

# Socialist Worker

As the Troika comes back into town...

# Occupy the IMF!

Join the Enough Protest on 15 October.

Blockade Merrion Square in the interest of the 99%

AS the economic crisis deepens, millions of people across this country are finding life increasingly intolerable.

Despite promising a massive assault on the scourge of unemployment, this government has not created a single extra job since it came into power.

Indeed, according to the latest figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), 449,000 (14.5%) workers remain on dole queues - an increase of around 7,000 since FG/Labour took office.

This is equivalent to roughly one worker out of every six, and it makes a mockery of suggestions that Ireland has somehow turned the corner.

On top of unemployment, Irish families have had to endure savage cuts to pay and conditions, attacks on vital services and a continuing propaganda assault from the ruling class.

Despite the very real problems the country now faces, the mainstream media seems content to lavish endless attention on a meaningless presidential race and a Global Economic Forum for the Irish elite.

Fiddling while Rome burns seems to be the strategy, as the Irish rich sets about destroying our livelihoods whilst convincing us that everything will eventually be ok.

The problem is that 'ok' for these people means ongoing pain for the rest of us, as Enda Kenny made abundantly clear at the recent forum in Dublin Castle.

Responding to Adrian Jones' - managing director of investment at Goldman Sachs - claim that Ireland faced considerable challenges in rebuilding its reputation for investors, Kenny stated that a "new age of prosperity lay ahead for the Republic by making it the best small state in the world in which to do business."

Despite the continuing drive to force down wages, global investors are still reluctant to invest in Ireland and Kenny made it clear that "improving competitiveness, reducing business costs, providing access to credit... and protecting the corporation tax rate were the government's chief priorities in the next five years."



New Yorkers occupying Wall Street

Across the world we have seen the costs of pandering to the interests of big business and yet here we have the country's chief politician almost apologizing to a representative of one of the world's most hated companies.

Goldman Sachs (GS) has been closely associated with the capture of political power in the USA, as Hank Paulson and a string of lesser bankers have made their way from the corridors of GS to the corridors of the White House.

This was one of the reasons that the financial sector could demand a blank cheque during the 2008 meltdown.

But since 17 September a new grassroots movement has emerged to tackle the interests of the bankers and the speculators.

'Occupy Wall Street' is the left wing alternative to the American 'Tea Party' and it members are currently occupying Liberty Plaza (beside Wall St) in an attempt to highlight the growing inequality that characterizes American society.

Just 0.01% of the US population now holds \$46 trillion worth of assets, whilst the bottom 15% (45 million) has no meaningful health care and relies on food stamps.

This is a direct result of neoliberal capitalism and Occupy Wall Street is determined to revive the spirit of 68' in its fight against the corporate take over of America.

Many of the people interviewed identify themselves with the 99% of Americans who they believe have become increas-

ingly marginalised, and its 99/1 slogan has touched a nerve in US society.

Already 239 US towns and cities have organised similar occupations and as the Troika gets set to come back into Ireland we need to build a similar movement of occupation and resistance.

The IMF is hand in glove with the bankers on Wall Street and they want nothing less than a determined movement to occupy their Irish headquarters.

Just this week the Troika announced permanent representatives to oversee their Irish austerity programmes, and as Saturday looms the slogan must now go up to **Occupy the IMF** and build an alternative to their right wing austerity.

The protest is assembling at 1pm at Parnell square.

Socialist Worker

€10 000

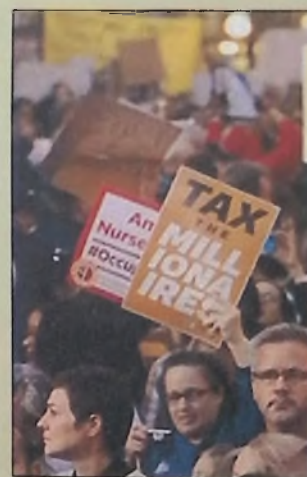
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### What is the Occupy Wall Street Movement?



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## Trade Union Activist Network

By AINE DILLON

UP to eighty people, from twelve different unions, attended a trade union activist meeting in Dublin on 1 October. Speakers from rank and file groups within SIPTU, the CPSU and the British Shop Stewards Network discussed the impact that the crisis is having on public service workers. A lively discussion queried why the 840,000 union members in Ireland are not fighting the austerity measures of the Fine Gael/Labour coalition.

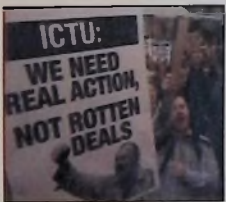
Much of the blame was attributed to almost 25 years of social partnership which has resulted in a trade union bureaucracy wedded to government parties and a feeling that there is no alternative.

This has resulted in a generation of younger workers with no experience of struggle from below.

Several speakers highlighted the need to illustrate the gains, albeit small, that are won every day when workers take collective action.

The meeting agreed to establish a Trade Union Activist Network, which will seek to build cross-union, rank and file links in the public and private sector.

The network will have a website and newsletter dedicated to promoting rank and file union action and to resisting the cuts.



Participants agreed to support the 26 November Pre-Budget Demonstration being called by the Dublin Congress of Trade Unions.

This will hopefully be the first step in a heightened level of trade union militancy across the country.

We must challenge the right wing bureaucracy and the austerity agenda that they do little to protect us from.

If you are a union member, and you would like to get involved, email your name, union and workplace to [info@swp.ie](mailto:info@swp.ie) and we will pass your details onto the TUAN organisers.

# Support the Limerick Nurses ESCALATE THE STRIKE!



by PEADAR O'GRADY

AFTER three half-day strikes in September and October by Emergency Department nurses in the Mid Western Regional Hospital Limerick, HSE management refused all options put to them by the nursing unions, the INMO and SIPTU.

