

Socialist Worker

Labour's shameful budget means

ROBBING THE POOR TO HELP THE RICH

Now's the time to let our anger rip

LABOUR Minister, Joan Burton, is robbing €811 million from the mouths of the poor.

But she needs the money as she has promised to keep paying bondholders like Goldman Sachs, and to keep helping the Irish rich to avoid new taxes.

Her prime target was the unemployed, the disabled, the elderly, lone parents and large families.

The unemployed will have to pay an extra €6 a week to cover their rent allowance.

Those on short time will lose a day's unemployment benefit—equivalent to €37 for a single person.

If you are under 21 and disabled, Burton will rob you of €88 a week.

More elderly people will die next year because Burton has cut their fuel allowance.

Donning the mantle of Mary Harney before her, Burton singled out lone parents for special attack because she thinks they can be scapegoated.

Anyone with a child aged over seven will lose their Lone Parent Allowance and they will only be allowed to earn €60 a week extra on top of the allowance, instead of the current €140 a week.

Burton says she does not want single mums to be stuck in a welfare trap.

But she also slashed the income that people will receive from going on Community Employment schemes so that they will now only get an extra €20 a week for 18 hours work.

This in turn will mean less workers in community crèches and fewer places for the children of lone parents.

The government parrots the line that 'it hurts us more than it hurts you—but we just have to do it'.

But these hypocrites gave a €35,000 pay rise to one of their advisors.



That man will now earn €122,000 a year.

That is more than twelve times what a CE worker will earn in a community

crèche.

Each year, the Irish government pays out €3.1 billion to pay off the speculators who lent money to Anglo-Irish bank.

If they refused to pay these huge private debts, there would be no need for cutbacks.

On the tax-side, we see not a single penny will be added to corporation tax, no mention of a tax on accumulated wealth and no extra income tax for the super-rich.

Instead we have another €1.6 billion in higher taxes that will hit the poorest, hardest.

VAT is paid at the same rate by everyone and so an increase hits low income households much harder than the wealthy.

The same goes for the household charge, taxes on carbon and all of the rest of the new indirect taxation.

And, of course, they have done virtually nothing to go after the 33,000 millionaires who control nearly a third of the wealth of the country.

The United Left Alliance has produced detailed figures to show how €12 billion could be taken off this group through a wealth tax on their global assets.

But the government pretends this is impossible.

They want to bow and scrape before the feet of the wealthy and do their bidding.

So this budget is exactly the same as the previous four and according to Enda Kenny the austerity will go on for another four.

Low and middle income earners must continue to pay for the crimes of the rich.

And this reason for this is very simple.

No matter which of the mainstream parties takes up the reigns of government, the whip master remains exactly the same.

The 'Troika' (IMF/ECB/EU) may have officially taken up residence here in late 2010.

But since the start of the crisis they have done everything in their power to ensure that Irish workers' pay for a crisis caused by Irish banks and European capital.

Across Europe, governments have been forced to take on the debts of their private bankers.

This has left them unable to pay their way, especially as they are unwilling to take any more taxes from corporations that bully them with the threat of leaving.

In the end some governments' ran out of money and this presented the perfect excuse for the 'Troika' to step in with so-called 'bailouts'.

European capital has used this crisis to force us to pay off their bad debts and this is the only reason why our pay and conditions are continuing to be savaged.

Our lives must get much worse to prevent them from losing any money and the worst part of all is that their strategy is only driving the economy further into recession.

Over the last four years the government has adjusted its finances by €23 billion only to see a €12.5 billion deficit in 2008 grow to around €21.4 billion this year!

Even the Irish Independent has admitted that "despite all the austerity measures endured over the past 12 months, the overall deficit at the end of November stood at €21.4bn, compared with a deficit of €13.4bn in the first 11 months of 2010....The massive €8bn increase was mainly due to the €10.6bn pumped into the banking sector in various rescue measures."

It's obvious that their strategy only promises on-going misery.

It is time to rise up against this madness.

We have been quiet for too long. Now it is time to let our anger rip.

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LABOUR'S SHAMEFUL BUDGET

By BRIAN O' BOYLE

FG and Labour claimed that they would be different.

But for the fifth budget in a row the government have carried out a smash and grab on the vulnerable to bailout the country's richest citizens.

Tuesday's spending cuts, announced by Labour minister Brendan Howlin, are cruel, vindictive and unnecessary.

With the flick of a pen, Howlin has robbed families with four kids of almost €800 a year, as child benefit for third and fourth children is slashed from between €167-€177 to €140.

Children's charity Barnardos estimates that approximately 96,000 children are already living in consistent poverty, and their director of advocacy, Norah Gibbons, has said that "it is the poorest families that will be hit hardest with this cut."

On top of this, the back to school allowance was cut by between €25-€55, a move that will see many families struggling to provide school books and uniforms.

Howlin also cut the capitation grant to schools by 2%, announced that the most disadvantaged schools would lose over 40 teachers and cut the payment for one parent families from €147 to €130.

Over the next two years this payment will be stopped altogether for anyone with kids over seven, and the cumulative effects of all of this will be to drive many people on the margins of society into serious poverty.

As well as attacking the country's youngest people, Howlin also attacked the eldest, savaging the fuel allowance from 32 to 26 weeks.

Speaking yesterday Sean Moynihan of the charity Alone stated that this would "have a marked effect on vulnerable older people who are already suffering due to the increased cost of fuel."

This is literally a life and death issue as the last available data showed that there are up to 2,000 excess winter deaths in Ireland each year, and responding to this disgraceful attack, Richard Boyd Barrett TD asked "how many

Resistance to the Budget Gains Momentum



By BRIAN O' BOYLE

ON 26 November around 3000 protesters hit the streets of Dublin, as the first in a series of anti-austerity marches got under way.

Kicking off at 12 noon the event was full of colour and steely determination.

Groups represented ranged from Trades Councils (Dublin, Waterford, and Kildare) and Trades Unions (SIPTU, ASTI,

CPSU, INTO, CWU, Mandate, TUI) to a number of civil society groups ('Repudiate the Debt', the 'Irish National Organisation of the Unemployed', the 'National Widows Association of Ireland', 'Alliance Against Austerity' 'Enough') and Left wing political parties (SWP, SP, PBP, ULA, Workers Party).

A number of Occupy movements (Cork, Waterford Belfast) also made the trip to Dublin and the message from

everyone was extremely clear – we will not pay for the greed of the bankers.

Following the initial march the majority of the crowd remained behind to participate in a general assembly.

Indeed many people who hadn't even been on the original demo began to congregate as ordinary members of the public gave voice to their disgust at the current policies of the FG/Labour government.

Speaking from the platform Thomas O' Dúlaing, of Alliance Against Austerity, said that "children's rights are being trampled on as the loss of 700 SNA's will mean crushing the futures of vulnerable kids around the country."

Adrienne Murphy of the 'Enough Campaign' agreed, stressing the hardship that her autistic son was enduring at the hands to savage cuts in one-to-one resource teach-

ing hours.

