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Socialist Worker

STRIKE BACK ON BUDGET DAY

THE FF-Green government is preparing the greatest ever attack on Irish society since the foundation of the state.

The country has already been seriously hurt by their policies.

Tens of thousands have been forced to emigrate and many live in fear of poverty.

The only group the government has helped are corrupt bankers.

Now Brian Lenihan says they want to withdraw another €6 billion from the economy on top of the €14 billion they have already taken.

Even the ESRI says that this will bring a 'prolonged recession'.

All justification for this crazy government's policy has fallen apart.

Two years ago, Fianna Fail said they had to cut public spending to reduce interest payments.

But now Irish bonds are trading at over 8% and the annual interest bill will soon be over €4.5 billion a year.

To continue that policy means savage budget attacks on working people for the next ten years.

Their last line of defence is to pretend that 'nothing can be done'.

They wring their hands and pretend to be concerned at the loss of 'economic sovereignty' but many wealthy people want the IMF or the EU to be ruling this country.

That way the ruling elites in Ireland will get the 'political cover' to carry through their savage cuts.

Resistance

We should not fall for the line that 'nothing can be done'.

The European Central Bank has worked hand and glove with this rotten government to save the banking system.

The ECB never provided funds to Ireland – it only provided funds to allow Irish banks pay back British and German banks.

It did not have the slightest in-



PENSIONERS FORCED the government to back down in 2008. They can do it again.

terest in the welfare of the Irish people – it just wanted to shore up the EU banking system after a decade of dodgy lending.

Whether we are ruled from Dublin, Brussels or the IMF, our message should be the same: 'We will not pay for a crisis that we did not create'.

Specifically:

- We should refuse to pay back the ECB for the bank bail-out.
- We should take the assets of the top ten developers who owe NAMA €1.5 billion each.
- We should impose an annual 2% wealth tax on the €150 billion held by the Irish rich.

- We should close all tax loopholes and introduce a special 70% tax on all income over €100,000.

- We should immediately nationalise Ireland's oil and gas which are valued at €440 billion.

- We should create a public works scheme to put people back to work.

If this means that we have to break the rules of the EU – so be it, because we have to save our society.

Mobilise

The ICTU has called for a huge demonstration on November 27th and that is welcome. But many feel that the union leaders want a once-off show of strength so that the

government keep taking them seriously.

Most of the grassroots, however, want serious action.

The union leaders should be calling a national one-day strike on budget day and then follow it up with French-style resistance to the cuts.

Scared of workers in revolt, David Begg and Jack O'Connor's sole aim is to create the conditions to elect Labour leader, Eamon Gilmore to a powerful position in the next government.

Yet Gilmore, following Fine Gael's lead, has already said he will not reverse the FF cuts but will continue them.

We need a different way.

Join the Right to Work Demonstration

ON TUESDAY December 7th, we can show we want action to end the crisis by coming onto the streets for a protest against budget cuts called by the Right to Work Campaign.

It starts at 7pm at Parnell Square and will march on the Dail.

The TDs who will vote on the budget should know what reception will await them if they vote to attack our rights.

They should know that the tide has turned and that real resistance will start.

Inside: What will happen if the IMF comes in? Pages 4&5

SIPTU in Decay

By KIERAN ALLEN

SIPTU'S PUBLIC sector conference, with delegates from education, local authorities, semi-state agencies and the community sector, showed all the signs of a union in decay.

No resolutions or debates were allowed and the only contest was an election for National Trustee where SWP member Kieran Allen scored 25%: beaten by an organised block vote.

Delegates who asked about HSE funding of SIPTU were told that the 'internal inquiry' was underway.

One current senior official, Matt Merrigan, wrote a letter on SIPTU headed paper acknowledging receipt of funds.

General Secretary, Joe Flynn,

claimed the union knew nothing about the account.

Nor was there any explanation of a disgraceful decision by SIPTU to suspend an elected union convenor in the Dublin Fire Service after he walked out of a fire brigade section meeting.

During a discussion on mobilisation for the 27 November, Jack O'Connor was repeatedly pressed for a commitment for serious follow-up action rather than a once off demonstration.

He refused to give any. SIPTU grassroots' discontent is growing.

Sadly the suppression of internal debate and the denial of opportunities to reform the union could lead to more breakaways.

An Alternative Voice for Donegal

By DONAL MACFHEARRAIGH

KILLYBEGS MAN Thomas Pringle was elected to Donegal County Council in 1999 and was re-elected twice.

This election will be a referendum on the government and the upcoming budget and can help change the future of the country.

"We can lead the way

by electing an alternative – an Independent who will put citizens first", says Thomas.

"I am convinced other areas will also choose alternatives who can work together at national level to begin the change".

Donegal has one of the highest unemployment rates in the country.

"We can create hundreds of jobs with local production of

renewable energy for local consumption."

"We must renegotiate the Common Fisheries Policy and build alliances with other smaller nations in developing our fishing industry."

"Our politicians, Bankers and unscrupulous businesses have destroyed our economy."

"Our children and our grandchildren will be paying for the sins of the past."

"The bank Guarantee must be cancelled."

"We must save the people, not the banks!" The SWP is supporting the campaign of Thomas Pringle in the Donegal by-election.

'United Left Alliance' Formed

By JOHN LYONS

IN AN exciting new development, a 'United Left Alliance' has been formed to fight the upcoming General Election.

The Alliance includes the Tipperary Workers and Unemployed Action Group, the People Before Profit Alliance, the Socialist Party and the Independent Socialist Group in Sligo.

Candidates include Cllr Richard Boyd Barrett, Joe Higgins MEP, Cllr Declan Bree, Cllr Clare Daly, Cllr Joan Collins, Cllr Seamus Healy and many others, who will refuse to support any right-wing parties.

Socialist Worker spoke to Cllr Richard Boyd Barrett (PBPA) and Joe Higgins MEP (SP):

RBB: "With the very deep crisis now facing the country and the savage assault on the incomes and services of working people and the vulnerable in our society, there is a crying need for a genuine and credible left political alternative."

JH: "Given the fact that Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, Labour and the Greens have signed up to the cut back agenda, and Sinn Fein north of the border is doing



likewise, the launch of the United Left Alliance is very timely.