The HSE refused to increase

staffing levels by even one nurse on a 24 hour-a-day basis or to use any of the 100 day-care beds to ease the plight of patients on trolleys. The HSE then refused to continue talks.

Mary Fogarty, INMO Industrial Relations Officer said "It appears the HSE wish to provoke this dispute further by making an example of nurses who have

publicly highlighted patient safety issues."

This response is far from good enough.

Emergency Departments like Galway, Drogheda, Cork and Dublin are all in crisis.

The strike needs to spread to every hospital and every ward to stop Reilly's destructive cuts and privatisation plan.

## Minister Reilly backs down on Portlaoise Hospital downgrading

By PEADAR O'GRADY



FOLLOWING a campaign against hospital cutbacks, plans to downgrade the Midlands Regional Hospital Portlaoise have been shelved by the HSE.

Downgrading would have meant cutting Emergency Department opening hours and abandoning acute surgical services.

In July, the HSE had informed an

Oireachtas committee that Portlaoise was on a list of 10 hospitals identified as at risk.

Health minister James Reilly conceded in the Dail that downgrading would not now go ahead but insisted he had not supported it anyway.

Pushing issues of 'safety' and 'complexity', Reilly is clearly planning to justify further closures and cuts along the lines of the infamous 'Hanly report.'

No closure should be accepted until a funded equally effective and sustainable alternative is provided.

The success of Portlaoise is encouraging to the Roscommon and Loughlinstown campaigns.

People Before Profit/ULA Cllr Hugh Lewis said:

"These protests have forced the government to back down.

"We must do the same to safeguard the future of Loughlinstown.

"The crisis in Limerick General is



Health minister James Reilly

because of the downgrading of Ennis and Nenagh.

"If we allow Loughlinstown to shut there will be a similar crisis in St Vincent's Hospital.

"The nurses in Limerick should be applauded for the stand they are taking.

"This kind of action will win us a decent health service."

The next demonstration to safeguard services at Loughlinstown will meet at 2pm in Tesco's Ballybrack on Saturday 29 October.

## CAMPAIGN ON BIN CHARGE LAUNCHED

By LEAH SPEIGHT

GREYHOUND Recycling has imposed an annual charge of €60 for its bin collection services on over 60,000 households in South Dublin.

Many people were given just a couple of week's warning, and were threatened that if they failed to pay by 1 October, their bins would not be collected.

This is absolutely disgraceful.

In April, South Dublin County Council (SDCC) handed over responsibility for refuse collection to Greyhound.

This for-profit company stated at the time that there would be NO increases to service charges.

However, privatisation has led to the proposed removal of the waiver system next April (affecting 18,000 low-income households), and now this unjustified extra charge.

Thornton's are introducing a €50 annual charge of their own.

The excuse given by SDCC to justify privatisation was that it 'pushes down prices' and 'improves services.'

But the reality is that costs skyrocket as greedy companies like Greyhound and Thorntons push up prices to maximise profits. Privatisation is

inefficient and leads to constant price rises to finance executive's large salaries and

waste on advertising and competition.

We need proper recycling facilities and services under public control.

Other austerity attacks such as the Universal Social Charge, mortgage interest hikes and the household charge have pushed people beyond breaking point.

This is the final straw. Cllr Gino Kenny (PBP) has launched a campaign in South Dublin to fight these outrageous charges.

Plans by Dublin City Council to privatise its bin services in December will also meet fierce resistance.



## LABOUR'S FUEL POVERTY SHAME

By MICHAEL WALLACE

LABOUR'S Joan Burton has cut fuel and electricity allowances to 630,000 social welfare recipients.

The cuts will reduce payments to pensioners and the unemployed by almost €20 a month and up to €35.29 during the winter months.

John Mark McCafferty of St. Vincent de Paul said: "There will be more people having to make a decision between whether to heat or whether to eat."

Eamon Timmons of Age Action said: "Each winter in Ireland we have up to 2000 excess winter deaths, many of whom are older people dying of cold-related illnesses.

"We are left to contemplate even greater hardship this coming winter."

In contrast, the likes of ESB boss Pdraig McManus earns a staggering €750,000 a year while chief executive of Bord Gais, John Mullins, is currently on €250,000 annually.

No fuel poverty for them! And the ESB and Bord Gais are hiking up their charges! EBS prices will rise by



15% from September, adding €160 to household bills.

Bord Gais customers face increases of more than €300 per year following hikes in electricity and gas.

Almost 100,000 Bord Gais customers are already in arrears.

From October last year, the EBS, Bord Gais and Airtricity were disconnecting more than 80 households a day because of non-payment of bills.

Massive numbers face arrears and disconnections this winter.

Ireland sits on over €700 billion worth of oil and gas reserves which should be returned to public ownership immediately.

This would provide cheaper and more efficient energy and is the only sane answer to Ireland's fuel poverty scandal.

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### WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

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

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

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

greater political and economic democracy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY**  
To win socialism 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 SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

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**Tory vultures gather to plot their war on the poor**

By SIMON BASKETTER



THE Tories met in Manchester this week to celebrate and deepen their war on the poor.

Minister after minister got up and looked smug as they unveiled further attacks on ordinary people at the Tory party conference.

Their drive to shift wealth from the poor to the rich saw them attack workers' rights, asylum seekers, safety at work and council housing.

Millionaire chancellor George Osborne was clear who the enemy was.

He said, "Let me say this to the unions to go on strike in economic times like this, when you're being offered pensions far more generous than most other people could ever afford, will hit growth, will cost jobs."

"It is totally irresponsible." Along with the bravado came spite.

He said, "We're now going to make it much less risky for businesses to hire people."

"We will double to two years the amount of time you can employ someone before the risk of an unfair dismissal claim."

He also introduced a fee of £250 to make a claim if you're sacked or discriminated against, and another £1,000 to get a hearing.

Only about 5,000 out of 236,000 claims currently succeed at tribunals each year.

