it gives inspiration to others; for that reason alone we should all get behind the rail workers.

Our nurses fight back

Nurses who are members of the INMO are set to begin a series of work to rule protests to highlight the ongoing crisis in Hospital Emergency Departments.

Nurses in St Vincent's Hospital were the first to stage a lunchtime protest and work to rule over the conditions in the A&E there.

The union reported that in September over 7,000 patients were being treated on trolleys in the EDs across the country. Despite minister Vardakar's high media profile and various promises, chronic overcrowding, a lack of bed capacity and continued understaffing have worsened.

Beaumont Hospital in Dublin had 41 patients on trolleys on one night in October, many of whom were OAPs. The numbers waiting for beds has increased by over 130% since last year alone.

The crisis is caused by the refusal of this and previous Governments to properly fund health services and



increase the numbers of beds available. The ratio of beds available fell from over 5 in the 1980s to just 3.2 per thousand in 2010, in comparison the figure for Germany is over 8 per thousand.

Not only is the crisis endangering vulnerable patients, but it is placing a huge burden on frontline workers. Despite claims from the Government, the actual number of

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DUBLIN BUS



SIPTU and the NBRU have both lodged pay claims for over 6% that workers are owed since 2009. The company are trying to wring extra productivity from drivers for what they effectively already owe them. This comes after two major productivity and cost cutting plans that saw lay scale redundancies, cuts in services and reduced earnings for workers. New drivers are now placed on a drastically reduced six year pay scale and work continuous late shifts. In 2013 workers were browbeaten into accepting a cost cutting plan that took over 6 million euro in earnings from them.

However within months of the

deal being accepted, Dublin Bus accounts showed rising passenger numbers and last year it returned an 11 million profit.

Many drivers now believe they were fooled into accepting that deal and frustration is growing at the length of time the talks on a pay rise are taking.

One driver told Socialist Worker "It's been over seven years since we had a pay rise and we have given cost savings amounting to millions since 2008; with USC and other stealth taxes we have had enough; talk of green shoots of recovery mean nothing if our pay packets are still less now than they were in 2007, the budget will make little difference to most of us here"

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WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

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

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

greater political and economic democracy.

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

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

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

working class.

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

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

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

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

We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.

Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

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

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

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

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

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Carrickmines: An Earthquake of Tragedy - A **FAILURE** of the State: NEVER AGAIN!

Lorraine McMahon,
Baileyfermot Travellers Action Project.

Saturday 10th October 2015 - an earthquake of tragedy sent shock waves across the Traveller community on a scale never seen before.

The fire took the lives of 10 members of the Traveller community, 5 adults and 5 children; Willie Lynch (25) and his partner Tara Gilbert (27) and their children Jodie (9) Kelsey (4) and Willie's brother Jimmy Lynch (39), Sylvia Conors (25), her husband Thomas (27), their children Jim (5), Christy (2) and Mary (5 months) as they slept through the early hours of the morning in the halting site on Glenamuck Road, Carrickmines Dublin.

"I think in reflection to ignored voices, valiantly fought campaigns, deep and repeated challenges to the systematic and institutional ignorance and thinly veiled discrimination; those ten lives were not lost. They were taken" Oein DeBhairduin, Traveller leader.

This was the worst fire in Ireland in terms of fatalities since the Stardust Fire in 1981.

It raises serious questions as to the safety on halting sites, in particular unofficial and temporary sites on which Traveller families are forced to live for decades; sites with intolerable conditions, severe overcrowding and often without the most basic of services such as water and sanitation.

Traveller families who were worried before this tragedy are now living in fear, with a common statement being *"I am now afraid to sleep at night"*.

Safety concerns have been raised for decades by Traveller organisations to no avail.

Our calls for safe, culturally appropriate accommodation in line with legislation have been systematically ignored by the vast majority of Local Authorities.

Travellers In Ireland

Travellers are an indigenous minority who have been part of Irish society for centuries. Travellers long shared history, cultural values, language, customs and traditions make them a self-defined group, which is recognisable and distinct.

Their culture and way of life, of which Nomadism is a part, distinguishes them from the sedentary or settled population.

Yet successive governments, despite obligations from human rights treaties Ireland has signed, have denied Travellers recognition of their ethnicity.

It is the desired wish of the majority of Travellers to have formal recognition of their ethnic status. Continued refusal of this is nothing less than State Racism.

Recognition will not in itself solve the problems but it is a vital starting point.

Traveller Accommodation - the Policies of the State

At 36,000 Travellers are less than 1% of the Irish population, so their accommodation needs could easily be met. But it doesn't happen.

In 1995 the Task Force Report on Travelling People recognised that Travellers suffer social marginalisation and that Traveller specific accommodation was a key need.

One outcome was the enactment of the Housing (Traveller Accommodation) Act 1998.

This Act makes it mandatory for all Local Authorities to develop 5 year Traveller Accommodation Programmes (TAPs) identifying how they plan to meet the accommodation needs of Traveller families, including group housing, halting sites and transient



Carrickmines Halting Site After the Fire

sites where the needed.

However, in practice, these TAPs are only a paper exercise; they don't deliver on commitments made, government policies actually facilitate this as there are no penalties for non delivery.

Plus the budget allocation for TAPs at €4.3million in 2015, is so small that the delivery of targets is literally impossible.

This situation continues to be ignored by the government. It turns a blind eye to the fact that this year alone 15 Local Authorities did not even seek to draw down funding for Traveller accommodation.

One of these is **Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown** who have responsibility for the Carrickmines site.

The last local elections told a horror story about public representatives attitudes towards Traveller accommodation.

Joseph Madigan (FG), openly objected to the Council's decision to locate Travellers on sites in the area as *"a misuse of taxpayers' resources"* and Cllr Barry Saul (FG) saying about the proposed halting site at Mount Anville Rd, *"This site overlooking Dublin Bay would be a premium site for development"*, and that he had *"a commitment from the Council that it would be sold and the money reinvested*

in the community".

Clearly Fine Gael do not view Travellers as a part of the community! The other Authorities who did not draw down any funding this year for Traveller accommodation are Carlow, Cavan, Donegal, South Dublin, Galway City, Galway County, Laois, Leitrim, Louth, Mayo, Meath, Monaghan, Sligo and Wexford. All these areas have Traveller families in need of accommodation.

Conditions

Accommodation is one of the most critical issues for the Traveller community. It is the linchpin needed to address wider issues of health, education and employment.

Currently 549 Traveller families are living in *unofficial*, i.e. side of the road or temporary, halting sites and 987 Traveller families are estimated to be sharing accommodation.

That is 1,536 Traveller families living in intolerable conditions, overcrowded, unsafe and often without access to water and sanitation.

In one area families have been waiting up to 18 years on permanent accommodation, 14 of those without water, sanitation or electricity. 4 years ago the Council provided the family

with what is basically a 10ft x 10ft steel shed only fit for use on a building site.

Conditions became unsafe due to exposed sockets wired to the internal walls which were only plasterboard and eroding over time.

It took two years to address the unsafe conditions and that was only after one of the units went on fire in Jan 2015 and following a protest outside Dublin City Hall in July this year.

