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Socialist Worker

NATIONAL DAY OF PROTEST!

Wednesday 29th September

WEDNESDAY 29th September is set to become a national day of protest, as a number of organisations call mobilisations for that day.

The moves began when the European Trade Union Congress urged all unions across the continent to take action on that day.

This set in train the first all-European action against the right-wing policies which are making workers pay for the economic crisis.

Communities against Cuts

Since then, Communities Against Cuts – a representative organisation of community organisations and trade unions – decided to call its own day of action on September 29th.

Last year, they mobilised 15,000 people on the streets in opposition to government plans to decimate community services.

Finally, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions also announced that it is 'considering' holding a demonstration to the Dail on the 29th September over the government's failure to tackle unemployment and its planned attacks in the December budget.

All of this means that a key national focus has emerged for the accumulated bitterness and rage in Irish



Thousands protest at cuts in Roscommon, now let's bring thousands on the street nationally

Photo: Paula Geraghty

society.

Drive FF Out

This is the day when Fianna Fail can be driven out of office under the mass pressure of people power.

The last few weeks have shown why this has become more urgent than ever:

- In August, it was announced that electricity bills would rise by 5 percent.

- Later the Sunday Independent revealed that there will be a further 3 percent

rise as 'as part of a government move to subsidise energy costs for large business'.

- The banks have been allowed to hike up interest rates – even as the European Central Bank refused to raise interest rates elsewhere. Ireland now has one of the highest interest rates on mortgages – even though its people are pouring billions into the bank bail-outs.

- Hospital services are being decimated around the country with over 1,000 health

jobs being cut in HSE-West alone.

No wonder that tens of thousands have marched in Letterkenny, Roscommon and Ballinasloe.

Tatters

Now, news has started to filter through that the government's whole economic strategy is in tatters.

It used the summer months to announce that the bail-out of Anglo-Irish Bank will rise by another

€2 billion to €24 billion, while Michael Fingleton's Irish Nationwide will cost the country €3.5 billion.

The figures have become so massive that this arrogant government thinks that an extra billion or so here and there make no difference.

Yet the reality is that more money has been poured into Anglo-Irish Bank than has been pledged to end world hunger by the G8 leaders.

If we stopped bailing out Anglo-Irish Bank, we could

give every person on the dole a whole year's pay at the average industrial wage – and still have money left over to save our health service!

It is time to put an end to this madness and to give Cowen his redundancy notice.

Walk-outs

Ireland could witness its most massive demonstration ever on September 29th, if everyone gets behind the call for action.

Instead of leaving it to the bureaucrats of the ICTU, who may not organise properly, we need to get the message into every workplace from now.

Instead of just a march where only a few can participate, we need to shut down jobs with mass walk-outs.

In the Dublin area, we should all congregate at the Dail with a massive redundancy notice for Cowen.

The Right to Work Campaign is urging on all its supporters to:

- Call workplace meetings and local community meetings to support the National Day of Protest.

- Put resolutions to these meetings for walk-outs to congregate at the Dail.

Socialist Worker will be providing leaflets and posters to help build for the protest. You can order them from info@swp.ie.

Asylum Seekers Victimised

By KIERAN ALLEN

THE REFUSAL of asylum seekers to move from Mosney has thrown light on the terrible conditions they face.

They receive only €19 a week from the state, are expected to live in hostels, and are often moved around.

They can be forced to live under these conditions for up to five years.

At the launch of the Anti-Racist Network, an Iranian Kurd, who fled his home country for political reasons, said:

"Like many other asylum seekers I have done my best to integrate into Irish society because that is one of the conditions [for being allowed leave to remain.]

"I have mixed with the local society and now my partner, who is a local woman, is due to have a baby.

"Why am I just being moved around like this?"

FF Payments

The company who runs Mosney donated €4,050 to Fianna Fail.

The figure is just below the €5,079, figure where public disclosure is required.

Hostel owners, often FF supporters, get state contract to house asylum seekers.

Many of them have deeply racist views – but are glad to get state money.

FF racism

FF politicians cynically use asylum seekers as scapegoats for society's ills.

Their friends, in the Irish Independent media group, run scare stories about fake marriages and 'floods' of asylum seekers.

But then the FF hangers-on try to make profit from their misery.

Corruption

"You know why they want to move us?"

"Some hostel owners are feeling the pinch due to the recession as there are fewer tourists.

"So FF want to share us around so that they can get an income from us – even as they give us racist abuse".

The allowance of €19 a week has been the same since 1999.

No other groups in the country have ever been asked to live under such terrible conditions.

Aer Lingus workers prepared to strike

By DONAL MACPHEARRAIGH

AER LINGUS cabin crew, members of IMPACT Union, have voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action after management imposed new rosters.

The row centres on the company's controversial €97m cost-cutting plan.

Cabin crew voted to accept the cost-cutting plan in a ballot in March 2010, but that agreement did not contain the roster changes now imposed by the company.

Neither did it allow the company to arbitrarily impose changes to contracts or work rules.

Management want to increase the flight hours for cabin crew to about 850 hours per year.

Unions say this can be achieved under existing contracts.

Breach

The company breached the previous agreement by unilaterally abolishing the existing rules on working time and imposing new rosters with the minimum legal protections.

These allow cabin crew to work 60 hours over a seven-day period,

including long shifts without breaks.

Full-time cabin crew already work a 39-hour week, although they are only paid for 35 hours under an earlier productivity concession.

The workers voted 96% in favour of taking action on a turnout of 67%.

From August 25th, workers will refuse to work the new rosters but will remain available to work the old rosters.

Threats

Aer Lingus management has threatened that anyone who refuses to work the new rosters will be made redundant.

The union said the action was not a strike but that, if management escalates the dispute by taking disciplinary action against any cabin crew members for working within their existing contracts, the union would call a strike.

Aer Lingus workers show that both private and public sector workers are willing to stand up to a bullying management and call a halt to the freefall of concessions by cowardly Union leaders.