The average payout for an unfair sacking is just £4,900.

And so it went on. Cabinet minister Francis Maude said that 'facility time' — time for union representatives to represent workers — "has got way out of hand" in the civil service.

Local government minister Eric Pickles said he was "going to call time" on union reps having time to represent their members.

They claim they're hailing out the economy.

But it's an excuse to wage war on us.

# Greek workers show the way



By WILL SHANNON

GREECE is alight once again with strikes, occupations and demonstrations planned to coincide with the EU-IMF visit to Athens.

"Cancel the debt! Let the rich pay" was the battle cry of the tens of thousands that marched to the parliament.

A 24 hour public sector strike brought Athens to a near standstill last Wednesday while the date for a general strike of public

and private sector workers is set for Wednesday 19 October.

Last Tuesday workers in many government ministries began to occupy their workplaces in order to lock out the EU-IMF delegation sent to dish out further pain.

Thousands gathered on the streets to protect the occupiers from riot police.

Unlike previous actions, the occupations took place outside official union direction.

Wages, benefits and gen-

eral living standards have been slashed since the beginning of the debt crisis.

As in Ireland, the Greek people are being shouldered with massive debts accrued by private banks.

Since PASOK (the Labour party) began their programme of austerity nearly two years ago, the Greek state has been shaken by the rebellion of workers across the country.

Their current attempts to sack 30,000 public sector workers along with a new

household charge have once again enraged ordinary people who have had enough.

While the Greek establishment has stumbled along trying to dish out austerity, in many cases the government have simply been unable to implement cuts and have been forced to back down.

Now socialists in Greece have raised the call for an anti-capitalist default that uses the vast wealth of the rich to pay for the crisis that they themselves have caused.

## Portuguese Left gains momentum

By IAN MC DONNELL

TENS of thousands of workers came onto the streets in Lisbon & Porto recently in response to IMF austerity.

The CGTP, Portugal's largest trade union, called for more rallies between 20-27 October.

The CGTP estimated that 130,000 people protested in Lisbon alone.

Among the factors which sparked the demonstrations was gas price increases of between 6% and 23%.

In addition, a host of punitive taxes, privatization's and charges have been introduced to help pay down the deficit, currently running at 9.5% of GDP.

Portuguese unemployment is already 12.4% and this is set to rise as the severity of the IMF's austerity bites.

Despite this Portugal is still an extremely wealthy state.

Over €247 billion is generated by Portuguese workers every year; most of which is sucked out of economic circulation



as profits and not taxed sufficiently.

The problem of the Portuguese deficit could easily be solved if more of the wealth generated by society went towards public amenities.

Unfortunately the main political parties are unwilling to administer such policies, which is why the task falls upon the 'left' to popularize the idea of wealth redistribution.

The Portuguese left is gaining momentum

despite some setbacks.

The left block (the Portuguese version of the ULA) currently has 8 seats in parliament.

The communist party have 16 seats, and while the leadership of the CP are conservative, their support is indicative of a desire for radical change among the general population.

The strength of the Portuguese left is exhibited on the streets of Lisbon, as they are able to put pressure on

the conservative union leaders to engage in protests & strikes.

Likewise in Ireland, the propensity of the unions to engage in mass mobilizations, and strike action will depend on the ability, of the left to organize the most radical sections of ordinary people under a new banner.

The ULA has made an important start and it is now up to all of us to build this movement to oppose the IMF.

# Is the Arab Spring becoming a US Winter?

By MICHAEL WALLACE

THE global revolt against neoliberal capitalism has spread to Wall Street.

A new grassroots movement called Occupy Wall Street (OWS) has launched peaceful protests against record bailouts and bonuses for bankers, massive unemployment, repossessions and vast inequalities of wealth in the US today.

From a small number of activists camped in Liberty Plaza, the numbers are now in their thousands and growing.

The movement includes students, the unemployed and workers and aims to represent the '99%' of the population being made to pay for the economic collapse brought about by the greed and corruption of the top 1%.

The protests are now in their third week, and are spreading across the country.

Alex Carter, a 23-year-old activist in a protest camp outside the Chicago Federal Reserve Bank said: "We are comrades against corporate greed."

"We are united and staying put!"

On 24 September, the New York police attacked several thousand peaceful demonstrators.

Activists were 'kettled' pepper sprayed and 80 people were arrested.

After this show of police brutality the corporate media began to belatedly cover the protests.

On 1 October, activists blocked Brooklyn Bridge for several hours

but were met with a ruthless police crackdown and 700 arrests.

The OWS movement has now gained the support of four large trade union organisations, with almost a million members.

They marched in solidarity on 5 October.

The greed and inequality of Wall Street is everywhere.

There are 14 million Americans out of work and 46 million living on food stamps.

Almost 50 million people cannot afford basic healthcare.

In New York, the top 1% own 44% of income making the city the most unequal in the US.

Just 0.01% of the US population now holds assets worth \$46 trillion.

While workers suffer, Wall Street bonuses and profits have soared.

The banker bailout for 2009 alone totalled an unimaginable \$12.8 trillion.

Total bonuses for bank executives were \$135 billion in 2010.

While politicians give trillions to the banks, schools, hospitals, food stamp and welfare programs are slashed.

The US working class is fighting back.

Success now depends on the movement's ability to join with other grassroots struggles in workplaces, communities and schools.

Clearly defined demands and raising wider issues such as racist police violence and US wars of imperialism will attract more people and expand the struggle further.

**Capitalism in Crisis - The Socialist Solution to Market Madness**  
By Brian O'Boyle

**Brian O'Boyle's, Capitalism in Crisis: The Socialist Solution to Market Madness, €3.00 +€1 p&p from Socialist Worker Books, PO Box 1648, Dublin 8**

## Why are Sinn Fein imposing cuts in the North while opposing them in the South?



By GORETTI HORGAN

ONE of the most baffling things about the Presidential election campaign for workers in the North has been the way in which Martin McGuinness has re-invented himself—not about his IRA past, but his Stormont present.