Spectacle of Resistance

Following on from the Trades Council demonstration, around 2000 again took to the streets on Saturday 3 December under the banner of a Spectacle of Resistance.

Like the previous week, the march was full of colour and vibrancy and the key theme of the protest, which was organised by the community and voluntary sector, was defend and sustain youth projects and the community.

Speaking at the event, Paul Hansard a SIPTU organiser for the community sector, said that "vulnerable communities are being attacked by a government that supposedly contains a party for labour."

It is an absolute disgrace that people who voted for the Labour party are now being attacked by them. But the people in these communities have a voice and they will fight back."

Right across the country people are suffering.

But the determination of these protests shows that people will not be cowed down at the behest of the IMF and their European allies.

For three years we have been told that if we take the pain today everything will be ok tomorrow.

But as the austerity rolls on and on – more and more people are waking up to the reality that the only solution is to take back the streets, build resistance in our communities and strike in our workplaces.

deaths will Brendan Howlin and Joan Burton take responsibility for as cutting the fuel allowance season will do nothing to bring down the figures of people dying from cold related illnesses."

On the tax-side the governments' eagerness to protect the rich has meant that they have hiked up indirect taxes that hit

the poorest, hardest. VAT is a flat tax paid at the same rate by millionaires and pensioners alike.

This is also true of the household charge, the newly increased carbon taxes and the taxes on motoring.

Rather than protecting the most vulnerable this budget actively punishes them, and the

worst thing about it that it is totally unnecessary.

According to the Central Statistics Office (Nov 2011), the net financial assets of Irish households increased by €45 billion between 2008 and 2010.

These numbers seem so incredible because the rich are so good at pleading poverty.

But the reality is that those who control the factories and businesses are sitting on literally billions of assets.

If the government had the courage to take wealth from those who can afford it, this budget could have helped to get thousands of Irish people to get out of real poverty.

Unfortunately they would rather grovel around at the feet of the rich.

If we want to make any real difference, we have to take it upon ourselves.

This was the fifth disgusting budget in the series.

Join the resistance to make sure that it's the last one.

ANTI-HOUSEHOLD CHARGE CAMPAIGN GROWING

By MICHAEL WALLACE

THE Campaign Against Household Charges is gathering momentum across the country.

Following the Campaign's successful launch in September, public meetings are being held in Dublin, Galway, Cork, Donegal, Sligo, Kerry and elsewhere to build support for mass non-payment.

The campaign in Cork City began on 26 September in Ballyphehane, attended by 60 people.

On 2 November more than 70 attended a campaign meeting in Cobh, the largest meeting in Cork to date.

The Cork branch of the anti-household charge campaign is organising further meetings around the county.

The mood at these meetings was one of anger, determination and a willingness to organise and work together with other groups in other localities.

October and November saw strong turnouts across Galway, from Westside and Knocknacarra to Eyre Square and Ballybane.

The tone of these meetings was that vicious austerity like this were forcing many into poverty, while those responsible for the crash continue to freely exploit and accumulate.

November also saw over 20 people at a launch meeting in Tralee.

A committee was formed and agreement was reached about distributing the campaign leaflet.

Rage against the charge has been strongest in Donegal,

where 350 people turned up at a meeting in Donegal Town.

Independent Cllr John Campbell captured the mood saying: "they will try to bully and intimidate us, but if people stand together and support each other, we will win out."

On 17 November 40 people attended the initial meeting in Sligo and from there a committee of 18 people was formed.

Again the mood was defiant with a number of women committing to going to jail before paying the charges.

One reason for large attendances outside the Capital was Minister Hogan's decision to introduce a €50 charge on 440,000 mainly rural households with septic tanks, on top of the planned €100 household tax.



However, with the charge being imposed on 1 January, opposition in Dublin is expected to spike substantially.

The FG/Labour government and the EU/IMF are then planning a property tax and water charge in 2014 which according to John Fitzgerald (ESRI) will cost around €1300 combined.

This unjust charge is forcing working

class people around the country to pay for bankers' debts.

A genuine grass roots movement of our neighbours, family, friends and workmates can beat the Household Tax.

The message around the country directed towards FG/Labour and their cronies in the 'Troika' is loud and clear: NO WAY, WE WON'T PAY!

Doctors support abortion services: ULA plan legislation

By PEADAR O'GRADY - Doctors for Choice

IN a study of Irish family doctors (GPs) just published, the vast majority (75%) supported Abortion Services being available in Ireland in at least some circumstances.

A clear majority (52%) supported Abortion Services being available in Ireland to any woman who chooses it.

Only 11% said abortion should not be available in Ireland, with 13% having no opinion.

Some four in 10 of the 750 doctors questioned thought a woman's healthcare suffers because of the requirement to travel for an abortion.

One doctor said: "Illegality and having to travel abroad add to the traumatic effect of what is already a complex situation and a decision not taken light-heartedly

by many women."

The researcher, Dr Mark Murphy GP, said he hoped the research would highlight circumstances in which women who choose to have an abortion abroad may suffer adverse health consequences.

Welcoming the report, People Before Profit/ULA TD, Joan Collins said the ULA is actively supporting legislation for abortion services to be made available in Ireland. Labour has sold out on too many promises to be trusted to legislate without a major campaign.

A ULA Bill is expected in 2012, aptly coinciding with the 20th anniversary of the X-Case mass protests in 1992.

A broad united front of organisations is expected to campaign to ensure that this long-promised legislation for abortion services becomes a reality.

On a day of historic significance for Irish Labour, socialist activist, Sean Mitchell, explores a number of the important themes for workers North and South of the border:



THE DAY THE WORKERS FOUGHT BACK

NOVEMBER 30 was truly a historic day.

Over 100,000 workers across the North from more than twenty unions took action to safeguard their pensions.

The North's public transport system was brought to a complete standstill, whilst education and health workers joined together to show their disgust at the attacks on the services in which they work.

NIPSA, which represents most of the workers in the civil service brought out 45,000 workers and staged around 160 pickets.

For many the day started early. Picket lines were organised outside schools, hospitals and government buildings.

At some hospitals, pickets were organised from midnight right through until the morning.

Whilst pickets were seen outside many workplaces it was the rallies that really demonstrated the scale of the day.

Rallies were organised throughout

the North with around 2,500 workers coming together at the Guildhall in Derry and up to 20,000 gathering at City hall in Belfast.

In Belfast alone there were five feeder parades into the main march.

Workers came together from the four corners of the City in a tremendous show of unity unseen for decades.

The North's local parties largely stayed aloof from the day's proceedings.

The DUP actually condemned the strikes with Peter Robinson describing them as a mistake.

Sinn Fein claimed they supported the strike but reaction to this opportunistic stance was summed up by the cold response of workers to the sight of the party's banner being unfurled at one of the Belfast feeder rallies.

This day was about red politics not opportunistic green ones and people were anxious to let Sinn Fein know they understood exactly who was cutting their services.

Unlike some union events, there was a strong sense of input from rank and

file workers.