One mother stated at the Dublin City Housing SPC in 2013 *"Could you imagine having to take your child out of the trailer and going across the road in the middle of the night to go to the toilet, waking up in the morning not knowing if you can get water to boil a kettle to make a cup of tea or wash your children before going to school? That's what I have been forced to live in for well over a decade"*. This situation is the reality for many Traveller families the length and breadth of the country.

Many families could no longer cope with living in intolerable conditions and have turned to the private rental sector.

Currently there are 2,672 Traveller families in private rented accommodation, many against their stated preference for Traveller specific accommodation which would allow extended families to live closely together which is a very important part of Traveller

culture and a support for Travellers who are marginalised by wider society.

This situation reinforces the belief among Travellers and Traveller organisations that an unofficial policy of assimilation, or *"absorption into the general community"* is very much alive and supported by the State.

For years Travellers and Traveller organisations have made repeated reports to their Local Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees, the Housing SPCs, National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committees and directly to the Department of Environment and Ministers with responsibility for Traveller accommodation of our concerns in relation to safety on sites across the country. But these have never been addressed. If our concerns were taken seriously would the Carrickmines tragedy have happened? Questions must be answered.

"As shocking and sorrowful as the recent deaths have been, it was not a surprise. It was something spoken about for quite some time, challenged, raged against." Oein DeBhairduin

Given the fact current government structures have not delisted on accommodation for Travellers despite a clear legislative framework to do so, it is time for an alternative and more effective structure to be put in place.

Traveller organisations have long since recognised this and have been calling for the establishment of an Independent Housing Agency for Traveller Accommodation.

As the Connors, Lynch and Gilbert families grieve the loss of their loved ones, we must ensure that such a tragedy is a turning point and the deep rooted institutionalised racism towards Travellers is wiped out.

Racism and Discrimination - fed from the top

In the days which followed the horrific fire we witnessed an outpouring

of genuine grief and sympathy for the victims of Carrickmines, the survivors and their extended families.

Some of us hoped that such a tragedy would not be in vain and that this might be a turning point and maybe the settled community and public representatives who previously objected to Traveller accommodation would think of human need before reacting with prejudice.

However, even before the bodies of the deceased were formally identified, a racist frenzy began.

A media circus of comment and condemnation focusing on victim blaming, feeding prejudices against Travellers went into overdrive.

The bias which the media (with the exception of Kitty Holland and one or two others) have shown towards the Carrickmines families has been shameful.

When Dun Laoghaire-Rathdown County Council moved to provide emergency accommodation for the survivors a small group of local residents quickly mounted a blockade.

This reflected the anti Traveller racism that has persecuted Travellers for decades. Even worse, however, was the reaction of the Council.

When they abandoned their plans for temporary accommodation at Glenamuck Road they capitulated to the bigotry and failed to involve the powers that a Local Authority manager has in emergency situations.

If these were Water protesters, the Gardaí would have swiftly mowed them on. But neither the Council nor the State saw fit to protect the rights of Travellers even in such tragic times.

Instead they offered the grieving families a car park to live in: a car park which the council themselves have describe as *"not ideal"*.

Not ideal is an understatement, the car park was formerly a dump.

It is beside a recycling centre where families will have no peace and quiet to grieve the loss of their loved ones, where there is no access to proper sanitation and where the *private lane way in*, further isolates the families from the wider community.

Martin Collins, Co Director of Pavee Point says, *"Once again Travellers' rights to a decent place to live come second place in the demands of the majority population"*.

"This situation is a sad indictment of our society and raises issues which need to be urgently addressed. It is shocking that the bereaved Traveller families will be accommodated in a car park".

"If in these tragic circumstances the county council cannot assert its authority in acting in the best interests of its citizens, what chance do Traveller families have in other less urgent situations?"

This, along with the "lockdown" of Bray, Balally and Wexford on the days of the funerals, demonstrates the deep rooted institutionalised racism towards Travellers.

When Enda Kenny and Brendan Howlin at the funerals of the Connors Families in Wexford on Friday said they understood why business premises, including pubs, remained closed during the funerals, they were not talking about closures due to respect.

They said *"Obviously, you've had incidents on some occasions where things got out of hand"* and then Kenny said that Travellers have to discuss the 'bad eggs' within their community more.

When, at the funeral of Garda Tony Golden last week, did Enda Kenny speak about the need to discuss the "bad eggs" within the force?

The 10 lives taken in such horrific circumstances and the subsequent responses are an indictment on the State.

The racism and discrimination Travellers experience must be wiped out and the media bias with which Travellers are portrayed must be challenged.

It is time for change and, in the words of Fr Derek Farrell at the funeral mass of the Connors, *this must be a "Watershed" moment!*



The Balleyoghan Rd Car Park.

Eileen Flynn writes:

Travellers have always come second place in this state. What happened in the Carrickmines tragedy is a result of that. We just don't matter to this government or the ones before it. You just have to look at the accommodation, and unhealthy living conditions to see it.

They think we, the Traveller

community, have nothing to give to Irish society, but people should not let the government or people in power fool them.

Travellers have already made a significant contribution to Irish society and have so much more to give, if only we had equal opportunities, but all we get from this government is cut backs and let downs time after time, after time.

This government needs to go ASAP - they put no value on Travellers, refugees, homeless, or the wider working class.

I'm studying community and youth work.

Something I've learned is never do anything for the community, without the community, NOTHING ABOUT US, WITHOUT US.

As a Traveller woman living on a halting site in Ballyfermot

with abandoned living conditions, I call the people of Ireland to pull together and work in solidarity with the Traveller community, help us get what we deserve as human beings,

■ WE THE PEOPLE OF THE TRAVELLER COMMUNITY HAVE HAD ENOUGH.

■ THIS TRAGEDY MUST NEVER HAPPEN AGAIN ON A HALTING SITE OR TO ANY OTHER FAMILY IN IRELAND.

#socialism 1.01

John Molyneux

Why Revolution?

In the coming general election People Before Profit will stand on a programme of abolishing the water charges and property tax, taxing the rich and the corporations, cancelling the bankers debt, building social housing and a raft of other measures of real benefit to working class people in this society.

Socialist Worker will enthusiastically

First, because the real power in this society, whatever the Constitution or RTE may say, is not located in parliament but in the boardrooms of the banks and big corporations who control the bulk of wealth, finance and production.

This 1%, the real rulers of our society, will not permit either their wealth or their power to be taken

to be a change in people's consciousness.

At the moment the way most people think about the world is strongly influenced by the ruling class via the media and the education system, both of which they ultimately control.

Socialist education and propaganda – leaflets, newspapers, books etc – can make a difference but the only way the consciousness of the majority of people will change is in the actual process of a mass revolutionary struggle.

Experience

It will be through the collective experience of starting to take control of their streets and communities, their transport and schools, their hospitals and factories that people will learn the meaning of solidarity and who are their real friends and potential allies and who their real enemies, and at the same time develop the confidence that they can run society themselves instead of leaving it to their so-called betters.

