

Socialist Worker

Beating the drums of war again

We are living in dangerous times. The threats of war are growing across our planet. The big imperialist powers of America, Russia and China and their allies are increasingly involved in overt, covert and proxy wars.

Here are some of the flashpoints

Syria-Iraq

The US is currently flying 60 flights a day, including bombing missions to target the Islamic State.

Despite widespread poverty at home, these are costing \$7.5 million a day.

The propaganda war used to bolster this intervention focuses on the barbaric practices – including beheadings – of the Islamic State group (also known as ISIS).

But the US's own ally, Saudi Arabia, carried out 19 beheadings in August including that of Mohammed bin Bakr al-Alawi for allegedly practicing black magic sorcery.

The Islamic State is a vile sectarian organisation that grew out of the mess that the US had already created in Iraq.

The US originally backed Shia sectarian forces in Iraq, headed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, and turned a blind eye when he unleashed bloody massacres against the Sunni minority.

These in turn began to give support to the Sunni insurgents of the Islamic State. We have now entered a period of sectarian conflagration where both sides carry out massacres.

Ukraine

Over 2,000 people are already dead as the two imperialist forces of Russia and the US-EU alliance fight a deadly proxy war for control.

Ukraine has been devastated by economic policies which favoured wealthy oligarchs at the expense of the mass of people.

Its population has shrunk by 13 percent as millions have emigrated.

This catastrophe exacerbated the pre-existing division between the more rural Ukrainian speaking West and the Russia speaking east.

It is these divisions that both imperialist powers are now trying to exploit in order to gain greater control.

NATO is currently forming a new 10,000-strong multilateral force in response to the crisis and has set up four 'trust funds' to help re-equip Kiev's armies.

These armies include militias run by far right-extremists.

Meanwhile Russia is engaged in a major covert operation to back up separatist forces and has annexed Crimea.

Libya

Remember all the talk of 'humanitarian missions'. These were launched by Britain and France and then turned into a military operation to topple Gaddafi.

Once again, the intervention of imperialist powers has created a gigantic mess as Libya descends into a civil war.

This war is now being fuelled by the intervention of the United Arab Emirates which works with Egypt and Saudi Arabia to establish their regional hegemony.



East China Sea

The declared aim of US foreign policy is to 'pivot towards Asia', to encircle and contain China.

Meanwhile the Chinese regime has doubled its own spending on arms and is now the second biggest global spender.

It too has begun a military build-up in the area and is challenging Japan – the US's principal ally – for control of disputed territory.

While the conflict barely figures in the mainstream media, it foreshadows much deeper rivalries between the US and China.

These flashpoints indicate two key patterns which will shape our world.

One is a new more dangerous imperialist rivalry between the big powers. The growing economic competition between global corporations is developing into political and military competition between their home states.

The reason the US initially invaded Iraq was to gain control over oil supplies to gain leverage over economic rivals like China.

When that failed they moved to a new strategy of 'containing the Chinese' influence by encircling them with its military bases in the region.

And it is not just the US which acts as an imperialist power. Russia and China may be weaker than their main rival – but so too was German imperialism when it confronted Britain during World War I.

Their weaker status does not stop them having imperialist ambitions.

The second feature is the decline of the US as 'the world's policeman'.

In the past, especially after the fall of the Berlin Wall, the US seemed totally dominant. Today, however, its weakness is glaringly obvious.

It was effectively defeated in Iraq, it was forced to retreat from Afghanistan; and it could not muster political support to intervene in Syria.

But the weakening of US imperialism has whetted the appetite of its rivals to take advantage of the situation.

And this is why the world has suddenly become a more dangerous place, with ever more flashpoints developing.

Socialists support none of these 'great' powers. We actively oppose their drives to war and will do everything to counter the propaganda they use to rally their population to their flag.

In the West, that will mean opposing arguments that western liberal civilisation is under threat from Muslim hordes.

One estimate for the cost of eliminating world hunger is \$30 billion annually.

That is the equivalent of just over two week's military spending by the US alone.

It is less than one week's spending from the shocking \$1,747 billion budget for the new global arms race in 2014.

What better reason is there to rid ourselves of a system driven by profit and war?