In the west of the city there was a high degree of co-ordination between workplaces.

Civil servants and bus drivers marched down the Andersonstown road to be gradually joined by more workers as they passed picket lines.

This had been organised by local shop stewards in advance and was a sign of the potential for workplace coordination at rank file level in the future.

At the main rally at City hall, all but one of the speakers were workers rather than Union officials.

The representative from the INTO, Mary Cahillane, received a rapturous response to her attack on the conduct of the local politicians in Stormont.

The assembled crowd was then brought to song as local folk singer Tommy Sands encouraged them to sing along to his purposely and aptly written song "There's a way, there's a better way — tax a billionaire".

The final speaker of the day Peter Bunting, speaking on behalf of NIC-

ICTU, struck a chord with the mood of the day when he compared the actions of the tax avoiding millionaires to the hard work of millions of public sector workers.

"The real extremists in our society are those who evade and avoid tax, those who have gambled billions with other peoples' money, and those politicians who have decreed that ordinary people, private sector workers, public sector workers and the most vulnerable of all.... will pay for the criminal conduct of the pampered elite."

The day itself was a magnificent example of what is possible if workers come together.

After the strike, there is a distinct sense in the minds of workers and in the mood of the class that something had changed - not all that can change, not all that will change, but something none the less.

To grasp this alone is to go some way to understanding the measure of the possibility that lies before us.

AFTER 30 NOVEMBER - WHERE NEXT?

DAVID Cameron described the strikes as a 'damp squib'.

Behind this attempt to downplay the strikes is a fear of what is to come.

The Prime Minister is hoping that 30 November proves to be a one off.

Politicians in the North are thinking the same. Take the pain for a day and then it's back to business.

We need to ensure that this is not the case and that the pressure on the government begins to mount.

As almost every speaker at City Hall said, 30 November is only the beginning.

We need to turn this considerable sentiment for further activity into a reality.

Indeed, in the coming weeks and months we need to escalate the action.

In the first instance this means the Unions moving immediately to set a date for the next

round of actions.

We cannot wait months before setting a date. If we do it immediately it will send a message to the government that we mean business.

It will also allow the momentum created in workplaces on 30 Nov to be built upon.

As well as setting the date pressure needs to be put on other unions to become involved in taking action.

In particular we should be working towards action which brings together public and private sector workers.

On the ground, we need to be creating networks of activists which can push the movement forward.

In particular, the networks and contacts created between workers in the run up to the strike needs to be kept and solidified.

The fact that unions are taking action in the North whilst failing to do so in the South also

needs to be raised.

The example of the strikes in the North should be raised against those in the South that say resistance to austerity isn't possible.

Workers across this island have much more in common than they have with either of their respective governments.

Struggle in the North should be used as a catalyst for more resistance in the South and this would help to develop a positive cycle of resistance across the 32 counties.

All this will be greatly helped by a bigger and more vibrant SWP.

More socialists' means stronger picket lines, stronger links between workplaces and a stronger voice for more militant action.

The packed SWP meeting after the rally in Belfast showed the thirst there is for socialist organisation, we need to ensure that this is capitalised on.

Workers struggle is the only effective way to challenge Sectarianism

WEDNESDAY 30 November revealed a path to a different direction for workers in the North.

The sight of Catholics and Protestants marching for a common cause in their thousands punctured the myth that workers here are incapable of uniting.

For too long, politics has been demarcated along sectarian lines, political events judged only by the measure of inter-community difference and political debate itself contained within the confines of green versus orange.

30 November was different.

For all its talk of creating a shared future, the Assembly has not lifted a finger to challenge sectarianism.

Sectarian attacks are on the rise and the so-called peace walls continue to grow in number.

By contrast opinion polls have shown that sectarian attitudes among the general population in the North are on the wane.

There are more people than ever who want to live in mixed neighbourhoods, work with people from different backgrounds and send their children to non-denominational schools.

The problem is that the set-up of the Northern State ensures that divisions remain entrenched.

The main parties garner their support on a communal basis - seeking votes not through the merit of their actions but by the extent to which they can identify themselves as representatives of the 'community'.

Sectarianism is accepted as the norm and everything is run on this basis.

Housing, schools, and State money are all allocated on sectarian lines.

You may wish to send your child to a mixed school but this is often untenable as so few areas live close to one and so little money is put into them.

Crucially, in contrast to the rest of society, workplaces have become more integrated rather than less and Trade Union membership is relatively high.

When workers fight together it reveals that the real divide in society is not between Protestants and Catholics, but between those at the top and those at the bottom.

It also exposes Sinn Fein and the DUP as the opportunists that they are, and creates a space for real working class politics to emerge.

If the momentum after 30 November is kept, we have not only the potential of beating the government but also of challenging the entire sectarian setup of politics in the North.

2012 will hold many possibilities but the outcome of these potentialities are not predetermined.

There will be forces working for unity, but also those who will attempt to scupper it.

We need to build working class struggles, but also fight within these struggles against sectarian ideas and organisations.

To do this we need action but also organisation.

In particular we need to urgently build socialist organisations which can help build struggle, whilst standing firm against any attempts to divide us in the future.

Why we should leave the Eurozone



By BRIAN O' BOYLE

AT its core, neoliberalism is a political project that aims to use the State to increase the power of capital.

In general this has been pursued by liberalising markets (including capital and finance), selling state assets, attacking workers and developing a tax framework that favours low inflation, low taxes on capital and support for inward investment.

The Eurozone helps to achieve these aims in a number of ways.

Firstly, control of monetary policy is decisively shifted towards European financial interests (ECB).

Secondly, the Growth and Stability Pact drastically reduces the States' ability to stimulate the economy.

Thirdly the loss of exchange-rate policy means States cannot regain competitiveness through devaluing the currency.

This means wages must be kept low instead.

Finally, capital markets become highly integrated.

This means that capital can easily leave and must be attracted with generous benefits.

Workers lose everywhere

Across the Eurozone this has facilitated a general transfer of wealth from labour to capital.

Since 2000, every Eurozone country has seen real wages lag behind productivity.

The adjusted wage share as a proportion of income has fallen from around 75% to around 60% in each of the PIIGS, as well as in much of the core.

Workers everywhere have been squeezed by the neoliberal policies of the Eurozone as a result.

But this is not the end of the story.

The periphery also loses

The squeeze on workers has been even more profound in countries like Germany and so even a general attack on workers' conditions has not been enough to secure competitiveness in the periphery.

This has meant a second transfer from the periphery of Europe into the core.

Within Europe, the periphery became the dumping ground for goods and services that workers in Northern Europe could no longer afford.

But workers in the periphery were no better off, so core capital was lent into the periphery to continue the model of export-led growth.

This facilitated productive and finance capital accumulation, but as with neoliberalism elsewhere it simply wasn't sustainable.

Over time the private sector in the periphery became ever more indebted and when the bubble burst this debt was quickly foisted

onto the public sector.