In other words revolution is necessary because it is the only way the existing rotten system can be defeated and the only way we can lay the foundations for a new and really democratic society.

This revolution is not something that is counterposed to people's ongoing battles for reforms and concrete demands but a process of mass upheaval that grows out of those immediate struggles.

from them by any radical parliamentary government.

No matter how large its democratic majority, the ruling class would do everything it could to resist and undermine such an elected government.

They would stop investing, try to take their money out of the country, sabotage the banks. In short they would try to strangle the economy.

Armed Forces

They would be backed in this by the media, the judges, and the top civil servants all of whom are run by the same class and by the IMF, the EU Commission, the ECB and other institutions of the global 1%. And if all of this was not enough to bring the radical government to heel they would have the police and armed forces on hand to depose it if they really needed.

Even a government of a hundred Richard Boyd Barrett and Paul Murphys would not be able to resist such an onslaught unless there was a mass workers movement able to take the source of the ruling class's power from them in the work places and defeat the power of the state machine i.e make a revolution.

Equality

There is another reason why such a revolution is necessary. It is that to build a better society, a society of real equality and freedom, there needs

endorse this programme and will actively campaign for these demands in the election and on the streets.

At the same time, for Socialist Worker and the Socialist Workers Party, both the election campaign and the campaigns on the streets – the marches, rallies, strikes etc. – while important in themselves, are part of a wider struggle for a revolution in Ireland and internationally.

Why? Why do we insist on the need for a revolution rather than just electing more socialists to the Dáil or getting in a left wing government, important as those things are.

To answer this question we first need to be clear what we mean by a revolution.

We do not mean small bands of people training in the Wicklow mountains in the hope they can repeat the Easter Rising. We do not mean an armed struggle launched by a small minority.

We mean a mass movement of hundreds of thousands of ordinary working people.

We mean developing the kind of campaign we have seen over the water charges into a mass movement that not only holds huge demonstrations but calls mass strikes, general strikes and workplace occupations and is able to get rid of the existing power structure and take over the running of society.

Why is this mass revolution from below necessary?

As the housing crisis deepens Ireland's New Corporate Landlords

Special Report by



WHO ARE THE NEW CORPORATE LANDLORDS?

As thousands of more families face homelessness, evictions or emergency accommodation in hotels and B&Bs, the human misery involved is providing opportunities for some to make vast profits.

While the Government and Labour's Minister Alan Kelly have failed to provide social or affordable housing for those affected by the fall out of the Celtic tiger, they have ensured that a clique involved in real estate and corporate finance will profit enormously.

Last year the Government funded the building of just 459 social houses, one of the lowest amounts in the state's history.

As reported recently on RTE radio, this Government is content to see a situation where 40 families crowded into just one Dublin city centre B&B with just one cooker to share amongst them when preparing meals for their families.

The lack of social housing alongside the near impossibility for many of ever owning

a house means a new corporate elite will be able to exploit tenants on a scale the old landlord class could only dream of.

The FG/Lab Government have thrown incentives at builders, speculators and financiers who are now building a massive rental market, attracted by high rents, non-taxable profits, and no prospect of any rent controls or tenant's rights.

The housing crisis is thus providing rich pickings for a new generation of corporate landlords.

Both Irish and international investors are rushing to get into the rental market and are buying up apartments and houses at knock down prices from NAMA and others.

The personnel involved come from the same class who profited during the Celtic bubble: real estate agencies, legal and financial experts, builder and speculators.

Together with international vulture funds and private equity firms they are forming a new generation of corporate landlords who will have vast numbers of tenants and

properties at their disposal and who are set to profit from the continued housing crisis and lack of social housing.

The state agency NAMA is gifting thousands of housing units to various outfits with the sole aim of boosting the profits of a few and ensuring property prices continue rising, regardless of the suffering of people in desperate need of accommodation.

These properties, already effectively paid for by taxpayers could end the crisis overnight if used as part of a massive investment programme in social and affordable housing.

REITs: Real Estate Investment trusts, although often fronted by the Irish rich and propertied class, also have international backers from various private equity firms or global real estate companies that give them access to vast international funds.

I-FRES: Green and Hibernia have gathered billions in funds to buy properties cheaply from NAMA and others that can then rent out at high prices in tax free ventures. One

Marxism Festival

1916 to 2016, 100 years of imperialism and rebellion

Fri Nov 13 to Sun Nov 15

Teachers Club, 36 Parnell Square West.

Nearly 100 years after the 1916 rebellion people in Ireland and round the world are still fighting against austerity, against imperialism and against oppression.

There are new movements rising, from the fight against racism in the USA to the rise of the radical left in Europe. We live in very political times.

This year's Marxism Festival features meetings on a range of topics from the Easter Rising to the struggle in Greece. Speakers include: Richard Boyd Barrett TD, Sinead Kennedy,

Eamonn McCann, Kieran Allen, Goretta Horgan, and activists from Egypt, US and Greece.

Arm yourself with radical ideas at this year's Marxism Festival. We can change the world!

Tickets are available from: (01) 8722682 james@swp.ie

3 days = €12 waged / €8 unwaged

Accommodation and crèche on request

Fb MarxismFestival

6pm	Paul Mason on Understanding the Crisis Dave O'Farrell
7.45pm	
10am	Reclaim & Refuse Lorraine McManus
11.45am	The 1916 rising Kieran Allen
2pm	After Syriza. Which way for the 1916 Richard Boyd Barrett
3.45pm	Abortion rights in the era of neo-liberalism Sinead Kennedy
6.30pm	
10am	The political Cllr John Lyne
11.45am	Greece. The battle against Greek socialist
2pm	Can capitalism stop climate change? Eamonn Ryan, Owen
3.45pm	Merchant of death The war industry Eamonn McCann
5.15pm	

Meet: Corporate Landlords

by Owen McCormack



the legislation in 2013. This new legislation meant corporate landlords could now operate in Ireland and pay no taxes on their profits or on the sale of their properties.

According to Bill, Ireland needs to be more like China or Singapore when it comes to planning and development. ie less regulation or laws that impinge on the wealthy's latest get rich quick schemes; "Many of the new cities in China 10 years ago were pastures. In Ireland, we need a Singapore-type approach to providing new residential and commercial buildings

Nowlan gets his son, **Kevin Nowlan** in as Hibernia's CEO, a former agent with real estate firm DNG, who worked at Anglo Irish Bank under Sean Fitzpatrick as a "wealth manager", then landed a job at NAMA. Many of NAMA's officials were deeply embedded in Ireland's property and financial bubble during the Celtic tiger boom. Just as many have now jumped from NAMA into private firms bringing their valuable contacts and insider knowledge of where cheap and profitable properties can be got. Everyone's a winner, except Irish taxpayers or those who face homelessness or evictions or rapidly rising rents.