Hospital Electricians' Fighting Spirit



On the picket line

Photo: Paula Geraghty

By VANESSA O'SULLIVAN

ELECTRICIANS IN the TEEU union at St. James' hospital have been part of an ongoing dispute with the hospital management since November.

The dispute is over management's attempts to outsource aspects of the electrician's jobs and to reduce the role of maintenance workers in general.

Outside contractors have been brought in without prior agreement and in breach of agreed procedures to take over repairing and resetting the fire alarms.

The changes have already resulted in a number of "near-misses" in the hospital's fire alarm system.

Strike

The workers had been on a work-to-rule for several weeks before recently taking strike action.

The Electricians staged two half-day strikes on Thursday 5th and Monday 9th of August and a full day's strike on 16th of August.

A number of SIPTU and IMPACT union members refused to cross the picket line in solidarity with the electricians.

Outsourcing

One of the workers had this to say: "Look, this is not just about who gets to push a button like management wants everyone to believe.

"This is about outsourcing.

"They are giving our jobs and duties that are listed in our contracts to people who are unqualified.

"They are risking everyone's safety by doing so and if they get away with this, what's next?"

Lifesaving

He explained that some of the tasks they carry out are essential to the quality of service in the hospital.

"As maintenance staff we have a wide range of duties from light bulbs in operating theatres, to lifesaving machinery, to the likes of doors and alarms.

"If any of them go down or get damaged you wouldn't want some randomer who doesn't know what they're doing coming in and guessing how to fix it".

Awaiting a date for the Labour court, the Electricians fighting spirit has won them leverage.

All health workers should support the electricians to defend our health service against HSE management and government cutbacks.

DL Campaign against Dublin Bus cuts

By KARL GILL

DUBLIN BUS has decided to take 90 buses off the streets of Dublin.

What is being disguised as a 'Reform of the service' is clearly nothing but a cutback.

In Dun Laoghaire they have once again decided to cut the route of the number 46a from going through Monkstown Farm and cut the amount of number 4 and 4a buses by a third.

In August, the People before Profit Alliance in Dun Laoghaire organised a campaign meeting in Bakers Corner pub.

Packed full of angry residents willing to take militant action,

the meeting resolved to reverse the Dublin Bus cuts which would isolate the people of Monkstown Farm and Avenue and the Stradbroom and Abbey roads.

A bus driver who attended the meeting said: "All of these changes are part of a major cut-back and 'restructuring' plan, which will see Dublin Bus take 90 buses off the roads across the city.

Privatisation

These cuts are clearly part of a long-term plan to privatise many of the city's bus routes.

The areas affected contain a large elderly population as well as young families and



students who travel to college on these buses. Cllr Richard Boyd Barrett from People Before Profit Alliance said: "It is a disgrace that the

government and Dublin Bus are cutting services at a time of recession, when many rely more on public transport and when the FF/Green government

claim they want to encourage the use of public transport to reduce carbon emissions.

"These cut backs are yet another example of how this rotten government are making ordinary people and the less well-off pay for the economic crimes of the bankers and developers."

The meeting agreed to launch a vigorous campaign to keep the much needed local bus services.

All agreed to take up a petition and to hold a further meeting and invite all local councillors and TD's and Dublin Bus management.

If we give an inch they'll take a mile.

'Save the Railway' builds up Steam

By VANESSA O'SULLIVAN

THE PLAN by the C.I.E to close the railway line from Waterford to Rosslare is sparking outrage from the local communities between the towns.

The closure is part of a cost-cutting plan by C.I.E. According to them the route is not profitable enough so it will be closed.

Established in 1906, the line provides commuters in West Wexford with a vital link to Waterford City.

With the closure of Rosslare Europort (also owned by CIE) and now the line to Waterford, there is fear the Waterford to Limerick line may be threatened next.

Campaign

They planned to close the link 9 months ago, but, thanks to local activists in the 'Save the railway' campaign, the closure has been put on hold.

The campaign has held several demos in an attempt to save the railway line. Tanya Fenelon, from 'Save

the Railway' said: "It's an absolute disgrace and it's the elderly who are going to be affected by this the most.

"Their plan is to put on a bus but it won't touch a lot of the smaller towns or villages that the train currently stops at".

The final decision on closure will be on the 3rd of September, at a meeting in Dublin of the National Transport Authority.

The 'Save the railway' group say they will fight on to save this vital service.

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Protest Blair's Irish visit

By MARNIE HOLBOROW

TONY BLAIR is coming to Ireland to promote his autobiography.

He is set to appear on the Late, Late show on Friday September 3rd, and signing his book, *A Journey: My Political Life*, in Eason's on O'Connell St on Saturday, September 4th.

The Irish Anti War Movement is approaching the Irish Palestine Solidarity Campaign; the Peace and Neutrality Alliance; CND and the Trade Unions and political parties to support the protest.

Galway Against War has called for Blair's arrest for war crimes when he arrives in Dublin.

Blood Money

Since Tony Blair left office he has been paid hundreds of thousands of pounds for speeches, and millions as an advisor to Zurich insurance and JP Morgan Bank.

Some estimate his personal fortune at more than £15m. Blair made headlines by agreeing to give his reported €5.6 million advance to the British Legion to help injured soldiers.

Carole Jones, whose son was killed in Iraq, sees it as blood money:

"As far as the families are concerned we all hold him responsible. If Tony Blair had not sent our lads to an illegal war, they would still be alive right now. He never even said sorry."

The UK's Stop the War Coalition will picket his signing at Waterstone's in Piccadilly, London, on September 8th.

The store has insisted that customers cannot be photographed with Blair.

All bags, backpacks and



briefcases must be checked in, along with cameras and mobile phones.

War-monger

Blair, in his absurd role as the Middle East 'peace' envoy, is the arm of US foreign policy.

Everybody who opposes Blair, and the murderous war-mongering he stands for, should come out and protest on September 4th.