JH: "It is almost a foregone conclusion that Fianna Fail will be hammered and you will likely have a Fine Gael/Labour government who will try to continue where Fianna Fail left off."

"Therefore having an opposition bloc of several left TDs from the ULA can, linked to the active opposition to cuts in the workplaces and communities, be a real pole of attraction for those who will inevitably feel betrayed by Labour in particular."

RBB: "I think the ULA has a very credible chance of taking five or six Dail seats and become the main voice of opposition in the Dail and on the ground, representing the majority of working people in our society."

Launch

JH: "The mainstream media will do us no real favours but an electoral alliance that could become the fourth largest force in the Dail and includes a line-up of candidates of poll-topping councillors from across the country and

three former TDs, cannot be ignored."

RBB: "If this new alliance can work to marshal the growing resistance to the austerity and economic madness being inflicted on ordinary people, then we can build a movement to transform our society for the better."

On Friday November 26 the United Left Alliance (ULA) will be officially launched with a public rally in the Ashling Hotel, Parkgate Street, Dublin at 8pm.

'The struggle goes on' say French marchers



By JIM WOLFREYS, in Paris

OVER ONE million people took to the streets in 250 cities and towns across France on 6 November against president Nicolas Sarkozy's attacks on pensions.

Numbers may have been down on previous protests, but resistance to Sarkozy remains considerable.

Since September virtually every sector of the French labour movement has struck.

Some – including oil refinery, railway and local government workers – held rolling strikes.

Parliament has now adopted Sarkozy's reform, effectively raising the retirement age to 67.

But the movement against him, supported by 70 percent of the population, has become much more than a campaign over this issue alone.

Anna, a student at Censier university in Paris, told Socialist Worker:

"There have been bigger demonstrations than anything we've seen for a long time.

"The government has completely shut its eyes and ears to this.

"This has only made people angrier.

"Normal, traditional kinds of protest haven't got results.

"Action could now take harder, more brutal forms."

Unprecedented

The slogans on the demonstration expressed the same defiance:

"What parliament does, the street can undo"; "We're not giving up on anything"; "All together, all together: general strike."

This poses a problem for union leaders.

Some have openly turned their backs on continuing strikes and would rather shore up their role as intermediaries between the movement and the government.

The unions have called a further day of action on Tuesday 23 November.

As Marie, an education worker from the north of France said:

"Many people who were never in a union before have realised that to fight Sarkozy we need to be organised."

(full report at www.socialistworker.co.uk)

Laura Ashley workers fight on!

By JAMES O'TOOLE

THE STRIKE at the Laura Ashley store on Grafton Street in Dublin is still going on.

One of the strikers, Emma Nolan, spoke to Socialist Worker:

"So we are in our third week on strike outside an empty store on Grafton St, which is extremely frustrating for us.

"We are on the picket line from 12 to 3 everyday.

"The support from the public has been amazing.

"We were invited along to the Axis theatre in Ballymun this week to see the play Strike.

"We met one of the Dunnes girls who was on strike for 3 years to stop selling South African goods.

"It was very inspiring and we found so many similar issues with our strike.

"It got our spirits up.

"We have over 3,000 names on our petition and if you go on to the Mandate website you can sign the petition online.

"It's getting cold outside but we are determined to stay fighting to get what we deserve.

"Laura Ashley still refuse to go to the LRC"

In a period were so many are made redundant it is an inspiration to workers everywhere to see workers fight back.

Hopefully workers in other Laura Ashley stores can come out in solidarity and bring this dispute to an end in the interests of these courageous workers.



High Street Exploiters

THE CLEAN (clothes) Campaign website (cleanclothes.org) is a valuable resource for those interested in how High Street chains treat their workers.

It's not only Laura Ashley in Dublin that rips off workers.

The website accuses Laura Ashley, but also companies like Marks & Spencer, C&A and Debenhams of using factories where workers are fainting at their machines or where the conditions cause ill-health.

In one Bulgarian factory making clothes for British stores, more than 100 female textile workers are forced to strip by bosses at the end of their shifts with the excuse that: 'they may have stolen something.'



Protestors Demand Jailing of Corrupt Bankers

By JOHN LYONS

'WHAT DO we want? Jail Fitzpatrick' rang out through the streets of Greystones, Co. Wicklow, at the Right to Work march on Saturday 13 November.

The protesters marched to the luxurious home of former Anglo Irish Bank chief Sean Fitzpatrick, close to the exclusive Greystones Golf Club.

Outside the gates of Fitzpatrick's home, the assembled crowd heard that the protest was not just about the now bankrupt banker: "Sean Fitzpatrick is just indicative of the whole super-rich class in this country who haven't been touched," Right to Work chair James O'Toole said.

It has been over two years since it was

revealed that Sean Fitzpatrick was involved in moving €7.4bn in deposits to artificially boost his ailing bank's profits.

"This is a clear case of fraud yet he still walks around free.

"Hundreds of people are being sent to jail in Ireland because of their inability to pay fines.

"In other words they are being imprisoned for being poor.

"We need to put fraudsters like Sean Fitzpatrick in jail."

"Our suggestion to solve this crisis is to take the assets off the wealthy.

The call to mobilise for the ICTU demonstration on 27 Nov and the Right to Work protest on budget day 7 December was received enthusiastically by the crowd.

Send us your stories Send reports and stories for Socialist Worker to editor@swp.ie

Brilliant Student Protest Stands Up to Thuggery

By IAN McDONNELL and WILL SHANNON

WEDNESDAY 3 November saw 30,000 students from all over Ireland march against third level fees under the slogan 'Education not Emigration'. An increase in the registration fee to €3000 would force many out of third level education and would raise only €80 million (€50,000 million) was thrown at the banks). National College of Art and Design students began a sit-in outside the gates of the Dail while other students made their way to the Department of Finance on Merrion Row. No one was to expect the sickening reaction launched by gardai. Back-up gardai moved in, mounted on horseback, armed with batons and wearing full riot gear. Without warning they

began dragging and beating students inside the Finance building. Students sat down on the road chanting 'peaceful protest' and linking arms to avoid being singled out for a beating. An ambulance was called for injured students but paramedics were not allowed in by police. Student Stephen Hughes said: "I was batoned literally because I couldn't run away fast enough". Video evidence of the event shows repeated unprovoked acts of violence by gardai (available on YouTube). Injured protestors made 28 separate complaints of police brutality to the Garda ombudsman.