Because McGuinness has been joint First Minister in a government which is a neo-liberal's dream.

The budget which Stormont receives from Westminster in the Block Grant has been cut drastically on the back of the crisis caused by neo-liberal policies and the tens of billions of our money spent on bailing out the banksters who had insisted on those policies.

The DUP/Sinn Fein government in Stormont has responded to this crisis, not by learning the lessons of the global economic collapse but by implementing yet more neo-liberal policies.

A big slice of the Stormont Budget is earmarked to pay for the many Private Finance Initiative (PFI) schools, colleges and hospital buildings that previous Sinn Fein and DUP Ministers built—McGuinness led the use of PFI in the North as Education Minister.

Now, those schools, colleges and hospitals are costing the taxpayer far more than publicly-built equivalents would have, so budgets for teachers and nurses are reduced accordingly.

For the last few years, they have imposed a 3% year on year cut in all public sector budgets.

So, all public services have seen a cumulative 15–20% cut in funding.

And now they are looking to impose £4 billion worth of cuts over the next four years.

Services are already cut to the bone.

It's hard to see what else can go.

Despite their rhetoric of wanting to defend frontline services, in practice the DUP/SF are in thrall to the "business community", to private profiteers and to a view of the public sector of which Cameron and his Tories would be proud.

Edwin Poots is Minister for Health, like most DUPers he is an open Tory.

In September, he announced a review of health and social care.

This review is supposed to be "independent", but he made clear that he believes we need fewer hospitals, more care in the community and greater involvement by the voluntary and private sectors.

While most people would like to see more people being cared for in the community instead of being forced into nursing homes, budgets for home helps have seen vicious cuts and no one believes that closing hospitals and nursing homes will see more money going into community care.

Meanwhile, "consultations" have begun on re-imposing prescription charges—but this time without the exemptions for people on benefits.

And Poots has been hinting that one of the core values of the NHS—that it is "free at the point of delivery" will end and patients will be charged to visit GPs.

Of course, he can only do any of these things if his Sinn Fein partners in government agree.

Sinn Fein's Education Minister John O'Dowd has already cut the jobs of hundreds of teachers, classroom assistants and ancillary staff—something people should ask SF members about when they turn up at anti-cuts demos in the South.

He, too, has announced a review: to see which schools are to close entirely.

His SF comrade Caral Ni Chúillín, Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure, is closing some libraries and cutting hours back in others.

She is also cutting funding to community arts groups.

Libraries in some of the most disadvantaged areas will become very part-time.

Libraries are vitally important to allow children and young people growing up in poverty access to books and to the internet.

It's a Sinn Féin double-whammy for education—schools and libraries cut.

There are many, many more examples—which is why public sector workers across the North are gearing up to strike together on 30 November in defence of jobs, services and pensions.

# Another world

Socialist economist, **Brian O'Boyle** argues that people power and austerity foisted on us by

In September 2008 the global economy almost collapsed as credit markets went into cardiac arrest.

Without credit the entire system grinds to a halt and this was reflected in the way events were covered by the media.

Commentators who had previously championed the virtues of the 'market' were suddenly calling for more regulation.

Capitalism itself was under pressure and market participants genuinely wondered if anyone could save their economic system.

This panic soon passed however as the ruling class collected itself for the task in hand.

Within two weeks \$14 trillion had been committed to stabilising the financial system and within six months all talk of meaningful change had been replaced with the language of austerity.

Despite an initial stimulus package the dominant response to the crisis has been sustained attacks on workers and the poor.

Wages and welfare have been steadily reduced as the ruling class implements 'socialism for the rich' and 'barbarism for the rest of us'.

## The human cost of the economic crisis

The result has been the destruction of over 40 million jobs and almost 50 million people plunged into life threatening poverty.

This has primarily been caused by increasing food prices and it is important to highlight the ruling class' responsibility.

On the one hand private speculators have looked to foodstuffs as a relatively safe option following the collapse of property and equity markets.

On the other hand governments have responded to the crisis by scaling back their assistance to the poor.

Sharp increases in food prices have been accompanied by cuts in living standards and the direct result is countless deaths and hundreds of millions in on-going food poverty.

The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organization (UNFAO) has estimated that a mere €30 billion would be enough to solve the entire global food epidemic.

This is a mere drop in the ocean compared to the resources being thrown at the financial crisis and yet 10 million people are currently being allowed to starve in the horn of Africa.

Out of the nearly 7 billion people on the planet over 3 billion go to bed hungry, and 1 billion of them suffer from debilitating malnutrition.

This is the true cost of the capitalist economy and the global crisis is just making matters worse.

According to the Financial Times, American families are now more impoverished than at any time since the 1960s.

In the US, despite four decades of economic growth, out of a total population of about 300 million people there are 40 million people now on food-stamps, 45 million people without proper healthcare cover and 7 million families who have lost their homes through repossession.

Whether one lives in the worst parts of the capitalist system or in its most powerful nation, life is becoming increasingly intolerable.

But is there anything we can do about it?

## 'There Is No Alternative' (TINA)?

If the ruling class is to be believed we have no options.

In reality there are vast amounts of untapped wealth that could be taxed: corporate profits, natural resources and other state assets that are daily being given



away.

Just this week the UK chancellor, George Osborne, told the Tory party conference that Britain was borrowing £18 billion every single hour and that continuing recovery demanded austerity no matter what the human costs.

The UK will borrow £168 billion this year alone, and the Tory logic is that the country is broke and has no choices.

In reality, the Tory government left £120 billion in unclaimed corporation taxes last year.

This would have totally negated the

need for the £80 billion in public spending cuts.

Instead the Tories are actually cutting corporation taxes from 28% down to 21% -- at the very time that ordinary people have seen their pension contributions increased and their wages and conditions slashed.