Irish Anti War Movement <http://irishantiwar.org/> for more info on building the demonstration on September 4th

Blair's War Crimes in Iraq

1. Breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Sanctions caused an excess mortality of at least 500,000 children.
2. Conspiracy to join with another power in aggressive war; the supreme international war crime (Nuremberg Rules; Charter of the United Nations).
3. Manufacturing a case for war, including 'weapons of mass destruction'.
4. The deaths of at least a million Iraqis, almost half were children. At least two million maimed.
5. The further deterioration of medical services in Iraq.
6. Destruction of Iraq's cultural treasures and violent chaos after the invasion.
7. Use of banned weapons including white phosphorus, 'bunker buster' bombs and depleted uranium.

Government indifference to Flood disaster in Pakistan

By A. KHAN

THE DEVASTATING floods in Pakistan are considered the worst natural disaster there in recent history.

With thousands dead and millions homeless there are more people affected than after the 2005 earthquake.

Floodwaters wreaked havoc on already poor infrastructure and left millions of children vulnerable to water-borne diseases like cholera and dysentery.

Profiteers

As in Haiti, natural disasters expose the bleak face of a country's divide between rich and poor and its government's abilities to cope.

Billionaire President, Ali Zardari, known for corruption, was criticised bitterly for staying on a foreign visit when the disaster hit.

For international capital too, profits come before people.

Only part of the paltry €450 million fund recommended by the UN has been sent by rich governments.

The World Bank, instead of aid, announced a 'loan' of \$900 million.

War

A further threat to Pakistan's elite is the resurrection of support for guerrilla fighters, including Taliban, in the Swat valley and surrounding regions in Northern Pakistan where flooding hit first.



As part of the so-called 'Af-Pak' war, the US pressured the Pakistani government to launch a major offensive by the Pakistani military in this area.

With brutal force the army drove insurgents from the area and installed strict army rule including curfews.

Now the floods have seriously disrupted the supplies of food and medicines to an area in dire need and have worsened the situation for

a local population already devastated by war.

How can Pakistan now justify its expensive army and its nuclear weapons programme to its traumatised citizens?

Break-up

The fragile national unity of the provinces that make up Pakistan is also threatened by this crisis.

The North Western province is organizing an independent donor conference, accus-

ing the bigger province of Punjab of not allocating aid equally.

Angry survivors blocked the main road in Sindh Province to protest against the slow delivery of aid.

However, popular protests, against US imperialism's cronies in Pakistan, may hold out some hope for this devastated region.

The World Bank and the 'War on Terror' will just mean more suffering to come.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Newsweek: Cowen in Top Ten

RIGHT-WING current affairs magazine *Newsweek* put Brian Cowen in the top ten of world leaders alongside Nicolas Sarkozy, David Cameron and Saudi King Abdullah.

Calling him the 'Fiscal taskmaster' the magazine said that, despite Ireland's economy being "staggered by the banking crisis", he and Lenihan had "pushed through austerity packages drastic enough to win the admiration

of the international community".

By the 'international community' they meant of course bankers and rich shareholders, not ordinary citizens.

Cowen now has an abysmal 18% popularity rating with Ireland's citizen's precisely because he is keeping international financiers happy by pouring money into bank bail-outs for the super-rich.

Anglo-Irish Execs Pay Rise

MINISTER FOR Finance, Brian Lenihan, gave pay rises to Anglo

directors even though an independent commission on bankers' pay recommended a cut.

The commission recommended €158,000 for the chairman and €32,000 for the board but Lenihan rejected this and gave pay increases to €250,000 and €73,000 instead.

Lenihan excused his decision saying the executives had 'an increased workload'.

FF Expenses Scandal

FF'S IVOR Callely's expenses scandal continued with revelations he claimed

€3000 with false invoices for mobile phones from a company which had gone bust.

While a junior minister for health Callely claimed over €87,000 in mileage expenses even though he only lived 3 miles from his office; 5000 miles claimed for a month he wasn't even in the country.

Not to be outdone, transport minister, Noel Dempsey ran up a government jet bill of €13,000 to attend a summer school in Donegal.

"People are very sensitive about these things now" said Dempsey.

Callely will continue

to receive a €15,000 a year senate allowance while he is suspended from the Seanad.

Clearly being sensitive is not enough.

Bribes for Doctors?

PHARMACEUTICAL COMPANIES, including major Irish employers Glaxo and Pfizer face investigation by the US Department of Justice under anti-bribery legislation.

The companies are accused of giving 'inducements' including foreign travel, meals and corporate toys as bribes to doctors to prescribe their drugs.

March for Marriage Equality



By KIERAN ALLEN

OVER 20,000 people recently took part in Gay Pride in Ireland and thousands more joined a march for 'Marriage Equality' in Dublin.

David Carroll and Danny Fagan have been in a relationship for fifteen years and recently decided they wanted to get married.

They had visited Canada before and were impressed by the acceptance of diversity in that society.

Later they returned there to take advantage of its equality laws and get married.

'Thanks'

"During the toast at the party, my eldest brother jokingly 'thanked' the Irish government for making more than 50 people take a holiday in Canada to attend our

wedding. "The fact that we can't get married in Ireland, nor have our Canadian marriage recognised to have the legal rights and privileges of marriage here in Ireland is wrong.

"We realise that we are lucky we could afford to get married as far away as Canada, and that this is not an option open to everyone."

Marriage Equality

Iceland and Portugal have recently brought in 'Marriage Equality' legislation.

The government's own Colley Report recommended this change.

But the Green Party made a concession to the backwoods men of Fianna Fail and settled for a lesser 'Civil Partnership' proposal.

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 Brown government.

Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction' We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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

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

We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc. We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Join the Socialists

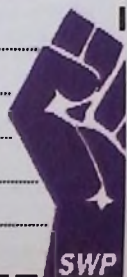
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Dublin Bus: An attack on Public Transport

By OWEN MCCORMACK

DUBLIN BUS has announced a city wide 'review' of their entire route network.

Under the guise of providing a more efficient and easier-to-use bus service, the company are actually implementing yet another round of savage cuts to the city's bus services.

Last year they cut over 120 buses from their fleet and laid off hundreds of bus workers.

At the time, the company claimed the cuts would not affect services as less traffic congestion meant fewer buses were needed to provide the same level of service.