Danny Kitchen, Chairman of Hibernia, was former head of INBS who oversaw "Fingers" Fingleton's retirement package worth 27 million Euro, even as the Building society was bust with 5 billion in debt that Ireland's



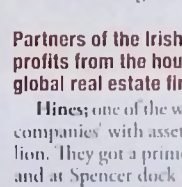
workers had to pay for. **Terence O'Rourke** - managing partner in KPMG in 2007 one of the big auditors and accountancy firms that like Ernst and Young or Price Waterhouse Cooper receive huge fees from Governments for studies that always recommend cuts to public services and privatisation as solutions to every problem! Under Rourke's tenure, KPMG audited Irish Nationwide even as the crisis was in full swing, but managed to miss the impending bankruptcy and give them a clean bill of health. As well as been on the board of Hibernia, he is also on the board of the Irish

Times. **Frank Kenny**; Director of Hibernia; Owns US based Willett Companies, with a property portfolio which brings in rents of €51m a year. A recent interview proudly announced that "His kids went to Harvard and Columbia. He collects fine art. His house insurance alone is €30k a year"



And a little help from some International Friends.....

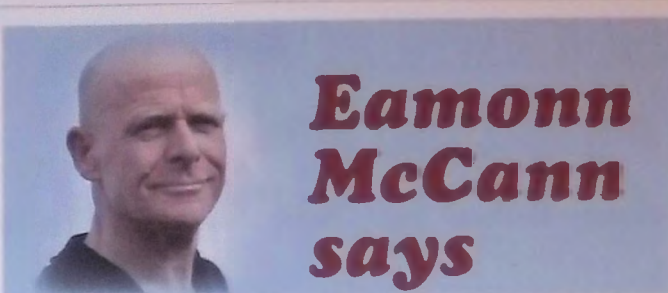
George Soros, billionaire investor with a personal fortune of 20 billion euro, owns 7% of Hibernia. Known as the "Man who broke the bank of England", he like other capitalist smelled the profits to be made from Ireland's housing misery.



Partners of the Irish rich in making profits from the housing crisis are the global real estate firms such as:
Hines; one of the world's largest real estate companies' with assets valued at \$25.8 billion. They got a prime sites in Cherrywood and at Spencer dock in Dublin at bargain basement price from NAMA. Cherrywood alone is a 400-acre site with approval for 3,800 apartments and houses, which they can rent out without paying taxes on any profits. They currently have about 1 billion in property assets in Ireland, most snapped up since the recession started.



Cherrywood bargain...
US giant real estate company **Kennedy Wilson** have also benefited from NAMA's largesse and the collapse in property prices when the bubble burst: they bought numerous sites and properties including five apartment blocks in Dublin while NAMA are also helping to fund their development on Sir John Rogerson's Quay in the Dockland which will house "204 high quality" apartments John Rogerson quay. The corporate future... funded by NAMA.



Eamonn McCann says

The elephant in the room: the British State

The news from the North over the past month has been dominated by the claims of Loyalist paramilitaries to be moving away from crime - and by the PSNI/MI5 report which suggested that the Provisional IRA retains effective control over Sinn Fein. The group which emerges worst from these stories is the British State. It emerged during October that the UDA, the UVF and the Royal Hand Commando had been taking for 18 months to Tony Blair's former chief of staff, Jonathani Powell. Flanked by leaders of the three organisations, Powell announced the formation of a "Loyalist Communities' Council" which, he said, was committed to ending violence in return for funding for offices, office equipment, jobs as "community workers" and so on. (He didn't put it in those terms, but it's what his words amounted to.) Neither Powell nor any of the Loyalist leaders denied that Loyalist paramilitaries continue to be up to their eyes in murder, extortion and drug-dealing. But, they say, these activities were never sanctioned at leadership level.

of the truth. They cite also the rapes by IRA members of Mairia Cahill and Paudie McGahon and the subsequent Republican cover-ups. Not a word from the Indo, though, about the fact that, as Blair's right-hand man, Powell was closely involved in concocting the lies used to lure the British parliament and people into supporting the invasion and occupation of Iraq. It was Powell who emailed the chairman of Westminster's Joint Intelligence Committee suggesting that he insert a lie into a dossier to suggest that there was reliable intelligence showing that Saddam Hussein planned to attack British targets with chemical and biological weapons. This deliberate piece of warmongery led to more deaths of innocent people than all the paramilitary groups in Northern Ireland put together. Then there's the involvement of MI5 in reporting on the plausibility of IRA denials of some of its actions. MI5 is a murder gang. It's a dozen years since the BBC's Panoramas exposed its role in the murder of innocent Catholics in order



So they don't count. Sinn Fein leaders said something similar in the wake of the killing of Kevin McGuigan in Belfast on August 12th. The PSNI asserted that members of the IRA had been involved.

to sustain the credibility of its agents within Loyalist paramilitary groups, and to get rid of supposed Republican activists that they had no evidence against that could be presented in court.

Derision
The DUP walked out of the Executive in protest. Sinn Fein said that those who'd carried out the killing were "criminals", that Republican leaders had not sanctioned any such activity. So the British asked the PSNI and MI5 to look into the matter and sort the truth out. The report found that members of the IRA had been involved in killings and racketeering even after Sinn Fein claimed they'd gone away. But none of these activities had been sanctioned by the IRA leadership. So they didn't count either. Commentators have heaped derision on the Loyalist and Republican denials. Sinn Fein isn't helped by the fact that party president and long-time IRA leader Gerry Adams denies ever having been in the IRA. Other SF leaders who served in the IRA alongside Adams regularly claim to believe him. Newspapers like the Sunday Independent have had a field day attacking the Shinners for this denial

The solicitor Pat Finucane is the best-known victim of the MI5/British Army/UDA murder machine. There wasn't a mention of any of this during the Dail debate on the PSNI/MI5 report during which Sinn Fein was roundly attacked by FF, FG and Labour spokespersons. The fact that Adams and Co. deserve little sympathy shouldn't blind us to the hypocrisy which highlights the sins of the Provos and other paramilitaries while ignoring the sacrileges against humanity perpetrated by Powell, MI5 and other representatives of the British ruling class. These ills thrive in a dysfunctional State with politics based on the artificial construct of communal identity. Socialists must differentiate themselves sharply from the communal parties. Green and Orange, and carve out a political position which enables us to take an unequivocal stand against paramilitarism and all its ills while making no concessions to the toxic State represented by thugs like Powell and killer gangs like MI5.

NDLORDS?

of the largest, Hibernia, shows how the same clique that benefited from the Celtic Tiger bubble intend to continue profiting from the misery of its collapse.