'hijacking' by a minority of left-wing groups'. But no one could force 2,000 students to break away from the main demo, march past the Dail, occupy the Dept of Finance and stand their ground for four hours against fully-armoured riot squads. Far from the USI leaders' conspiracy theory, student actions on 3 November were the consequence of the seething anger felt by many students. USI president and erstwhile FF-supporter, Gary Redmond, claimed the sit-in was 'anti-social behaviour'. However, Redmond himself has occupied government buildings. One student voiced a common sentiment that day: "Simply marching students from A to B to listen to speeches from wannabe politicians calling themselves student leaders achieves nothing". Students recognize that protest through 'legitimate' channels has failed and allowed the FF-Green government raise the 'reg

Aristocrats of Education:

IRELAND IS at the bottom of league tables for Education spending.

Of 20,000 third level staff, only about 70 individuals earn salaries over €150,000 and all of these are bureaucratic management jobs, not frontline staff:

- Mary Coughlan, Minister for Education : €208,526
- Prof Des Fitzgerald, UCD: €263,602
- Prof Nick Quirke, UCD: €227,659
- Prof Frank Gannon, SFI: €259,697
- Brigid McManus, Dept of Education: €215,590
- Dr Michael Murphy, UCC: €232,151
- Dr James Browne, NUIG: €212,755
- Prof Tom Begley, UCD: €231,575
- Dr Hugh Brady, UCD: €212,755



Fine Gael Plans to Privatise Health



By DR PEADAR O'GRADY
FG'S 'UNIVERSAL Health Insurance' proposal will shift the cost of healthcare from taxation (more expensive for the rich) to a direct charge for private insurance (cheaper for the rich). The Dutch payment system FG claims they are following is only in place since 2006. Already there is poor public satisfaction with service quality and a majority in the Netherlands still want their health service reformed. The Dutch health service has been built up with a tax-funded system but this service is now under threat by unleashing market forces. The main beneficiaries of the reform will be for-profit insurance companies and rich tax-dodgers. Even Fianna Fail right-wing minister Dara Calleary could criticise FG plans as introducing a 'profit-led' system. He didn't mention it was FF that prepared the ground by running down the HSE and subsidising for-profit care. We can get Universal Healthcare by getting rid of the two-tier system. FG in government will cause chaos and hardship by promoting private for-profit insurance instead of progressive taxation.

The Union of Students in Ireland (USI) leaders patronisingly attributed the mass civil disobedience to

10,000 March to Save Navan Hospital

By LEAH SPEIGHT
SATURDAY 30 October saw 10,000 people push beds, and wield placards through the streets of Navan town, to gather at Our Lady's Hospital chanting: 'We are the people, we have the vote'. As happened in Monaghan, a savage HSE

cutback plan to remove acute and emergency surgery is putting lives at risk. Campaign secretary and SIPTU health worker, Noeleen Donoghue said: "In August of this year the cuts were announced without any consultation with staff or unions. "It was a devastating blow to the hospital in Navan and as a result the campaign got started.



Unions Must Resist HSE Cuts
THE HSE has announced a plan for 5,000 voluntary redundancies and retirements in administration and support services'. Surely hospital patients being fed in a clean environment with well-maintained and organised care is frontline work in any health service? Trade unions should strongly resist any reduction in these frontline workers to halt any further deterioration in our ailing Health service. Fine Gael has threatened to cut 30,000 jobs across the public service.

Anger
"Many long hours were put into the campaign getting advertising done and delivering house-to-house leaflets - thus the big turn-out on the day. "We knew that there would be a big crowd due to the feedback we were getting from people. "We now know the anger that's out there." The bail-out of Anglo Irish Bank would build 70 regional hospitals.

It was no surprise Fianna Fail TD Thomas Byrne was booed when he addressed the crowd. People want their hospital saved. He should read the protestors' banners: none of them say 'save our banks'. Under pressure, the other local Fianna Fail TD, Minister Noel Dempsey, has now offered to meet with a campaign delegation including local GPs and hospital consultants. Noeleen added: "We also

plan to attend the (ICTU) march on the 27th of November in Dublin and we will be running buses to the venue. "We do not plan on giving up on this at all until we reach our target which is to restore the services to Navan until we have a better, centralised hospital in place." This monster rally of young and old was a stark warning to the government that people are uniting against budget cutbacks that bail out the rich.

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

Fill in the form and send to
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Did America turn right?



By LANCE SELFA

THE MEDIA are proclaiming the 2 November mid-term elections in the US as a triumph for the 'Tea Party' faction of the Republican Party.

They argue that the election proves America is a 'centre-right' nation and therefore that Obama and the Democrats have to move to the 'centre' (translation: to the right) to have any hope of being politically viable in the future.

This argument gives the 'bipartisan' (both parties) political establishment a seemingly 'popular' explanation for their intentions to shift to the right.

They're only carrying out the will of the American people, don't you know?

In reality, support for Republicans in Election 2010 was much more due to the Democrats' inability to meet the challenges of the economic crisis.

Opinion polls consistently showed that the only political forces more unpopular than Obama and the Democrats in Congress are the Republicans and the Tea Party.

What support the Republicans did manage to gain is in spite of their stands on issues, not because of them.

Opinion poll data documented the 'enthusiasm gap' that depressed liberal and Democrat turnout and energised the Republican base.

The mid-term electorate was therefore much more conservative than the much larger electorate of the 2008 presidential election.

Even so, it split right down the middle on whether the health care reform bill should be repealed or retained and improved, according to exit polls.

A majority of midterm voters also favoured doing away with George W. Bush's tax cuts for the rich.

While an election is one way to register public opinion, it's a very blunt instrument.

This is true about many measures of public opinion, framed as they are by the choices on offer.

For example, if you look at the 'support-or-oppose' polls about the Democrats' health care reform law, you'd think that more people oppose reform than support it.

But one in five people opposed the law because it doesn't go far enough in changing the system.

If you add together the people who support the health care law with those who want genuine reform, the supposed conservative anti-reform majority becomes a minority.