In reality, as public transport campaigners and bus-workers pointed out, the city needed MORE buses, not less.

Whole areas and new estates are left with no public transport service at all.

The complete bankruptcy of the Greens in government was shown clearly when they uttered not a word of protest at those cuts, which saved the company the relatively paltry sum of €21 million.

Savage

Little over a year later, the company are again preparing to savage the bus service in the city.

They are peddling the lie that the 'network review' is an attempt to provide a more 'efficient' service.

In fact, almost 100 more buses will be lost. Routes that were not cut last year now face severe reductions in their bus numbers.

The company is attempting to dress up the cuts as an attempt to improve the service by amalgamating routes from the south side of the city with routes from the north side.

For example,

the number 40 route to Finglas will be combined with the number 78 route to Ballyfermot to create a new 'super route' across the city.

However, in total, the new 'super routes' will now have far fewer buses operating on them than the previous two routes had.

City-wide

Across the city the picture is the same.

In some areas, routes that have always serviced particular estates are now being withdrawn, forcing people to walk for 10 to 20 minutes to main roads to get the bus.

Dublin Bus management say this will allow them to provide more high-frequency services on the main roads.

In fact, it is designed to cut the routes' journey times and thus reduce the number of buses the company operate on that route.

If anything, such moves will discourage people, especially older people or those with restricted mobility, from using the service.

Agenda

In some areas the agenda is clear and no amount of PR can obscure it.

Last year the company cut services in Ballymun on the number 13 route and from the number 7 route on the south side.

But they claimed that the numbers 4 and 4a would be unaffected and provide an excellent alternative service in the same areas.

But now they are scrapping the 4a and cutting 14 bus runs from the remaining number 4 route.

On Sundays, passengers will be left with one bus every hour servicing a route that goes throughout some of the most populated areas

in the city.

Non-union

Side by side with this savage attack on public transport comes the attempt by some private, non-union bus operators to use the courts to force Dublin Bus out of certain profitable routes.

The Swords Express recently won a high court case that could force Dublin Bus to stop operating some services in Swords and elsewhere.

Other companies are now threatening to take similar cases.

They are hoping the courts will interpret European competition laws in such a way as to stop subsidised states services competing with non-subsidised private operators.

The effect, if unchallenged, would be to allow effective privatisation of services in some areas.

Already, Dublin Bus management are trying to use the case to justify withdrawing from some areas.

Fightback

Transport Unions and the public need to fight now to retain every bus and service that Dublin Bus operate.

A campaign by bus-workers and passengers could stop these cuts and highlight the hypocrisy of the Greens.

Projects like Metro north have more to do with the needs of Fianna Fail's friends in developers Treasury Holdings than public transport. Instead the government could be forced to fund the transport system that most people actually use at the moment; the bus.

If the Greens are serious about saving the Planet from global warming they must explain how scrapping 200 of Dublin city buses in a year is going to reduce our CO2 emissions.

'Save Our Hospital' grow: Now it's t



Thousands protest at cuts in Roscommon, now let's bring thousands on the street nationally

Photo: Paula Geraghty

'Thatcherite' Health

By DR PEADAR O'GRADY

THE GROWING 'Save our Hospital' campaigns across the country demonstrate that local communities are not going to stand by and let frontline health services be slashed.

But what is the overall HSE and government strategy for health cuts?

Economic Policy

The first thing to understand is that the cuts are driven by government economic policy not by health policy.

That policy is to reduce public expenditure and cut labour costs; both to save the rich money.

This is driven by a neoliberal, 'Thatcherite' policy of redundancies and

driving down wages to boost 'National competitiveness'.

The public sector is being used as a lever in a race to the bottom in wages and conditions across the whole economy.

Health Cuts

With this in mind the 2010 budget announced €4 billion in cuts in public services which included €400 million of cuts in the Health Service.

While €106 million was earmarked for 'HSE Economies', areas such as HSE West alone have had their budgets cut by €142 million; well in excess of the 2010 budget.

Planned cuts in HSE West are typical: Closure of a

children's home and health centres; a 10% cut in home help hours; 'reconfiguration' of three wards to weekdays only, the 'amalgamation' of wards and hostels in mental health with a loss of beds, a 'reduction' of 255 temporary staff and 92 nurses, and the loss of consultant staff at Galway University Hospital; closure of 27 beds at Mayo General Hospital; Roscommon County Hospital for closure or downsizing.

Closures and Staff Reductions

In order to further reduce health expenditure the HSE has closed 1300 beds in Hospitals around the country this year. The moratorium

(ban) on recruitment means thousands of staff are not being replaced when they retire or resign.

Numbers of frontline staff being lost, like nurses or Care Workers, are 5 times greater than management losses, according to the Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO).

The HSE strategy is to report 'budget overruns' on smaller budgets, issue a 'report' recommending more cuts and closures, and then the cycle continues.

Hospitals which accept service reductions or 'downgrading' are then set up to be recommended for closure as 'too small' to be viable.

Protests Matter

Threatened resignations by FF politicians and reversals of planned closures at Portlincula in Ballinasloe and Roscommon General show that protests matter.

The HSE's chaotic slashing of staff and beds can be resisted.

The alternative to the government's Thatcherite policies is: to get rid of the profiteers in private hospitals and health insurance and end the current two-tier system.

Totally unnecessary private consultant fees cost more than €400 million a year!

We need a comprehensive, universal health system, free at the point of use and

'Hospital' campaigns Time to unite...



By VANESSA O'SULLIVAN

ALL THE time now we are being told by the Labour Party and Trade Union leadership that there is no real will to fight against the horrendous cuts being implemented.

Why then is has one area of service alone pulled out approximately 100,000 people onto the streets in the last 6 months.

What sector is this? And why are the mass of workers still flooding the streets?

It is of course the 'save our hospital' campaigns and they are giving a voice to the mounting anger and breadth of the country.

Closures

In Dublin, the plan is to close Our Lady's Hospital and Tallaght hospital's children's ward.

They are selling off public land in St. James' and Beaumont hospitals to make way for private hospitals.