Hibernia REIT: Ireland's entrepreneurial class at its finest

Founded by **Bill Nowlan**, as the head of an asset and property management company, Nowlan lobbied FGs Michael Noonan to pass legislation to legalise REITs in order to attract Irish and international funds into Ireland's commercial and residential sector. Nowlan saw an opportunity with large amounts of property going at bargain prices and set up HIBERNIA REIT when Noonan and the FG/Lab government passed

Marxism Programme

Karl Marx? post-capitalism.	Ireland's Revolution. 1916 to 1923. Leah Speight	Portugal 1974. A year of revolution. Melisa Halpin
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Opening Rally. 1916 to 2016.
100 years of imperialism & resistance.

ees. The fight against Fortress Europe. on. Memet Uludag	Rosa Luxemburg. Reform or Revolution. Fiona Ferguson	The politics of Gramsci. Marnie Holborow
Marx's Capital. Paul Blackledge	Sinn Fein in Government Goretti Horgan	Sean O'Casey. Revolutionary author. Paul O'Brien
Crisis at Stormont. A marxist analysis. Michael Collins	75 years on. The legacy of Leon Trotsky. Sean Mitchell	From Hegel to Marx. Their revolutionary ideas. James O'Toole
Is the world economy recovering? Brian O'Boyle	The Egyptian Revolution. What can we learn? Samch Naguib	

International Rally

of James Connolly. na	Lessons of the Spanish Civil War. Alan Martin	Lenin's 'State & Revolution' Hazel Norton
austerity. IS16, Syria, Imperialism & the Middle East. Anne Alexander	Paris Commune to Egypt. Women in Revolution. Cllr Brid Smith	Germany 1918-23. The 'lost' revolution. Madeline Johansson
ate. From Ferguson to Saunders. Race & Class in the USA. Becca Bor	How can Palestine be free? Sara O'Rourke	The fight against fascism in Europe. Brian Richardson
ate. McCormack	Corbyn, Syriza- What is reformism? John Molynoux	Marx, Freud- Capitalism & mental health. Pendar O'Grady

Closing Rally

BUDGET 2016:

21st Century Thatcherism

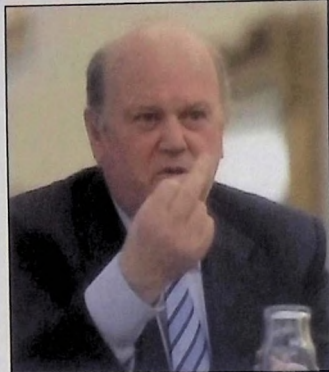
Nigel Gallagher, People Before Profit candidate for Sligo Leitrim.

If you were to only listen to mainstream media in the wake of Budget 2016 you would be forgiven for thinking that austerity was over and we were back to the so-called 'giveaway budgets' of the Celtic Tiger. But instead of resembling the budgets of the Tiger era it resembles the budgets of the infamous Thatcher years. Whilst Thatcher was for many a deeply unpopular figure she still managed to win three elections in the crisis ridden era of the 1980s.

This was done through a combination of two strategies: first, pushing the narrative of TINA, claiming that There Is No Alternative to austerity, cuts, privatization, and market forces. This is the narrative that the Irish public has been fed by Irish and European elites and their media since the crisis hit in 2008. It will be parroted by Fine Gael and Labour throughout this election.

They will insist they were the ones who had to make the "tough decisions" and they are the only safe pair of hands to lead the so-called recovery; it is either a future of "stability" with them or "chaos" in the hands of the left and independents, failing to recognize the chaos already here for the thousands of people on hospital trolleys and those living in deprivation because of their policies.

Thatcherism's second strategy was delivering carefully aimed budgets that would shore up their support base close to election time. Budgets were aimed at appealing particular sections of society, the corporate sector and the middle to upper middle classes.



If we look behind the headlines of "giveaway" Budget 2016 we see that it is these sections that benefit most from the €1.5 billion that is being returned to the Irish economy from a total of €30 billion that was stripped off the Irish people over the last five years. Social Justice Ireland describe it as 'the fifth regressive Budget in a row'.

Corporate Giveaway

Many of the key benefits from Budget 2016 flow directly to the corporate sector. The jewel in the crown is the introduction of a Knowledge Development Box (KDB) to reduce corporate taxes even further.

Over the last 12 months, the Irish state has come under increasing pressure to close tax loopholes enjoyed by multinationals. Noonan eventually relented on the so-called 'double Irish', but not before dreaming up the introduction of a research and development catch-all category.

The whole idea of a KDB is a scam. It allows corporations to declare profits



relating to their research & development at 6.25%. This is half the current low rate of 12.5%, confirming that the Irish state is completely wedded to corporate welfare. The status of profits coming from R&D is extremely hard to identify and this is really the point of the exercise. People Before Profit have long argued that the effective rate of corporate tax in Ireland was around 6%. Now we have proof.

Appealing to the rich

The government parties want to shore up their support among the middle to high-income earners and the rich. This is evident in their reduction of Capital Gains Tax from 33% to 20% and a big increase in the amount exempt from capital acquisitions taxes - from €225,000 - €280,000 (eventually rising to €500,000). This en-

ures that children of the elite can inherit their parents' wealth without paying as much towards public services.

Another key move was the changes to income tax. The package that cost a total of €847m (€75m on income tax reductions and €772m on USC reductions) benefits high-earners disproportionately. A single person earning €20,000 gains €493 per annum, while a single person on €75,000 gains €902. Appealing to this demographic fits with Fine Gael and Labour policy of protecting the wealthy but it also reaps rewards in terms of votes, as affluent areas like Sandymount and Donnybrook have voter turnout rates of 87%.

All in all, this budget is an important part of Fine Gael and Labour's broader electoral strategy. Mainstream Irish media has played its part in feeding the illusion that this budget was somehow a giveaway for the masses but it was not. This has been a giveaway to the wealthy that will increase the gap between rich and poor and leave the door wide open for further tax avoidance by the corporate sector.

This is something People Before Profit will expose during the build up to Election 2016 whilst clearly articulating an alternative that protects the most vulnerable and presenting a vision of society in which everyone can live with dignity.

This can be done through taxing the super-rich and by ensuring multi-nationals - at least - pay the 12.5% tax-rate they are supposed to be paying in order to fund our public services; by ending the €8 billion euro giveaway to wealthy bondholders every year, which squashes to building 37 children's hospitals. Otherwise the vast majority of people will continue to suffer at the hands of 21st century Thatcherism.

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT ELECTION CAMPAIGN:

Meet the Candidates

People Before Profit is fielding its strongest ever team of candidates for the coming general election.

Socialist Worker talked to four of them from across the country: Una Dunphy in Waterford, Eddie Conroy in Roscommon East Galway, Jim O'Connell in Cork South Central and Deirdre Wadding in County Wexford.

We asked what made them decide to run for People Before Profit, what are the main national and local issues they want to highlight and their attitude to the new AAA-PBP alliance.

Una Dunphy is from Tramore and is an active trade unionist, currently President of Waterford Council of Trade Unions.

She says 'The deterioration of people's lives at the hands of the most recent governments has led me to further activism, culminating in my decision to run for election and I feel that PBP best suits my beliefs on how to achieve a fairer society.'

Una has many national issues she plans to campaign on including abolition of Irish Water, the overhaul of the HSE, the plight of lone-parents and repeal of the 8th Amendment.

Cardiac care

Locally she wants to focus on the immediate reinstatement of 24/7 cardiac care at University Hospital Waterford, the achievement of university status for Waterford Institute of Technology and youth employment and the development of opportunities for 18-24 year olds.

Eddie Conroy is a native of Boyle and was one of the main figures in the Right2Water campaign in the Roscommon East Galway constituency.

