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Socialist & Worker **ICTU Must Call a 24hr General Strike Support the United Left Alliance**

NOT HAPPY that they have bankrupted the country, the Fianna Fail/Green government are bent on destroying what's left of the economy.

The government are begging for loans from the EU and IMF with strings attached which will impoverish us for decades to come.

The pension reserve fund will be robbed of its €17.5 billion to bail out the banks.

The interest alone on the EU/IMF bail-out 'loan' will be €10-12 billion every year.

Their 4-year plan attacks the minimum wage, pensions, health and welfare benefits to boost profits for business.

Increased taxes on capital, like Capital Gains Tax, amount to only €140 m; less than 1% of the total.

Lenihan and Cowen shout about the deficit but evade the question of the need for bank bail-outs or their refusal to tax the super-rich in Ireland.

First they bailed out the reckless borrowing of the developers with NAMA.

Then they bailed out the reckless lenders in Anglo, AIB and the other Irish banks with the Bank Guarantee and serial bail-outs.

Now, with the EU/IMF 4-year plan they are bailing out those reckless European banks who lent money to the



default and 10,000 facing im-

minent repossession. Poverty

rose from 180,000 people to

Slashing the minimum

wage and taxing the poor-

est with income tax, VAT and

majority of Irish people now

support defaulting, that is, not

paying senior bondholders

and they want a wealth tax

necessary but won't stop the

Getting Fianna Fail out is

What then is the Alternative

over 250,000 last year.

economy even worse.

to fund services.

bail-outs.

OVER 100,000 people marched in Dublin against FF/IMF cuts

reckless Irish banks!

Even those bankers didn't expect to get paid in full. But our leaders insist: 'We will pay in full or the markets won't have confidence in us and lend us money'.

Markets Not Happy

The results of Fianna Fail playing 'keep the markets happy' has been devastating.

450,000 workers are unemployed, 14% of the workforce. 6,000 a month are

emigrating. 350,000 people with mort-

gages are in arrears, 40,000 in

to Fianna Fail? Fine Gael too are a right-

wing party for the rich who want to tax workers and slash services.

But are Labour any better?

service charges will devastate Eamon Gilmore has promised to keep to the ridiculous living standards, cause untold suffering and make the target of a 3% deficit by 2014. In recent national polls the

Pat Rabitte says they will work with the IMF plan.

workers.

In a coalition with a right-wing party Labour have always been pulled even further to the right and implement attacks on

It is Labour Parties in

Greece, Portugal and Spain

that are implementing the 'austerity' programmes there, getting workers to pay for the bankers' crisis.

Workers in Ireland need real, radical, political alternative.

We need the United Left Alliance that fights and stands up for workers, resists cuts in wages and services and makes the rich pay for their gambling mistakes.

The Left will have the biggest impact when the most vibrant, united community and trade union campaigns are supporting them.

The UNITE trade union is calling for a campaign of strikes and protests says Regional Secretary, Jimmy Kelly:

'We have begun plan-

There is an Alternative

- End the bank bailouts.
- Take top developers' assets into public control.
- Tell EU: Ireland won't keep 3% deficit target by
- Introduce a wealth tax on combined asset values exceeding €500,000.
- Tax all income over €100,000 at 70 percent.
- Nationalise Ireland's natural resources.
- Develop state-owned industry.
- Create a public-works programme to put people back to work.

disobedience and industrial action that will make clear the level of anger and fortitude that exists among the people who political leaders have failed utterly." The Alliance will refuse to

ning for a campaign of civil

do deals with FF and FG but will support left-wing policies supporting workers, communities and services.

Cllr Richard Boyd Barrett said at the United Left Alliance launch rally:

"The presence of a number of genuine Left TDs in the Dail offering a visible political alternative will be a massive pole of attraction to workers, unemployed and young people, and can become a real factor in the unfolding crisis."

People Before Profit Alliance Election Candidates

By VANESSA O SULLIVAN

WITH AN election looming, the People Before Profit Alliance has announced their candidates under the United Left Alliance.

Each issue of SW will feature three of these potential

Clir GINO KENNY is the andidate for Dublin Mid-

Active in the SWP since 1994 he has been involved in many community campaigns in Clondalkin. This will be his 4th time on the ballot box and he is currently a councillor for PRPA

PBPA

Never has there been a time when people are crying out for a radical

crying out for a radical alternative. " appeal to anybody who wants a revolutionary change in Ireland: come and join our campaign. "It's your 'patriotic duty" to revolt!"



SEAMUS O'BRIEN is the andidate in Wexford. Seamus has been geting the healthcare suts and he is currently he main organiser of the Save Wexford Hospital'

Seamus is building to link up the country's different hospital campaigns. With his political commitment to ordinary workers he intends to shake the Dail out of its complacency, alongside the United Left Alliance

JOHN LYONS is the andidate for Dublin North candidat Central. John is currently living in

John Is currently living in Ballymun. An experienced activist and organiser building resistance against the cuts, he is standing in a general election for the first time. "It's time to take this country back. We need to take control and run the economy so that it meets the needs of the many and not the profits of the greedy few." greedy few.



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Wave of Student Protests and Occupations

By IAN MCDONNELL

FACING SOME of the most severe austerity seen in dec-ades, Europe is experiencing a wave of student occupations & protests.

On 3 November last, 40,000 students marched through Dublin against the

potential re-introduction of fees and 2,000 staged an oc-cupation of the department of finance.

The police responded with riot squads, and proceeded to brutally sweep students off the streets in clashes that lasted between three to four hours. Days later, 50 thousand stu-

dents marched through London aents marched infoldin London in opposition to austerity. Thousands occupied the con-servative party HQ. Students in the UK have oc-

cupied 12 major universities in November alone, including University College of London and Cambridge University.