Inside:

Page 3:



Victory to the Greyhound workers

Pages 4:



Sex, Catholicism and Capitalism

Liverpool hospital restricts Irish abortions

A Liverpool hospital which has been used extensively by Irish women seeking abortions has decided to restrict access.

From now on only one woman a week from the Irish Republic can avail of their services. The restrictions are due to Tory spending cuts

in the NHS. The move means that growing numbers of Irish women will be forced to use privately run clinics which

do not have the same standard of medical care. This announcement coincides with the results of a survey carried out at

Dublin's National maternity Hospital It showed that eight women out of ten whose foetus were diagnosed with a fatal condition decided to

opt for termination. The fact these women will not have their access to NHS facilities in Britain shows why Ireland cannot

simply rely on exporting its problems. We need the repeal of the 8th amendment and proper abortion facilities provided in Ireland

North Justice Minister looks at abortion law

Politicians in the North are under pressure to make abortion available to at least some women.

Justice Minister David Ford is to consult on a change to the law which would allow abortion in cases of fatal foetal abnormalities (FFA) and rape/incest.

But as Ford announced his plans, Jim Wells, soon to be the DUP's new Health Minister, announced that he had tabled an amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill to stop Marie Stopes Belfast providing early medical abortion.

The law in the North is much more liberal than Ford's moves suggest. Court

cases in the 1990s saw judges agreeing that abortion is legal if continuing the pregnancy would leave the woman "a physical or mental wreck" - which covers most women who need an abortion.

But the politicians' interpretation of the law is that it is legal only to save a woman's life.

Ford's proposals are

welcomed but they will not help the vast majority of women who are forced to travel to England for abortion or who access the abortion pill via Women on Web.

The best way to do that is to take abortion out of the criminal code altogether and make it the health issue it should be.



Keep up the boycott of Israeli goods

Over 2,100 people in Gaza were murdered after Israel bombed the area for more than fifty days.

This tiny strip of land - no bigger than the Isle of Man - now stands in ruins.

Yet despite its brutality Israel could not crush the Hamas government. Instead, the Israeli government faces greater strains as the extreme right criticise Netanyahu and calls for even more genocidal attacks.

The latest ceasefire gives some relief but Israel will attack again in the future.

Israel is, in a reality, an apartheid state - and should be treated the same way as South Africa

was in the past. This why we need to the boycott of Israel.

Already over 500 Irish artists and 150 Irish academics have pledged to boycott Israel.

We urge you to do your part by boycotting Israeli goods in shops.

They include Jaffa oranges - which are often grown on confiscated Palestinian land.

Israeli fruit such as grapefruit, peppers, avocados, grapes, figs, Sharon fruits. Check the label before you buy.

Tivall vegetarian products

Israeli herbs - again check the label.

Beauty products from the Dead Sea Company.

€100 million in hand outs to the rich



Toll road companies are getting a special hand-out because of secret clauses inserted into

agreements they made with the state. Last year, €8 million was handed over to the operators

of the Limerick tunnel and the M3. The reason is that traffic on these routes is about 20

percent below the 'penalty points' level.

Traffic targets were drawn up by the National Roads Authority as part of an agreement with the toll companies.

These targets were totally unrealistic but it suited certain elements in the NRA which were closely tied to business interests.

Under the terms of public private partnership agreements, the contracts between companies and state agencies are regarded as commercial secrets.

As a result the NRA did not even tell an Oireachtas Committee, charged with overseeing costs, about its secret clauses.

Now hard pressed taxpayers will end up paying an estimated €100 million in subsidies to wealthy investors.

And that is on top of the €500 million paid out of National Toll Roads, which is controlled by the Roche family, in 2007 for buy out of the Westlink toll in Dublin.

Three easy steps to help solve housing crisis

Evictions, rent rises and homelessness - they are all growing. They are the direct result of the government's policy of stoking up a new property boom.

But it could change if there was any determination to take serious measures to help solve the crisis. Here are three easy steps.

Cut out the tax subsidies to property speculators and build social housing.

The government is by giving tax breaks to large investment company that buy Irish property. By con-



trast they have cut the social housing budget by 80 percent since 2008. If the policy was reversed, they could build thousands of social housing

units. **Impose rent controls.** In 2012, the German parliament passed a law that allows state governments to cap rent

increases in certain areas at 15 percent every three years, compared with 20 percent previously. Why could it not happen here?