Eurozone austerity as a continuation of neoliberalism

By forcing States to defend their financial institutions, European capital has been able to do two important things.

Firstly, it has been able to frame the crisis as a crisis of public spending.

Secondly, it has been able to squeeze peripheral governments before attacking their workers with so-called 'bailouts'.

At the start of the crisis the banking system was given unlimited liquidity by the ECB.

Crucially this was not repeated for peripheral governments.

As governments were priced out of private markets, the ECB refused to help.

Instead the troika (EU/ECB/IMF) was called in with 'loans' which were reminiscent of IMF structural adjustment in Latin America.

Over the last three years this has meant terrible hardship for ordinary families and this pain is only set to continue.

The importance of Workers Default

If neoliberalism is the political reassertion of the power of capital, then the Troika's management of the crisis has been textbook neoliberalism.

The ruling class is using the Eurozone to enforce debt and austerity.

As revolutionaries we must argue for a break with this logic on the basis of

1. A workers default
2. Nationalisation of the banking system
3. Rapid imposition of capital controls
4. Reassertion of democratic control of monetary and fiscal policy
5. Industrial policy designed to stimulate job creation in the interests of workers and the poor.

To achieve all this means leaving the neoliberal Eurozone nightmare far behind.

One final point; no strategy will be painless and workers may well feel like remaining in the euro is the lesser of two evils.

This is a mistake. The Eurozone is austerity and workers lives will not get better in a framework designed to support the ruling class.

An exit on our terms is infinitely better than an exit on theirs.

If we go, workers must seize banks and impose capital controls, in order to save themselves from massive hardship.

In the end, resisting austerity is the only sure way to improve the lives of ordinary people.

The year 2011 will go down in history as a revolutionary year akin to 1848 and 1968: a year in which ordinary people around the world rose up against their governments and ruling elites – their respective 1%.

Politically speaking, the year began on 17 December 2010 when a young vegetable seller called Mohamed Boazzizi set fire to himself in Tunisia after police confiscated his stall.

What followed next was unpredicted by any commentator.

The tone of the first Reuters' report makes this clear: "Police in a provincial city in Tunisia used tear gas late on Saturday to disperse hundreds of youths who smashed shop windows and damaged cars...."

There was no immediate comment from officials on the disturbances.

Riots are extremely rare for Tunisia, a North African country of about 10 million people which is one of the most prosperous and stable in the region."

Just 22 days later, after riots, demonstrations, violent clashes with security forces and mass strikes had spread across Tunisia, the country's dictator, Zinedine Ben Ali, who had ruled for 23 years with full support from the West, fled to Saudi Arabia.

The Arab Spring had begun.

Egypt Revolts

Eleven days later on Tuesday 25 January vast numbers of Egyptians poured onto the streets of Cairo, Alexandria and Suez.

They were, of course, met with brutal repression, but they fought back.

It was the beginning of the Egyptian Revolution.

All the commentators agreed that the Egyptian dictator, Hosni Mubarak, would not be a push over like Ben Ali.

However, by Friday 28th, after four days of intensive street fighting and many deaths, the hated police were defeated; in Cairo the people claimed and held Tahrir Square; in Suez the main police station was burned down while across Egypt the police fled the streets.

Mubarak was on the rocks. Then on Wednesday 2 February Mubarak and his regime counter attacked.

They mobilised thousands of 'supporters' – in reality paid thugs and plain clothes police – to launch an all out assault, on horses and camels, with machetes, iron bars, whips and rocks, on the people of Tahrir.

It became known as 'the Battle of the Camel', but once again the people, thanks to great courage and great numbers won the day.

Still Mubarak clung on, infuriating the people with speeches in which, despite rumours that he would resign, he insisted he would continue.

Street demonstrations became ever larger – it has been estimated that 15 million people took part.

Then on 9-10 February, the Egyptian workers began to go on mass strike.

This was the decisive moment.

On 11 February the military dumped their leader.

It was only 18 days after the start of the revolution, four less than it took to remove Ben Ali.

On 16 February protests against Gaddafi began in Benghazi and quickly turned into an uprising.

On 25 February there were mass protests – 'Days of Rage' – in cities right across the Middle East, including in Sana'a in Yemen, in Bahrain, in Iraq (where six were killed), in Jordan and also back in Tunisia and Egypt.

At this moment the march of the Arab Spring seemed unstoppable and if the rest of 2011 had continued the way it began we would all be living in a very different world today.

Counter-revolutionary forces

Unfortunately, as well as ordinary people, there are ruling classes that always fight back.

The Gaddafi regime, in particular, fought back with terrible ferocity.

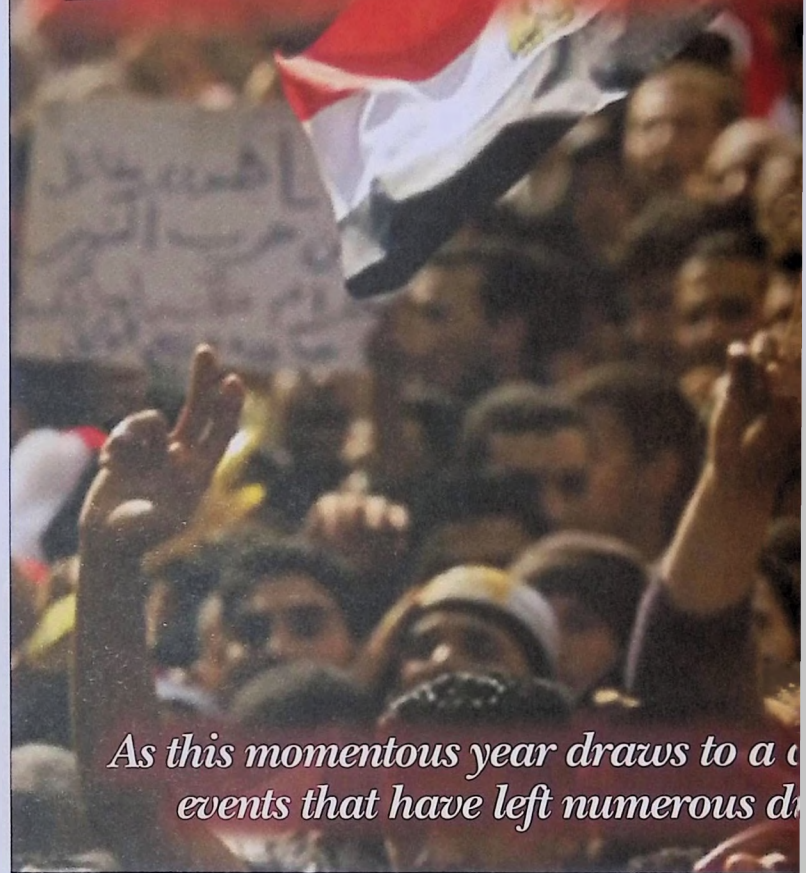
In Tripoli his armed forces remained loyal and he simply mowed the Libyan revolutionaries down in the Square.

By 20 February over 230 were dead.