Most occupations are still in

progress. Meanwhile, student activ-ists in Ireland are planning national actions in response to the budget.

Students involved with the FEE (free education for every-one) in NUI Maynooth, have recently called for a march on a local Fianna Fail TD's office on December 9th.

FEE branches in NUI Galway, IADT, NCAD, QUB and UCD

they link up with the workers'

The presence of a United Left Alliance in Universities and work-places can help to forge these links.

Galway

United

By KIRAN EMRICH

Spanish Arch.

people

THE GALWAY Unites Against

Cutbacks Campaign protests

The campaign is backed by Galway Says No to Health Cuts, FEE, Hope 4 Disability, AMACH LGBT, and various

other groups and individuals. The demo begins at 1pm at Galway Cathedral and will march through the city to the

The budget attacks

workers to pay off bankers and does not have the

consent of the majority of

on Saturday 4 December against budget cuts.

Swords Ambulance Cut



By JOHN LYONS

DUE TO budget cuts and HSE mismanagement a vital service for North County Dublin is under threat. The Swords Dublin Fire

Brigade (DFB) ambulance is to be taken out of service due to budget cuts.

The ambulance covers a very large area of North Dublin and its loss would clearly be a matter of life and death

This ambulance averages 4800-5000 calls per year. Management informed

unions at a meeting in October that funding for the Swords ambulance was cut

by the HSE. The HSE also owes money to the City Council for the provision of 11 other Fire

Brigade ambulances. DFB fire crew are also

paramedics so in desperation the fire tender itself will be sent to more and more medical cases.

Fire cover in the area will obviously be reduced as a result.

The annual cost of 1 DFB ambulance is €85 an hour! What is the price of one life



Disney Nightmare Before

Xmas for Laura Ashley Strikers

are planning nationwide actions, ranging from marches to occupations.

As Fianna Fail desperately continues to pass the burden of financial speculators and bank-ers onto the backs of ordinary people, the students will have

an important role to play. Throughout history students can be a powerful source of energy and ideas for change. However student movements have been most effective when

movement.

By LEAH SPEIGHT

OUT IN the cold on Grafton St, 22 Laura Ashley shop workers are still on strike. As they protest, refurbishment of the premises

for new owner Disney goes ahead. Disney is far from the

'friendly' company image they promote.

The truth behind Disney toys is anything but a fairy tale.

A report released by China Labor Watch in November is

shocking. Children work as much as 80 hours a week, including 40 hours of forced overtime.

Gloves for handling hazardous chemicals are not worn as it slows down their work rate.

Disney executives removed a healthcare plan for its 2150 employees in the USA.

Strike at Drogheda Hospital

By LEAH SPEIGHT

ACCORDING TO Unite union a strike at Our lady's Hospital Drogheda is centered

on safety and outsourcing. The 300 workers affected involves general porters, household staff, healthcare

attendants and food supplies because of an unwillingness

on management's part to engage through the Labour Relations Commission. Most of the low-paid

staff have faced increasing workloads over recent years. According to Unite regional officer Claire Keane:

'The scale of this work has

escalated to unsafe levels Despite the threat of

The low paid workers on a \$13 an hour average wage are also being pressured into parttime contracts.

In February of this year

As recently as June this year, a long time union activist

is Unfaithful' told socialist worker:

healthcare and keep their jobs full-time has waged on for nearly three years now." She said she hadn't known

of the Laura Ashley workers' situation but offered solidarity on "how we could collaborate."

Grafton St with its workers on the street, another one arrives

industrial action, management

hopes: "All the outstanding issues will be resolved in the

Labour Relations Commission

"Management will start to communicate with Unite in

on Tuesday 30 November."

"There has been a

with management over outstanding issues the past

four years." The strike is now on hold for

7 days pending negotiations. Workers at Drogheda

hospital rightfully expect to be

treated fairly and with respect

lack of consultation

by management.

the hospital."

has continually turned their back on issues which we see as critical for staff and patient care and safety." Unite union rep Ann Griffin

Unite members voted 87% favour of strike action,

some even went on hunger strike. Disney made \$3 billion profit last year.

was sacked after speaking out against promotion and

scheduling conditions. Leigh Shelton of 'Disney

"Their battle to hold on to

As one bad employer leaves

Portugal: General Strike against Austerity and IMF



By PEADAR O'GRADY

ON WEDNESDAY 24 November Lisbon's metro was closed and most flights were grounded as workers went on a General Strike, the first in over 20 years. Staff at ports, railways

and the post office took part and over 1,000 schools were closed.

The strike was in protest against the government austerity budget and threats of IMF intervention.

Cuts include a freeze on pensions, cuts in the minimum wage, health and welfare and the privatisa-tion of more state-owned

assets. In March 500,000 public sector workers carried out a 24-hour strike and resistance has continued.

Some 100,000 workers marched through Lisbon on Saturday 6 November. Portugal's minority

Socialist Party government (similar to the Labour Party) also plans to cut public sector workers' wages by 5 percent and raise VAT from

21 to 23 percent. A recent poll shows that support for the party has fallen more than 10 points

to 25 percent since it was elected

The country has one of the weakest economies in Europe and austerity could force it into a deeper recession.

The IMF however is push-ing for even more cuts. The announcement of the deepest deficit reduc-

tions in more than 30 years has done little to reassure investors. The 10-year bond yield

(cost of government borrow-ing) has risen to a record 7%, just less than Ireland's 8%. Unemployment has risen

to nearly 11%. Unemployed workers have already faced big cuts to their benefits and are forced to take any job offer

or face benefit cut-offs. "The country is in a dif-ficult situation," said UGT secretary-general Joao Proenca. "But it's not possible to

always demand sacrifices from the same people.