Give councils power to take control of unused houses.

People Before Profit councillor, Sonya Stapleton, has a motion before Dublin City Council to force all owners of vacant properties to register.

If it remains vacant after three months, she is proposing that the council use its power to house people there for a nominal rent.

PROPERTY VULTURES SWOOP
NAMA, the Irish state owned Property Company has sold off 800 apartments in Dun Laoghaire and Finglas to the IRES Company, a recently formed REIT.

This is more than they have handed over to local authorities for social housing.

REITs are the latest scam which the wealthy are using to make gains from property. Real Estate Investment Trusts are the main vehicle through which wealthy international investors are buying up Irish

property on the cheap. Incredibly, the FG-Labour government facilitated them by introducing special tax breaks for these vultures in its 2013 budget.

As long as they keep the property for three years and earn more than 70 percent of their income from rents, they are not taxed.

IRES is a front cover for a company owned by a large Canadian REIT called Carpreit which has been buying up property all over Dublin.

Its main shareholder

is Franklin Templeton, a company which also bought Irish government bonds on the cheap at the early stages of the economic crash. It made a fortune when Labour and Fine Gael went back on their promises to 'burn the bondholders' because it was able to sell these bonds on to other investors.

Now it is using its profits to rip off Irish tenants with high rents - and get a tax subsidy from a government that lectures us about 'sharing the pain' of austerity. You couldn't make it up.

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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
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Victory to the Greyhound Workers



Brian O'Boyle

The lockout at Greyhound Recycling began on 17 June when 78 workers were locked out of their jobs for failing to accept a 35% pay cut. The Buckley Brothers who own the company had previously established themselves as the bully-boys of the waste management industry.

Over the previous 18 months they had already succeeded in wresting an extra nine hours unpaid labour from their workers, before doubling their routes. This would be enough to satisfy most employers, but the Buckley Brothers wanted more. Sensing blood they accused the workers of being lazy and unproductive, even though the routes they assigned were becoming increasingly unmanageable.

Then without warning on 17 June they struck again, demanding that every worker accept the new contract or face being sacked.

Planned assault

This was clearly an orchestrated move to break the workers. Over 50 security staff were on site to make sure anyone who refused to sign was forced to leave. Meanwhile, a squad of scab labour was

ready to roll within two hours.

Since then, nearly 100 scabs have been drafted in to make sure the Buckley's keep making their profits. Ironically, it takes almost 25% more scab labour to do the route-maps.

Greyhound is incredibly profitable. According to figures relating to 2011, the company made €8.75 million in profits on one contract from South Dublin County Council. This is not even their biggest money-spinner. However exactly how much Greyhound is currently making is shrouded in mystery, as the company accounts have been moved to the tax haven of the Isle of Man.

Injunctions

Greyhound have also spent hundreds of thousands using the courts to batter their workers into submission. Within hours of locking out his 78 employees, Michael Buckley was at the High Court seeking to injunct them.

Buckley's thinks that it is perfectly acceptable to lock out workers and hand their jobs to scab labour, so long as the workers don't try to defend their livelihoods in any meaningful way.

He is happy if workers want to picket at the gates of Crag Avenue or Knockmitten Industrial estate. Very few

customers actually see this and the long term effect might be to demoralise his opponents as scabs torment them and the trucks keep rolling.

What he will not tolerate is anyone interfering with his ability to make profits. The minute a worker blocks a truck or the entrance to his facilities he wants to criminalise them.

Shamefully, the High Court accepted this logic and granted him his injunction. It seems that depriving 78 people of their rights to provide for their families is perfectly legal, but depriving millionaires of the use of their property for even a few hours is unacceptable.

This is the warped logic of the Irish justice system and Buckley knew it. His injunction may have cost tens of thousands but it was designed to have two main effects – frighten his workers and demobilise their union SIPTU.

The role of supporters

SIPTU is the biggest union in the country with over 200,000 members. This means that it commands something in the region of €5 million every month in union fees.

If SIPTU was to sanction any form of action that broke the injunction, the fear would be that they would be liable

for costs in the High Court. This was enough to make them run for cover.

Over the last ten weeks of the dispute SIPTU have hid behind legal obstacles, forbidding their members from participating in any action that would disrupt Greyhound. This left it up to activists, supporters and the workers families to do the heavy lifting.