This process is also being played out in the USA where the 'Tea Party' has been mobilised to ensure that the richest Americans escape the burden of paying their taxes.

Against the idea that the wealthy should pay at least as much as middle-class Americans (the so-called Buffett Rule), Republicans



# d is possible

and seizing wealth are the real alternatives to the bail-outs  
FG-Labour and the Troika.



have had the cheek to claim Obama is now engaging in 'class warfare'!

The truth is that the last thirty years have played witness to a sustained attack by the ruling classes.

### Neoliberal accumulation

Freeing up capital controls allowed capitalists' extra bargaining chips in their battles with labour, and the result has been stagnant real wages and a rolling back of taxes on profits.

It is not that we are all now living

beyond our means.

Rather it is that our means have been systematically eroded as footloose capital plays workers and governments off against one another.

This is particularly clear in the Irish case as Labour ministers cut the fuel allowance for the poor and all of the mainstream parties clamour to protect the 12½% corporation tax rate.

No one in their right mind would prefer to deprive a vulnerable child of a special needs assistant over an extra percentage of tax on profits.

But as soon as this is mentioned as a possibility, we are told that capital will leave and it will be much worse for us all.

It is not that there is not enough wealth being created.

Rather it is that those with capital bully the rest of society when there is any talk of them paying their fair share.

Ireland currently has an economy of over €145 billion and so the '€18 billion deficit' could easily be closed if the political will was available.

But political will does not emerge spontaneously.

It can only be forced onto the agenda by working people taking to the streets and withdrawing their labour.

### Another world is possible

Although the ruling classes have ramped up their offensive, they have not had things all their own way.

Capitalism is a highly integrated system and across the globe we have seen numerous examples of heroic struggles against the tyranny of exploitation and oppression

The most noteworthy has been the Arab spring as millions of people across North Africa and the Middle East have refused to accept the ruling class solution to the crisis.

Like our own government Hosni Mubarak pleaded poverty when denying basic resources to millions of Egyptians.

But rather than accept that there is no alternative, the people took to the streets to demand bread, dignity and freedom.

Faced with over 10 million protestors Mubarak could suddenly find a 15% pay increase for all public sector employees.

This is the real lesson of the Arab successes.

Like the pensioners in Ireland it is only when people struggle in ways that are outside the control of the ruling classes that real successes are achieved.

That is why it is so important to follow the lead of millions of workers across North Africa and the Mediterranean by engaging in mass protests, occupations and general strikes.

On 30 November over 3 million workers will be on strike across the UK, mirroring the on-going struggles in Greece and Portugal.

Alongside this we have seen industrial disputes in Wisconsin and a heroic student movement emerging in Dublin and London and Santiago (Chile).

Perhaps even more importantly we have now seen the beginnings of a left-wing movement in the 'heart of the beast'.

Since 17 September a growing number of left-wing activists have occupied a square beside Wall Street and representing what they say is the dispossessed 99%.

Despite being brutally assaulted by the NYPD they have forged important links with organised Labour and staged a protest of over 20,000 people.

Following the lead of occupations in Tahrir and Syntagma, they are determined to occupy Wall Street for as long as it takes.

Irish socialists must take heart from each and every one of these struggles. We cannot occupy Wall Street.

But we can resist the IMF boot boys sent in here to carry out their orders.

We are the 99%, and as the IMF comes back into town we should occupy IMF Headquarters and force them out of Ireland for good.



## The Presidential Yawn



By CLLR. BRID SMITH

THE presidential election campaign is really a case of "fiddling while Rome burns".

The beginning of October saw the darkest cloud yet closing in on the global economy and all over the world the media and political focus was on the financial crisis and its consequences.

But Ireland has been in a bubble.

The entire political discourse and media has been dominated by the farce of the presidential election.

This is an election of an individual who has little or no powers, who will not be able to influence the direction of the economy and whose hands will be tied and mouth gagged when it comes to political criticism.

The entire campaign is a side show to the real issues that people face on a daily basis and the establishment are trying to anaesthetise the population.

We are fed a daily diet of stupid questions about who was a member of what and when, who wrote what and when, who resigned from what and when and on and on.

Meantime hospital wards are closing, hundreds more workers are thrown out of jobs, state assets are being sold off, SNAs are gone from classrooms. And all to satisfy the demands of the IMF/EU who will be back in town in the middle of the presidential campaign.

What a shame we don't have a vocal radical candidate that would use the opportunity to highlight the bank bailout scandal and to mobilise the citizens to get

on the streets and occupy like the citizens of the US, Greece, Cairo and beyond.

The attacks on the characters and past of Martin McGuinness and David Norris have been particularly shameful.

Neither McGuinness or Norris fit in neatly with the establishment and all its conservatism but the media and political elite have been relentless in trying to ensure that the old reliable competition between the mainstream parties remains intact.

And so we have a campaign that is as dull as dishwater and are daily distracted from the real world by watching a personality contest with no political backbone.

Martin McGuinness is talking a rhetoric of equality and opposition to cuts. But he is directly involved in slashing services and jobs across the North even while his party claims to be the voice of radical opposition in the South.

David Norris has finally been given the opportunity to run after a disgraceful campaign to keep him off the ballot paper. But he is not reflecting the real anger and daily struggles that face people throughout the county.

McGuinness and Norris are the only two candidates outside the political establishment and for that reason are the only two that merit a vote. But that is not saying a lot.

A vote for either of the Government candidates Michael D or Gay Mitchell, will only serve to embolden the coalition's campaign of austerity.

## Socialist Worker

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# Between hope and despair

## Who will lead the response to the crisis?

As the economic crisis deepens socialist activist, **Sara O'Rourke**, argues that fascism and racism can only flourish in conditions of despair, and that socialists should build the broadest possible movement based on democracy, freedom and the fight against austerity.