The problem, in other words, isn't a monolithic conservative population, but a dysfunctional political system.

The Tea Party has gone from a ragtag collection of local groups to a national force in the Republican Party on the strength of millions in corporate funding, and help from the Republican establishment and its media arm Fox News.

Mass mobilizations matched or dwarfed the largest Tea Party gatherings.

Protests for LGBT equality in Washington, D.C., in 2009 or the mobilizations in Washington and Arizona for immigrant rights this year, got no media coverage or corporate support.

And when the Jon Stewart-Stephen Colbert 'Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear' got a huge turnout against the outrages of the right, establishment media figures expressed shock.

In reality, there's a significant gap between the attitudes of the rightward-shifting political establishment and the views of ordinary Americans.

For instance, somewhere around 60 percent of Americans oppose the war in Afghanistan, and even larger numbers continue to oppose the war in Iraq.

But those opinions don't register in Washington's bipartisan commitment to both wars.

It's worth remembering as well that in the last 18 months, two national polls, found one in three Americans had a positive view of "socialism."

Compare that to the 18 percent of Americans who identified themselves as Tea Party supporters in a New York Times/CBS survey.

Who would have guessed that in 'centre-right America', potential supporters of socialism outnumber Tea Party supporters by two to one?

The next two years will challenge the millions of people who want genuine change to fight for it.

The stagnating economic recovery will continue to leave millions unemployed.

The foreclosure crisis will grind on, and so will two wars.

The scapegoating of immigrants and Muslims will continue to be the last refuge of politicians and hate-mongers who have no real answers to the crisis facing ordinary Americans. Meanwhile, a bipartisan establishment will continue to try to impose austerity on working people.

That's why now isn't the time to mourn the election results.

Now is the time to mobilize and organize against the agenda of austerity and scapegoating.

(Full article at www.socialistworker.org)

Lance Selfa is the author of *The Democrats: A Critical History*.

If the IMF

Frenzied speculation is growing in the media soon be directing the Irish economy. Here,



Why is there growing talk of Ireland going to the European bail-out fund or the IMF?

BECAUSE THE government's strategy for an economic recovery has fallen apart.

Their lies have come unstuck and the right-wing dogma they followed has led to a blind alley.

First, the lies.

The government claimed that the final cost of bank bail was €50 billion.

But like a lot of Brian Lenihan's predictions, his assumption that property prices would not fall below the level of November 2010 was nonsense.

The Irish property market is still in free fall and there is growing concern that up to 100,000 households may not be able to pay back their mortgages.

There could even be a surge of 'jingle key' departures as thousands walk

away from houses they cannot pay for and whose value has fallen below their mortgage principal.

The prospect of a new wave of mortgage defaults will mean that Irish banks will sink even deeper into crisis.

Second, the dogma.

After the East Asian crisis of 1997, the Keynesian economist, Joseph Stiglitz, claimed that no government since the 1930s ever tried to implement cuts in the middle of a recession.

The Irish government, however, followed this madness because they are fanatical neo-liberals.

They also wanted to appease the financiers who inhabit the Irish Financial Services Centre.

Over the last two years they have cut €14 billion from the economy – and it has only deepened the recession.

Now they want to cut another €6 billion more

even though the ESRI says it will lead to 'prolonged recession'.

These developments have panicked the global rich and they are demanding huge interest payments on Irish bonds.

This is why the Irish government will have to look elsewhere, possibly to the IMF.

But didn't the German Chancellor contribute to the crisis by saying that bondholders should take a hit if countries cannot pay their debt? Why did she do that?

YES, THIS is correct.

Her statement reflects the renewed crisis over the Euro.

The German government made sure that their banks were first paid back fully with the help of funds provided to Irish banks by the European Central Bank – and only after that occurred have they issued warnings about 'hair cuts'.

They are worried that the EU bail-out fund will not be able to cope with further speculation against countries like Spain, Portugal and Italy.

So they are making Ireland a sacrificial lamb to warn these countries what is in store for them if they do not impose enough austerity.

What is the European Financial Stability Facility and what is the IMF?

THE FIRST is commonly known as the EU bail-out fund and it offers loans to EU states that cannot raise money on bond markets.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is a notorious institution which uses debt crises to impose privatisation, cuts and 'user fees' – water charges or university fees, for example.

Prise

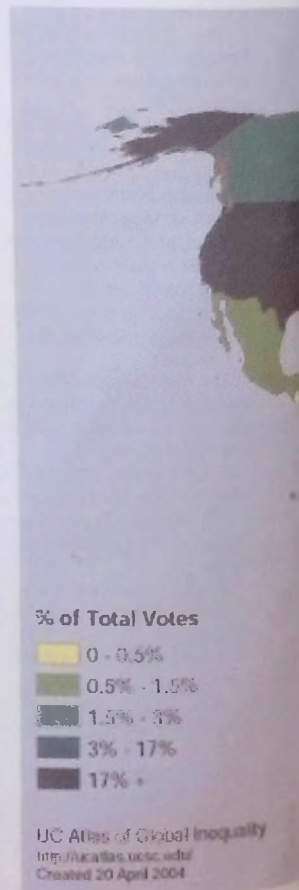
The IMF is heavily influenced by the US and often uses a debt crisis to prise open countries in order to create new opportunities for foreign investment.

Its Structural Adjustment Funds, which were imposed on African and Asian countries, caused economic devastation.

There is not however a huge difference between the EFSF and the IMF because the IMF has shares in the former.

They both function as vehicles for imposing hardship on the population to save the skins of the rich.

Professor Patrick Honohan, governor of the Irish Central Bank, worked as an economist with the IMF.



Come In...

...that the International Monetary Fund will
Kieran Allen looks at what is at stake.

Why is the Irish government saying it does not need the bail-out fund just yet?

THIS IS just political posturing because up to now they claimed that their policy was to 'maintain economic sovereignty'.

The reality, however, is that a considerable section of the Irish economic elite want the IMF to come in.