"If we fight the deficit by sinking the country, then we aren't going anywhere. Ireland's workers too should push for a general

strike to grind this govern-ment to a halt.

Against FF/IMF Austerity By JOHN LYONS

AS THE first snow of

the winter hit the plains of Ireland, a crowd of up to 70,000 descended on Dublin city centre. They marched in protest at the diasatrous economic mismanagement of the country by Fianna Fail

protestors made their way from Wood Quay to the

and the Green Party and to reject their four year

austerity plan. As the thousands of

GPO chants demanding the unions call a general strike rang out through the city. The new United Left Alliance (ULA) comprised of the People Before Profit Alliance, the Socialist Party, the Tipperary Workers and Unemployed Action Group

and others, marched to-gether and attracted a

huge number of people on the march.

Tens of Thousands March

Many more people Many more people marched behind the banners of their unions, including SIPTU, IMPACT, UNITE, TUI and TEEU in a magnificent display of uncher's calidatity in of workers' solidarity in action.

As the ICTU speakers from the main stage fin-ished up, the United Left Alliance held an alternative platform.

Several thousand people gathered to hear Socialist Party MEP, Joe Higgins de-

clare that: "The bills of bankers

and developers are being handed over to the Irish working class. "We need a nationwide

strike to say that we will not pay." Clir Richard Boyd Barrett,

who initiated the protest march in October in a pro posal to ICTU, demanded that "The unions must now call a general strike."

"We must all now mobi-lise in our workplaces and communities to lay siege to the Dail on budget day."

United Left Alliance Calls for Organised Resistance

By JOHN LYONS

THE EXCITING new United Left Alliance (ULA) held its first press conference in Dublin city centre on Thursday, 25 November.

The ULA is comprised of the People Before Profit Alliance, Socialist Party, and the Tipperary Workers and Unemployed Action

Group. Cllr Richard Boyd Barrett (People Before Profit) said that the ULA will stand up to the International Monetary Fund and European Union and reject the Fianna Fail/Green Party

four-year austerity plan. Joe Higgins (Socialist Party) said the plan was an attack on the poor and working class who should not have to pay

for the mistakes of the wealthy. He maintained the ULA was an alternative to a right-leaning Labour-Fine Gael coalition propped up to coalition, propped up by Sinn Fein.

"The presence of a number of genuine left TDs in the Dail offering a visible political alternative will be a massive pole of attraction to workers attraction to workers, unemployed and young people and can become a real factor in the unfolding crisis."

rnative

The alliance will field up to 20 candidates in the next general election alongside a campaign of organised and sustained resistance on the streets to government policies. Boyd Barrett said that it is time for people to revolt: "We're talking about standing up against the extremism of the IMF and this

Unite

government. 'The United Left Alliance offers a real alternative because it states openly that it

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

REVOLUTION

United LI will vote against water charges, property taxes, new PAYE taxes on the low paid and all other measures that force the majority of low and middle income earners

to pay for this crisis. "It is time that the super-rich paid for the mess they have created." The United Left Alliance was officially launched on Monday 29 November at 8pm

with a public rally in the Gresham Hotel, Dublin. **VHAT THE SOCIALIST WOR**

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 throatens US military, strategic or economic dominance

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

domin

working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women. We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

ERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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 orkers republic where all

But many other low-paid workers, whose pay-rate is higher, are still measured against the minimum wage and if it falls their boss will follow suit with a pay cut. The bosses union IBEC also wants to target sec-toral minimum wages like in construction. UCC economics lec-

workers: "I don't think lowering the minimum wage will create jobs. "It's more to do with bringing about an inter-nal devaluation in the economy."

Minimum Wage: Pain for Us but Gain for them

ties across ireland. Jobs, homes and serv-ices can only be safe now if workers unite in a cam-paign on the streets and at the ballot box to halt the right-wing politics of pain for us and gain for them

The Right To Work' campaign marches to Leinster House from Parnell Square at 7pm on Tuesday 7 December.

Protest Against 'Four-Year Plan'

By JAMES O'TOOLE

ON THE day the government announced its 'four-year plan' to slash wages and welfare, People Before Profit organised a protest outside the Department of Finance.

People were visibly furious with the IMF and with the Cowen-led government chanting

'Cowen, Cowen, Cowen, out, out, out!' and 'IMF hear us clear, we don't want your cutbacks

The protest made its way to the fancy five star merrion hotel, where the IMF hitmen are staying.

closed its doors. Richard remarked:

Cllr Richard Boyd Barrett and Cllr Joan Strike and for mass civil disobedience.

Join the Socialists
Fill in the form and send to
SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8
Name
Address
Email
Phone
SWP

PROBABLY THE single PROBABLY THE single most vicious proposal, in the so-called 4-year plan for 'National Recovery', is for slashing the minimum wage by 12% from €8.65 down to €7.65 an hour. €1 an hour means €40 a week and €2,080 a year to a worker on only €18,000 a year, mainly hotel, bar and shop workers. The official poverty rate for a household in Ireland is €28,000 a year so this is taking over €2000 from the poorest workers. But it is only part of a more general attack on wages and welfare payments. Workers on the mini-mum wage are just 3% (1 in 30) of the workforce.

workers gain.

Our flag is neither gree orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY P

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

This party needs to argu against right-wing ideas ar for overthrowing the system

We stand for fighting tr unions and for independen rank and file action.