The rebels gained control of Benghazi and other cities but Libya was divided and in the civil war that followed, Gaddafi's superior conventional forces gained the upper hand to the point where they were threatening Benghazi.

Meanwhile the Bahrainis of Pearl Square, like the Egyptians of Tahrir before them, were

2011: A Year of Revolutions



As this momentous year draws to a close, events that have left numerous...

in the process of overwhelming their local police force.

At this point the forces of Western Imperialism, fronted by Sarkozy, took the initiative.

In mid-March, under the guise of 'humanitarian intervention', they mounted a sustained air assault on Libya which eventually had the effect of destroying the Gaddafi regime and handing power to the Transitional National Council, while simultaneously taming and putting a pro-western stamp on the Libyan Revolution.

Meanwhile, in what was probably a co-ordinated move, the Saudis marched into neighbouring Bahrain and crushed the revolution.

Nevertheless the Arab Spring was by no means exhausted.

Mass struggles escalated in Yemen and then in Syria, struggles which continue, at the cost of thousands of martyrs, to this day.

In both cases the dictators, Saleh in Yemen and Azzad in Syria, clung on with great brutality and determination, and in both cases the popular movement has shown immense courage and resilience with the result that in both there has been a kind of deadly stalemate.

At the time of writing the regimes appear to be slowly disintegrating, but so far the revolutions have not yet seen the mass strikes that were decisive in Egypt.

At the same time there are rumblings of revolt in Saudi Arabia itself.

Europe ignites

On 15 May things took a different turn. The spirit of Tahrir Square leapt across the Mediterranean to Spain when thousands of protesters set up camp in Madrid, proclaiming that "They (the politicians) don't represent us!" and demanding 'Real democracy now'.

When the police beat the protesters the movement took off like wildfire and squares right across the Spanish State was occupied,

with hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions mobilised in their support.

As they said 'Nobody expected the Spanish Revolution'.

Unsurprisingly, the revolt then began to interact with the already high level of workers' resistance in Greece.

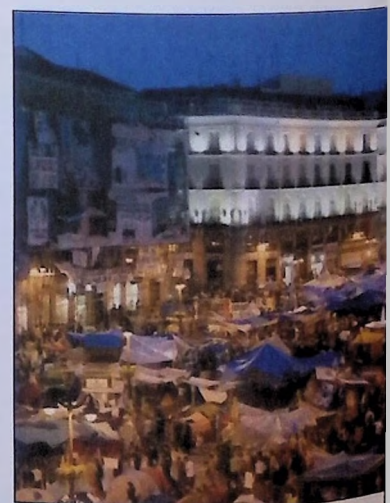
More mass demonstrations, riots, and general strikes followed as the crisis of Greek capitalism rapidly intensified.

Occupy

Then in September the struggle made the leap across the Atlantic in the shape of Occupy Wall St.

Again it was police repression especially the arrest of 700 demonstrators on Brooklyn Bridge on 1 October, which fuelled the flames and led to 'Occupy's' across America.

Crucially, organised labour identified with and actively supported the struggle, producing the highpoint of the Oakland General Strike of 2 November.



Year of Revolutions



Close, socialist revolutionary, John Molyneux reflects on the dictators deposed and the global working class on the rise

In Britain the struggle has also been rising.

The past year has seen mass student protests, a 750,000 strong trade union anti-cuts demo in March, a big public sector strike on 30 June, the August riots, and now an even bigger strike on 30 November.

With 2 million workers out, this was the largest strike since 1926, won huge popular support [61% according to a BBC poll] and was accompanied by unprecedented demonstrations nationwide, e.g.

20,000 in Bristol, 10,000 in Brighton, 10,000 in Dundee.

In Northern Ireland there was the important development of 10,000 or so Catholic and Protestant workers uniting in Belfast.

The week before there was the small matter of a general strike in Portugal.

While all this has been happening, the Egyptian revolution has deepened and developed.

From a struggle against Mubarak it has become a struggle against the military, the

independent unions have grown and – so far – all attempts to crush the movement by force have been heroically repelled.

The explanation for this global tidal wave of revolt is essentially very simple.

The international capitalist system is in profound crisis.

The 1% - the ruling class - is everywhere trying to make the rest of us pay for it and in place after place people are fighting back.

From Tahrir to Oakland we are feeding on the inspiration of each other's resistance.

Confidence is rising and for the first time in a generation revolution is back on the agenda.

For us in Ireland this raises a question.

We have been hit harder than most by the crisis so why has there not so far been mass revolt? In February we saw an expression of mass discontent at the ballot box with the election of five United Left Alliance TDs, but besides the two big trade union demonstrations, there have not yet been masses on the streets.

The answer seems to lie in the interaction of three factors - the legacy of the Celtic Tiger, the years of social partnership and the shameful refusal of the union leaders to initiate resistance - which together have led to a certain mood of bitter resignation.

But here we need to remember that in any wave of struggle, 1848, 1968 or 2011, there are always places or times when little seems to be happening.

'Nobody expected' Tunisia, Egypt, Spain or Occupy Wall St.

And crucially resignation is not agreement; it suddenly turns into its opposite when an unforeseen spark gives people the confidence that what they do will make a difference.

One thing is certain: the years to come will see many such sparks!

The economic crisis of capitalism, merging with the crisis of climate change is rapidly becoming a crisis of the whole of humanity.

So the great slogan of Tahrir Square 'Revolution until Victory!' has the potential and need to become a slogan for us all.



Freedom Un-bowed



An eye witness account of the storming of the 'MV Saoirse' by PBP Councillor Hugh Lewis

AT 3.40 pm on 4 November last, Israeli commandos stormed the ships of the Freedom Waves to Gaza, kidnapping the Irish Ship, the 'MV Saoirse' and the Canadian ship, the 'Tahrir'.

This act of Israeli aggression and the subsequent incarceration of its passengers are all part of the brutal and dehumanising blockade of Gaza enforced by the State of Israel.

The aim of the recent 'Freedom Waves to Gaza' was simple; to reach the port of Gaza with passengers, including a broad range of civil and political representatives; to answer the call of the besieged Palestinians, to highlight the brutal conditions inflicted upon them on a daily basis; and to expose the racist and apartheid nature of an Israeli state that is falsely upheld by the ruling classes as a democratic and liberal beacon in the Middle East.

It was to take 56 hours for the MV Saoirse to travel across the Mediterranean to the port of Gaza from Turkey.

On board were 14 Irish passengers and a Greek Captain.

Our two ships, the Saoirse and Tahrir, sailed side by side and we were to be welcomed at Gaza port by hundreds of Palestinians.

Israeli Aggression

This was, until the intervention of Israel.

Our ships were surrounded 42 miles off the coast of Gaza, in international waters, by five Israeli warships and numerous smaller vessels including gunboats with water cannons.

In a display of intimidating superiority, Israeli Commandos, the same unit responsible for the slaughter of nine Turkish human rights activists on the 'Mavi Marmara' last year, attacked our ships with high pressure water cannons almost sinking them.

