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Socialist Worker

FF & Greens: Get them out now

THE LOCAL elections were a massacre for Fianna Fáil and the Greens. Voters used the ballot box to exact revenge on a government that has been attacking workers and slashing public services.

With over 400,000 workers now unemployed, this election was a referendum on government policies to deal with the economic crisis.

The political defenders of big business, the bankers and the developers were routed at the ballot box.

Fianna Fáil has been the biggest party in Ireland since the 1930s, but now its national percentage has fallen to barely over 20%.

The Greens betrayed their principles around military neutrality, ownership of natural resources and even motorway building and have now lost heavily in all areas where they held council seats.

This is now a deeply unpopular government that should be driven from office.



Thousands protested in Dublin over cuts in the Community Sector in early June

Pic: Paula Geraghty

Elections signal a significant shift to the left

THROUGHOUT THE country – in Dublin, Dun Laoghaire, Cork, Tipperary, Sligo and Galway – the people have voted for councillors who want to see real change in Irish society.

The People Before Profit Alliance won five seats in its first local election campaign and now has more seats than the Greens.

Newly elected Councillor, Richard Boyd Barrett, who topped the poll in Dun Laoghaire, said, “The election results show there is a real desire for change. People are angry with a government that has pumped



Richard Boyd Barrett

billions into failed banks while services and wages are cut and dole queues get longer.

“This government has no mandate to rule and should be driven from office.

“The trade unions, community organisations and the left should now organise mass protests to give the government the final push.”

Re-elected Councillor, Joan Collins, pledged, “People Before Profit will not be doing deals with any of the establishment parties on local councils.

2 Instead, our councillors will

give voice to the anger of the public and lead the resistance to cuts and local charges.

“We will be an independent voice for all those wanting change. We will provide a real opposition on the councils to which we have been elected.

“The outcome of the election has seen a significant number of councillors elected who offer a real political alternative.

“The People Before Profit Alliance is committed to working with other like-minded individuals and organisations to give political expression to those who want real

change.

“The alternative offered by Fine Gael and Labour would see no major change in the direction of government policy.

“Fine Gael plans even more savage cut-backs in public services and they refuse point blank to call for taxes on wealth.”

“There is no future for the left in doing deals with parties beholden to big business and failed economic doctrines.

“We are calling on all those committed to a real alternative to come together to work for the creation of a new political force.”

Borderline Totalitarianism

By **BARBARA MULDOON**,
(an Immigration Practitioner in
Drinan Solicitors, Belfast)

IN A recent report entitled "Our Hidden Borders – The UK Border Agency's Powers of Detention" the NI Human Rights Commission has shone a light on what could only be described as the nefarious activities and draconian methods of UK Immigration Officers operating in Northern Ireland.

Immigration Officers are regularly involved in detaining and removing individuals and families from the north.

The report details that many of the immigration officers are not aware of what powers they hold, believe that they have powers exceeding those that they actually have, with conflicting views on what the purpose of their various operations are and have a scant knowledge and regard for the rights of the people they are dealing with.

Over the last number of years I have represented numerous people who have been unlawfully detained and threatened with removal. People report being intimidated, bullied, verbally abused and denied access to legal representation. I am routinely refused access to my clients.

On one occasion I was forced to issue High Court proceedings in order to locate the whereabouts of my client in order to take his instructions and prevent his removal.

This man was on his way to being removed to Nigeria but instead was subsequently released and received £20,000 for his unlawful detention.

A large part of the focus of the report is the activities of immigration officers involved in an operation called "Operation Gull". Operation Gull takes place a couple of times a month, nearly always at weekends, at the port and airports in the north.

It is responsible for the forced removal of hundreds of immigrants every year. Immigration Practitioners in the north believe that many if not most of these removals are illegal.

If you look at these operations from a UK immigration control perspective then they don't make much sense. The investigations target people who are travelling on boats and flights from Stranraer, Brighton, Bradford, London, Liverpool, Glasgow etc into Northern Ireland.

The important point is that these people are already inside the United Kingdom.

In the 1980s Margaret Thatcher famously coined the phrase that "Northern Ireland is as British as Finchley".

Politically she was wrong but jurisdictionally in terms of immigration control she was right. Travelling from Scotland or England to Belfast is no different than travelling from Liverpool to London. Yet those travelling

from Liverpool to London do not find that they are routinely asked for their passports as they alight at Euston station.

So what is Operation Gull? On paper it involves scrutinising everyone arriving into Northern Ireland during the period of the operation. In practice those who have been caught up in it know differently.

I have represented the victims of Operation Gull since its beginning five years ago. With only slight variation all of my clients who were stopped during Operation Gull have told me almost exactly the same thing. They tell me and it is always shown to be the case that they hold a valid UK visa. They tell me that at passport control at the port/airport they were asked to produce their passport. They say that every black and Asian person was asked to stand over at the side. After all the "white tourists" and "local people" have left the interrogation begins. The questioning focuses on whether or not they have friends or family in the Republic, whether they have ever visited there, whether they know anyone who has ever claimed asylum there and whether or not their real intention in coming to Northern Ireland is to visit there.

The UK Border Agency admits that during this time they have someone from the GNIB cross referencing the individual's details on their computer system.

Therefore Operation Gull is not about UK immigration control. Instead it is about immigration control into the Republic.

This is a matter that is strenuously denied by the authorities north and south of the border as there is no legislative provision for such an operation.

So why would the UK immigration authorities spend so much money protecting the borders of the Republic. There appears to be no similar reciprocal agreement.....or was there?

In 2004 a European Court of Justice decision ruled that a European national child of one country in the EU was entitled to live in another country of the EU and that its non national parents were entitled to live there also in order to maintain EU "free movement" rights.

This meant that all those Irish children living in the south whose non national parents were under threat of deportation from the state could simply move across the border into "Britain" and reside there lawfully. What did the Irish authorities do?

They lied to and bullied the Irish people into accepting a referendum that withdrew automatic nationality rights for those born on the island to non national parents.

They offered residency rights to almost all the non national parents of Irish children already in the state.

What year did the UK authorities set up Operation Gull? The year was 2004 of course.

Migrant workers fight FF racism

By **RORY CONNOLLY**

AT TIMES of economic crisis unscrupulous politicians who are interested only in keeping their own snouts in the trough, will do anything to blame others for the mess they created, and Fianna Fail are no exception.

In a move that smacks of outright cynicism, Tainiste Mary Coughlan, has decided to put the boot into migrant workers.

From 1 June it will be virtually impossible for any worker from outside the EU - other than those coming to the highest paid posts like doctors or IT specialists - to get a new work permit. At the same time, those already employed here on work permits - including thousands for whom Ireland is now their only home - will find it impossible to stay if they are made redundant.