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

UCC economics lec-turer Declan Jordan rubbishes the claim that the minimum wage is a barrier to employing more workers:

In other words, it's about driving down wages to boost profits not jobs. If the minimum wage is lower, welfare payments would have to go down too, the bosses argue. Sure enough, in the 4-year plan, welfare pay-ments are to be slashed by €3 billion over 4 years. This race to the bottom must be stopped. Poverty and inequality are destroying communi-ties across Ireland. Jobs, homes and serv-

here!

The hotel quickly

"Sure we couldn't afford to go in anyway!"

Collins made a call on behalf of People Before Profit for a General



By JAMES O'TOOLE

BRIAN COWEN tells us that it's for the good of the 'nation' that we have to gulp down the IMF's bitter medicine.

The four year plan crucifies low paid workers, increases VAT, hits the poorer pensioners

and slashes welfare Again we are told it's in the 'National Interest'.

Just what is the 'national

interest' then? Are we'all in it together'? It's easy enough for Cowen to talk about representing the Irish 'people' while getting

obscene amounts of money. People are different; we are

not one large mass of identical units.

Some own factories and office blocks, what Marx called the 'means of production'. Some of us unfortunately

have nothing to sell except our ability to work. We work week by week, pay rent, save a little, but if we stop

working we go without.

Class

That wasn't always the case though. A couple of hundred years

ago the ruling class were aristocrats who lived off the

aristocrats who lived off the peasantry. The peasant worked one bit of land for himself and one bit for the lord of the manor. When the merchants and businessmen grew in power, and began to need wage labourers to fill the city slums, they cleared the peasants off the land. The capitalist class

The capitalist class, which these merchants and businessmen became, needed to mobilise the 'nation' behind them in opposition to the tyranny of the aristocracy.

They spoke of freedom, equality and the brotherhood of man

As soon as they had the aristocrats dealt with things changed. Freedom became freedom

to trade, freedom to exploit labour.

Equality became equality before the law, equality on paper.

And that brotherhood turned out to be like a mafia family knifing one another in the back in the process of competition and accumulation of wealth.

The minority who governed used their economic might to buy off the State machine which became nothing more than a 'committee to manage the affairs' of the capitalist clas

Now the class that owns

factories and offices and lives off profits is interested in one ng only: maximising that thi

profit. The easiest way for them to do that is to cut wages.

They smirk at a job well done when lower wages

equals higher profits. There's a problem though.

Who's going to buy all the stuff they make?

Wages are a cost to the

employer. Wages are also a source of demand for his products.

That's one contradiction they can't solve.

More importantly for us there's the relationship between wages and profits. One goes up the other goes

down.

It's in the interest of the class that lives off wages to fight for better conditions. That's why we form trade

unions It's in the interest of another

class to fight for maximum profits.

That's why they form IBEC, the employers union, and why they throw grotesque amounts of cash at right-wing political parties. In the last two years in

Ireland the income of those who live off wages has fallen by, on average, 10%.

Ireland in crisis

Some Public Sector workers have lost over 20%! If the IMF get their way it

will fall even more. For the class that lives off profits, dividends and shares

tr's another matter: their incomes rose by 29%! The present crisis is deeper than just a crisis of the

financial sector. Declining profit rates mean their class has declared war on ours.

The rich go on strike and sit on their cash throwing

thousands onto the dole. They then make those on welfare suffer to make welfare so terrifying that workers are scared into working for nothing. The citizens of the nation

of Ireland are not then fall in it together' as Fianna Fail have always claimed. The interests of our rulers

The interests or our rules, are not the same as workers, they are opposed and have to be fought for. So when Cowen next says 'national interest' we know he

national interest' we know he means more banquets and rounds of golf for him and his class and more cuts for us. United, our class can stop him and his cronies in their tracks

The IMF: Sociali **Barbarism for t**

BY BRIAN O'BOYLE

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund was one of a number of organisations set up at the Bretton Woods conference in 1944.

Known as the world's 'lender of last resort', the 'fund' was originally mandated with smoothing out 'balance of payments' problems in order to facilitate a steady transition to post-war capitalism.

During the 'long boom' (1945-73) the IMF was a relatively marginal player within the global economic order.

However, the revival of economic liberalism (neoliberalism) and the Latin American 'debt crisis' set the scene for a much more active role after 1980.

In the late 1970's a crisis emerged for many countries in the developing world as hikes in interests rates, declining terms of trade and an overreliance on western loans left them dangerously close to declaring bankruptcy.

In 1982, Mexico actually defaulted on its loans.

Fearing that this problem might escalate, the US along with the EU (then the EEC), forced other debtor countries to accept IMF 'loans' in order to pay off Western banks.

The IMF works on the basis of 'one dollar one vote' and so the conditions attached to any loans are largely decided by the richer Western countries.

The conditions called 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' forced the adoption of free-market reforms like privatisation or lowering protective trade barriers like tariffs on imports to 'open up' the economy.

Exports

In IMF theory 'export led growth' is the best way to drag a country out of poverty

In reality, a deluge of foreign imports radically undercut developing counties' ability to compete, whilst a continuing need for IMF funding effectively forced them to become economic colonies of the Western powers.

Debt is an extremely efficient way of making a developing country's re-sources available to western capital, as asset stripping



(selling of resources) becomes necessary to meet financial obligations.

Since the 1980's the IMF has overseen a massive 'development of underdevelopment' as debtor population.

forces people to pay for vital services (such as water and essential foodstuffs) that were previously free or subsidised.

In many of the poorest countries, interest payments now account for a bigger proportion of GDP

than health and education put together.

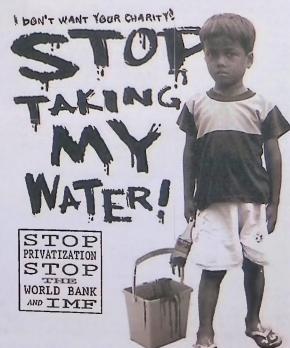
Not surprisingly the results of these policies have been horrendous for the people living in these countries.