Twenty troops then stormed the 'Saoirse'.

We were immediately taken to the port of Ashdod in Israel under the supervision of these armed balaclava wearing commandos and eventually transported with a convoy of dozens of Israeli military police to Givon prison in Ramla.

We spent a week in Wing 5 of the prison.

As uncomfortable a prospect as this experience would seem; it is only a microcosm of the dehumanising treatment the people of Palestine

have had to endure since the establishment of the apartheid state of Israel in 1948.

The six days spent in an Israeli prison can only serve to highlight the suffering that the people of Gaza have spent in effectively the largest open prison in the world for the past five years.

The people of Gaza are denied the most basic of human rights expected in a normal civil society.

Eighty percent of the population is fully reliant on aid.

The water cannons that almost sank our ship are the same as those used on Palestinian fisherman should they venture four miles past the Gaza coast.

This brutal treatment makes life an absolute struggle even to achieve the simplest things and inflicts untold misery upon Palestinian people, half of whom are children.

The area of Ramla where the prison was located was also where 50,000 Palestinians were driven from their homes and villages in 1948 under the command of former Israeli Premier, Yitzak Rabin.

Solidarity and resistance

Although the suffering continues, the recent revolution in Egypt brings a new hope for their liberation.

Unity in struggle against Middle Eastern imperialism, and its agents, such as Israel, has galvanised people in the belief of an alternative society.

All of us who travelled on the Flotilla and all of those who sent messages of solidarity will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with those who challenge the system in the face of brutal oppression.

Our own government continues to ignore the human rights abuses of Israel, recently facilitating an Israeli Film festival co-sponsored by the Israeli embassy.

It is an absolute disgrace that the Minister for Foreign affairs, Eamon Gilmore, should cross through a protest to launch such blatant propaganda in an attempt to legitimise the state of Israel and by association their apartheid treatment of the people of Palestine.

Unity in struggle can be found in strength from Cairo to Dublin.

We grow stronger in the face of oppression and like the people of Gaza we will never be beaten.

When will Irish workers resist?



Despite massive attacks over the last three years, Irish workers have yet to resist in the massive numbers seen in other countries. But as yet another slash and burn budget is announced, Socialist Worker asks Kieran Allen, National Secretary of the SWP, for his views on the crisis and resistance in Ireland.

At one of their massive demonstrations, Greek workers reputedly carried a banner 'We are not Irish - we resist'. Is it true that the Irish have forgotten how to protest?

This myth of the passive Irish is actively promoted by the political establishment.

The former Minister for Finance, Brian Lenihan, once boasted that 'our partners in Europe are amazed at our capacity to take pain. In France, you would have riots if you tried to do this'.

His successors in the FG and Labour government also present themselves as the 'good boys' and girls' of Europe.

Their implicit message to the EU elite is that 'we have our population under control'.

There is an important element of myth-making in these claims because the Irish have repeatedly shown a willingness to protest.

At the start of the recession, huge numbers turned out on pensioners' protests to oppose the withdrawal of the medical card.

A quarter of the million public sector workers staged a one day strike in November 2010, despite many having misgivings about the seriousness of the union leaders to lead a fight.

Between 15,000 and 20,000 students have marched against third level fees and have shaken the confidence of Labour backbenchers to push them through.

At a local level, there have also been

phenomenal protests.

Towns like Navan, Roscommon, Portlaoise and Abbeyleix have mobilised almost their whole population against hospital closures.

There is simply no truth in the statement that the 'Irish do not protest'.

Nevertheless the question remains, why do these protests not generalise into a more sustained movement on the streets? And why have the protests largely by-passed the organised workers movement?

OK. So why have we not seen a general anti-austerity movement from workers?

The Russian revolutionary, Leon Trotsky, famously argued against a mechanical understanding of the relationship between economic downturns and militant resistance.

He wrote that,

'The political effects of a crisis are determined by the entire existing political situation and by those events which precede and accompany the crisis, especially the battles, successes or failures of the working class itself prior to the crisis.'

'Under one set of conditions the crisis may give a mighty impulse to the revolutionary activity of the working masses; under a different set of circumstances it may completely paralyse the offensive of the proletariat.'

Irish workers entered the crisis in ways which predisposed them to be dumb-struck - rather than respond militantly.

The Celtic Tiger years produced a virulently pro-capitalist culture where entrepreneurs acquired the status of the republican heroes of the past.

Business values were systematically instilled in the population through media outlets run by the two tax exiles, Denis O'Brien and Tony O'Reilly.

The constant message was 'private-good' and 'public-bad'.

This got a hearing because many workers saw their living standards increase with little need for a collective fight.

Few noticed that the share of the economy going to workers declined compared to that which went to profit and dividends.

The situation was exacerbated by the historic weakness of the Irish left.

In Greece, for example, the radical left has had a strong base since the rising against military rule in 1974.

By contrast, even Irish social democracy was puny compared to the size of the two dominant right wing parties.

The salience of pro-capitalist values was in evidence in the support which Sean Gallagher won in the Presidential election.

His only claim to attention was the fact that he starred in the loathsome Dragon's Den!

Irish workers therefore entered the crisis ideologically disarmed.

By and large, they had no ready-made understanding to see this as a capitalist crisis.

All of this seems very important but are there any other factors that help to account for the low level response?

There was also a thirty year legacy of social partnership.

In other words, it was not just a matter of ideas - but also of organisation.

Social partnership did not just align the policies of the Irish trade union movement with the needs of national capitalism.

It also broke some key organisational supports for workers.

During the partnership years, union membership declined from half the workforce to one third and became increasingly concentrated in the public sector.

Membership participation also shrunk massively and many of the union committees came to be dominated by union 'hacks' who parroted the leadership line that 'nothing can be done'.

This layer grew increasingly close to management as they saw their mission as 'selling' deals to a passive and uninvolved membership.

Social partnership deprived workers of an organisational space whereby they could come together in big general meetings to discuss how they could respond to the crisis.

If these factors help to explain the absence of a general response to the crisis from organised workers, how might the situation change?

The Irish ruling class do not have any short term escape from the crisis.

Their attempt to portray themselves as the 'success story' of the peripheral countries is largely based on PR spin.

By 2013, for example, the ratio of Irish state debt to GNP will hit an incredible 150 percent - higher than the Greek level, after recent discounts are taken into account.

Inevitably, the 'the markets' will launch new speculative attacks which will lead to an even greater flight of capital.

In addition, our rulers gambled everything on an export led strategy in the hope that the multi-national corporations would forge a way out of the crisis for the whole economy.

However, the oncoming global economic recession has torn this strategy to shreds.

So although the political establishment have been able to exploit the ideological and organisational weakness of workers, they do not offer anything other than years of continual attacks.

The scale of these attacks means

that there will equally and inevitably be a response from workers.

Here the analogy with the experience of US workers during the Great Depression from 1929 is instructive.

After the 'Wall Street Crash' occurred in 1929, US workers entered a period of huge defeats.