Yaiz M., a migrant worker from Malaysia explains, "I have been living in Ireland for the past nine years with my wife and two children. I recently lost my job and I am worried what will happen to my family, especially with these new work permit changes. I want the government to consider people like me who have committed themselves to Ireland, to at least give us a fair chance."

Coughlan and her business pals were quick enough to go out and actively recruit immigrant workers when they needed cheap labour to do the dirty, dangerous and domestic jobs that Irish workers weren't interested in. But now Coughlan won't allow non-EU nationals - even those who live here - take up jobs unless they have been advertised for eight weeks through FAS and a further six days in the national press.

In these days, when an ad for counter-staff leads to queues around the block, what employer is going to advertise a job for nine weeks before filling the post?

The conditions laid down by Coughlan are so ridiculous as to lead to only one conclusion: she and her government cronies actually want to drive immigrants out.

Likewise, those who find their hours cut from full time to part time - like the thousands employed



Migrant workers demonstration to stop work permit changes in Dublin earlier in June

doing all the menial jobs in hotels and catering - can be arbitrarily told to go back to their country of origin, because work permits are only available for full time jobs.

Coughlan's outrageous measures deliberately create an impression that Irish workers have something to fear from foreign-

ers - that "they" are after "our" jobs, and that you, me, and Mary Coughlan all have a common interest in keeping them out.

The truth, of course, is very different. It is Mary Coughlan and her corrupt colleagues in Fianna Fail who are the biggest threat to jobs. Thanks to their dirty dealings with

banjaxed bankers, dodgy developers and spivvy speculators, they have brought the entire country to the verge of bankruptcy.

Now they are trying to scapegoat one of the most vulnerable groups in society, cynically running the risk of stirring up racism in the process. Shame on all of them.

Belfast Traffic Attendants

By **GORDON HEWITT**

IN EARLY April over 20 Traffic Attendants working for National Car Parks (NCP now NSL Services) were sacked for taking industrial action over working conditions and management bullying and harassment.

The workers called a union meeting and took unofficial action. Management suspended and then sacked the workers using the Tory anti-trade union laws.

The jobs were effectively privatized in 2006 when NCP won the contract for the jobs. Ever since then, profit has been the motive of traffic control

rather than a more civil parking regime.

It is NSL Services that creates and increases the antagonism between the public and traffic wardens by forcing them to issue more parking tickets.

These workers must be reinstated and their jobs brought back into the public sector - where the revenue can be used to build an environmentally friendly public transport system. The anti-trade union laws can be repealed by the Northern Assembly, laws relating to Trades Unions and Companies were devolved to the Assembly when it was created.

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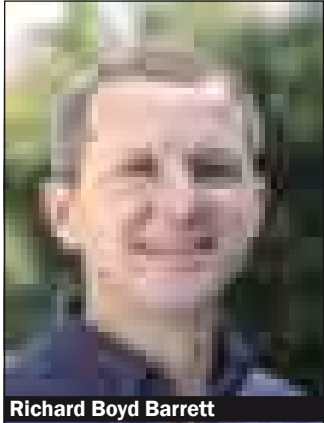
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Election breakthrough

People Before Profit wins 5 council seats

SOCIALIST WORKER spoke to the newly elected People Before Profit councillors about the election and the future for the left in Ireland.



Richard Boyd Barrett who was elected in Dun Laoghaire

said, "This election is a political earthquake. The election results show the boiling anger at the government, they have no mandate to govern and should be driven out of office."



Brid Smith "The election also shows the desperate desire among

people for a radical left alternative to the establishment. The left now needs to group together and mobilize on the ground to keep pressure on Labour and build a new left alliance."

Brid Smith elected in Ballyfermot said, "This is an historic chance for the left. We need to meet the challenge and build links across the country with other socialists and local campaigns."

"The election shows the respect there is for principled candidates who promise not to cut deals with right-wing parties."

Gino Kenny elected in Clondalkin said, "It's important the radical left has a voice in communities like Clondalkin.



Gino Kenny

"We have been ignored by mainstream politicians for ages. What we need now is radical solutions for radical times."

Hugh Lewis elected in Ballybrack said, "On the day of the election I saw young people coming out to vote who wouldn't usually bother. They came out to vote for radical politics, not just because

there were young candidates running.



Hugh Lewis

Young people will bear the brunt of the economic crisis because we won't be able to get jobs. We want to fight back against the system. People Before Profit will expose the corrupt political process and bring change through protest and people power."

Cape Clear Crew Strike Against 'Malicious' Pay Cuts

By DOMINIC HEWSON

STRIKE ACTION was undertaken on Friday by four workers of the state subsidised Cape Clear Ferry Service. Up to 60 protesters showed up to express their solidarity with the crew of the 'Naomh Ciaran II' which operates between Cape Clear island and the mainland.

The dispute arose when company owner Ciaran O'Driscoll unveiled plans for pay cuts ranging from 22% to 27% as well as demanding his employee's work for four extra weeks between May and September free of charge. The situation intensified when during the lead up to the strike the ferry's skipper was suspended for the whole month of June. These brutal measures have been undertaken according to Mr. O'Driscoll due to competition from a rival firm and the resultant heavy losses. SIPTU who represent the four workers have branded the attacks as 'illegal' with organizer Eddie Mullins citing the initial action undertaken by Mr. O'Driscoll and his subsequent response as 'malicious' and 'indicative' of the companies approach.

Owner refuses to recognise Union

Mr. O'Driscoll who won the five year €1.2 million state tender in 2007, has threatened the striking workers with disciplinary action stating: 'I am meeting them for a disciplinary hearing, as per normal company legislation. I want to hear their reasons for not coming to work yesterday.'

He has also indicated that he believes SIPTU are operating without the full litany of facts. However any resolution has been made impossible by Mr. O'Driscoll's refusal to recognize the Trade Union let alone negotiate with it. As a result SIPTU organizer Eddie Mullins has stated his intention to bring the case to the Labour Relations Commission declaring 'The employees are very united and are determined to fight these unilateral cutbacks'

Money for old rope

Auditors Ernst & Young pocketed a tidy fee of €2.2 million for overseeing last year's accounts of nationalised Anglo Irish bank. Signed off by the auditors just 8 months ago, the accounts pointed to potentially bad loans totaling €2.5bn. And that's a bill the government is making you and me pick up so their banker friends can stay in business.

But at the end of May, Anglo said that their potentially bad loans actually amount to €23.6bn, over ten times more than Ernst & Young spotted.

But these days, what's twenty odd billion between friends, especially since the gullible tax payer will be footing the bill?

And Ernst and Young are in the running to be reappointed as Anglo's auditors this year again.

What kind of left do we need?

By KIERAN ALLEN

THE RECENT elections represent a seismic shift in Irish politics. Ever since 1927, Fianna Fail has dominated the working class vote but this has now changed – most probably for ever.