Deaths

According to UNICEF over 500,000 children under the age of five die each year in developing countries as a direct result of IMF polices. When (as is inevitable)

'structural adjustment' fails to alleviate poverty, there is absolutely no way of holding the 'fund' to account.

Raj Patel argues that whilst the IMF presents itself as a



'safety net', its insistence on structural adjustment leads to mass poverty and is a weapon of mass destruction. Until recently this eco-

nomic genocide has been reserved for the poor of the 'Global South'.

However, the current economic crisis has seen the IMF step in to 'bail out' capital in more developed parts of the global system.

In Latvia the 'fund' recently gave €7.5 billion for Western (primarily Swedish) banks. The price for the Latvian people was:

(1) A 30% cut in public sector pay,

A 30% cut in (2)pensions

(3) The closing down of one in three hospitals (19 of 59) and

(4) A cut of 9% of GDP in public spending (Irish equivalent: €13 billion).

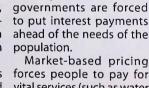
In effect, the IMF has paid Swedish capital with Latvian wages.

So, far from 'bailing out the country', this has transferred wealth from working people to international capital.

This process is also taking place in Greece.

Ireland

On Thursday 19 November a team from the IMF and the EU arrived to begin the process of bailing out European capital with Irish tax-payer's money.



5m for the Rich; ie Poor



During the Celtic Tiger, Irish capitalists borrowed vast sums from international capital (around four times GDP or €500 billion).

With the spectacular collapse of the property bubble much of these loans are now 'impaired' (unable to be paid back).

Under the rules of capitalism the private investor takes the risk and receives the return and so the banking crisis should, by right, have been the end of the Irish private banking system

'Euro-zone'

The Euro

THE ABILITY of Europe's elite to make

key economic decisions has been

central to the development of the

Elected governments give power to

'unelected bankers' mandated with

looking after the interests of capital.

In the bubble years, the euro seemed

to be succeeding in currency markets

without serious constraints on member

countries' sovereignty in taxation. In Europe there is no mechanism for

harmonising monetary policies like in-terest rates or money supply, a fault

Over the last two years, European capi-tal has been massively bailed out by

While governments have guaranteed the private debts of the rich as 'sov-

ereign' public debts, it has become obvious that they could not afford

Under the 'rules' of capitalism the banks

line exposed by the current crisis.

European tax-payers.

to pay them

and a massive hit for international capital.

Instead the Irish government moved quickly to 'socialise the debt' in order to ensure that their cronies in Anglo were bailed out by the Irish tax-payer.

This process was fully supported by the EU as it meant that the Irish people would now be liable for the debts of the German and British banks (each of these are owed around €100 billion).

Over the next few years we



could expect to see savage attacks on working people as the IMF/EU bailout would put Irish workers €100 billion in debt.

This, quite simply, is 'socialism for the rich' and 'barbarism for the poor'.

It represents a last-ditch attempt by the neoliberals to avoid paying for a crisis that was entirely of their own making.

As socialists we have to understand that this is not a bailout for anyone other than the exploiting class of capitalists.

People are currently under the mistaken belief that the IMF is some neutral arbiter or 'honest broker' stepping in to weed out cronyism and to rejuvenate the economy.

This could not be further from the truth as their real agenda is to make the working class pay for the economic crisis through ever more savage forms of oppression and exploitation.

The only way to ensure that we are not forced to pay for their crisis is to stay on the streets and fight for socialism not the barbarism of the IMF.



should have taken a massive 'hair cut'. However the bail-outs mean instead that workers will borrow to pay with their future earnings, and pay interest for the privilege!

Because governments don't currently have the money to afford this, they are being lent it by the self-same capitalists at 5% interest.

In Ireland interest payments alone may reach €10-12 billion each year.

Prospects for a decent society are rap idly meeting the limits of capitalism. The government's'four year plan'would

effectively seize assets from every person in the State for years to come. In this case it is obvious that the normal rules' no longer apply. This is naked class warfare.

The only solution is to seize their assets instead (including our natural resources) to take to the streets and to drive the government and its IMF handlers out of Ireland for once and for all.

Only by breaking capital's rules can we achieve a society based on human need and human dignity as opposed to capital greed and human misery.

Interview with Greek Socialist **Panos Garganas**

Greece is battling IMF bail-out austerity programmes for the past year. Panos **Garganas of the SWP sister organisation** in Greece tells of the struggle against the IMF there



SW: How has the IMF plan impacted on the Greek Economy?

PG: It is getting worse—this is clear from the latest results. The predictions at the be-

ginning of the year were for a contraction.

They were hoping it would be anything between 1 and 2 percent. Now it's heading for between

4 and 5 percent. The tourist industry is badly

hit.

Construction in August was at the lowest point in 15 years. These are areas on which the Greek economy depends, so obviously the crisis is getting worse in terms of the recession.

And it may get worse also in terms of the fiscal crisis, although the government are proudly announcing that they have cut the deficit by 40 percent in the first seven months of the year.

But there are doubts whether this will continue, because they've been very tough in the area of cuts, but they're doing badly in the area of state revenue.

The recession is hitting their plans.

They were hoping for more money through raising VAT from 19 to 23 percent, but that's not working in the recession. Things are getting worse in

terms of economic activity and in terms of the fiscal crisis.