From the start small teams of supporters targeted individual Greyhound trucks in various working class communities. This slowed down Buckley's operation



and put pressure on scabs.

The next tactic was to block the main entrances to Buckley's premises. On four or five separate occasions around 30-50 supporters turned up unannounced. This hit the nerve centre of the operation as now tens of trucks were put out of action.

This had the desired effect. Almost immediately, Buckley sought injunctions on five or six high profile activists. TD's and Councillors from People Before Profit and United Left were named in the injunction and Cllr Gino Kenny had costs awarded against him. Buckley eventually succeeded in getting a global injunction against everyone and anyone.

The workers rise

This was calculated to finally break the workers spirits. Buckley thought that by stopping everyone from interfering with his trucks it was only a matter of time before the strike was lost. After 9-10 weeks on strike it would be easy

to lose hope.

In the event the workers united, stood up to the bullying and started to push the Buckley's back. On Monday 25 August, 150 supporters assembled at Crag Avenue alongside big numbers of the workers.

Their aim was simple and effective. Break the Buckley's injunction, stop their business and hurt their profits. All week the gates were blocked meaning that Greyhound was simply unable to function.

Speaking to *Socialist Worker* one of the workers, Ray, summed up the feeling amongst his fellow strikers

"When we first got locked out we weren't exactly sure how to react. We wanted to stop their profits but SIPTU insisted that we had to stay within the injunction. Since Monday we have been hitting the Buckley's in the only way they understand. They thought we would roll over, but we've actually come back stronger and more confident. We are learning every day and the Buckley's now have a major fight on their hands. At the end of this they will wish they never treated us like dirt. Michael Buckley is a bully and there is only one way to react to bullies and that is to stand up to them"

The workers estimated that as much as 60% of the waste was left uncollected. After ten weeks on strike Buckley never budged on his insistence that workers take their pay cuts or lose their employment. Within two days of holding the entrance, the workers were offered unconditional talks in the Labour Relations Commission.

SIPTU

SIPTU is behaving like a weak union in this dispute. It even asked the workers for a period to give up their picket as some sort of good will gesture. The fact that Buckley wasn't asked to give up his scabs or give back the jobs shows exactly how bad our trade unions have actually become.

Lots of the workers have rightly reasoned that SIPTU can't be trusted. However it would be wrong to conclude that they are not needed. Regardless

of how bad they have been up to now, SIPTU are still the major players in the fight to win the Greyhound lockout.

The SIPTU leader, Jack O' Connor, should be calling a Dublin wide mass demonstration inside working hours like he did for the Irish Ferries workers. SIPTU is a massive bureaucratic machine that could quite easily get tens of thousands onto the streets. A letter into every house in Dublin asking people to show solidarity would be one way to build this protest.

Another would be to work through their network of full timers and shop stewards to get out the numbers.

Once SIPTU start playing the role of popularising the protest it is still important that worker militancy backs this up. Workers need to hold their pickets, get SIPTU to build the support base and get into the communities. This strike can win and it is important for workers everywhere that it does.

This is what an effective picket line looks like



This is how workers win!

Sex, Catholicism and Capitalism

Sexual politics are back. In recent weeks, thousands have joined demonstrations demanding abortion rights and the repeal of the eight amendment to the Constitution while other demonstrations called for marriage equality.

Alongside battles over austerity, these issues are set to figure prominently in Ireland's political landscape.

Ireland rivals Malta in having the most restrictive abortion law in Europe.

Hailed by the Labour Party as a major step forward, the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act, that was passed last year, is barbaric.

It makes no provision for abortion after a rape; it forces women to continue with a pregnancy even when there is a fatal foetal abnormality; it even threatens women with 14 years in prison for taking a self-administered abortion pill.

The whole ethos of the Act is that a woman cannot make a free and conscious choice to control her body. Instead she must subject herself to an examination by a panel of psychiatrists and obstetricians, two professions which have a lot of anti-choice doctors.

The demand for marriage equality has a different dynamic. Back in 1969, when the gay movement formed after the Stonewall riots, there was no focus on marriage.

That institution was seen as repressive as happy married straight couples were held up as the ideal model for the regulation of sexuality.

The recent demand for marriage equality reflects both the victories of the gay movement – as well as, sometimes, a demand for greater respectability within the system. In some sections of the movement there is an idealisation of marriage.