Even before the current economic crisis, the Fianna Fail vote had entered a long slow decline. At the height of the Celtic Tiger, for example, Bertie Ahern scored less votes than Charlie Haughey. When the crash hit, Fianna Fail dropped all pretence of populism and launched an aggressive attack on working class conditions.

They have now paid dearly for this and the electoral base of the Greens has also been decimated.

The major immediate beneficiary is Fine Gael which has been re-furbished through a huge influx of funds from business.

At its core, are a new generation of hard-right young politicians such as Varadkar and Creighton who want to intensify attacks on the public sector. On the doorstep, however, Fine Gael played up the populist card, denouncing the 'bail-outs' of the banks.

Fine Gael is seen by many workers as a vehicle for getting rid of Fianna Fail.

The most serious long term shift in Irish politics is the swing to the Labour Party. It is the strongest party in Dublin and has gained from its verbal shift to the left.

It has opposed the bail out of the banks and has distanced itself from Fine Gael. Its growth is part of a greater class consciousness among urban workers.

But Labour can face in one of two ways. It can talk left for a while – in order to gain greater



People Before Profit candidates

leverage in a future coalition with Fine Gael or even Fianna Fail. It did this in the late sixties when it went through a 'socialist' phase and after the Spring tide of 1992. Significantly, Eamon Gilmore has refused to rule out coalition with Fine Gael.

A more ambitious perspective would be to form 'an alliance of the left', which is advocated by both SIPTU's Jack O'Connor and Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams.

This would see Labour and Sinn

Fein – and possibly even a reformed and repentant Green Party come together to offer a 'third option' in Irish politics.

While this might be welcomed as a shift to the left, it still contains severe limitations.

First, both Labour and Sinn Fein are committed to the management of Irish capitalism.

Both advocate 'temporary' nationalisations of the banks; both want more support for business; and both only advocate more

public spending rather than the re-organisation of an economy on socialist lines.

Second, both parties define politics primarily in terms of electoral activity rather than popular mobilisation.

The Labour Party, for example, opposed a national strike on March 30th and its leader Eamon Gilmore told an IMPACT that industrial action in the public sector was a thing of the past. Both will verbally oppose water charges but

will advise against a non-payment campaign.

In this context, the vote of the radical left offers some real hope for the future. As well as Joe Higgins magnificent victory in the Dublin Euro elections, today the People Before Profit Alliance, the Socialist Party and the Workers and Unemployed Action Group have all individually more councillors than the Greens. Collectively they could be within striking distance of Sinn Fein. Voting patterns in Dublin indicate many are already wary of Sinn Fein's zig-zagging between left and right.

The vote for the radical left is all the more significant because it grew alongside the swing towards the reformist left – and before Labour or a Labour-Sinn Fein Alliance had been tested in office.

The radical left must now enter discussions to form either an alliance or broad radical left party, where different tendencies can co-exist.

Previous arguments that such a development might be 'premature' make little sense today.

The Socialist Workers Party is already working productively within the People Before Profit Alliance, promoting its own distinctively revolutionary socialist views while working with others on the 90 percent we also agree on.

There is absolutely no reason why an alliance of this sort cannot be expanded.

We are only at the start of a deep economic crisis – where even more wage cuts, water charges, and redundancies will be imposed on workers.

There is now a responsibility on the left to offer serious policies which assume the possibility of an end to capitalism.

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Make the Religious Pay Get them out of Education

A history of sadism and cover-up

By PEADAR O'GRADY

THE RYAN Report is a shocking indictment of the systematic neglect and abuse of children for economic profit by religious orders and the state.

The report criticises these orders ('congregations'), who "admitted that abuse took place but ... they have not accepted congregational responsibility for it".

Despite this, these same congregations remain in charge of children in education (e.g. the Sisters of Mercy and the Christian Brothers) and residential care (e.g. Brothers of Charity, Sisters of Charity)!

All recommendations in the report should be implemented, especially the last one: "Children First, The National Guidelines for the protection and Welfare of Children, should be uniformly and consistently implemented".

Published in 1999, the guidelines still lack funding or a statutory (legal) base. In 2009, up to 7 out of 10 reports of abused children in HSE areas have no allocated Social Worker.

The best monument to the decades of abused children would be properly funded Child Protection Services, a ban on Religious Orders (or other profiteers) being in charge of children's services and the seizing of the assets of the abusing congregations.

Victims of Institutional Abuse should have the final say in what constitutes a just solution to past crimes of power and greed but the future welfare of children is all of our concern.

Solidarity with the abused means fighting for justice and democracy in properly funded public services today.

By RORY CONNOLLY

OF ALL the religious orders who raped and tortured children in institutional 'care', none did so with more sadistic gusto than the Christian Brothers. Yet none has sought to cover up their crimes and protect their assets from compensation claims as much as these pious perverts.

Over 80% of all the male children whose abuse cases were investigated by the Ryan Commission had been in the care of the Christian Brothers, and what the Ryan Report shows is that, right to the end, the Christian Brothers lied and deceived, accusing their victims of being compensation-seeking cheats and chancers.

And all the while, behind the scenes and under the guidance of corporate lawyers, the Christian Brothers were shunting their assets back and forth so as to ensure their victims would never get proper compensation.

Within two days of the publication of the Ryan Report, Edmund Garvey, former world supremo of the Christian Brothers and now head of communications, announced that they had no more money to put into the compensation pot.

As Garvey spoke, public fury was mounting over the scandalous deal done in 2002 between the 18 abusing orders and the ultra-Catholic Minister for Education, Michael Woods. The deal limited the liability of the religious to a mere €127 million - most of which has never been paid - while the taxpayers have had to fork out over €1 billion in compensation to the abusers' victims.

Garvey made it clear the Brothers had no intention of putting another cent into the pot, not because they didn't want to, but because they couldn't. The poor Brothers are stony broke.



Pictures of the Artane institution run by the Christian Brothers

But don't they own scores of valuable properties all over Ireland?

They certainly did at the start of the Inquiry into Child Abuse, when their Irish assets - 100 schools and acres of land - were worth €500m. But, as Garvey revealed in the wake of the Ryan Report, the Brothers have since transferred ownership of all their schools and land to a separate entity called The Edmund Rice Educational Trust, headed by Commercial Court Judge, Peter Kelly.

And this isn't the first time the devious and cunning Brothers have engaged in such shenanigans.

In 1996, faced with compensation claims totalling \$30m from victims of abuse in their

Mount Cashel orphanage in Newfoundland, the Canadian Christian Brothers went into liquidation, telling the liquidator they had only \$4.3m in assets.