Union activists were repeatedly victimised and the American Federation of Labour lost a million members.

But as workers suffered defeat after defeat, bitterness and politicisation grew.

It took a full four years for the turn around.

But when it came, there was an explosion.

After a number of key battles in Toledo, San Francisco and Minneapolis, US labour launched an all-out confrontation with the employers.

A new militant union movement - the Commission on Industrial Organisation - was formed and many workers shifted to the left.

The tragedy was that, under the influence of Communist Party politics, they were pulled back into the orbit of Roosevelt and the Democratic Party.

History does not repeat itself and any left winger who claims to read the future knows as much about Marxism as soothsayers who read tea leaves.

There is only one thing we can be sure of - the greater the level of exploitation and oppression, the more workers are forced to respond.

How they respond is undetermined.

From the past we can envisage two scenarios.

A grave political crisis can produce mass street mobilisations which act as a stimulus to rapid organisation at the workplace through a new type of unionism based on mass assemblies.

Or, oscillations within the economic crisis itself, creates opportunities for workers to unleash pent up anger.

At this juncture, the former response looks more likely but no one can tell.

What history does teach us, is that if a revolutionary socialist organisation can grow in the current crisis, it will have a major impact on the outcome.

What we do as a radical and revolutionary left over the next few years is extremely important.

When the workers do resist en masse we have to be ready.

What we do as a radical and revolutionary left over the next few years is extremely important. When the workers do resist en masse we have to be ready



MARX
and the Alternative to Capitalism
Kieran Allen

Kieran Allen's new book - **Marx and the Alternative to Capitalism** - is out now

OBITUARY

Jim Blake 1939-2011

THE Cork Branch of the Socialist Workers Party was deeply saddened to learn of the death last month of our Comrade and Friend, the Socialist and Trade Unionist Jim Blake.

Family, Friends and Comrades gathered to pay their last respects to Jim in a humanistic ceremony in Cork on Friday 11 November.

Jim's immense life and fighting spirit were an inspiration to all those fighting for Trade Union rights and working class emancipation around the world.

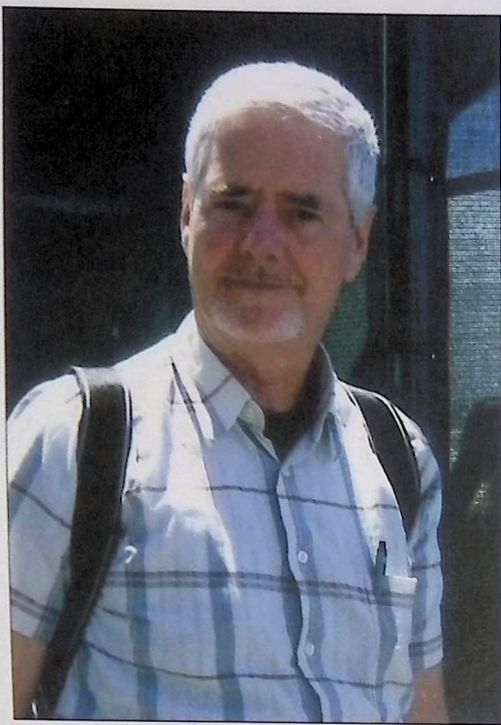
He will be fondly remembered as the founding member of the Cork branch of the Socialist Workers Party, the party whose politics he embraced and promoted for almost 50 years.

For those of us who joined the SWP in the late 1980's, a difficult time for Socialists because of a big downturn in the class struggle and the rise of neo-liberalism, Jim was a wonderful teacher of Marxist political ideas.

He combined an exceptional intellect, with a genuine interest in people, and a warm, relaxed style of conversation.

His sense of humour and diverse range of interests made him very popular with those many years his junior.

Importantly, as well as imparting theory, he would also tell us fascinating anecdotes



from his experience of struggle in the 60's and 70's.

His stories captured the excitement of how Marxist ideas can become such a powerful ingredient in practice when they are taken up by a working class that starts to get organised.

We were never left in any doubt that a fighting working class, armed with revolutionary socialist politics, had the capacity to change the

world.

Born in Cavan, Jim moved to London in his early twenties, where he became politically active, initially with the Communist Party.

His disillusionment with the Eastern European regimes and recognition of their class or 'state capitalist' nature, led him to join the International Socialists, the precursor to the SWP, in the 1960's.

He was a member of the Islington branch, playing a very active role in numerous campaigns during the 1960's and 70's,

Having returned to Ireland in the early 1980's, Jim set about building the Socialist movement in this country.

He played a prominent role in numerous campaigns.

He became Cork secretary of the H-block Hunger Strike campaign, ensuring that the struggle against Imperialism in this country had a strong Socialist voice.

He was also a very prominent activist within the Cork Unemployed Action Group, and as contributor to the national paper, The National Crumb.

While studying for a H-Dip in Economics in UCC as a mature student, he managed to establish, and win a new generation of students to a Socialist Workers Student Society in the college.

In his workplace, Jim always put himself at the front line in the class struggle, becoming an active shop steward in the Oil rigs in the 1980's, and later in the 1990's as a shop steward while working as a porter in St Finbarr's Hospital.

During this time he also served on the Cork Trades Council.

In between these stints, he managed to find time to spend 10 years teaching in Zimbabwe and Botswana.

While in Africa he also played a key role in the establishment of the Zimbabwe International Socialists Organisation, and a new organization in Botswana, spreading the socialist message to workers in the continent he loved so much.

His CV of campaigns are far too numerous to list here.

However it is telling of the man that despite suffering from a severely debilitating illness for the last 3 years of his life, he remained to the end a tireless and optimistic fighter for his beliefs.

He continued to play a leading role in the monthly Gaza support and Boycott Israel demonstrations in Cork.

He expressed his delight at the emergence of the United Left Alliance and the more recent Occupy movement.

The Occupy Cork Assembly marked the news of Jim's departure with a minute's silence and a decision to open a book of condolences for his family.

It was a nice and fitting tribute to a man who had devoted over 50 years to the struggle to bring about equality, freedom and democracy for the 99%.

To his partner Mary, and to Maggie, his daughters Sonia and Holly and six grandchildren, we extend our deepest sympathies.

ROUND-UP

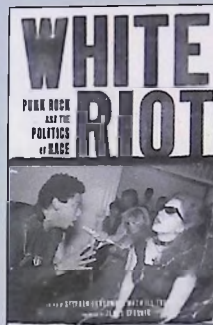
Holiday reading for socialists

As Christmas comes around *Socialist Worker* reviews some stocking fillers for that revolutionary someone in your life - all available from www.bookmarks.uk.com

Reviewed by

Donal Mac Fhearraigh

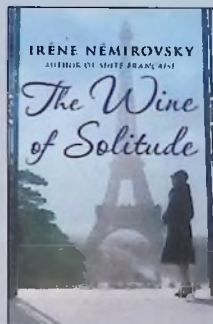
White Riot: Punk Rock and the Politics of Race, by Stephen Duncombe and Maxwell Tremblay
£14.99



FROM the Clash to Los Crudos, skinheads to afro-punks, the punk rock movement has been obsessed by race.