In a submission to the Constitutional Convention, Marriage Equality, for example, argued that there was a 'business case' for equality because companies like Google and Apple believed it would lead to greater productivity for happier employees.

But there is also a radical side to demands for equality. At a recent LGBT Noise demonstration, for example, the issue was framed as part of a more general fight for 'equality' which embraced asylum seekers, travellers and wider women's rights.

Socialists defend the right of gay and transgender people to marriage and reject medieval views that marriage is an institution designed by God only for procreation.

No social institution is permanently fixed and we have a democratic right to re-configure them.

Opposition to these changes comes from conservative forces who want to impose 'order' on people.

Instinctively, they recognise that de-



mands for greater control of our bodies can be linked to a demand to the control of society.

Currently, about 70 percent of people in opinion polls support marriage equality.

But no one should underestimate the ability of Catholic fundamentalists to prey on fears about the care of children. In France, for example, these forces formed an alliance with the fascist National Front to mount major demonstration against same sex marriage.

These fascists also used the austerity betrayals of Socialist Party President, Francois Hollande, to increase support for their reactionary views.

The intervention of the fascists on the issue – and the failure of the radical left to actively confront them – contributed to their recent electoral success.

The limits of liberalism

We, therefore, need a clear strategy to win the Repeal the Eight Amendment campaign and gain marriage equality.

This may mean looking beyond political 'liberalism'.

The Irish movement for greater sexual freedom arose out of the wider opposition to the control that the Catholic Church exerted over society.

For decades, that Church appeared to be unbeatable. This led some within the movement to look to the EU as a 'progressive' force.

The hope was the EU might help propel the Irish state into a more liberal position.

In addition the Labour Party thought that only slow incremental change was possible.

They suggested a strategy of creating a 'broad consensus' with elite, rich and powerful figures in Irish society.

The assumption was that a more modern form of Irish capitalism could be created.

What happened next shows how flawed was this belief in gradual reform and a 'liberal' Europe. During the Maastricht Treaty referendum the EU granted a 'special protocol' to Ireland to copper fasten its constitutional protection for the 'unborn'.

In its most recent judgement on the ABC cases in 2010, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that Irish women did not have a right to abortion in their own country on the grounds of health or well-being.

It acknowledged their right only when their life was threatened. Despite its rhetorical veneer about 'human rights' the EU's primary concern is about market freedom – not women's rights.

Nor were new sexual freedoms being won through slow, incremental reform from above. The major shift in Irish society occurred after thousands mobilised in 1992 over the original X case.

This concerned a 14 year old girl who had been raped and was prevented from travelling to Britain.

Such was the scale of mobilisation that it forced the Supreme Court to 're-interpret' the 8th amendment so that it allowed for abortion in cases of women

who were at risk of suicide.

Their judgement did not arise from any legal logic – but from massive social pressure. Moreover, as the fundamentalists suggested, it did help 'open the floodgates' of sexual rights and created an environment where homosexuality



was legalised shortly afterwards.

Those who seek to win change through a consensus with elite figures ignore how, collectively, the political establishment still relies on the most backward forms of social Catholicism to sustain its support.

The core base of Fianna Fáil and much of Fine Gael, especially in the rural areas, relies on this conservative support base.

The Dublin 4 liberals in Fine Gael may squirm uncomfortably but they need this strata to carry out their austerity programme. That is why they make concession after concession so that we end up with a disgraceful measure like the Protection of Life in Pregnancy Act.

Winning

Real change will have to come from mass, popular mobilisation. The recent demonstrations have shown that the

younger Celtic Tiger generation is waking up to the repression that lurks beneath modern Ireland's liberal image.

Instead of toning down militancy to appease Joan Burton, we need to encourage young people to express their outrage at the backwardness of official Irish society. That means loud angry demonstrations, as organisations like LGBT Noise have pioneered.

These demonstrations need to be combined with clear political interventions that give no leeway to excuses for delay and dithering.

There is no reason why women have to wait for yet another government to tackle the 8th Amendment. A referendum to remove this article could take place in a few months if the government so wished.

A simple piece of legislation to call such a referendum should therefore be prepared and all TDs who claim to stand for women's rights should be asked to vote for it.