But the liquidator discovered that the Brothers' assets were worth over \$100m just a short time previously. What they had done was transfer ownership of their most valuable schools to supposedly separate trusts which they hoped would put them beyond the reach of their victims.

The Brothers, of course, say they have set up their Irish schools trust for 'benign' reasons - the maintenance of their 'educational ethos' - at a time of rapidly declining vocations. Apart from the sheer hypocrisy of an abusing order seek-

ing to protect its assets so it can stay in the business of caring for children, there is good reason to doubt the Brothers' bona fides.

For one thing, Edmund Garvey himself played a key role in helping the Canadian Brothers protect their assets, even to the extent of advising them to move ownership of their best school off-shore, something even their lawyers balked at.

What's more, the Canadian liquidator found a damning document, dated 1990, stating quite explicitly that by transferring the title of schools to independent Trusts the Brothers could protect their wealth from claims for compensation. It was a deliberate ruse.

Fortunately, the wheeze failed in Canada and their schools were

sold to compensate the children they had raped.

But the big difference between what happened in Canada and what is happening in Ireland is that the Newfoundland state authorities pursued the Christian Brothers through the courts, believing none of their lies, and in the end forcing them out of educational provision entirely so that today Newfoundland has a completely secular school system, totally free from denominational control.

We need to follow our Newfoundland cousins and kick the religious out of our schools! WE need to demand free secular education for all! And while we are at it, let's kick the religious out of the health service as well.

Time to separate church and state

By KEVIN WINGFIELD

THE ARROGANT dismissal by the 18 congregations of religious of any revisiting of the deal to pay just a fraction of their liabilities for sexual and physical abuse of children in their care must be the last straw.

Even some of the bishops, sensing the huge groundswell of anger over the issue, have felt forced to speak out in the last few days. The Catholic primate Cardinal, Seán Brady, Archbishop of Dublin, Diarmuid Martin, and Bishop of Killaloe, Willie Walsh, said the 2002 deal limiting the religious congregations' contribution to just €127m of the estimated €1.3bn liability with the taxpayer picking up the tab for the rest, should be revisited and the 18 congregations concerned should contribute more.

But the director general of the Conference of Religious of Ireland (CORI), Marie Ann O'Connor, point

blank refused, flannelling instead that the 18 congregations would prefer to "deal directly and to use all in their powers to channel whatever resources directly to the former residents" rather than reopen the terms of the deal.

In a statement, the Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI) said, "Sadly, yet again we see these institutions employ the legal profession and hide behind so called legal concerns in order to aggressively protect their self preservation at any cost."

The RCNI said it was unacceptable for agencies involved in the systematic abuse revealed in the Ryan commission report "to promote themselves as best placed to meet the needs of those they have previously betrayed".

Having protected men in their midst who raped and brutalised children, the orders believe they can hide behind the government and the legal profession to avoid

paying realistic compensation to their victims.

It was recently revealed that the religious congregations told the government in 2002 that they would fight every case in the courts and estimated that by spinning out these cases, and the rising legal bills of those claiming, they could reduce their liability by to just €60m.

The tuggish cover-up of decades of sexual and physical assaults by the religious orders amounts to a criminal conspiracy of enormous proportions. Yet they believe a few words of regret will wipe the slate clean. They also know that Fianna Fáil will protect them and their assets.

The craven excuse of Fianna Fáil ministers that there are legal impediments is a transparent falsehood. No such impediments were found when it came to altering the contracts of public sector workers and imposing levies on their pension contributions.

If there was a willingness from the government to ensure the religious took responsibility for their actions, it could easily be done. The statute of limitations which prevents victims taking action for physical abuse and cruelty in the past could be amended. A special tax or levy on the assets and property of the religious congregations could be put in place. The massive Church assets could be taken by the CAB. If there was a willingness from our rulers to bring the Church to account, it could be done.

Instead the corrupt institution of Fianna Fáil will do nothing unless they are forced to. We need a massive movement of protest demanding that the Church pays for its abuse.

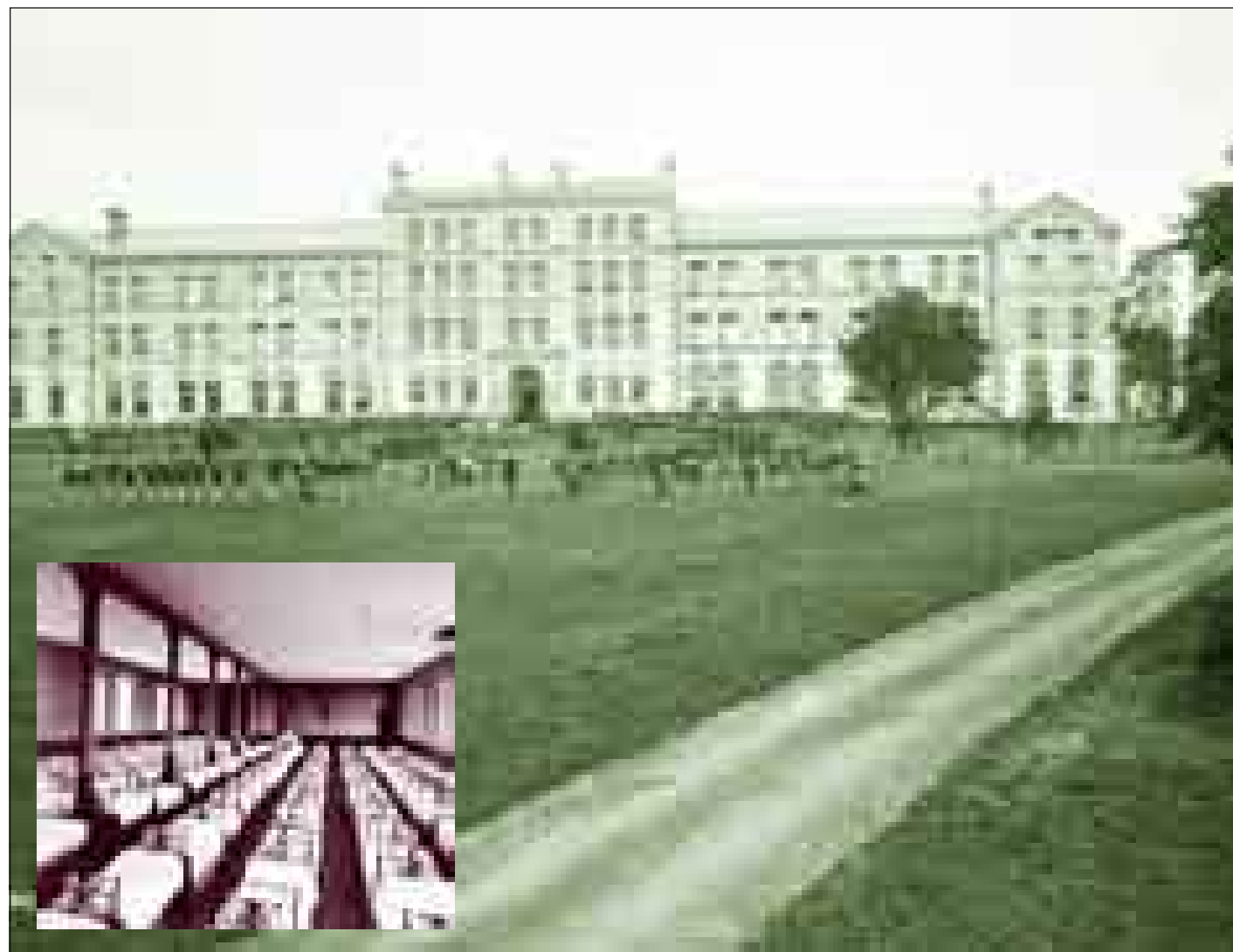
From the foundation of the State, the Church was given a privileged position in Irish life, dominating education and health. What should be a voluntary association was elevated into an arm of the State.