The main reason, according to the Sunday Business Post, is that:

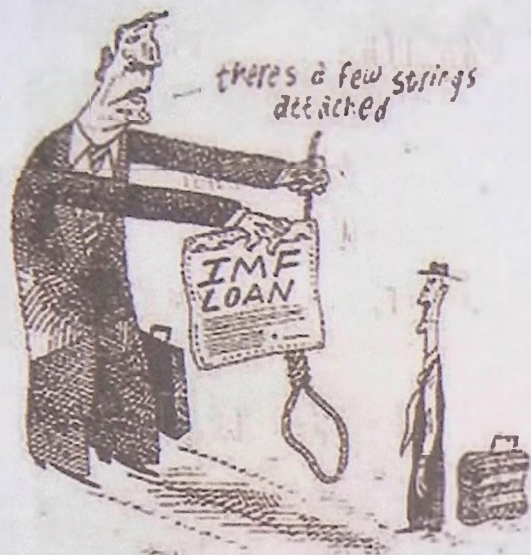
"It provides political cover for painful and difficult cuts to be introduced like reform of the public sector."

When Labour gets elected to the new government, for example, it will be able to say: 'We have to bring in water charges or more cuts in public pay because the IMF ordered us to'.

Central Bank governor, Patrick Honohan, gave the game away when he said that the IMF would not be doing much different to what the Irish government are doing today.

The use of the IMF is part of a 'population pacification technique' where a foreign agency takes the heat and allows the local elites to benefit.

It is similar to the hard cop-soft cop routine played out in police stations.



After the East Asian crisis of 1997, the Keynesian economist, Joseph Stiglitz, claimed that no government since the 1930s ever tried to implement cuts in the middle of a recession.

The situation is fairly dire – but what is the left advocating should be done?

RESISTANCE AND more resistance to uproot this current system of capitalism. Anger is rising amongst

the population at large and the student demonstration may be a turning point.

However, there is also considerable fatalism among unionised workers because of the treacherous activities of the union leaders.

Currently, they are offering no strategy beyond one

demonstration on Saturday 27 November and arguing that implementation of the Croke Park agreement is a 'shelter' that protects workers.

In reality, this is a non-strategy.

The government will seek to extract as many concessions as it can from public sector workers in the next six months.

Then a new government will invoke the clause in the Croke Park deal which allows for further pay cuts in the event of a deterioration of the budgetary conditions.

As an alternative, the left is pushing for French-style protests that combine strikes with mass civil disobedience.

There should be a mass mobilisation at the Dail on budget day.

The Right to Work Campaign is urging people to assemble at 7pm at Parnell Square on budget day, Tuesday 7 December.

If the IMF come to Ireland – or alternatively, EU bureaucrats form a bail-out fund – they must be met with mass protests.

To succeed these protests will have to go beyond the streets – to occupation of workplaces and colleges.

It is time to defy the logic of capital and take back our society.

What is the role of the police?



BY MADELEINE JOHANSSON

AN GARDA Síochána, or 'Guardians of the Peace', pledge that:

'I will faithfully discharge the duties of a member of the Garda Síochána with fairness, integrity, regard for human rights, diligence and impartiality.'

What does this really mean?

For most people it would be seen to mean keeping the population safe from criminals, paedophiles, rapists and murderers.

And if we are to believe the cop dramas filling our TV screens, these dangerous people are lurking in the shadows waiting to get us.

The police are there to catch killers, save women from rapists and generally keep us safe.

But to understand what the role of the police really is we have to look deeper at their position in society.

'Law and order'

The police have a duty to protect what is called 'law and order'.

But who writes these laws and who defines 'order'?

Considering the fact that the majority of people in prison in Ireland are there for not paying a fine (i.e. being poor), and Sean Fitzpatrick still walks free, it would seem the laws serve the rich and powerful in society, and not the majority of working class people.

That is also clear to every worker on strike, like the Dublin dock workers last year, who received High Court injunctions on a regular basis forbidding them from stopping trucks, standing on the picket line (they had to be constantly moving), using the word 'scab' and even just looking at the scab workers.

As soon as workers fight back against their bosses, the state with its courts and police force will quickly step in on the side of business to preserve the status quo.

Workers in uniform?

The Gardai have taken pay cuts and pension levies, and it could seem that they are like other workers and should therefore join with those fighting against the cuts.

However, no workers are bound to the state as the police are.

Their job to protect the

status quo and maintain 'order' means daily harassment in working-class areas.

This can mean beatings and false arrests.

Terence Wheelock died in Store St Garda Station in 2005, allegedly by hanging himself with his tracksuit-bottom cords.

The family firmly denied that he would have done that, and there are photos of Terence's bruised and obviously assaulted body.

The hierarchical structure of the police and the power they have over ordinary people means a psychology of superiority.

This together with the racism, sexism and reactionary ideas within the police force mean that they will never join the working class in a revolutionary struggle.

Fight back and repression

As soon as ordinary people start fighting back against government and the ruling elites, state repression carried out by the police will follow.

The brutal beating of students by Gardai on the USI protest on 3 November was meant as a warning to the rest of the population.

If you try to resist these budget cuts, we will beat you too.

The students on that march learnt a valuable lesson on the role of the police, but an incident like that can also fuel the rising anger against this government.

This can lead to a growing determination that people will not be scared off the streets by Fianna Fail's guard dogs.

The reaction of the police that day is nothing new, as the residents of Rosspoint in Mayo know.

There the Gardai have harassed and assaulted local protesters for years to protect Shell and big business.

The people in this country should not be afraid to come out on the streets.

The Gardai can not beat up pensioners, nurses, teachers and students if we unite to fight together.

By building a mass movement we can bring down this government, and send a strong message to the governments to come: we will not be beaten off the streets!

Voting Power in the IMF



Rosa Luxemburg and the Mass Strike

By JAMES O'TOOLE

ROSA LUXEMBURG'S booklet *The mass strike* summarises the experience of the Russian working class from 1896 to 1905.

The strength of this work is its focus on the necessity of the mass strike as a means by which the working class starts to build unity and become a conscious fighting force.

She notes how the mass strike acts like a lightning flash suddenly awakening in the working class a sense of its own strength.

It is this sudden understanding of a newly won strength that makes previously accepted economic and political oppression intolerable.

This new confidence gives rise to more and more political demands.

As Luxemburg points out: "Thereupon began a general shaking of and tugging at these chains."

In a mass strike the working class not only begins to shape history but also, most importantly, to reshape themselves.

As Marx pointed out the emancipation of the working class must be the act of the working class itself.