SW: There's clearly been a formidable response by the Greek working class movement to the austerity measures—six general strikes in as many months during the first half of

2010. But how would you as-sess in more depth the response, both at the rank and file level where, as you've already said, there's considerable combativity, also, in terms of the trade union leadership, given that the most powerful wing of the union bureaucracy is aligned to Pasok (Greek equivalent of the Labour Party), the ruling party?

PG: During the summer the government tried to confront truck owners and owner-drivers, who were out on strike, by im-posing military discipline and ordering them back to work, to break up the strike. That didn't work.

The government was forced to go into dialogue with their unions to turn them back. The strong tactic was practi-

cally destroyed. And if it didn't work for truck

owners—people would say they could be easily isolated from the working class (since they are owners, they're not even working class)—the government won't be able to use it against, for example, power workers and other powerful sections of the working class.

Yes, the general strikes did not bring down the government, which would be the only way to avoid the measures being voted for in parliament.

But they were not a failure in terms of creating a movement that provides the background for every sector that will fight in the coming months.

But the trade union bureauc-racy is accepting this argument that the general strikes failed and suggesting that we should try other tactics.

Sections of the left also ac-cepted the argument and say we should now orient on the elections.

And we have to argue that there's no other way but to fight back and build a strike movement, using the general strikes of the past six months to build this movement up.

SW: As you just said, the stakes are very high in Greece: to defeat the austerity measures really requires bringing down the government.

PG: So there are many areas where there will be bitter strikes in the coming months.

We'll see whether we'll be successful in generalising them and producing a wave of gen-eral strikes in support of these groups of workers. That's what's at stake!

Can the Labour Party Bring Change?

By KIERAN ALLEN

EAMON GILMORE sounded good for a period.

As soon as he took over the Labour Party leadership, he broke with the 'Mullingar strategy' of agreeing common policies with Fine Gael before

the election. He denounced the 'twoand-a-half party' system which relegated Labour to an add-on to the dominant right-wing parties.

Then, in a crucial moment, the Labour Party came out against the bank guarantee scheme in

September 2008. Sinn Fein, by contrast, caved into the talk of the 'national interest' and voted for the scheme

Over the past two years Gilmore's speeches in the Dail have given voice to the huge anger in Irish society. He has branded Cowen as

'either a fool or a liar' and as an 'economic traitor'.

All of this helps to explain Labour's spectacular rise in the polls but also the fear this has generated in the Independent Group of newspapers.

Labour now has a distinct possibility of becoming the largest party in the state and leading

HI

the next government. But if that were to happen, what would the outcome look

Lower Expectations

One ominous sign is evident in the latest shift in Labour's rhetoric.

On a recent Ryan Tubridy show, Gilmore said that he would not reverse the cuts in-troduced by Fianna Fail.

This was no slip of the tongue as he also recently issued a the following: "It simply will not be cred-ible for politicians to tour the

country promising to reverse every cut or to deliver to every loca al project. "The task for the next

Government is too great for us to promise to fix everything overnight. If Labour comes into Government in the spring, we will not be able to press a button and rewind the 2011 budget."

His aim was to play down expectations of change because Labour is already committed to the overall budgetary frame work of deficit reduction.

Here is Gilmore again: "Despite the difficulties that go with it, Labour has stood by the target of reducing the deficit to 3% by 2014."

Labour disagrees with Fianna Fail and Fine Gael when it opposes €6 billion cuts this year, but instead wants €4.5 billion in cuts now and greater cuts in coming years.

It also wants more taxes and fewer reductions in pub-

lic spending. This approach also helps to explain Labour's attitude to the

International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the wider question of paying off the bondholders of the banks. It has not opposed the IMF's

entry to Ireland but has rather claimed that Fianna Fail is unable to negotiate properly with them.

Labour suggests that it could strike a better deal.

It favours repaying the bank bondholders because, as Joan

Burton put it: 'The Labour Party has never advocated 'burning bondhold-

WILL EAMONN GILMORE (above) save FG like Dick Spring saved FF (inset)?

DAVID BEGG, ICTU, Jack O'Connor and Patricia King, SIPTU

ers' or 'sovereign default', but there is room for hard-headed negotiation to ensure appropri-

ate burden sharing." All of this indicates that the Labour Party is not commit-ted to any seriously radical measures

A small minority in the party might favour the Keynesian solution of increasing public spending to stimulate demand but the leadership is committed to the dominant elite consensus of cuts, paying bondholders and endorsement of the IMF.

The Two Faces of Labour

This arises from the nature

of the Labour Party itself. Social democratic parties give some voice to working-class dis-content with the system and tend to forge close ties with the

officials are members of the Labour Party and union resources are made available to

committed to running capitalism and operating inside the framework of EU neo-liberal

and Stability Pact which limits state borrowing to less than 3 percent of GDP.

that provides some crumbs of comfort for workers, you need to firstly ensure that capitalists make sufficient profits.

them. In Ireland, however, a sig-nificant slice of indigenous

Only after they have done so, can some measure of re-

distribution be imposed on

Irish capital has been wiped out in the banking and prop-erty crashes as this is where the wealthy traditionally located their investment.

In the past few months there has also been a flight of capital of the order of at least €30 billion.

This follows a sharp decline in capital investment of over 50% in the past two years.

All of which begs the obvious question: If your aim is to manage capitalism in a fair way, how are you to stimulate capital investment which is the life blood of the system?

Or to put it differently, how can you convince capitalists that they can make significant profits again so that they invest and allow you later to re-distribute some of their income?

There are no easy answers to this beyond greater state

subsidy of capital and an absolute commitment not to levy any more taxes on them.

And this is precisely what Labour intends to do.

It proposes to establish a Strategic Investment Fund from money that accumulated in the national pension reserve fund and to use it to support private business.

It also endorses Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), which are schemes whereby private busi-nesses are allowed to milk state funds to design, build and operate public services.