This is the definitive study of the subject, collecting first-person writing, lyrics, letters and analyses of punk history from across the globe.

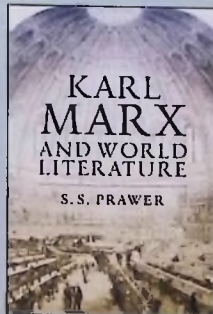
The Wine of Solitude, by Irène Némirovsky
£14.99



THIS tale follows a young Hélène through the Great War and the Russian Revolution, as she grows from a dreamy, unhappy child into an angry young woman.

The most autobiographical of Némirovsky's novels, now available in English for the first time

Karl Marx and World Literature, by S.S. Praver
£14.99



LYRICS from poems, novels and plays infused Marx's writings.

His engagement with literature was not time off from the struggle but an important part of it.

This book gives an interesting insight into this little commented upon aspect of Marx's writings.

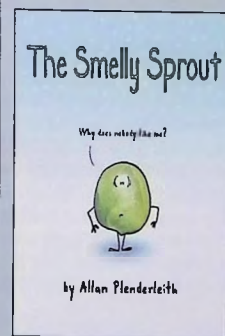
The Verso Book Of Dissent: from Spartacus To The Shoe Thrower Of Baghdad, by Verso Books.



THIS anthology presents the voices of dissent through the ages: poems and songs, pamphlets and speeches, plays and manifestos.

Good for reminding us all that these traditions will never die.

The Smelly Sprout, by Allan Plenderleith
£5.99



A little sprout wants to be loved but he's wandering in the snow and everyone he meets shouts, Out, Smelly Sprout!

Will there be a happy ending for our hero in a Christmas dinner?

Will you learn the joy of sprouts? Find out in this book for the little radicals' in the family.

BOOK REVIEW

The roots of Egypt's revolution

On the State of Egypt; What Caused the Revolution, By Alaa Al Aswany

Reviewed by
Laura Duggan

AS the world anxiously watches the Egyptian elections and wonders where next for the Revolution, this book goes right back to the root causes of the upheaval.

Al Aswany's book is a collection of his articles that appeared in national newspapers *al-Shorouk* and *al-Dustur* between February 2005 and October 2010.

In each article Al Aswany focuses on either personal stories of hardship, giving a name and face to the oppressed or a long standing issue of contention.

The topics range from the presidential succession, women's rights and US intervention to hypocrisies in the State's interpretation of Islam.

No matter what the issue is, it's always framed by a deep belief that the only way to a better Egypt is through more democracy: "Democracy is the only Solution."

Al Aswany often uses references to the US political system as an example of how a politician/president should be held accountable to his people. He draws a comparison



between the furtive way Mubarak's ill health was hidden as opposed to that of Regan's.

Paradoxically, Al Aswany also continuously highlights the contradictions of the US interventionist policies in the Middle East and North Africa, and Obama's willingness to support despotic leaders like Mubarak as long as they do the 'right' thing concerning Israel.

Al Aswany uses these examples to reinforce the sentiment that a revolution must come

from the ground up and consist only of the Egyptian people.

But it never occurs to him that US imperialism has any consequence for the levels of real democracy in US domestic politics.

He also dissects the issue of the Muslim Brotherhood.

While having a deep respect for the faithful he recognises how Islam has been used as a tool of repression.

He argues that the Muslim Brotherhood, ineffectual opposition to

Alaa
Al Aswany



On the State of Egypt: What Caused The Revolution

Mubarak and predicted election winners, would

use the power of Islam to turn Egypt into a theocratic state like Saudi Arabia and Iran.

He asks why throw off the shackles of one leader to replace them with another?

By no means a political treatise, this book offer an interesting insight into the beginnings of the revolution and the changing attitudes of the Egyptian people.

But the weakness is a hidden assumption that democracy is equivalent to bourgeois elections and a representative parliament.

After 30 November

ESCALATE THE RESISTANCE!



Name the Date for the Next Round of Strikes

LAST Wednesday saw the biggest strike in Britain since 1926 and one of the biggest ever in the history of the North.

Over 2 million workers struck in Britain alongside 220,000 in the North.

A total of 29 Unions took part in the industrial action.

No buses or trains ran across the North and at least 2/3 of schools shut down.

Hospitals only had emergency services operating and most civil service workplaces were closed for the day.

30 November showed what workers can do when they flex their muscles in unison.

The Tories and local politicians like the DUP tried to demonise public sector workers by claiming the strike action would cause 'disruption' and 'chaos'.

This is some cheek coming from the same people who are disrupting thousands of people's lives with their program of cuts.

There is no mention from them of the chaos created by the bankers or the markets that we have all been forced to endure.

Not content with merely demonising the strike, the government has set out to divide groups of workers.

They have attempted to pit public workers against private sector workers by claiming that public sector pensions are 'gold plated' in

comparison with those attained in the private sector.

The truth is that public sector pensions average £4,000 per year whilst the Cabinet receives a pension (paid by us) of in the region of £500,000 - £700,000 a year.

The divide in society isn't between public sector and private sector workers - it's between the rich at the top and the rest of us at the bottom.

Here in the North our politicians are no better.

Try as they might, the Assembly cannot hide the fact that it has done nothing to oppose cuts.

They are just as culpable as the politicians in London.

They want the debate to be about this cut or that rather than asking should we even have cuts in the first place.

They want the debate to be framed in a sectarian way - which community centre or school should be closed, the 'Protestant' one or the



"Catholic" one.

This is an attempt to divide the working class along sectarian lines.

We have to stand strong against all cuts.

The bankers are the ones who caused the mess - they should have to pay.

In the run up to the strikes SF Education minister John O'Dowd claimed that he would not cross any picket lines.

This is the same John O'Dowd who talks proudly of his plans to close up to 300 schools.

The education minister thinks he can speak out of both sides of his mouth, calling for cuts and supporting strikes at the same time.

However much they want to claim they support workers on strike the reality is that all parties in the Executive are implementing George Osborne's cuts and are on the wrong side in this battle.

Just recently, Peter Robinson threatened to resign over a police emblem, but where was that determination when the Tories slashed

the budget.

30 November was a momentous day, but it should only be the beginning.

Incredible as it was, it won't be enough to beat their cuts.

We need to escalate the action.

Trade Unions have said 30 November was just the start and this has to be put into practice.

Workers now have a spring of confidence in their step and the momentum is with us.

This has to be used to call for more co-ordinated action across unions and workplaces.

As well as this, we need to be widening the campaign - to bridge the public private gap we should be working towards bringing private sector workers and unions into the fight back.

30 November showed that despite the muck of the media, workers are prepared to fight to save our pensions and public services.

The Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) must now name the date for the next round of industrial action in the New Year creating the grounds for a campaign that is sure to bring the government to its knees.

Inside page 3: Complete analysis of an historic day of workers resistance