'Austerity had stirred the anger within me and the water charges were the catalyst for taking that anger to the



Clockwise from top left: Una Dunphy (Waterford), Eddie Conroy (Roscommon East Galway), Jim O'Connell (Cork South Central) and Deirdre Wadding (County Wexford)

next level, activism. The more I looked into PBP, the more boxes were getting ticked.'

Like all PBP candidates, Eddie wants to abolish the water charges, the property tax and the USC for those earning under €70,000.

He will campaign for 'a National Health Service where people are treated according to medical need not the size of their wallet' and wants to 'take all oil and gas resources back into public ownership' while making

'the corporations pay the proper rate of 12.5% tax.'

As a candidate in Roscommon Eddie is particularly concerned about the decline of rural Ireland, including the closure of Garda stations and the collapse of employment opportunities in the region.

Plus he is for a ban on fracking which he sees as 'a threat to our farms, our water, fish stocks and general health'.

Jim O'Connell grew up in Cork City,

has worked in construction and is a Law graduate from UCC.

'I was very much concerned with issues of inequality and oppression across the world and came to realize the possibilities of effecting change.'

'The policies and ideologies of PBP reflect my own, and I believe that together with ordinary people we can bring about the change that's needed to end inequality and clear out the establishment politicians.'

National issues stressed by Jim include: 'The class divide and the widening income gap', the 'two tier health system that victimizes the old and the disadvantaged', and 'the scandal of the housing crisis, homelessness, bank repossessions and the lack of social housing'.

He too is pledged to abolish water charges, property tax and the USC on ordinary people.

Locally he opposes 'further efforts to site an incinerator in Cork harbour' and 'the further erosion of local democracy with attempts to merge City and County Councils'.

Cllr Deirdre Wadding, is from Wexford Town, now living in Kiltrane. She is a former teacher working with Traveller children and performed as a Storyteller in schools and libraries.

She says, 'I was non-party but became interested in People before Profit through my contact with and observation of many who have now become comrades, I felt the policies and attitudes were very much aligned with how I thought.... This system is rotten and must be changed utterly and radically.'

Deirdre's list of issues was as long as your arm: housing and homelessness, refugees and racism, repeal the 8th, tax the rich, redistribute the wealth, stop TTIP and many more.

In relation to Wexford she stresses also 'staffing levels at Wexford General Hospital and mental healthcare -

Wexford suicide rate is double the national average', the decline of the Wexford fishing industry, lack of local jobs, and 'looking ahead, the shortage of school places.'



AAA- PBP alliance

Deirdre speaks for all the candidates in describing the AAA-PBP alliance as 'a very positive and encouraging development'. Jim O'Connell calls it, 'a real alternative as opposed to different shades of neo-liberalism' and Una Dunphy notes that the polls 'have reacted extremely favourably reflecting the public desire for an alternative to the establishment parties'.

Eddie Conroy says, 'There is a hugely solid foundation for the alliance to push forward from and that is that we both share the same core principles. We will not allow the 1% to prosper from the suffering of the 99%'.

Prospects

Looking ahead, Deirdre sounds a warning, 'As regards the future and a potential Left Wing government, that's something to strive for but not at any cost and certainly not in coalition with any Right Wing / Austerity parties. We need to avoid the road Syriza took'.

Jim O'Connell's final comment is, 'This election is probably the best chance for generations for people to dispense with the politics as usual of the mainstream parties who only consult with the electorate around election time and then resume their aloof privileged position for another 5 years.'

A more equal and fairer society is possible with a new way of controlling our own destinies. First we must clear out the rotten establishment.'

Future issues of Socialist Worker will feature more PBP candidate interviews.

International round up – from Palestine to South Africa

As *Socialist Worker* goes to press there are a large number of important struggles and developments internationally which our lack of space and resources prevent us covering adequately. Here is a brief round up:

Palestine:



This is what occupation looks like

James O'Toole reports

A 16 year old Palestinian sweet seller was shot on Saturday Oct 24th at an Israeli checkpoint. The Israelis claimed he 'had a knife' but eye witnesses rejected this.

Over the last three weeks, the Israeli Occupation Forces have killed 46 Palestinians – including 10 children – and injured over 5,000 more, with over 290 injured forces on the 'Day of Rage' protests which took place on October 23rd.

Israel recently passed legislation allowing soldiers and police to shoot to kill when confronted with stone throwing protesters.

Israel has increased the level of repressive measures directed against Palestinians, including the use of lethal force against protesters, punitive home demolitions, and an increase

in the number of arrests and detentions. Netanyahu was re-elected on a ticket of defence of the occupation and denial of any Palestinian state.

He has continued to entrench a reality in which Palestinians and Israelis are subject to different laws and courts, use separate roads and have unequal access to basic necessities such as water and housing while Israeli settler violence goes unchecked.

In response to the repression Palestinians have begun knife attacks on Israeli citizens.

This kind of desperate reaction is an inevitable response to the brutal occupation.

Israel is a racist Apartheid state built on the expulsion and exclusion of the Palestinian people.

We must continue to boycott Israel and protest in solidarity with the Palestinians.

Portugal: Left Government blocked

President Anibal Silva has refused to appoint a left anti-austerity, anti-Troika coalition government even though it gained a majority in the elections and the parliament.

He said, 'It is my duty to do everything possible to prevent false signals being sent to financial institutions, investors and markets'. As in Greece -so much for democracy!

Turkey's new war on Kurds: Memet Uludag reports

Turkey is going to the ballot box a second time in 4 months following the deadlock after the June elections.

The results of these elections were a key moment in Turkey's troubled history. For the first time the Kurdish and left supported People's Democratic Party (HDP) passed the 10% national threshold and gained 13% of the votes and 80 of the 550 seats in the Turkish Parliament.

The June elections ended the 13 year single party rule of Erdogan's Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Since the elections the AKP government and the Turkish fascists have continuously attacked the HDP and particularly its leader Selahattin Demirtas.

Last month fascists burned an HDP party building. After two years of relative calm there are increased military operations against the Kurds. The Turkish government ended the peace process in July and since then hundreds of people have died and many HDP representatives have been arrested.

On October 10, a peace rally called by the Confederation of Trade Unions, was bombed with the loss of more than 100 lives and hundreds wounded. The peace rally was calling on the Turkish government to stop its war with Kurds. Although nobody claimed responsibility for the bombing clues suggest ISIS was responsible, fuelling opposition anger over the enormous security lapse by the government.

After the explosions the government was keener to send in the police and tear gas the wounded protesters than to send ambulances. This attack was clearly targeting the HDP and the hopes for renewed peace talks. The situation is very dangerous.

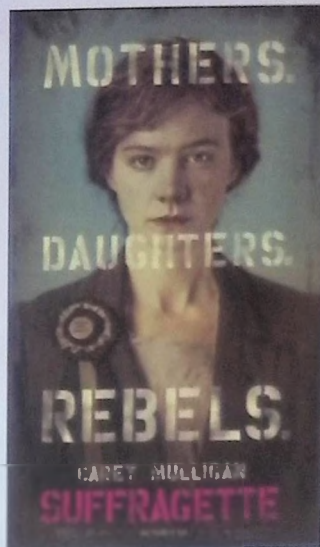
Egypt: mass strike at Mahalla

As we go to press, 17,000 workers at Egypt's largest textile factory at Mahallah have been on all out strike for a week over promised but unpaid bonuses. This is the biggest strike since the military coup. It shows that despite President al-Sisi's brutal repression resistance is still possible. The Egyptian Revolution will rise again!