Finally, there is also a class dimension to this struggle. In the past, upper class men and women have lectured the poor about their morals while having the money to hypocritically engage in whatever lifestyle they chose for themselves.

Their ability to find British solutions to Irish problems has suited them perfectly.

The greatest victims of this Irish hypocrisy, however, are working class women.

Over the last twenty years, 150,000 women have been forced to travel to Britain to seek an abortion.

This has involved needless stress and expense when they least need it.

Those, like the neglected teenage migrant victim of rape in the so-called Y case, who have not had the money to travel have been forced to go through with their pregnancy against their wishes.

The fight for abortion rights and wider freedoms of sexual repression should, therefore, be linked to the fight against austerity and for proper public services.

This would also help to undercut the rhetoric of the fundamentalist right which will target a 'liberal political establishment' and try to channel the anger of society towards reversing the rights we've gained rather than winning more rights to choose our destiny as workers and humans with feelings, hopes and dreams.



Resistance grows to Irish Water



Irish Water are issuing every household with an 'application pack' and informing them that they have until October 31st to return them if they wish to avail of a free water allowance.

This allowance will only cover about one fifth of the average person's needs and the rest must be paid for. The current charge is €278 per year for the average household. Larger households, especially those with young adults over eighteen, will pay much more. The charges will also rise considerably in future years to an estimated €600.

The 'application packs' are part of a propaganda war to get people to accept the charges and have two main functions.

They want you to 'confirm if you are or are not a customer of Irish Water'. In other words, do you want to give up your human right as a citizen to water services or 'buy in' to your own rip-off.

They also want you to give them details about everybody living in the house, including their PPS numbers. This is despite the fact that the current Irish Code of Conduct on privacy prohibits companies from holding such information on individuals.

The new Minister overseeing this robbery is Alan Kelly from the Labour Party. He replaces Phil Hogan who has been rewarded with a €337,000 salary in his first year as EU Commissioner for lecturing the Irish people on the need for austerity.

The profit-making motives of Irish Water were recently revealed when they announced their set of additional charges.

People will have to pay €188 per hour if an Irish Water engineer travels to their home in response to complaints about potential meter or water pipe problems. That will rise to €282 per hour if the request for a site investigation is made out-of-hours.

If a householder wants Irish Water to carry out pressure testing at their property, people will have to fork out €220.

We don't want your meters!

Resistance to Irish Water is growing—even though it has gone completely unreported in the mainstream media. Here we report on three major flashpoints of resistance.

■ CORK: Jim O'Connell reports

One of the areas to be first targeted by Irish Water for metering was Ashbrook Heights which was followed by Palmbury, both in the Leghenamore, Toghher area. The residents put out calls for help and the Ballyphehane/South Parish group responded. They were joined by people from all over the city, including members of People Before Profit and other groups.

After some weeks of intense protest Irish Water retreated, beaten by people power. Even the handful of meters they had installed were removed by Irish Water under the eye of the victorious residents and campaigners.

There were similar scenes in Palmbury and both of those estates are essentially meter-free as of now. Emboldened by the successes in Leghenamore residents and activists in Elmvale and Greenwood took on Irish Water as they arrived in their areas, thoroughly hampering the meter installation program.

Ballygarvan, a small village south of Cork city was one of the next areas in the line of fire. Once again Irish Water had to retreat in the face of strong opposition from residents.

Carrigaline is a sizeable town about 15km south of Cork city centre. Here and in the nearby town of Passage West the main battle lines were drawn. Irish Water made concerted efforts to install meters in at least 10 estates. In most cases they again have had to retreat; their efforts thwarted by the resolve of the ever-growing numbers of concerned residents and activists. To date, twenty estates in Cork are meter free.

■ SLIGO: Seamus O'Boyle reports

An older Sligo estate with more than 400 houses has stood up to Irish Water.

'When Irish Water came to the Cranmore estate, these were met with protestors who resisted the meter installation. Irish Water responded by calling the Gardai and telling some residents that their social welfare would be stopped if they resisted meters.

'The Gardai, however, felt that the situation was so tense that they decided to call a public meeting in the estate.

'When the meeting took place it was chaired by a Garda, and an Irish Water representative put their case.

'The meeting, however, voted overwhelmingly that they did not want meters and Irish Water was forced to leave.