They have tried to viciously attack respite services in Cherry Orchard Hospital but because of the huge resistance, they have failed 3 years in a row.

In Louth they succeeded in closing the A&E, hundreds of people fought for their service.

In Clonmel, 20,000 people came out on the streets to prevent downgrading.

Resistance

In the last 2 weeks we have seen resistance to the cuts in Sligo, Donegal and Roscommon amongst others, all in the attempt to prevent down-

grading and/or closures.

On Sunday the 22nd of August, the fighting spirit was soaring in Wexford against the cuts to the 24 hour A&E, Maternity wards and paediatric wards, just the latest in a series of cuts that have already seen wards being closed.

The carnival against cuts raged through city and truly catered for everyone.

There were puppet shows, face painters and even a 'graffiti wall' for the kids and music spanning from cover bands, country, hip-hop and salsa dancers to heavy metal.

The weather was perfect as each fantastic local band or performer took to the stage.

To top it all off, Natty Wailer performed an amazing set ranging from his good friend Bob Marley to his own music.

It was echoed throughout the day how important it is to fight these cuts and the responses from the crowd really summed it up.

Anger at HSE

Socialist Worker spoke to Anne O'Neill, a regional ambulance controller who was very angry at the response from the HSE.

She told us: "It's an insult to the highly trained individuals the HSE have at their disposal.

"We haven't been attacked yet but we know it's only a matter of time, that is why it's important to show solidarity today."

She revealed that if the service is downgraded then the county

will be split in two sections.

The North of Wexford will go to Loughlinstown and the South to Waterford to get their treatment.

She continued: "Primary care is so important.

"What happens in that first 30 minutes can be crucial.

"Why risk someone's life by adding an extra half hour to get them treatment".

Going Private

A woman told us of her trip to a private hospital and the treatment she received.

"I went into Kilcreen to get 2 injections which cost around €1-1500.

"Me and 4 other women were told to wait in Physiotherapy while it was going on.

"I was then brought to a toilet and told to change into a gown, had the procedure, brought back to the toilet to change and was then given a cuppa and toast.

"I am with VHI and was charged €635 for a bed I didn't even see.

"The total bill was nearly €2,000."

Unity

Although these individual campaigns are thriving, they are still cut off from each other.

There is now a need to unite these campaigns all around the country.

The first meeting for the National Hospital Campaign will take place at 12pm on Saturday the 28th of August in Dublin and will be preparing to come out in Solidarity with the Community sector on the 29th of September.

ESB Privatisation: Price hikes and disconnections

By IAN MCDONNELL

THE GOVERNMENT is set to further increase electricity costs with a 5% levy.

This is despite the fact that soaring bills have already led to a dramatic rise in the number of people being disconnected in 2010.

An ESB spokesperson recently confirmed that:

"In the last year, ESB customer supply has 'de-energised' an average of 900 customers per month and this must be seen in the context of a total customer base of 1.5 million."

According to the Commission for Energy Regulation, 2,604 people had been disconnected by March this year.

New arrivals, Airtricity and Bord Gais are also disconnecting their new customers who cannot pay their bills on time despite the advertised 'discounts'.

11,000 people have had to use repayment plans for electricity bill arrears in 2010.

Profits

The ESB made €580 million in profits last year, despite the recession.

Why then are energy costs so high?

Some media commentators have attempted to blame wage increases for ESB workers as the cause of price hikes.

However, payroll costs only account for 16% of the ESB's entire budget.

Blaming wage levels for high prices has no bearing whatsoever in reality; reducing wages would have no significant effect.

The real reason for high electricity bills has to do with the government policy of privatisation.

Currently, the Commission for Energy Regulation keeps the ESB's prices artificially high to artificially create 'market competition'.
Bord Gáis

and Airtricity are induced to undercut the ESB with 'discounts' to get their customers in a 'big switch'.

A big swindle is more the case.

Cheaper Electricity

It would be much cheaper for the ESB to be the sole provider of electricity as a public service, as it did to international acclaim in the past.

In 2000 Ireland had the third cheapest electricity prices in the EU.

Since then, the Government's 'liberalisation' program of breaking up the ESB has meant prices rising at over four times the rate of other EU countries.

As a result, in 2010, Ireland has the third most expensive electricity in Europe.

In effect, ordinary people are subsidizing the profiteering of companies we don't need.

Neoliberal dogma

The reason for keeping the current system has more to do with adherence to neo-liberal dogma than to any commitment to economic viability.

The government's pathological urge to push through privatisation is costing ordinary people dearly.

Fianna Fail plan to further privatise public services through their recently announced 'State Assets Review Group'.

Bloomberg businessweek noted that this group: "intends to divest many state assets in order to relieve the budget crisis and pay down the \$115 billion national debt".

With 400,000 people on the live register already in desperate need, increasing energy bills means people have even less to spend, which is further deflating the economy.

Needlessly pushing up energy costs, given the current economic climate, makes no

sense whatsoever, as it would likely lead to companies firing workers to 'neutralize the cost' of the levy.

Pharmaceutical Ireland, for example, has said that their member companies may make between 550 and 800 workers redundant to recoup their losses.

Likewise, Irish Cement Limited said the levy would cost them another €1.4m annually.

Increases in operating costs will not be absorbed willingly by companies.

They will attempt to divert them onto workers through redundancies and wage cuts.

Poverty

The hike in energy costs will also hit the poorest in society.

The Central Statistics Office's (CSO) most recent figures show that 14.4% of the population are living in relative poverty.

Pleading for mercy will not move this neoliberal FF-Green government.

€10 billion of taxpayers' money was recently pumped into Anglo-Irish Bank and more public service and welfare cuts are on the way.

Fianna Fail and their sponsors in the business community are determined to make ordinary people pay for their crisis.

Fight back

The only way to turn this crisis back on those who created it is through large-scale, grassroots organisation and tactical unity by the Left, Trade Unions and Community groups.

The fragmentation of the Left in Ireland is a serious obstacle.

Only through adherence to an agreed plan of cooperation can we generate enough momentum to pose a serious challenge to those in power.