In recent years there has been a resurgence of racism across mainland Europe.

Growing uncertainty, fear and anger are behind this resurgence as the deepening crisis of capitalism and the utter failure of social democracy have allowed racist and fascist parties to make electoral gains.

In the last great crisis of the 1930's, millions of people were murdered at the hands of Fascist organisations that preached hatred and scapegoating as a way of explaining why people's lives had become so intolerable.

Today we face perhaps the greatest crisis capitalism has experienced.

And as the mainstream becomes ever more impotent, there is once again a rising level of ideological debate alongside a rising level of social struggle.

### The origins of racism

Historically racism was used to justify colonialism and slavery. Rather than being an unchanging part of human nature - as many would have us believe - racism is a modern phenomenon associated with changes in economic relations.

In ancient Greece and Rome for example, the crucial dividing line was between slave and free citizen.

Slaves were used to produce a surplus, free citizens enjoyed it - but both categories crucially had people who were black and white.

This was not the case as predominantly white colonialist's set out to conquer the rest of the world.

Key economic relations now relied on slavery and modern racism emerged to justify the use of African slave labour in the plantations of the New World in the 17th and 18th centuries.

It then developed significantly under capitalism as it helped to divide the working classes.

The starkest manifestations of racism today are still related to exploitation and imperialism.

Currently, Islamophobia is used to justify Western oppression in the Middle East.

Ten years on, Muslims still bear the brunt of the justification of the so-called 'war on terror' and Islamophobia is deepening all over Europe.

### From mainstream to far right racism

In France, for example, President Nicolas Sarkozy pushed through laws banning women from wearing the Burqa in public.

In March, he declared that "France definitely does not want halal food options in school canteens, prayers outside mosques, veils, definitely no — and oh, no to minarets."

Another worrying development has been the rise in racism towards the Roma.

In the last few years, thousands of Roma have been expelled from France with Sarkozy ordering police raids and mass deportations.

In Britain anti-Traveller sentiment is being whipped up by the Tories around the expulsion of the Dale Farm Travellers from the site they live on.

All of this allows racism to become respectable and the result has been resurgent Nazi parties, street movements like the EDL (English Defence League) and populist racist parties making political gains.

In the Netherlands, Geert Wilders' racist Freedom Party (PVV) now the third biggest electoral force, wants to ban Muslims from entering the country and to put taxes on Muslim women wearing headscarves.

However far-right parties don't always start by talking about immigration and are



Above: Nazi salutes from the EDL; Below: organising against the BNP

not even always overtly racist.

They often build their base by talking about the bread and butter issues and growing inequality.

They then focus on ideas of national identity before moving to racism to stir things up, to divert anger towards minority communities, religions and so on.

### From Racism to Fascism

Racism by definition exists where a whole group of people are systematically discriminated against on the basis of characteristics they are believed to share.

Fascism, however, is much more than this. Fascism is an ideology that endeavours to destroy all democracy and take away the rights of the working class.

Historically fascism has grown when there has been economic crisis, a weak working class movement and an absence of a political alternative.

Fascists have only taken power when the 'left' has allowed them space to build, and they have never relied on elections alone.

In Germany in the 1930s the Nazis were used by big business to hammer the working class.

In 1933 in the midst of economic crisis the German ruling class were afraid of a workers revolt and were happy to see Hitler rise to power.

Leon Trotsky, the Russian Revolutionary was one of the first to see fascism as an ideology that had the dual strategy of participating in elections that give them

a veneer of respectability, while at the same time organising terror gangs on the streets.

Mussolini's fascist party arose out of the organisation of right wing gangs, the Blackshirts, sent out to beat up socialists and trade unionists, in order to stamp out militant workers power.

### Racism in Ireland

In contrast to many other European states a far right party has never emerged in Ireland.

However, the presence of racist discrimination and hostility towards travellers and immigrants does exist at the state and individual levels.

As the government/troika inflict savage austerity we can see a rise in racism and the government is only too happy to have scapegoats to divert peoples' anger away from their failed economic agenda.

This is one of the reasons why we must oppose the visit of Nick Griffin, leader of the British Nationalist Party to the Trinity Philosophy Society on 20 October in the strongest possible terms (see box).

This is a man who once said "I am aware that the orthodox opinion is that six million Jews were gassed and cremated and turned into lampshades."

"I have reached the conclusion that the 'extermination' tale is a mixture of Allied wartime propaganda, extremely profitable lie, and latter day witch-hysteria." The BNP is a party that has links to the EDL and its members are violent thugs that have attacked mosques and whose

members are often seen giving Hitler's 'sieg heil' salute. Nick Griffin aspires to an all-white Britain.

### No platform for fascists

The Socialist Workers Party has always believed that fascists should not be allowed to peddle their racist propaganda and

we stand opposed to giving them any platform.

Opponents of this stance use the free speech argument, arguing that everyone should have the right to debate their ideas.

The socialist argument is based on historical experience which has proven that fascist ideas are not like other political ideas.

Fascists want to destroy every source of democracy.

When Mussolini came to power in 1922 the fascists abolished freedom of the press, all democratic rights and stamped out all criticism and opposition.

Fascists don't want public debates to test their arguments; they want physical force to enforce their beliefs.

In a post-Holocaust world they just want the respectability that such public debates afford them.

### Building a mass movement of the left

We don't just object to what they say, we object to what they do.

We believe that fascists must be stopped by mobilising the largest numbers possible to exclude them from public spaces.

This is what they are most afraid of - a mass movement.

In this past year we have seen an explosion of struggle around the globe.

The revolution in Egypt has shown what a mass movement can do.

It is people power that will stop the growth of the far-right.

Capitalism is in a huge crisis and we have a historic opportunity to build a political alternative and build resistance.

Tony Cliff, the founder of the SWP, once said "Fighting the fascists is not enough."

"One has to fight the unemployment, low wages and social deprivation that create conditions for the growth of fascism."