Fianna Fáil and the ruling class were happy to turn a blind eye to its abuses because it provided social control, particularly on the poor and working class people. The long overdue erosion of its authority among the mass of people has allowed its terrible abuse to slowly come to light.

Socialists have always argued for the separation of Church and State. Religious observation of whatever sort should be a private matter, neither promoted nor discriminated against by the state, its schools or its hospitals. Social provision should be a public matter, democratically controlled, not the private fiefdom of religious hierarchies.

Even now, 80 percent of our schools are controlled by the Church. The neurotic celibacy of the religious, and its power over the vulnerable, has shown itself to be an affront to decency. It is time to take the Church out of our hospitals, social services and schools.

y: tion and Health



Obama and torture

BY JULIEN MERCILLE

DURING HIS electoral campaign, Barack Obama raised the hopes of many progressives around the world that his foreign policy would be less immoral than Bush's.

But after a few months in office, many are disappointed, and rightly so. His policies on torture are a case in point, dangerously resembling those of his predecessor.

The "torture memos" recently released by the White House provide details of how the Bush administration authorized torture by CIA agents in an attempt to find links between al-Qaeda and Iraq, which could then be used to justify the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Those links were non-existent, but that was irrelevant.



Barrack Obama

After the release of the memos, Obama toed the Bush line in several instances. His administration made several declarations that amounted to "effectively conferring impunity for acts of torture," as Amnesty International noted. For instance, Obama said that "the men and women of the CIA" who had followed the memo's guidelines would not be prosecuted and that, "This is a time for reflection, not retribution... Nothing will be gained by spending our time and energy laying blame for the past."

Up to this day, Obama opposes the creation of a "Truth Commission" that would shed light on the torture-related crimes of the Bush administration.

On a related front, Obama has also fought against the release of some 2,000 photographs depicting acts of abuse of detainees.

Obama also disappoints on his policies toward the prisoners held in the prisons at Guantanamo (Cuba) and Bagram (Afghanistan). There are 240 detainees at Guantanamo and 600 at Bagram.

In June 2008, the US Supreme Court rejected as unconstitutional the Bush administration claim that prisoners in Guantanamo are not entitled to the right of *habeas corpus* (the right to challenge one's detention). This was an important step against Bush policies.

But Bush wanted to ship abducted people to Bagram instead and argue that the Supreme Court ruling did not apply there. Incredibly, Obama has adopted the Bush position by arguing that detainees can be imprisoned indefinitely with no rights so as long as they are kept in Bagram rather than Guantanamo. A US judge has ruled against Obama, but his administration is appealing.

Obama had also promised to close Guantanamo, but now hesitates to do so. Moreover, he is backtracking on his promise to shut down Bush's "military commission" to try detainees and now he plans to revive them.

Obama's commissions offer some improvements over Bush's, but they still fall far short of providing the due process guarantees found in US federal (civil) courts.

There is much discussion about whether torture has been effective in extracting information from detainees, as if its effectiveness could justify it. This is a misplaced debate, as torture is never legal nor justified under international law, regardless of whether or not it is effective.

But in any case, there is growing evidence that torture is counterproductive in that it leads to killing more Americans by "creating terrorists" who are outraged by the abuses. This is what a US Major declared after overseeing more than 1,000 interrogations and personally conducting more than 300 in Iraq.

"Torture does not save lives," he said in a recent interview. "And the reason why is that our enemies use it, number one, as a recruiting tool... These same foreign fighters who came to Iraq to fight because of torture and abuse... literally cost us hundreds if not thousands of American lives."

So even out of self-interest, Obama would have a good reason to reverse his Bushite policies on torture. If moral reasons are included as well, the case becomes even stronger.

State's deference to Church

By EAMON MCCANN

THE FACT that Catholic clergy in the Republic got away with child abuse for decades reflected the deference of political institutions to the Church. This tells us a great deal about the nature of the Southern State.

Politicians of all major parties have consistently kow-towed to the Church. This has included parties of the "Left".

In 1996, it was a Labour Minister of Education, Niamh Breathnach, who introduced a law which copper-fastened Church control of primary schools.



Niamh Breathnach

The bishops were given a legal guarantee that the approximately 90 percent of schools run by Catholic bishops would henceforth be "managed in accordance with the doctrines, practices and traditions of the Roman Catholic Church as stated by the Irish

Epicopal Conference."

No TD objected.

In the same year, Breathnach led a delegation representing all Dáil parties to Rome for the beatification of Ignatius Rice, founder of the Christian Brothers. Again, no TD objected. No national newspaper condemned the use of public money for sectarian purposes.

Clerical abuse of school-children was already in the public arena. At the beginning of 1996, the number of admitted official investigations of complaints of abuse in dioceses stood at: Achonry 3, Ardagh & Clonmacnois 5, Armagh 8, Cashel & Emly 2, Clonfert 2, Cloyne 11, Cork & Ross 12, Derry 26, Down & Connor 3, Dromore 5, Dublin 67, Elphin 16, Ferns 21, Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora 6, Kerry 11, Kildare and Leighlin 1, Killaloe 10, Kilmore 6, Limerick 10, Raphoe 10, Waterford & Lismore 7.

And yet no TD opposed the moves to strengthen the bishops' and the Church's control of children's education.

Even today, no Dáil party, including the Greens and Sinn Féin, calls for an education system free of clerical control.

Bertie Ahern now denounces "attacks" on the Church. Former Education Minister Michael Woods defends the deal whereby the Church paid only a pittance to compensate the victims. Fine Gael leader Enda Kenny declares that the "great work" done by religious orders shouldn't be lost sight of.