Britain: Cameron on the ropes.

Following Corbyn's election as Labour leader, mass protests at the Tory Party Conference and a huge revolt by Junior Doctors, a public outcry over tax credits has resulted in the House of Lords (!!) defeating Chancellor Osborne's viciously anti-working proposal to axe Tax Credits. The Tories are on the back foot.

Throwing off the mantle of repression



Suffragette, directed by Sarah Garron, is a British period drama now showing in cinemas nationwide. It is reviewed here by Linda Kehoo.

This film takes us back to the London of 1912 where the suffragettes- the women fighting for their right to vote- are alive and well and kicking up a hell of a fuss. For over thirty years theirs had been a peaceful struggle; lobbying parliament, writing countless letters and holding meetings across the country.

They became more "disruptive", in the 1911 census many women disappeared as "women who do not count refuse to be counted" and by 1912 the movement had split as some chose to take a more militant route. *Suffragette* follows those women.

The cinematography and costumes wonderfully set the scenes, helping us to engage with the storyline and empathise with the personal and political struggles of these women.

Carey Mulligan is excellent as the young Maud Watts, who first through accident and then by choice, is awakened to their (her!) cause and becomes a suffragette.

Critics have commented that the film could have been better had the main character been a Pankhurst or Emily Davidson or one of those other fearsome women remembered by history.

Why create a Maud Watts? It seems to me that Garron

and Morgan, the female director and female screenwriter, were making a film about all women, about all the thousands of Suffragettes who fought, the hundreds who were jailed, and those few who died. These were mothers and sisters and daughters from all walks of life.

The film shows just how complete the repression of women was. In the Laundries women get paid "13 shillings instead of 19, for a third more hours worked".

They have no right to their money. Maud hands her unopened wage-packet to her husband and the MP only bails-out his wife and refuses to sign the cheque needed to free the

others.

Women are to forget their silliness and go home to their husbands. They also have no parental rights.

In a particularly gut-wrenching scene Maud loses her son, the brightest thing in her life, simply because she has no right to him.

Rape and domestic violence are part of a woman's lot. Watts discovers her boss (and abuser) is now preying on the daughter of the very Mrs. Miller.

The question left to the audience is whether Mrs. Miller herself knows- is it just a fight she cannot win, is it something so common it is taken as part of life, or is it something that just must be stomached because the family needs the wage?

Despite the strong feminist scenes, men are not portrayed as "the bad guys".

The police investigator charged with tracking the suffragette movement, played by Brendan Gleeson, has depth enough of character that the audience is able to see things from his perspective.

The London Premiere saw the "Sisters Uncut" feminist group stage a die-in on the red carpet to highlight cuts to vital women's services in the UK. It was a highly appropriate protest.

This is a strong and thought-provoking film, which despite some weaknesses, has brought women's rights, domestic violence and feminism to the headlines – no bad thing.

South Africa – student revolt against fees

South Africa has been swept by a mass student revolt against a fees hike they have branded as 'anti-black, anti-poor and anti-working class'.

The students faced tear gas and water cannon as in the Apartheid days but their mass solidarity has forced President Zuma to back down.

A great victory and inspiration to students everywhere!



South Africa student revolt

Karl Marx on the Paris Commune

Continuing our series on classic socialist texts, James Granell reviews Marx's study of the Paris Commune, 'The Civil War in France'.

What happens when the working classes emancipate themselves? Can the workers revolution take over the existing institutions of the state – its police, courts, and parliamentary dung-heaps?

Or must they destroy them, replacing them with new forms of workers' self organisation and power? These questions come to the fore in Karl Marx's *The Civil War in France*.

The Civil War in France is Marx's pioneering work on the Paris Commune of 1871. The Commune lasted for only seventy-two days – 18 March to 28 May – during which time the workers of Paris took control of their city and began to run it for themselves. This event provided the first glimpse of what socialism would really look like, while also demonstrating the importance of the self emancipation of the working class.

Mark wrote this piece during the

events of the Commune and presented it as an address to the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association on 30 May – just two days after the last barricade in Paris was destroyed. It was then published in pamphlet form in June 1871.

The Commune achieved much of note during its short existence. On 30 March it abolished conscription and the standing army, declaring that a National Guard consisting of citizens capable of bearing arms was to be the sole armed force. On the same day a number of foreigners who had been elected to the Commune were confirmed in office, because, as Engels said, "the flag of the Commune is the flag of the World Republic."

This historical fact flies in the face of modern bourgeois rhetoric that tries to paint the working class as backward and full of prejudice. National and racial strife are propagated by the ruling class and have no place within a workers' republic.

On 1 April it was decided that the highest salary paid to any employee of the Commune, including the members themselves, would not exceed 6,000

francs. All officials, public servants, magistrates and judges were now to be elected, responsible, and revocable.

On 2 April the Commune declared the separation of Church and State. Church property became national property and on 8 April it was decreed that all schools were to be secularised. Cleared of interference from Church and State, education was to be accessible to all. As Marx noted, "the priests were sent back to the recesses of private life, there to feed upon the aims of the faithful in imitation of their predecessors, the apostles."

On 16 April the Commune began to make plans for the reorganization of factories closed down by the manufacturers. These would now operate under the control of the workers formally employed in them, organised in co-operative societies, joined in one large union. All the while the Commune was under siege from the reactionary forces of the Versailles government.

Marx points out that the working class did not expect miracles from the Commune. They knew that, 'in order to work out their own emancipation...



Slaughtered Communards

they will have to pass through long struggles, through a series of historic processes, transforming circumstances and men.'

The Commune demonstrated the potential of the working class. It also demonstrated the lengths to which the ruling class would go to crush any semblance of working class revolution. In the last week in May the Commune was crushed by the Versailles troops who slaughtered 30,000 Communards on the streets of Paris.

In the postscript to the 1891 edition

of *The Civil War in France*, Engels wrote: 'of late, the Social-Democratic phillistine has once more been filled with wholesome terror at the words: Dictatorship of the Proletariat. Well and good, gentlemen, do you want to know what this dictatorship looks like? Look at the Paris Commune. That was the Dictatorship of the Proletariat.' And that is precisely why this inspiring piece merits reading, understanding, and rereading as that we, like the Communards, can fight for the World Republic.

Socialist Worker

Stormont crisis continues – so must the resistance!

Shaun Harkin

Politics in the North can often appear trapped in limbo. Crisis follows crisis reinforcing sectarian division and hopelessness. It's no wonder so many believe the devolved Northern Ireland Assembly is beyond repair and their political representatives incapable of running a functional government.

The latest crisis creating a sense of political paralysis was triggered by the murder of Kevin McGuigan, a former IRA member, in Belfast. Unionists threatened the power-sharing government couldn't continue if IRA members were found to have carried out the attack.