We want to see a movement and a radical left party in Ireland with a flavour of Egypt, Greece, Spain and Wall St.

We will oppose the fascists wherever they raise their ugly heads.

But the most important struggle in Ireland is against the IMF austerity and for a fairer, more democratic world, where fascist ideas will be unable to take hold.

Rally  
Against  
Fascism:  
After  
Norway  
Never  
Again



A number of student societies and workers have organised a 'no platform protest' to meet Nick Griffin when he attempts to speak at Trinity College Philosophy Society on 20 October. The protest will begin at 6.30 pm at College Green. Everyone should make this protest a priority to ensure no platform for fascists or racist thugs.

# Can Hip-Hop be progressive?

By WILL SHANNON

THE birth of hip hop on the streets of New York City more than thirty years ago brought a voice to poor black young Americans.

In the middle of the 1977 New York blackout, people who could never have afforded electronic music equipment, looted stores and turned their creativity towards two turntables and a microphone.

Suddenly everyone was an MC or DJ.

The music was imprinted with the harsh realities of life in the ghetto as anger at the police and identification with the memories of 1960s' radicalism became dominant themes.

Unfortunately this has somewhat changed today.

Currently, in the midst of the greatest economic crash since the 1930s, and with large record labels in decline, the raw, uneasy and angry music of Californian Hip Hop collective Odd Future Wolf Gang Kill Them All (Wolf Gang for short) has sprung to prominence.

criticisms as an overreaction to what they say is a joke and comments that "it's funny that people flip out over shit like that."

In an America that is suffering a right-wing backlash that's attempting to narrow the definition of rape, the music is certainly of its time.

Hip-hop has always been made up of contradictory elements.

*Public Enemy* could mix calls for Hollywood to be burnt down for its continual racist portrayal of black people with lyrics attacking homosexuality.

And the scene still continues to produce regressive musicians alongside socially-aware groups such as *Arrested Development*, *Credit to the Nation* and *Dead Prez*.

Art shouldn't be judged just on its political content; nor should we ever proclaim one taste to be right and another wrong.

At the same time socialists should have something to say about it.

Words can have real consequences in people's actions and

## THEATRE:

# O'Casey's great tragic drama

Reviewed by Paul O'Brien

Juno and the Paycock by Sean O'Casey, Abbey Theatre Dublin, until 5 November.



PLAYS are by their nature ephemeral, as each performance is unique.

But the dramatic tension between the writer, the performers, and the audience always takes place at a given moment in history.

The historical context can sometimes anchor a play firmly in the past.

But a great play breaks free of the past and speaks to an audience of their own social and personal concerns and experiences.

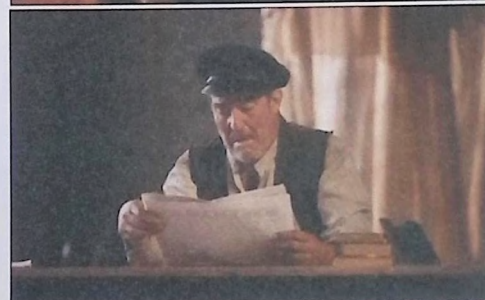
Sean O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* is just such a play; one of the reasons it has been in production almost continuously across the world for the last eighty years.

The play is set during the terrible events of the Civil War in 1922.

Captain Boyle, a strutting self-centred 'paycock' dominates the stage with his presence.

But it's Juno, a god-fearing determined woman who holds the family and the play together.

Towering performances by Ciarán Hinds as the Paycock,



Sinead Cusack as Juno and Claran Hinds as Captain Boyle. Credit: Mark Douet.

and Sinead Cusack as Juno, provide an evening of drama that demands to be seen.

This is a great tragic drama, but O'Casey tempers the tragedy with comedy to make it bearable.

O'Casey was expressing his disillusionment at the outcome of the War of Independence.

The noble ideals of the Irish revolution had failed to deliver any tangible advancement for the poor and the dispossessed that had sacrificed and suffered the most for Irish freedom.

As Kevin O'Higgins, a Free State minister said in 1924 "we were the most conservative minded revolutionaries that ever put through a successful revolution."

The analogy with the 'Celtic Tiger' and the crisis of capitalism across the world almost jumps out at you – in the Paycocks' famous summation – 'the whole world's in a state of chassis'.

Just like Ireland in O'Casey's time, the rich have run off with the prize and left the ordinary people to pay the price.

## BOOK:

# Examining the 'new sexism'

Laurie Penny, *Meat Market: Female Flesh Under Capitalism* (Zero Books).

Reviewed by Sinead Kennedy

JOURNALIST, socialist and feminist activist, Laurie Penny's recent book *Meat Market: Female Flesh Under Capitalism* is a powerful and angry critique of contemporary culture's obsession with controlling women's bodies.

This short book focuses on a number of aspects of the "new sexism", from eating disorders and housework to pornography and prostitution.

Under modern capitalism, Penny argues, women are both consumers and consumed.

Our culture has become saturated with unrealistic images of female beauty and airbrushed bodies while simultaneously real women and their real bodies are marginalised, humiliated and ignored: "Everywhere, in every part of women's lives, physical control, self-discipline and sterile sexual display are the watchwords of a new gender conformity that is branded into our very flesh".

Penny is particularly good at dismissing the modern-day expressions of 'girl-power' as a 'feminism that just wants to be liked'.

At its best this book is a powerful call to young women to re-ignite a debate about sexism that has been stifled by an acceptance of inequality as part of the status quo.

However when it comes to explaining the rise of "the new sexism" that



dominates our culture, Penny's arguments are considerably weaker.