Underpinning all this is the fact that the Southern State came into

existence as a specifically Catholic entity. Colonial oppression had long been expressed in anti-Catholic policies and practices. To an extent, then, freedom from oppression had come to be seen as freedom for Catholicism. Church bosses were not slow to take advantage.



Enda Kenny

The national movement which emerged as dominant in the aftermath of 1916 was steeped in Catholic influence. Ten percent of delegates to the Sinn Féin conference in 1917 were priests. The parties which emerged from Sinn Féin, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, and the remnants of Sinn Féin itself, carried this forward.

Thus, there was no serious opposition to allowing the Church to retain and strengthen its power in education and to have laws passed banning divorce, contraception or films and books which the Church disapproved of. Its power

was institutionalised. It was able to bring down a Minister, Noel Browne, when he tried to bring in welfare provision for mothers and children in 1951.



Noel Browne

Breathnach and her like were following in a long tradition.

Throughout, the Church helped ruling class parties to stabilise the State by denouncing and marginalising any Left-wing challenge which emerged.

To respond to the revelations of horrendous child abuse without facing up to the reality of the Church's role and the complicity of the political establishment is, again, to back off from confronting the organisation mainly responsible for the abuse.

We need a secular, socialist, democratic society in which the interests of children, not of any Church, take precedence. Ending Church control of schools would be a start.

Unravelling Capitalism

Review of Joseph Choonara's new book on Marxist Economics.

By JAMES O'TOOLE

MARX ONCE remarked that 'every child knows' that any society that stops working would soon starve. However, mainstream economics seems to think it can get along fine without labour.

With the world market now set to contract by an amount not seen since 1945, more and more people are interested in discovering how this system really works.

Joseph Choonara's new book – 'Unravelling Capitalism' – is a great short introduction to some of the most important ideas in Marxist political economy.

Choonara follows Marx in beginning with the Commodity and asking why is it that one thing can exchange for a certain amount of another? 'Use Value' is the value something has because it satisfies a human need, because it has 'utility', that is, it is fundamentally useful. 'Exchange

Value', on the other hand, is the amount of one commodity you can exchange for a certain amount of another e.g. 5 bicycles for one computer. But every commodity can be exchanged for any other commodity in different proportions, even though they have unrelated and even opposing Use Values, even though their physical forms are completely different.

Marx draws our attention to the common substance that all these diverse objects contain and which renders them capable of comparison and exchange: all are products of human labour.

Money and Wage Slavery

As exchange becomes more and more prevalent, one commodity stands out and begins to more and more become a 'universal' commodity. For example, in many ancient communities, cattle were used as an early form of money because they could be compared with everyone's labour. This sort of 'universal' commodity then became precious metals and then eventually coins made from gold, silver and in some places copper. The path Marx traces of money's evolution from commodity to universal commodity, from cattle to today's credit money is often forgotten.

Choonara then reveals to us one of Marx's greatest contributions to understanding Capitalism as an inherently exploitative system: the origin of the capitalist's profits, 'Surplus Value'. Say you spend your life working in a factory that makes TVs and say you make 10 TV sets a day. And let's translate the wage you're paid into an amount of TVs. Well, you are paid the equivalent of 3 TV sets, but your labour generates 10. So every single day you're making 7 sets without receiving any of them; it only takes you 3/10 of the day to generate your wage. Marx called that unnecessary (from the point of view of the workers) labour 'Surplus Labour' and the Value squeezed from the workers without payment 'Surplus Value'. It was no accident that Marx referred to Capitalism as a system of 'wage slavery'.

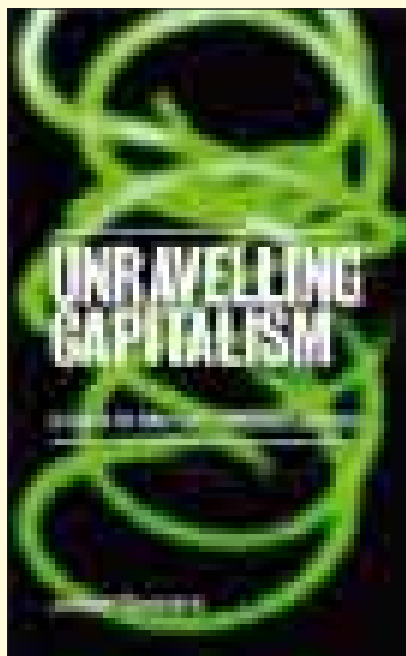
The Crisis

There's all this talk right now of the 'Banking Crisis' as if the real economy and finance were two unrelated realms (never mind that most large companies like General Motors of Tesco have financial wings). One of the great strengths of Choonara's short book is to show how Capitalism is prone to crisis and how these spheres are connected.

Competition between rival firms forces one and all to constantly invest in more and more new technologies and to try, through research, to improve productive techniques for fear of being out-gunned by a rival. So the first firm to introduce a new method gets to undercut its competitors but once it becomes the industry standard, more investment needs to be made in research and new machinery in order to mobilise a certain amount of workers. But if labour is the source of value then this tendency towards ever greater investment in what Marx termed 'Constant Capital' will cause a drop in the return on a certain amount of invested capital i.e. a Falling rate of Profit.

So crisis is built into the very heart of the System and once one branch in any way experiences a fall in profit rates, then the capitalists will rush blindly like lemmings to invest in any sphere where they get even the faintest whiff of profits. Hence the Dot.Com bubbles of the late 1990s and the over-investment in property booms and sub prime mortgages.

There is a wealth of material in this wonderfully written and concise book and if you are interested in understanding this redundant system in order to transform it then you need to get your hands on a copy of this work.



Nationalisation for workers



Sanitarios Maracay, a ceramics factory in Venezuela under workers' control holds a workers' assembly, to discuss and vote on issues surrounding their campaign for 100percent nationalisation

By SEAN KELLY

THERE ARE different reasons for nationalisation. In Ireland, we're seeing near-nationalisation of some of the banks. The purpose is to bail out the bankers and the rich.

In Venezuela, we're now seeing another type: nationalisation for workers.

In the last few months, heavy industry workers in the southern Venezuelan state of Bolivar have been caught up in a dispute with bosses. Some workers haven't been paid for over six months.

As of this week, however, the Venezuelan government has taken over some of these companies and handed decision-making power to the workers.

"Nationalise the iron briquette sector, there is nothing to discuss," Chaves said during a televised speech in which he announced wage rises for thousands of workers and a cut in management salaries.

The government's decision was greeted with cheers at a special meeting called by the workers to sort out the crisis.

The affected firms include branches of Japanese manufacturer, Kobe Steel, as well as Argentinian and Venezuelan companies. The companies produce iron briquettes which is used to make millions of tonnes of iron and steel.

Now workers in those firms will be in control of their own fate.

Chaves has cut back the size of the private sector elsewhere in Venezuela. In recent weeks, the government has taken over the local operations of Cargill, a U.S. Corporate monster that controls massive amounts of global food production.