The Ulster Unionist Party, led by former TV presenter Mike Nesbitt, exploited the opportunity to show they were the 'hardest' on IRA paramilitarism by withdrawing their one minister from participation in the Northern Ireland Executive.

The UUP was the dominant political power for decades in the North but were outmanoeuvred and effectively marginalised by the DUP during the Belfast Peace Agreement years.

With dissatisfaction with Stormont and the DUP growing, Nesbitt's UUP believe they can develop a broader case for themselves in advance of the Assembly elections next year. The strategy boils down to an attempt to heat the Orange Drum louder than other Unionist parties.

Nor to be outflanked, Peter Robinson then asked the NI Secretary of State, Theresa Villiers, to implement an emergency suspension of the Stormont Assembly.

When Villiers refused to do this the DUP in a theatrical attempt to raise the stakes higher had Robinson step-aside as NI First Minister.

Rather than collapsing the Assembly by ending their involvement Arlene Foster was assigned First Minister and DUP department ministers have been resigned and then reappointed on a weekly basis.

PSNI/M15 report

In response, Villiers requested a report on the state of paramilitarism in the North. The recently released report was jointly drafted by the PSNI and M15.



Paramilitary mural in East Belfast

It claimed to draw on 'current intelligence, historic material and analysis to provide an assessment of structures, roles and purpose of paramilitary groups in NI'.

It finds that all the main paramilitary groups operating here during 'the Troubles' are still in existence - this includes the PIRA, UDA, UVF and INLA.

This is nothing most people in the North would find surprising.

The report also finds that none of these groups 'are involved in planning or conducting terrorist activity' and are committed to the promoting peace - but that their members, including leading members, are sometimes involved in violence, criminal activity and sometimes murder.

Nevertheless, the report finds 'dissident republican' groups the New and Continuity IRA are the greatest threat to national security.

With this report in hand DUP ministers will return to their posts and Peter Robinson to First Minister. 'Intensive cross-party talks' are now taking place to deal with both the findings and Welfare Reform.

Where next?

What does this mean and where does it leave us? Stormont was already deadlocked and paralysed before McGuigan's murder because of Sinn Fein's refusal to implement Welfare Reform.

Welfare Reform was included among the cuts and job busting Stormont House Agreement delivered by SF-DUP at the beginning of the year. SF thought twice about supporting the implementation of Welfare Reform following mass opposition in the North and the potential damage to its anti-austerity position in the South.

When the heat generated by Unionists

in response to the McGuigan murder cools the political situation in the North will not have changed.

Only months ago Sinn Fein's opposition to Welfare Reform threatened to bring down Stormont. The crisis generated in response to McGuigan's murder is designed to break the political deadlock at Stormont which means pushing Sinn Fein to fully implement the Stormont House Agreement, including Welfare Reform.

For all the main political parties there is no alternative to a power-sharing government and the pursuit of political objectives through constitutional means. Along with this comes a commitment to create a stable environment to attract investment. This is why the DUP/SF are committed to reducing the Corporate Tax rate and further privatisation of public services.

Despite the crisis job losses and cuts

continue to have a devastating impact on all communities across the North. Fear grows at the loss of tax credits since Cameron announced they were on the Tory chopping block.

Resistance to these attacks remains crucial. Talks might break the deadlock at Stormont for now but alternative politics based on uncompromising resistance and solidarity can break austerity and sectarianism.

Stormont's paralysis encourages a wider sense of political paralysis in society. To counter this we should seize every opportunity to mobilise people in common struggle against cuts, job losses, for Equal Marriage, against racist attacks, in solidarity with Palestinians and in defence of trade union rights.

See also Eamonn McCann on *The elephant in the room: the British State*, on page five.

NAMA's Vultures Picnic – The dodgy deals continue

Dave O'Farrell

As the financial crisis began to take hold in 2007 we were treated to a chorus of government ministers and economic experts predicting a "soft landing". For most of us this soft landing was distinctly mythical but for some it was very real and a key part of it was the establishment of NAMA in 2009.

Since its creation NAMA has provided soft landings for a variety of big developers and rich pickings for a flock of vulture capitalists buying up distressed properties. One particular mythical beast which has done very well in the last two years is Cerberus Capital – a US based company named after the giant multi-headed dog of Greek mythology which guards the gates of the underworld.

The details of the Cerberus deal have been thrust into the media spotlight by Mick Wallace's revelations in the Dail around the sale of NAMA's northern portfolio.

Known as Project Eagle this was the largest property transaction ever in Northern Ireland involving a purchase price of €1.6 billion for loans with a face value of some €5.7 billion.

The allegations surrounding the sale are staggering, encompassing illegal payments, corrupt officials, the involvement of First Minister Peter Robinson and then Finance Minister Sammy Wilson – and a former US Vice President for good measure.

NAMA established a Northern Ireland Advisory Committee to advise on its Northern portfolio and Finance Minister Sammy Wilson appointed Frank Cushnahan and Brian Rowntree to its board.

Both have since resigned after revelations of massive contracts awarded by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, while Rowntree was Chairman and both were on its board, to Red Sky – a construction firm chaired by Cushnahan.

Only months after resigning Cushnahan reemerged as an advisor to Pimco – an early bidder for the Project Eagle loans.



Mick Wallace raises NAMA dodgy deals in Dail

Pimco were later forced to withdraw from the sale process after NAMA was informed that Pimco was to pay £15 million to its US legal firm Brown Rudnick, to Belfast based legal firm Tughans and to Cushnahan as part of its bid.

Following Pimco's withdrawal Cerberus

engaged both Brown Rudnick and Tughans. On March 25th 2014 a meeting took place between Peter Robinson, Sammy Wilson, Ian Coulter (managing director of Tughans) and former US vice president Dan Quayle - now chair of Cerberus Global Investments.

In July Mick Wallace revealed in the Dail an audit at Tughans found £7m had been put in an Isle of Man bank account and that this had been " earmarked for a Northern Ireland politician or party".

Despite the ongoing investigations into these dodgy deals NAMA has now identified Cerberus as the preferred bidder for Project Arrow – a loan portfolio with a face value of €6.25 billion and an estimated sale price of €800 million.

While many would question this deal in light of the revelations outlined above, for Cerberus – and indeed NAMA – this is business as usual.

Over the last two years Cerberus has used

a network of Irish based companies to buy distressed loans with a face value of €19 billion including some €6.7 billion in Irish loans from Ulster Bank.

While the exact sale price of many deals won't be available until the companies involved file their accounts some deals raise questions about the haircuts or discounts on the NAMA sales.

For example in December Cerberus bought a UK loan portfolio with a face value of £1.2 billion for £950 million – just compare this to the estimated €800 million sale price for the €6.25 billion Project Arrow loans!

It is now abundantly clear that NAMA was never intended to get the best possible return for the Irish public who bore the cost of establishing it.

The true purpose of this secretive operation is to get the property speculation casino going again and if this means selling multi billion property portfolios to big vulture capitalists in less than squeaky clean circumstances, well, so be it.