It is our rulers who need their power cut off.

th Cuts

properly funded by progressive taxation.

The increase in the numbers of millionaires and billionaires in Ireland show there is money there to fund the health service.

A 10% emergency tax on the assets of the super-rich would bring in €25 billion.

A 2% yearly asset tax would bring in an additional €4.5 billion a year.

Step Up The Action

To win these alternatives the 'Save Our Hospital' campaigns must unite and make common cause with health sector trade unions.

Fianna Fail hope that these protests will just 'blow off steam' and that there will be no serious follow up.

Campaigns need to step up the action:

1. Hold a national demonstration on heath. Don't just see campaigns as a local fight. We need to link up all the health campaigns. On September 29th, there is an all European Day of Action against the cuts. Why not make that the day for protests?

2. Escalate the protests. If any move is made against a hospital or service, the unions should call a local stoppage and urge everyone to come out. We also need a campaign of mass civil disobedience - it is the only way to make this hard-nosed, right-wing government back down.

Marxism and the Environmental Crisis

By JOHN MOLYNEUX

OVER THE next ten, twenty or fifty years, humanity faces an immense environmental crisis as a result of rapid and chaotic climate change.

Indeed, the crisis is already underway, and its effects are already being felt in many parts of the world, such as nearly submerged low-lying Pacific islands and drought-stricken Sudan.

People often talk of the need to 'save the planet', but planet earth will survive any amount of climate change.

In reality it is living creatures (human beings and animals) that will suffer, who will be wiped out in their millions and hundreds of millions, or even face extinction.

Question

In the face of this crisis there is one overriding question.

What has to be done to bring climate change under control and prevent the catastrophe?

In this article I shall argue that to answer this we need a Marxist understanding of society and to actually take the necessary action we need socialist politics.

The problem is not primarily scientific or technical.

The basic science of climate change is simple, well established and widely agreed by all scientists not funded by the likes of Exxon-Mobil with a vested interest in denying it.

Global warming is caused by the increasing emission of 'greenhouse' gases, such as carbon dioxide (CO₂), which form a kind of insulating blanket in the earth's atmosphere preventing heat from the sun escaping into space.

In scientific terms the solution is equally simple: drastically reduce carbon and other greenhouse-gas emissions.

Political Problem

The real problem, therefore, is political: why does our society continue, as it does, producing greenhouse gases at a disastrously high level?

Why do we not take the obvious measures required to avoid the impending catastrophe?

Why not switch from oil, gas and coal, as the main sources of power, to non-carbon emitting sources such as wind, solar, and tidal power?

Why not slash dependency on the carbon-emitting private car by enormously improving public transport or institute a general programme of house insulation?

Understanding why these things are not being done is where Marxist analysis is essential.

Profits

Marx showed that the driving force of capitalism is not human need or social welfare nor even consumer choice, but the need for profit and the accumulation of capital.

Capitalism is based on competition at every level – between corner shops and supermarkets, between international corporations and between national economies.

It is not just the greed of the bosses; this competition compels every capitalist



firm and economy to attempt to maximise its profits and its accumulation of capital, on pain of bankruptcy or being taken over or marginalised.

"Accumulate, accumulate! That is Moses and the prophets... Accumulation for accumulation's sake, production for production's sake", is how Marx described the basic law of capitalism.

Moreover, Marx explained that, in capitalist societies, governments do not serve the people as they claim, but serve the interests of the capitalist class.

If it is in the interests of the capitalist class to allow global warming to continue that is what capitalist governments will do, despite all their talk of 'going green'.

But, surely, some people argue it is just as much in the interests of the capitalists to stop catastrophic climate change as it is the rest of us.

There are two key features of the system which mean this is not the case, and Marxist analysis points to both of them.

Monopolies

The first is domination of the world by a few giant corporations.

Marx showed that this concentration of capital was the inevitable result of competition.

As he put it "One capitalist always kills many", so the ownership of capital becomes concentrated in ever fewer hands.

The table on this page shows the ten biggest companies in the world (according to Fortune 500):

Ten biggest companies in world

		Revenues(\$mill)	Profits(\$mill)
1.	Wall-Mart	408,216	14,335
2.	Royal Dutch Shell	285,129	12,518
3.	Exxon mobil	284,650	19,280
4.	BP	246,134	16,578
5.	Toyota	204,106	2,256
6.	Japan Post Holdings	202,196	4,849
7.	Sinopec	187,496	5,756
8.	State Grid	184,456	-343
9.	AXA	175,257	5,012
10.	China National Petroleum	165,496	10,272

Thus we can see that, four of the top five, and seven of the top ten, of these hugely powerful companies are in oil, gas and cars and so have a direct interest in carbon-emitting fossil fuels.

International Competition

The second factor is the international competition between states (on behalf of their respective capitalists).

This means that the world's biggest carbon polluters – USA, China, Europe, India etc – face each other as competitors.

Each fears that, if it makes the needed cuts in emissions, it will lose out to its rivals who will not reciprocate.

This analysis has been borne out in practice by the behaviour of Obama and the US at the Copenhagen Climate Change talks in 2009.

Despite the fact that Obama, unlike

Bush, certainly does understand the science of climate change, he intervened personally in Copenhagen to scupper any binding targets for carbon emission reduction.

Capitalism

This Marxist analysis, of capitalism being the main cause of climate change and the main obstacle to its prevention, differs radically from the views put across in the media or by the Greens or many other people in the environmental movement.

It rejects the view that the cause of climate change is individual greed and the solution is for all of us to 'do our bit'.

This cannot work because power in capitalist society is so unequal.

No matter how much ordinary people cut back and sacrifice, it will not stop the

big corporations using fossil fuels.

Similarly, this analysis rejects the idea that the problem is overpopulation.

Carbon emissions are proportional to the level of capitalist economic development, not the level of population.

The US produces 19.5 metric tons per person, Ireland 10.6 million tons, China 2.6 million and Ethiopia only 0.04 million.

Trying to restrict the world's population, which always has racist and reactionary implications, will not tackle the central problem at all.