And the government has taken over major oil, electricity, and cement projects, as well as Venezuela's main steel plant,

Sidor.

Some of the firms are part of Venezuela's massive oil industry, which for years has made sure the country's wealth end up in the hands of rich shareholders many of whom are outside the country.

But now the Chaves government has started to take back the means of production.

This can be done elsewhere, but it will be only be done for the sake of the workers if they take control of the state machine, or if they apply the right sort of pressure on governments.

Lessons

The Venezuelan situation provides numerous lessons. One is that the watchdogs of capitalism will raise alarm bells. The likes of Moody's, the credit ratings agency, will express concern. Media giants like CNN will call foul. Domestic opponents in the capitalist class will roll out scare stories. All of these outcomes can be seen recently. However, nationalisation can still go ahead if workers are strong and united.

Another lesson is that, contrary to what neoliberals constantly claim, nationalised companies can be effective, can be well run, and can address social needs. Already we're seeing in Venezuela that state-run firms, and indeed whole industrial sectors, don't need to be run for profit to remain in existence. Jobs can be secured. Workers' rights can be boosted.

But the most important lesson is that a real socialist politics, which calls for public ownership and an end to the profiteering at workers' expense, is not a politics of a bygone era.

The right-wing media commentators and their cronies in 'state-run' broadcasters such as RTE would have us all believe that nationalisation is a thing of the past, except when it's for the banks and their rich

shareholders.

What Venezuela shows is that nationalisation for workers can still occur.

So, whereas we've seen government ministers and the media claim that jobs at SR Technics and Waterford Crystal couldn't

have been protected, Venezuela's government shows otherwise.

Especially during this crisis, but also beyond it, a socialist politics needs to be about taking back the means of production and using them to meet social needs, not the wants of the rich.

Spin doctors feather nests while children put at risk

THE SAVE our Crumlin Children's Hospital Campaign expressed outrage at revelations that the HSE spent €17m on private advisors and spin doctors.

Councillor Joan Collins (People Before Profit Alliance), a founder member of the campaign said, "It is a disgrace that the State's largest children's hospital will not be open for our children this summer.

Wards and operating theatres are to be closed because of a €9.6 million short

fall yet nearly €17 m is spent on advisors.

Spending on advisors by the HSE has been cut by just €150,000 in the last year but Our Lady's is to have a cut of nearly €10 million."

Last month, the campaign revealed that the due to a forecasted deficit of €9.6 million, three wards will shut down this year.

The Campaign is demanding that the HSE provide the funds to allow the Hospital to continue to operate at current levels.

Tara court cases dismissed

14 PROTESTERS from the Save Tara Valley campaign, some of whom had been subject to strict bail conditions for the last two years, had cases against them dismissed at Trim District Court last week.

Most of the cases arose from incidents on 18th July at Soldier's Hill, Co Meath. The road works had been declared illegal by the European Parliament because of Ireland's failure to comply with EU directives on Environmental Impact Assessments. The failure of the Irish Govt. to comply could cost the taxpayer an estimated €50 million.

The Judge dismissed the charges against the protestors

because the Gardaí had failed to ask the protestors if they believed they had lawful excuse to be in the vicinity.

Dr Muireann Ní Bhrolcháin, the first person arrested at Soldier's Hill said: "We are all greatly relieved to have these cases dismissed but the 22-months delay was a disgrace. The battle for Tara symbolises the age of Celtic Tiger Ireland and the battle between making money and priceless heritage".

In June 2008 a leading Archaeologist, Miss Ronayne, on the M3 claims she was told by the National Roads Authority to 'change interpretations' so as to 'lessen to potential of numbers of sites'.

The sectarian poison in Coleraine

By SEÁN MITCHELL



THE MURDER of Catholic man, Kevin McDaid this past week in Coleraine was a blatant act of sectarian barbarity.

Mr. McDaid, a local community worker, was battered to death by a large group of Loyalists outside his home.

He had come to the aid of another man who was under attack but then the mob set upon him. His wife and another pregnant woman where both badly beaten whilst attempting to defend the man.

The role of the PSNI in this dreadful murder must be examined. Local people, including Kevin McDaid's wife, have said that the Police failed to intervene to stop the attackers. Police officers sat in their car whilst the attack took place. Many residents had expected an attack to happen and

there can be no suggestion that the PSNI were caught by surprise. Barricades had been erected to stop the Loyalist mobs from entering but they were then told by the PSNI to remove them.

The police have shown themselves to be utterly useless if not compliant in dealing with sectarianism. It exposes the absolute fallacy that we have entered into a new era of policing, void of sectarianism and acting as a "service not a force". The PSNI are still an utterly sectarian force and reactionary to their core.

In the immediate aftermath of the killing, both Politicians and the Police moved to distance Loyalist Paramilitaries from the attack, despite the fact that the family of the murdered man are convinced of UDA involvement, and despite the evidence linking some of the attackers to the paramilitary organisation. Unionists have recently been working quite closely with the UDA in negotiations and the Assembly has been considering giving the organisation millions of pounds to wind down – so they would rather not have the embarrassment of the UDA being associated with this attack.

Reaction from local politicians has been mixed at best. Despite the "unequivocal" condemnation of the RIRA attacks just a few months ago, some Unionist politicians have tried to claim that this was Loyalist reaction to Nationalist provocation.



Above: the funeral of Kevin McDaid (left) murdered by a loyalist mob

DUP councillor Adrian McQuillan said: "What reason can you see for there being tricolours up yesterday afternoon, a Sunday afternoon? None other than for to get a reaction from the loyalist community and they certainly got a reaction this time, which is very sad."

These disgusting remarks only serve to justify the actions of sectarian Loyalists and go some way to revealing the real politics of the DUP. The murder in Coleraine is only one of many sectarian attacks on Catholics in the area. It is clear the DUP have no intention of stopping this. In the run up to

the European elections, the DUP have been playing the sectarian card quite heavily. What we are seeing here is an attempt to outdo the sectarianism of their European election rival, Jim Alister.

Kevin McDaid's murder was an avoidable tragedy, which should be met with fierce condemnation.

Already anti-sectarian rallies have been called in Derry and other areas should follow suit.

Working class people must stand shoulder to shoulder against these sectarian attacks, but also against the state that creates the conditions that sectarianism thrives in.

North's East-West divide



By GORETTI HORGAN

A RECENT report from PriceWaterhouseCooper (PWC) on the East-West divide in the North of Ireland confirmed that people in the North West have not benefited from the economic growth of the last 10 to 15 years.

And now statistics show that the West is being hardest hit by job losses in the recession.

The PWC report indicates that Gross Value Added (GVA), a measure of wealth creation) in the North West is just 82% of GVA in the North generally and this, in turn, is just 80% of the UK's GVA.