This is important for two reasons.

Firstly because the old ruling class cannot be overthrown in any other way but secondly because it's only through struggle that we become 'fit to found society anew'.

It is through the necessity of solidarity and cooperation forged in the battle that the working class begins to imagine a society based on those collective values.

It's through struggle we begin to throw off what Marx called the 'muck of ages' - all the ideas that belong to the old society.

Confrontation

The mass economic movement led to confrontation with the forces of Tsarist oppression, the police and the army.

This led to countless political strikes which in turn fed back into separate economic struggles. Luxemburg brilliantly describes the intertwining of the political and economic struggles as the flow of a great river which can separate into several streams which then reunite on a grander scale.

Sometimes the stream can disappear underground only to emerge later on a grander scale. The trade union bureaucracy would have you believe that an insurmountable wall exists between economic and political struggle.

But every great political mass action also leads to economic battles.

The two feed each other in many ways.

Sometimes they accelerate one another.

At other times an impasse



Rosa Luxemburg addresses a rally in Stuttgart, 1907

on the economic plane can force the river onto the political plane.

We see this in Ireland right now.

The Croke Park deal represents a defeat on the economic plane but at the same time the advance of political consciousness accelerates.

Either this political consciousness raises the level of combativity in the economic sphere or the political consciousness eventually drops to the low level of the economic.

To quote Luxemburg: "There exists a reciprocal influence between the two struggles."

"Every fresh attack and victory of the political struggle has a powerful impact on the economic struggle, in that at the same time as it widens the scope for the workers to improve the conditions and strengthens their impulse to do so, it enhances their fighting spirit."

"After every soaring wave of political action, there remains a fertile sediment from which sprout a thousand economic struggles."

Power

"And the reverse also applies."

"The workers' constant economic struggle against capital sustains them at every pause in the political battle."

"The economic struggle constitutes, so to speak, the permanent reservoir of working class strength from which the political struggle always imbibes new strength."

The mass strike opens up the

question of power and the challenge for power.

In every great strike the workers must begin to take on more and more of an administrative role in society.

If every workplace is closed the strike must decide: how to distribute food, which workplaces should get electrical power, keeping the hospitals running and so on.

In this emergence and creation of alternate power, however, there is something missing from Luxemburg's account - the soviets.

The word 'soviet' in Russian simply means a workers' council.

In 1905 in St Petersburg, Trotsky was elected president of the first soviet.

Lenin immediately grasped the significance of the work-

ers council as the answer to the question as to what form a workers government would take.

A soviet is both an economic and a political institution.

The delegates are elected from workplaces, paid a worker's wage and are recallable but the soviet makes political as well as economic decisions.

If the mass strike represents a challenge for power it is the soviet that is the basis of the new society that emerges from the course of the conflict.

In every crisis the necessity of directing mass strikes, the necessity of discussion and debate as to the direction we should take, leads to the formation of workers' councils.

This was the case in 1905 and 1917 in Russia.

In Iran in 1979 the coun-

cils were called 'shoras' and in Chile in 1973 they were called 'cordones'.

New working class institutions arise alongside the old repressive state machine.

In every revolutionary situation there arises this dual power.

At this stage if the movement doesn't move forward and smash the institutions of the old power then it will be crushed.

In Russia in 1917 the workers successfully broke up the old state machine.

In Germany in 1919 and in Chile in 1973, workers failed to challenge for power and the price they paid was the barbarism unleashed by the ruling class.

Bureaucracy

There is another omission in Luxemburg's book *The Mass Strike*: the treacherous role of the trade union bureaucracy.

Luxemburg thought that a rising mass movement would inevitably push aside the bureaucracy.

"Events would not stop for a second to ask the union leaders whether they had given their blessing to the movement or not."

"If they stood aside from the movement or opposed it, the result of such behaviour would be only this: the union or party leaders would be swept away by the wave of events."

But this is precisely what has not happened time and time again throughout history.

It takes a revolution to break the hold of the trade union

bureaucracy.

After the October revolution in Russia the Mensheviks (a reformist labour party) used their hold on the trade union bureaucracy to resist the successful workers uprising.

If you underestimate the ability of the trade union leaders and reformist parties to hold back the movement then you also underestimate the necessity of building a principled revolutionary organisation.

Party

The revolutionary party needs to embed itself in the wider workers' movement and by working alongside reformist workers win them away from those who would sell the movement out.

A revolutionary workers' party can help transform a bureaucratic mass strike, which the union leaders hope to control from above, into a revolutionary mass strike i.e. one that is driven by the rank and file.

Revolutionary organisation can play a role in helping the movement escape the clutches of the bureaucrats.

Luxemburg relies too heavily on spontaneity as a factor in removing the conservative trade union leaders.

Anyone who has watched the development of the movement in Ireland over the last two years can see the price the workers movement has paid because the rank and file are not sufficiently confident and organised.

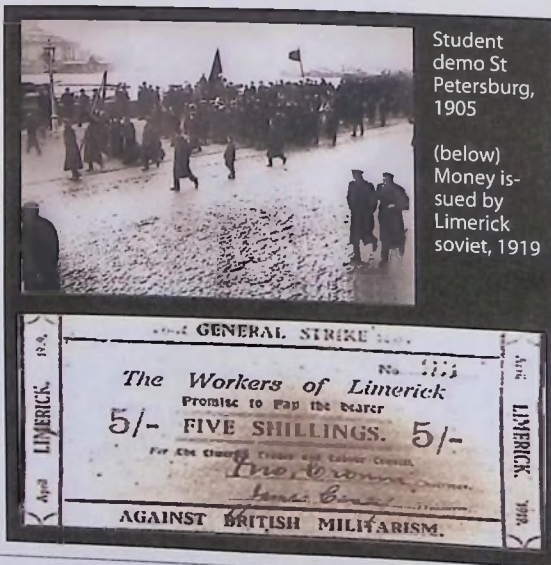
I would recommend people read *The mass strike* with the above in mind.

Rosa Luxemburg had a profound faith in the ability of working-class people to run their own world.

It's a breath of fresh air to read something written by someone with that sense of working-class destiny.