The National Convention Centre, for example, was built under a PPP and will cost the state an incredible €800 million.

Capital

Instead of any further taxes on capital, Labour has called for an end to property tax breaks (even Fianna Fail now agrees to this), and will also eventually advocate property taxes on private homes.

It will use a think-tank like TASC to give a slightly left-wing gloss to this, claiming that people's homes are an asset and so should be taxed.

But in a country where over 70 percent of the people own a home, it is another imposition on the majority. But that is the kernel of the issue.

It is precisely because Labour seeks to manage a weakened and wounded capitalist system rather than overthrow it, that it will be inevitably forced into attacking its own support base.

This is the experience elsewhere.

In Greece, Spain and Portugal the attacks on the population to subside capital is being carried out by Labour Party governments.

The last great surge of sup-port to Labour came in the Spring tide of 1992 when the then Labour leader, Dick Spring, launched vitriolic attacks on the Golden circle.

Yet he soon agreed to a tax amnesty for the rich.

Labour's collapse before the altar of capitalism will be even quicker this time.

trade union bureaucracy. In Ireland, virtually all SIPTU

Labour at election times. But while it gives voice to working class discontent, the Labour party leadership is fully

policies. This includes the Growth

Here, however, it faces a huge difficulty.

To run capitalism in a way

VAKE ASTA

privatisation".

on cuts to public services and

hospital emergency departments, libraries and other public services

shows NIPSA was right. Earlier this year when further cuts

were deemed "necessary", Sinn Fein

Announcing additional cuts of £10 million in her department, Sinn Fein agriculture minister Michelle

"These savings are necessary to allow the Executive to balance its

books and enter the next financial year ready to address in-year pres-

There will be some impact on the frontline and job numbers." Given Sinn Féin's claim to be 'fighting the cuts', north and south of the border, there is a large amount

Hypocrisy

ministers didn't hesitate.

Gildernew, said:

sures constructively.

of hypocrisy going on here.

The closure of numerous schools,

Join Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin

Sinn Féi n's Left Rhetoric By SEAN MCVEIGH SF/DUP budget was, "predicated

ACCORDING TO Ed Curran, former editor of the Belfast Telegraph, people in the Republic need to be wary because Dáil Éireann is set for an, "infusion of Marxist-influenced Sinn Féin TDs".

When announcing his candidacy for Louth, Gerry Adams encouraged this view of Sinn Fein as a party of the left when he said:

"If Labour is true to its origins it needs to get back to James Connolly." Clearly Sinn Féin sees some ad-

vantage at the moment in 'talking

BOOK REVIEW

in the North shows a distinct lack the effective use of resources."

When the Tories introduced Private Finance Initiatives (PFI) in the early 1990s, the move was opposed by trade unions and the left but Sinn Féin embraced the privatisation policy. In 2000 when Martin McGuinness

was minister for education, announc-ing a new PFI contract to rebuild a school in West Belfast he said: "The award of these PFI contracts

highlights the opportunities for part-nership with the private sector in the

Cuts

When it came to drawing up a budget for the North for the period 2008 to 2011, Sinn Féin thought it a good idea for government departments, including health and education, to make 3% 'efficiency

savings' each year until 2011. The SF/DUP plan amounted to £1.7 billion in cuts to the public sector

The trade union NIPSA said the

Free markets don't exist

Reviewed by PATRICK MCKENNA

DURING THE 2008 financial collapse, American economist Paul Krugman declared the era of Reagan and Thatcher was over: no longer would economic policy be

a matter of laissez-faire. But although governments are expropriating their citizens on a vast scale to keep banks afloat, free market economics hasn't quite made its excuses and left.

Intervention

In fact, Ireland shows you can have massive state intervention and free market economics sitting

side-by-side. Current affairs programmes would be incomplete without at least one free market sage, either as government cheerleader, or outspoken dissident standing up for the 'rules' of capitalism.

Worse, the government, the IMF and the EU plan a typical freemarketeer rampage against the Irish population.

Cutting the minimum wage, slashing welfare payments, selling off state assets: all classic free market moves.

Concocted

Ha-Joon Chang's new book, 23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism, is a timely and accessible guide to stubborn myths concocted by free-market economists and dispensed by politicians and media outlets.

Will entrepreneurs save the Irish economy? Will they hell.

Poor countries are full of entrepreneurs.

Does a welfare state inhibit economic growth?

No, it enables people to take greater risks and expand their

creative potential. Chang shows there is no such thing as a free market, since all markets are the result of political decisions. Ireland is a 'small open economy'

not by nature but by politics. And yet, Chang is a capitalist. He sees the profit motive as the most powerful instrument for economic growth.

He doesn't say anything about how capitalism as a mode of production shapes political systems, nor about how it shapes the way people see the world. As a result, his vision of active

economic citizens taking on the free market intellectual thugs, thus wresting a bright new capitalist day, doesn't ring true.

23 Things They Don't Tell You About Capitalism (Allen Lane, 2010) Author: Ha- Joon Chang

THEATRE REVIEW

1 n THEY YITT BOUT CAPITALISM RI-JODN CHINE

STRIKE: A play for today

Reviewed by VANESSA O'SULLIVAN

TWENTY SIX years ago Ireland witnessed a most extraordinary strike, when the most ordinary of workers in Dublin became the heart of the Anti-Apartheid movement in Ireland.

Eleven Dunnes Stores' workers went out on strike after their union, IDATU (now Mandate), passed a motion refusing to handle South African goods.

When 21-year-old Mary Manning followed her union's instructions and refused to handle South African goods she was disciplined by management; ten of her colleagues decide to back her up and thus began the strike.