Identifying capitalism as the problem also points to the solution.

One Solution

If capitalist corporations and states are the main polluters, what is needed is a social force that is more powerful than these corporations and states.

The point of Marxism – the central idea running through all of Marx's writing – is that such a force does exist in the shape of the international working class.

The capitalists everywhere depend on workers for all their production and all their profits.

Without workers labour, the whole system seizes up – its factories, call-centres, planes, trains, lorries and shops, all grind to a halt. At the same time the development of capitalism increases the size of the working class.

There are now major working classes in China, India, Africa, Latin America (where once there were mainly peasants), concentrated in great cities such as Shanghai, Cairo and Sao Paulo.

Power

Clearly what we are talking about here is potential power.

To realise that power, working class people have to become active in their millions and united in struggle.

This is not easily achieved but there is no other social force that has anything like this potential.

Several conclusions follow from this analysis:

1. Socialists who base their politics on Marxism need to be in the forefront of building the anti climate change movement, arguing their case.

2. Socialists have to work to raise awareness of the real causes of climate change in the labour movement and among working people everywhere.

3. The struggle against climate change needs to be linked to all the other struggles of working people against the cuts, the bankers, the bosses, war, sexism, racism and so on.

4. In all these struggles, socialists have to work to increase the understanding among working people that they need to take over the running of society themselves, requiring a revolutionary change in society.

It is just about possible that capitalism could, theoretically, resolve the climate crisis before it is too late.

It is also more than likely that it won't.

We can't afford to take that chance.

The whole future of humanity depends on it.

A Socialist Response to Riots



By EAMONN MCCANN

RIOTING AND attacks on the police in the North during August have widely been put down to 'dissident' groups.

The media and politicians of all the main parties claimed that dissident republicans were behind the fighting at Ardoyne and around the Kilwilkie estate in Lurgan during and after the Apprentice Boys' August 12th parades.

Some claimed to have seen 'micro groups' or 'criminal gangs' organising impressionable youngsters to stone or petrol-bomb the PSNI.

It is true that outfits like the Real IRA, the Continuity IRA or their political equivalents are happy to see young people from Catholic working-class areas blocking Orange parades and fighting police.

The dissidents openly oppose any peace deal based on the Stormont institutions.

They see the discontent of young people from deprived areas as providing a basis for building their armed campaign for an all-Ireland republic.

Road to Nowhere

But the history of the last 40 years shows up the futility of Republican armed struggle.

It is fantasy to imagine any of the 'dissident' groups mounting a bigger and better campaign than the Provos: it is the road to nowhere.

Politically, 'Brits Out' offers no strategy for confronting the oppression young people suffer; in Protestant as well as Catholic areas.

It sharpens divisions and diverts energy into futile wrangles between 'the two communities'.

Socialists, whatever community we come from, are totally opposed to the sectarian 'orders' and their coat-trailing exercises.

Class

It's only by recognising the class nature of the society we live in that a real alternative can be built.

Ardoyne and Kilwilkie are among the most deprived areas in the North, bar none, characterised by persistent poverty and marginalisation.

People here have known no 'peace dividend', and feel they have been left behind by the peace process.

This is the reason for the growing discontent, particularly among the young, towards the mainstream parties.

Way Forward

This sense of betrayal cannot be put down to the machinations of dissident groups.

With cut-backs, job losses and lack of services, things are set to get worse.

It is in mobilising to resist these attacks that we can make the common interests of working-class communities a reality rather than a mere slogan.

It is with this perspective that socialists see a way forward.

Reclaim the festivals from the profiteers



Oxegen, in Kildare, is another rain-soaked, alcohol-fuelled, rock-and-roll weekend.

MUSIC REVIEW

Summer Music festivals: Sziget, Hungary; Oxegen, Ireland; Hevy, UK.

Reviewed by: Jessica Bressan

SINCE WOODSTOCK attracted 500,000 people in the radical days of 1969, music festivals are now a multibillion euro business with over a million attending the annual 'Summerfest' in the US.

Sziget

This year 400,000 fans enjoyed bands such as Muse, Kasabian, 30 Seconds to Mars, Iron Maiden, Faithless, and Children of Bodom.

Sziget also boasts rock climbing,

logic games, magic mirrors and tarot card readings.

Downsides are: the food is terrible, it's hard to get to and the noise resounds until 5am and begins again at 9, making sleep a luxury.

Tents flooded to ankle height following the almost comically heavy rain; help from the organisers to get somewhere dry and safe was slim to none.

Oxegen

Oxegen, in Kildare, is another rain-soaked, alcohol-fuelled, rock-and-roll weekend.

It offers bad and ridiculously overpriced food, bad beer (Heineken had the market cornered), bad weather, useless police, but a brilliant line-up!

This year 80,000 watched great bands like Arcade Fire, Jay-Z, Eminem, Florence and The Machine, Vampire Weekend or Prodigy but that still didn't justify the outrageous €250 ticket for a four-day soggy camping experience with transport and food extra.

Hevy

The Hevy festival is a very small festival in a Wild Animal Park in Kent; bringing in a mere 2,000 people.

Not for the faint-hearted, it featured bands such as Comeback Kid, Napalm Death, Glassjaw, Gallows, Despised Icon, The Black Dahlia Murder, M&B, Dead Swans, Trash Talk and other heavy metal and hard-core bands.

Hevy festival was by far the best

experience for me this summer as it had the soberest crowd, the nicest weather, the best atmosphere, and featured bands hard to get to see in concert.

It was also reasonably priced at £70 for a four-day camping ticket.

Profiteers

The summer was tragically marred by the tragedy of 21 people crushed to death at the one million strong Love Parade festival in Duisburg, Germany on July 24th.

Security, focused on keeping the ticketless out rather than on safety, had squeezed everyone into one entrance tunnel.

Festivals can be fantastic fun but need to be reclaimed from the profiteers.