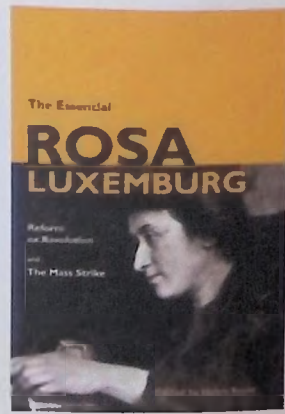
We have to build a revolutionary organisation that can act as a lever to free the workers movement from the dead hand of the bureaucracy.

Here in Ireland with an economy heading into a full-on depression we have to learn from the past: we have a world to win.



Student demo St Petersburg, 1905

(below) Money issued by Limerick soviet, 1919



Further reading: *The Essential Rosa Luxemburg: Reform or Revolution and the Mass Strike*

Sinn Féin's Duplicitious Economics

By SEAN MCVEIGH

THE NORTH'S health minister Michael McGimpsey has said the Ulster Hospital in Belfast could close and 'thousands' of health workers put on the dole as the DUP/SF-led Executive prepares to implement over £4 billion in Tory cuts.

All the Executive parties have tried to distance themselves from the cuts, but the reality is they are all guilty of attacking jobs and services.

The DUP has made its hostility to the public sector clear.

The DUP website quotes NI Chief Executive Forum's John Hunter: "Let's not waste a good crisis... financial cutbacks facing the public sector demand creative thinking."

This is the mantra of right-wing ideologues around the world.

Sinn Féin on the other hand claims to have a 'radical agenda' to oppose the cuts.

It has proposed raising public funds by charging mobile phone companies £2,000 a month for each of their 1,700 phone masts and for an, "alliance with trade unions to stop the Tory cuts".

In 2009, Gerry Adams said: "Economic crises, however severe, will come and go."

But the capitalist crisis is long-term and will bring enormous hardship for years to come.

The growing mood of anger has



forced Sinn Féin to present a more radical image.

Excuses

But back in January when Sammy Wilson announced £367 million in cuts there was no sign of any Sinn Féin radicalism.

Instead the Sinn Féin economic

spokesman Mitchel McLaughlin made excuses for the DUP minister.

The truth is that Sinn Féin has proved just as nasty in attacking public services as its DUP partner in government.

Sinn Féin minister for education Caitríona Ruane is closing schools, sacking workers and forcing chil-

dren to travel longer distances to school.

Ruane's 'Policy for Sustainable Schools' is closing one school per month.

It means schools must close unless they can prove they are 'financially viable'.

Big Business

Meanwhile, DUP and Sinn Féin continue to show remarkable generosity when big business asks for handouts.

This month, scandal-ridden global bank Citigroup got over £8 million to subsidise its operations in the North.

Recently, NYSE Technologies got a Stormont subsidy of £10 million and almost £7 million went to Coca Cola for a new bottling plant.

Martin McGuinness even posed with a can of Coke at the official opening (Whatever happened to SF's boycott of Coke?).

The radical language of Sinn Féin leaders' opposition to the cuts contrasts with their record as loyal servants of big business.

The fight against the Tory cuts will not succeed by looking to the politicians at Stormont who attack jobs and services.

It is working people, Catholic and Protestant, united and mobilised on the streets that have the power to stop the cuts from Westminster - and also the attacks that come from Stormont.

BOOK REVIEW

A Nicer Capitalism?

Reviewed by KIERAN ALLEN

FINTAN O'TOOLE is one of the most impressive critics of Irish society.

His last book, *Ship of Fools*, was a brilliant assault on the wealthy elite who led this country to ruin. In his latest book, *Enough is Enough*, he moves beyond criticism to advocate his own solutions.

He produces fifty proposals for action to change Ireland. This book betrays the limits of left liberalism in dealing with the current crisis.

At the core of O'Toole's argument is a need to declare a 'real' Second Republic.

Academics like Philip Pettit propose this type of state, "reduces the degree of domination that people suffer at the hands of other individuals or groups".

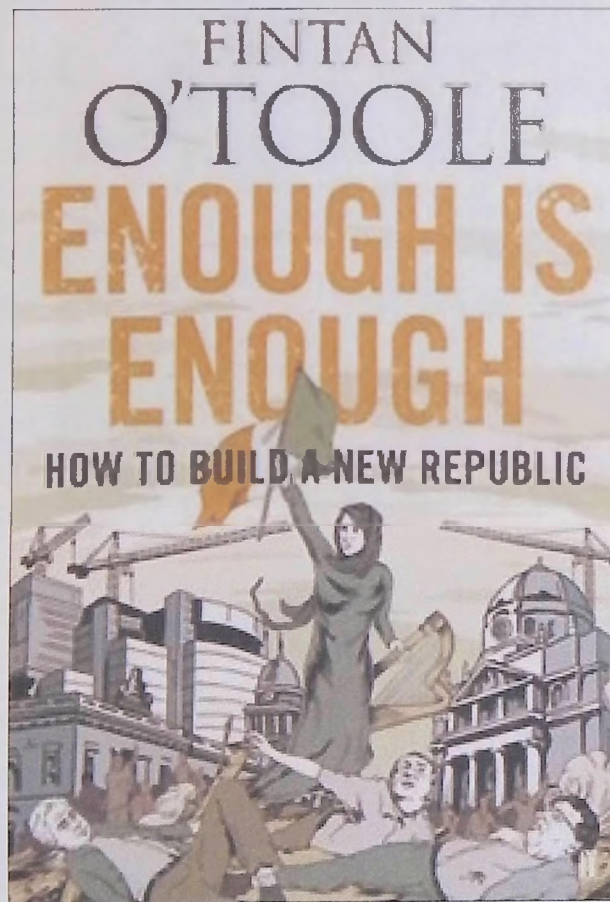
This is a laudable aspiration but it fails to locate the central source of that domination in the structures of a capitalist economy.

Limits

The state is seen as the product of a distinct national culture rather than economic power relations. Should this culture be changed, then a nicer and more civilised form of capitalism becomes possible.

Two of O'Toole's proposals show the limits of this approach. In order to increase local democracy, he advocates property taxes.

Clearly, such taxes are entirely appropriate on second homes or large commercial premises. But property taxes on residential homes will represent another attack on working people, coming on top of wage cuts, pension levies and negative equity.



Similarly, O'Toole advocates, "university fees for those who can afford them".