The industrial action started on July 19th, 1984 and it was thought it would last no longer

than a month. Instead it became the longest running strike in Irish history, lasting over 2 years. The play itself tells the most

honest story of workers solidarity,



whether they are right beside you

or thousands of miles away. The staging of this play is a timely reminder of the heroic struggle of the Dunnes Stores workers and is an important example of workers' power at a time when we see workers' struggle on the rise again. Two of the original strikers,

including Mary Manning, were at the show. The Laura Ashley workers, who

are currently on strike, were also in attendance.

The play captures the true essence of what it means to be on strike

You won't see such honesty on a cinema screen any time soon.

TV REVIEW

The Frontline, RTE 1, 22 Nov



by JOHN LYONS

ON THE day that news emerged that the Irish government had agreed to accept an EU/ IMF ballout of up to €85 billion, one might have expected that RTE's political and current affairs show, The Frontline, would have dedicated a significant portion of the programme to the implications and ramifications for Ireland of such

This being Ireland, however, there were more important matters to discuss: earlier that day the Green Party had announced that they would like to have an election in late January. And so the viewers were presented with a panel that included Fianna Fail's Tony Killeen, Richard Bruton of Fine Gael and Fintan O'Toole of the Irish Times.

Dominated

What we got was the narrow debate that passes for political discussion in this country: to the Fianna Failer "Why don't you call an election?", to the Fine Gaeler "Don't you and the Labour Party disagree on many issues?" and to the Irish Times jounalist "What do you think needs to be changed?" Consequently, the discussion was dominated by petty political squabbles and pie-in-the-sky theories from 0'Toole about changing the political structures of Dail Eireann. All well and good but divorced from the

All well and good but divorced from the realities now threatening the people of Ireland: the most expensive bank bailout in world history, another four years at least of austerity and the arrival of the International Monetary Fund that will fundamentally alter the lives of people...and only for the worst only for the worst

only for the worst. The one hint of the new reality to intrude into the debate came from a Workers Party member of the audience during an interview with Green Party Minister, Eamonn Ryan. He shouted that the Irish government had sold the children of Ireland into slavery and that the IMF are here to tell the government what to do, that there will be no negotiations. Raising the debate means the role of the

Raising the debate means the role of the United Left Alliance could not be more vital now.

Contact Socialist Worker: Email: editor@swp.ie Tel: (01) 872 2682



Socialist 🖗 Worker CAMPAIGN **AGAINST CUTS CAN ROCK STORMONT People Before Profit Calls for a United Left**

By EAMONN MCCANN

BOTH THE DUP and Sinn Fein head towards the New Year with a spring in their step.

Neither believes it faces any serious challenge in its 'own' community.

As far as Orange-Green issues are concerned, they are right.

Hard-line Unionists and 'dissident' Republicans cannot be written off.

But they don't have the strength or momentum to cause the main parties concern.

The major test for the Executive partners will come when they face opposition from within their communities to their cuts agenda.

At first sight, the DUP and SF appear to have sharply different approaches.

The DUP says that the cuts are unwelcome but necessary. At the same time, Peter Robinson

promises that:

to be steam-rollered.

"We will defend the most vulnerable in society."

Sinn Fein declares that:

"We fundamentally disagree with the Tory government's slash and burn approach to the economic crisis, but we are nevertheless forced to deal with the consequences of its approach."

It is obvious these are not entirely incompatible positions.

The budget negotiations will be dragged out, marked by grandstanding, ultimatums, bluster and threat.

But the two parties will agree a package in the end, involving major job losses and cuts to public services.



As far as cuts are concerned, | grass-roots level to fight back. as in so much else, the Ulster Unionists and the SDLP will offer only paler versions of the DUP/SF approach.

Jobs and Services

The question which arises is how, against this background, workers and working-class communities can fight job losses and defend services.

To put trust in any of the Stormont parties as they talk to one another behind closed doors makes no sense.

This means resistance to job cuts, up to and including strike action - if possible with official trades union backing, if necessary without it. Communities should organise to show support for the workers involved.

Management spokespersons, media commentators and mainstream politicians will try to focus the frustration of the public on 'selfish' trade unionists

The only effective answer will be solid numbers from the community on the picket lines and at rallies and meetings spelling it out that What's needed is organisation at | a cut in public sector jobs means

a cut in the services they deliver, that 'an injury to one is an injury to all'.

We will stand together or fall apart.

The same is true of campaigns to save care for the elderly, to prevent the closure of hospital, wards, classrooms, schools, prevent cut-backs in ambulance and fire services, defend funding for voluntary and community services.

Workers in these services should stand four-square with the campaigners against cuts.

The campaign should aim to prevent home repossessions. Threats of eviction over mortgage or rent arrears should be met by mass resistance.

Only action along these lines will force the Executive to back away from a cuts agenda. But none of it will happen without organisation.

This is why People Before Profit wants to pull together and work with all union, community and campaigning groups and individuals for coordinated action.

The campaign for the May assembly election should be a campaign for action against the cuts.

It should be used to strengthen anti-cuts groups and encourage the emergence of groups where none exists.

We should use the platform of Stormont seats to amplify grassroots voices against the loss of jobs and services and use the credibility of winning seats to back up activity on the ground.

This perspective transcends the communal divide, involving common organisation of people in the bottom half of society in both communities.

Defending

It holds the key to combating sectarianism as well as to defending rights and living standards.

Registering as 'Others' and remaining outside an Executive based on political barter between communal representatives, People Before Profit can offer a real alternative.

We urge left-wing and grassroots groups across the North to sink their differences for the purposes of the election and join with us in giving the parties which accept cuts and sustain communal politics a real run for it this time.

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