The report found that young people in the area get good examination results – often above the UK average – but then have to leave the area to find work.

This then means that the educational qualifications of those remaining are below average for Northern Ireland.

Both the population and number of jobs in the North West grew between 1995 and 2005 but the increase in population

was greater than the growth in jobs, which means that even more people have been left without the hope of getting a job.

While the report received a lot of publicity for showing how bad things are in the North West, it does not go into more social issues such as the provision of childcare or care for people with disabilities. In fact, the figures in relation to these measures are every bit as bad.

So, for example, the report, "Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion in NI", showed that western areas have less than half the number of nursery and child-minder places per 1,000 children under 5 years as eastern areas.

Surprisingly, for an outfit like PWC, which usually attacks public sector workers, the report concludes that the West needs the provision of more public sector jobs; that the University at Magee needs to be expanded; and that high-speed transport links should be put in place between Belfast and Derry.

People in Derry won't be holding their breath!

Protests force council to re-open recycling amenity

CAMPAIGNERS IN Derry have had a victory in forcing the City Council to agree to re-open the recycling and amenity centres closed as part of a cost-cutting exercise.

Goretti Horgan was a spokesperson for the Amenities Action campaign group established by the local community in the Bogside and Brandywell area.

She told *Socialist Worker*, "the closure of the amenity sites was a disaster. The Council having to spend even more money collecting waste that householders used to bring to the site. We predicted that this is what would happen, but the Councillors would not listen until we started to protest outside every one of their meetings"

"We told them that any money the Council would save in the next year or two from closing the sites would be lost several times over when the EU starts to fine us for sending too much of our rubbish to landfill. That is why we were determined to reverse these cuts.

"However, we were told by Sinn Féin councillors – in the most straightforward way – that we just had to accept the cuts and needed to get used to them because there would be more coming down the line next year.

"They are trying to cut services at the same time as City of Derry airport is costing the rates payers £3.5 million every year just to keep Ryanair happy.

If the Council told Michael O'Leary that we are no longer going to subsidise his airline, we could have more services for local communities instead of contributing to O'Leary's millions.

"This is an important victory: we have shown that protest works, that it is worth standing up for working class communities and we have made it clear that they will not get away with imposing cuts on services next year."

Public Meeting, Book Launch & Side Show

IRELAND'S ECONOMIC CRASH

A RADICAL AGENDA FOR CHANGE

WITH KIERAN ALLEN

Sligo: Wed 17th June 8pm, Sligo City Hotel, Quay St, Sligo

Galway: Thurs 18th June 8pm, McKenna's Pub, Eyre Square, Galway

Cavan: Fri 19th June 8pm, Farnham Arms Hotel, Cavan

Waterford: Wed 22nd June 8pm UNITE Hall, Moyne St, Waterford

Trillick: Tues 23rd June 8pm, Grand Hotel

Carik: Wed 24th June 8pm, Victoria Hotel

Dublin: Thurs 25th June 8pm, Wynns Hotel, Middle Abbey St, D.1

Bessboro: Wed 29th June, 8pm, Grants Hotel, Castle St, Bessboro, Co Tipp

Downside: Tues 30th June 8-10pm, Imperial Hotel, Park St, Downside



Organized by the Socialist Workers Party
www.swp.ie Tel: 0049 1-904-307440



Stop the sectarian rot

Time to Build a left alternative

THE NORTHERN European elections were fought on sectarian lines from day one.

The election was fought on the basis of who would win between green and orange and gain representation in Brussels. If you look at the manifestos or the speeches made by all the parties in Northern Ireland their plea was to vote to keep the other side out.

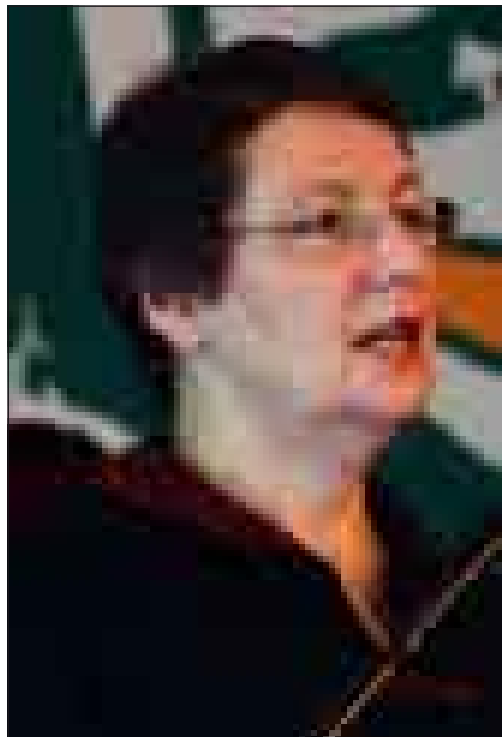
The most notable example can be seen in the right wing bigot that is Jim Allister. Leader of the Traditional Unionist Voice.

His campaign was based on breaking 'mandatory coalition' with Sinn Fein and being the 'traditional' voice of unionism.

Fed up with MPs expenses and the failure of the Assembly to deliver anything for people on the ground - the DUP lost 60,000 of their votes to the hard-line TUV and are now finding themselves trying to reorientate to claw back their lost votes. Fearful of a further gain of support in the TUV the DUP are now trying to reposition themselves back as the uncompromising Unionists.

The election results come against a backdrop of rising sectarian attacks and the killing of Catholic man Kevin Mc Daid in Coleraine.

Sectarian politics like we saw in the European elections and ever since the implementation of the Good Friday



Sinn Fein's Bairbre De Bruin; DUP's Peter Robinson and Jim Allister. Leader of the Traditional Unionist Voice

Agreement creates an illusion in the North that there exists only two communities and that politics is a fight between two sides and who can get one over on the other.

This sectarianism comes from the top of society.

The Assembly in its composition is split between Nationalist and Unionist - the 'peace walls' in Northern Ireland reinforce the idea that working class Protestant and Catholics have completely separate interests and can never

find common ground.

Politics like this is dead end and can provide no solution to the problems faced by ordinary people- especially when it comes to fighting against being forced to pay for the recession.

A different kind of politics is needed to break the stranglehold of sectarianism.

South of the border in a country dominated for decades by the right wing Fianna Fail party we saw the election of 5 People Before Profit candidates and

also Socialist Joe Higgins as MEP.

An avenue exists for left wing politics to emerge in the North.

Already we have seen the Visteon occupation, NCP and Nortel workers fighting back - this provides the basis to the alternative to the sectarian politics of the folks on the hill.

Now more than ever we need an alternative which focuses on uniting Protestant and Catholic working class people to fight against sectarianism, unemployment and bigger issues.