This left liberal version of the argument for commodifying education was used originally by the Blair government in Britain. It only opened the door for later proposals by the Tories to raise fees to £9,000 a year.

The real solution is not fees but high taxes on the rich or even

expropriation of their assets. Fintan O'Toole, however, is trying to find a 'third way' between neo-liberalism and revolutionary socialism.

The result is a mish-mash of proposals which are often fairly sensible without being very radical.

Others, however, only give left cover for future economic attacks on the majority.

TV REVIEW

Back to a Faded Future?



Fade STREET, RTE 2 reviewed by PATRICK MCKENNA

SOME THINGS are better left unwatched. Take *Fade Street*, the new twenty-something series from RTE.

Watching it is like trying to wake up from a nightmare.

Worse, once you've watched an episode, you can't unwatch it.

The storyline, if that isn't too strong a word, is that there are several glamorous young women with posh accents who work and hang out in Dublin City Centre.

Terrifying

RTE describes *Fade Street* as 'reality drama'. The more literal-minded might think this means a production with characters in situations everyday people can recognise.

Not so with *Fade Street*. Dani from Wexford worries about navigating the streets of Dublin.

They are, after all, a terrifying labyrinth.

On *Fade Street*, young women agree to work 7-day weeks, 10-12 hours a day.

Then they fall for the male boss.

RTE claims that the programme shows a 'radically different economic environment', but the human consequences of a burst housing-bubble and mass unemployment are nowhere to be seen.

The depths of despair are plumbed when one of the characters may not be able to go to Marbella because she's starting a new job.

Sponsored

The main aim seems to be to present Dublin City Centre as a thoroughly attractive place for young people in rental accommodation.

Fittingly, the programme is sponsored by MyHome.ie.

City Centre rental prices have fallen by 30.8% since the boom.

Perhaps *Fade Street* is meant as an innovative way of reviving the property market in the NAMA era.

In *Fade Street*, we see a ruling-class fantasy image of a Dublin from which the working class has been evacuated.

The models from boom-era glossy property brochures have come to life, and they stalk the streets undisturbed.

FILM REVIEW

Winter's Bone: The US We Rarely See

Reviewed by MARK THOMAS

REE IS 17 years old, and is the glue that holds her family together in rural Missouri. Played by Jennifer Lawrence, Ree is an impressively determined and believable character.

Her mother suffers from depression and Ree looks after two younger siblings. Money is tight, and the generosity of neighbours helps them get by. But their fragile existence, like that of millions of Americans, hangs by a slender thread. Nearly a million homes were repossessed in the US last year, and the numbers are rising.

For Ree though, the threat to



her family doesn't come from a bank but a bail bondsman. Her father is facing an imminent trial for making the drug crystal meth.

Precipice

He has used their home as collateral for his bail without telling his family. And now he's disappeared. Ree's family teeters on the edge of a precipice.

Ree's search for her father, to get him to turn up at court, drives the film's narrative.

The camera captures a landscape littered with the tossed aside products of industrial production: old cars, tractors, furniture and other debris accumulated outside people's houses. There are few options for making a living.

Ree is met with evasion and then violence when she asks around about her father. Some critics have called *Winter's Bone* 'grim'.

But this mostly reflects a distaste for films about the reality and quiet desperation of poor people's lives. It's a serious and sensitive film about people and places in the US we seldom see.

FIGHT FOR A FUTURE!

Higher tuition fees...Educational Maintenance Allowance cut...No Jobs

By GORETTI HORGAN

STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS in London showed Northern Ireland's students the way to fight for a future.

The anger against the assaults on workers, students and the poor crashed down on the Tories on Wednesday 10 November as thousands of students trashed the Tory party HQ at Millbank in London.

The 50,000 students, lecturers and other protesters who took to the streets were fighting £9,000-a-year tuition fees that will close university education to most working class students.

They are also fighting against the cuts in courses and staff, and the ending of the Education Maintenance Allowance.

The mood of anger that has swept Europe arrived in London.

Chants of Tory scum filled the streets.

But they were revolting about much more too.

The demo—and the occupation of the Tory HQ—were signs of the fury against the Tories pampering the rich while assaulting the poor.

And it showed the anger at a society where profit comes before any human need.

Tory headquarters at Millbank is the symbol of all that.

The attacks on education are



STUDENTS AT Tory HQ in London

about class.

The rich are declaring a war on the poor.

As Alan Whitaker, president of the UCU lecturers' union, said to huge cheers on the protest:

"Make no mistake about it, this is class war. They've declared war on us, we declare war on them!"

Class

The Tories, and their lackeys in the Lib Dems, want to price poor people out of education with exorbitant fees.

At the same time they are slashing

college budgets so there are fewer courses and fewer lecturers.

The government is made up of millionaires who went to posh private schools.

Yet they are slashing the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) which means ordinary young people won't even be able to do 'A' levels.

The EMA has been vital in helping thousands of young people afford to stay on in school or FE college and has helped raise educational levels in Northern Ireland.

Before the EMA was introduced in 2004, 68,000 young people in

the North used to stay on in school after 16.

After 2004, the numbers staying on rocketed to over 80,000.

Those extra thousands of young people will now find it much harder to finish school. Even if they do finish, they will not be able to afford to go to University.

At the same time, plans to cut thousands of public sector jobs will mean even fewer opportunities for young people trying to get a job.

As a result, many face a future of low paid jobs or long-term unemployment.

The Assembly could decide not to take away our young people's futures.

The Department of Education and Learning could decide to keep the EMA and refuse to increase fees.

Demonstrations

Local politicians could decide not to cut jobs and public services and instead to start a programme of building social housing which would help lift the economy out of the recession it is still in.

That's only going to happen if they are more afraid of masses of protestors on the streets than they are of Treasury officials.

Over the coming weeks, the damage done by the protestors in London will be raised again and again in an attempt to put people off protesting.

We need to be really clear: a few broken windows mean very little compared to the many broken lives that the cuts will bring.

As Mark Bergfeld of the NUS Executive told Socialist Worker:

"We need more demonstrations.

"We need occupations and protests in as many colleges as possible.

"Students need to unite with workers and other campaigners against the government."

Inside: Students Defend Right to Protest in South Page 3