BOOK REVIEW:

Berlin 1940: a city paralysed by fear

Alone in Berlin, Penguin Books, Author: Hans Fallada

Reviewed by Paul O'Brien

WHEN HOLOCAUST survivor, Primo Levi, suggests that *Alone in Berlin* is: "the greatest book ever written about German resistance to the Nazis", we know this is a book that demands to be read.

Based on a true story, the novel is at once a great literary work, a gripping fast-moving thriller, and a portrait of life in wartime Berlin.

Translated and reissued in 2006, it was originally published in Germany in 1946 just months after the death of the author, Hans Fallada.

Alone in Berlin is set in an apartment block in Berlin in 1940; a city paralysed by fear.

Two of the tenants are Otto Quangel, a cabinet-maker, and his wife Anna who try to stay out of trouble.

But when they hear that their

only son has been killed at the front they are shocked into an extraordinary act of resistance.

Resistance

They drop handwritten postcards, attacking Hitler, across the city.

The ambitious Gestapo inspector, Escherich, investigates and a murderous game of cat and mouse begins.

This wonderful novel never shouts at you, but whispers in your ear: 'this is how it was'.

It also suggests that morality under the Nazis was not measured by the size of the struggle; it mattered only that one did not capitulate.

Under interrogation Otto says: "It doesn't matter if one man fights or ten thousand; if one man sees he has no option but to fight, then he will fight, whether he has others on his side or not."

"I had to fight, and given the chance I would do it again."

"Only this time I would do it very differently".

BOOK REVIEW:

Invitation to a Sacrifice

Author: Dave Lordan., Publisher: Salmon Press.

Reviewed by Paul O'Brien

DAVE LORDAN'S new collection of poetry *Invitation to Sacrifice* is a modern, lively, outburst of anger and disbelief at the world we live in today.

These poems are full of energy with a rich language full of powerful rhythms.

They are meant to be read aloud and come alive in the performances that Dave has given all over the country.

Here all the satire, humour, emotion, and anger of Lordan's work are revealed.

That is not to say that his best poetry does not work on the page:

I see a storm surge blooming in deep blue caves underneath the pipes. I see Tarmacadam crack

and foam, then burst. Pearse Street swell like a sea.

The gutters, geysers. A brown torrent blasting up.

A small town drowning in its own waste

and mine own lovelies squealing,

swept into the ocean on the rebounding tide

of all we thought we'd flushed away.

But that could never happen.

That would be terrible

altogether.

That would be a thundering disgrace.

These poems show how poetry can be relevant, exciting, and speak to us about the modern world.

This is a poet who wrestles with the language of the street, transforming it into a powerful indictment of the rich and powerful.

This is Lordan's third book and his work has developed technically and lyrically.

This is a very fine collection that can be read with pleasure, laughter and excitement, by a writer who knows how to use words as weapons.

DUP/SF climb-down on Protest Ban

CIVIL RIGHTS campaigners have scored a significant victory in scuppering a DUP/Sinn Fein plan to severely curtail the ability of workers' and community organisations to fight job losses and spending cuts.

A proposal demanding 37-days notice of any outdoor rally of more than 50 people has been abandoned.

The measure would have had huge implications for anti-racism and anti-war campaigns, as well as for unions and community groups.

The change was announced by Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness on August 12th.

By releasing the news on the day of the Apprentice Boys' marches, they may have hoped to keep the climb-down as low-key as possible.

Flawed

Plans for dealing with contentious parades still stand, and are still deeply flawed.

But the removal of restrictions on meetings is a noteworthy success.

The draft Parades Bill was drawn up by three DUP and three SF Members of the Assembly, following talks, at Hillsborough Castle in February, on devolution of policing.

The group was mandated to devise a replacement for the Parades Commission which the Orange Order wanted abolished as part of the policing deal.

But the bill the MLAs came up with amounted to a wide-ranging attack on the right to organise.

The 37-day requirement would have outlawed the protests of the Visteon workers last year, demonstrations against the assault



Climb-down: McGuinness and Robinson

on Gaza in December 2008, solidarity rallies following attacks on Roma in Belfast and so on and on.

PSNI Powers

Any member of the PSNI would have had the power to arrest, without warrant, anybody suspected of being in breach of the measure.

Penalties were set at £5,000 fines and/or six months imprisonment

The proposals were condemned by the

Human Rights Commission, the ICTU, the Anti-Poverty Network, residents' organisations and many others.

It was made clear that the law would be defied if the DUP and SF went ahead.

People Before Profit announced a protest march on October 5th, along the route in Derry of the October 5th 1968 march which detonated the original civil rights movement.

In off-the-record talks, the coalition parties offered to shorten the 37-day period

and raise the size of meetings affected from 50 to 500.

When they were let know that this wouldn't wash, they gave up on this section of the bill.

The parades aspect remains to be settled.

Apart from abolishing the Commission to satisfy the Orange Order, the bill still does nothing to ease problems arising from annuals displays of sectarianism.

This fight is not over yet.

PSNI and Media Abusing Children's Rights

THE POLICE in the North have taken to plastering pictures of young people in newspapers and in leaflets identifying them as alleged rioters.

Some of those pictured are clearly under 16.

It would be illegal to identify them if they had been charged in court.

And yet newspapers in Belfast and Derry, as well as UTV and the BBC, have published photographs of their faces at the behest of the PSNI.

Hysteria

They have carried appeals to parents who recognise their sons or

daughters to turn them in!

Hysteria about dissidents, rioting and 'anti-social behaviour' has created an atmosphere in which the PSNI feels it has a virtually free hand to breach human rights guidelines and adopt whatever measures it

wants.

As always, when conservative parties – from the DUP to Sinn Fein – have no answer to social problems, they fix the blame on troublesome individuals and send in the cops to sort them out.

Children's Rights

In a letter to the Derry

Journal, Paul Hughes of the Enagh Youth Forum declared: "We see this as a violation of young people's human rights and as moving us further towards a police state... Young people need support, not surveillance."

"We recommend that any parent, who unfortunately finds that

their child's human rights have been abused as a consequence of this campaign, should not contact the PSNI, but should instead consult with the Northern Ireland Children's Commissioner and their local solicitor, with a view to taking legal proceedings."