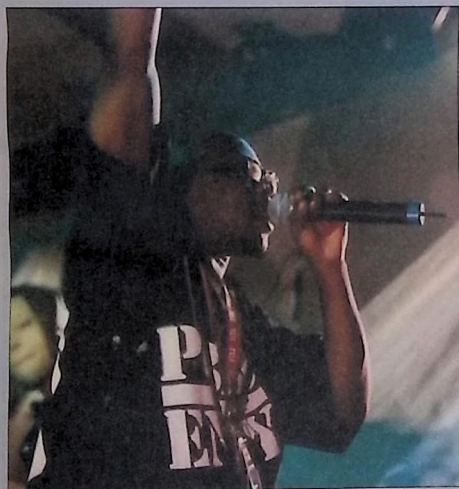
She ignores the class (material) roots of women's oppression and instead places the blame with a patriarchal capitalist machine, which sees "body fascism" as a result of the system's need for women's work in the family.

Her exploration of women's work is centred on domestic labour but doesn't consider women in the workplace and the collective power they possess.

This means that for Penny the solution is for women to reject these roles: "'No, is the most beautiful word in a woman's dialectic arsenal...No...We will not buy your clothes and shoes. No, we will not be beautiful; No, we will not be good."

While this may be a useful place to begin, it is not possible to simply side-step the pressure and alienation of the capitalism system.

We need to move beyond idealism and join a collective revolutionary challenge to capitalism that calls into question the material roots of the sexism that dominates our society.



Credit to the Nation and Dead Prez

Over the last few years they have moved from the tiny alternative hip hop scene to international success.

Lyrics of group members prominently feature rape and gay bashing.

To many, the rawness of the lyrics are an expression of the anger and frustration towards the world around them.

Unlike the unsavoury lyrics of mainstream Gangsta Rap, the big music labels are nowhere to be seen.

Tyler, the Creator – group front-man and main talent – dismisses

every homophobic or sexist utterance contributes to the general atmosphere in which we live.

Equally, music as with other art forms can carry a message of resistance and inspiration.

I'd advise readers to explore this music, enjoy it and recognise why it has become popular – at the same time as remembering that real change comes from people on the streets.

As *Dead Prez* say: "born in the Struggle, built in the Streets".

## MARXISM 2011 WEEKEND

The world is changing fast. The global economy lurches into another dip. Savage austerity cuts into the most vulnerable in our society while rising food prices inflated by speculation causes starvation worldwide.

Those who govern our world see their strategies falling apart. The Eurozone teeters on the brink of collapse. Even the world's biggest economy, the US, is grinding to a halt. Trillions in funds that could alleviate so much suffering have been wasted on corrupt financial institutions.

The flame of revolt against this madness and the injustices of this system has spread from the streets of Cairo to the occupied squares of Athens and Madrid.

Mass strikes by workers have hit back against austerity across Europe and the world

Students have taken to the streets of London and Dublin in their tens of thousands.

Resistance is growing day by day across the globe. People power is now a force to be reckoned with. We live in exciting and dangerous times.

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# Socialist Worker

## UNISON STRIKES SHOW THE WAY

All roads lead to 30 November

Unite the fight against austerity

**OCTOBER 5 saw the biggest strike in the North for a generation.**

The strike action, taken by members of Unison, was a clear signal to the Assembly that workers have had enough of the endless attacks on living standards, pensions and services.

The strike involved thousands of workers from across the North, in both the health and education sectors.

Pickets were organised across a number of schools and hospitals, with high participation from members and considerable support from the general public.

The strike began with health workers coming out at 12.00am on Wednesday.

Later on, classroom assistants, lunch time workers and admin staff came together to take action in schools.

One school, St Louise's, had its picket organised from 6.30 am.

Patricia Webb, a striking caretaker from Bunscoil Phobail Feirste told *Socialist Worker*,

"We are defending education for the kids.

"We feel education for the kids is important.

"With the cuts, what do they expect, teachers to run the school by themselves?"

Edwin Poots was trying to lay the boot into health workers by focusing on operations that had been postponed.

But as Jenny Smith, a worker with the Belfast Health Trust pointed out:

"Thousands of operations are cancelled every week because of bed shortages.

"The figures they're producing are being manipulated".

Marie Jones, from the same picket commented "We are on strike for the patients and ordinary public.

"We are defending all the children who will one day be a potential patient.

"If Mr. Poots used his ears to listen he would realise that patients aren't suffering because of our action".

Expressing her anger at the cuts she went on to say "Why should we pay for the banker's mistakes? They are getting bonuses while we have our pay frozen for four years.

"This is about our rights and our



health service."

A Unison rep, Anne McAvoy, also spoke to *Socialist Worker* about the desperate financial circumstances felt by many workers;

"We have already had a pay freeze.

"We have mostly low paid workers out today. We are on the fuel poverty line.

"There are lies being told to the media and by the media. We don't have fat cat pensions the average pension for us is £3,000 per annum."

With rising unemployment, many on the picket lines expressed concern over the future of workers in the Public Sector.

Nolen Devlin, on strike from the Royal hospital, was one such worker;

"I'm out to save my job. My job is important to me.

"If the NHS was run properly no cuts would be needed. They should cut the powers above.

"We are out to say no to GP's fees, no pension cuts, no A+E fees and save our NHS."

Despite the ever deteriorating weather, there was a fantastic fighting spirit on the picket lines.

The strike action was electrifying with hospitals having hundreds of people milling around.

A lot of schools had to close at lunch time and hospitals in many cases could only provide emergency care service with management scrambling to do the jobs of striking workers.

October 5 was a shining example of the potential that workers have to bring the country to a standstill.

But we need to go further.

Despite thousands of workers being out, the action only involved one union.

We need action that involves all of the unions.

This could become a reality on 30 November with unions including Unite and NIPSA, balloting for strike action against pension cuts and austerity.

We need to turn the 30th into a day of resistance where every union comes out in force.

Our message to Unions who are not balloting has to be 'We need you out'.

October 5 was a fine start, now all roads lead to 30 November.

Inside page four: How neoliberalism dominates Stormont