■ CLONDALKIN: Leah Speight reports

'Irish water have been driven out of Clondalkin in Dublin and have not returned since. It started with a street meeting in St Ronan's called by People Before Profit councillor, Gino Kenny. After receiving notices that Irish Water was coming to install meters, eighty people voted for resistance. When Irish Water arrived, they were told by crowds of people to leave.

Initially, the Gardai hung around during the stand-off but eventually the company

was forced out.

'This example was followed by other estates around the area. In Green Park, 60 people attended the street meeting and in Cherrywood a hundred turned up.

'Anti-water charge protestors also staged a major 300 strong demonstration through Clondalkin and showed their determination to resist.

'At one stage, Irish Water approached Councillor Gino Kenny and asked him to call off the protests. The request showed that they had no experience of dealing with the new political force that is People Before Profit. We don't do sell outs.'

How to resist the water charges



The water charges can be beaten by people power. You can help defeat them by supporting some of the following moves.

■ Contact People Before Profit when Irish Water delivers their 'application pack' in your estate.

We will call a public meeting to explain how the charges are designed to work and will put the case for resistance. It will be up to people at

each meeting to decide if they want to ignore Irish Water's request to buy into water charges.

■ Put around the word for a major demonstration on October 11th.

Two major unions, UNITE and MANDATE, have been working to pull together a broad coalition called Right-2-Water to mobilise people against the charges. They will organise a major demonstration

before the budget, on October 11th. You can support the demonstration by distributing bundles of leaflets to your friends and neighbours.

■ Demand that all parties give a pledge to abolish the charges.

Ask them not to support or enter any government that supports water charges.

Water charges must be made into a 'red line' issue from which there is no retreat.



Ukraine: the clash of imperialisms

John Molyneux

The escalating conflict in the Ukraine is a tragedy for the people of that country and a danger to all the people of Europe and the world.

On the one hand 'the West' - the ruling classes of the US and the EU - have been engaged in a sustained attempt to detach Ukraine from the Russian sphere of influence and bring it under their own control.

This is part of a wider attempt to dominate all the buffer countries of Eastern Europe - Poland, Hungary, Rumania etc. - by drawing them into the EU and NATO and thus isolate Russia.

On the other hand Russia is desperate to retain as much control as it can of this zone, which used to be directly part of its empire in the days of the Soviet Union.

At the moment Ukraine is the front line of this wider conflict.

The West is backing the government they helped impose in Kiev and Russia is aiding the 'pro-Russian' rebels or 'separatists' in the eastern half of the country.

The Ukrainian ruling class is itself split between those 'oligarchs' (multi-millionaire businessmen) who want closer ties with the EU and those linked to Russia.

The military situation is serious and getting worse, with over 2500 people



killed already, with allegations that Russian troops have entered the country.

There is a possibility of a bloody partition of the country and with the threat that the whole conflict can mushroom

into a new cold war, with all the perils that poses for humanity.

The ordinary people of the Ukraine who are being fought over in this conflict have no interest in supporting either side.

Neither the EU nor the US nor Putin care about the people of the Ukraine.

All talk about sovereignty and the rights of small nations is complete hypocrisy whether it comes from the supporters of

Israel, invaders of Iraq and manipulators of the IMF.

It is also hypocrisy when it comes from former members of the KGB (like Putin) and the invaders of Georgia and Chechnya.

Both these sets of imperialists are committed only to pursuing their own economic and geo-political interests.

The same is true of the wider conflict developing between the West and Russia.

The Irish Government and political elite, whether Fine Gael, Fianna Fail or Labour, will, of course, side with America and the EU, in violation of Ireland's constitutional neutrality because they will consider that that is where their bread is buttered.

And RTE and the main newspapers will go along with this.

In reaction to this, some on the left will be tempted to line up behind Putin and Russia - both on the dubious principle that 'one's enemy's enemy is one's friend' and out of vague nostalgia for the Soviet Union.

This is a mistake.

Certainly our most immediate task is to combat our own government and its support for US imperialism.

But this should not involve having any illusions in the Russian regime or imagining that it is somehow a progressive force, either within Russia or internationally.

After the beheading of American journalist James Foley: who created ISIS?

Rory O'Neill

The beheading of American journalist James Foley has once again shone a spotlight on Iraq.

Foley was executed by the Islamic State, which evolved out of the militant Islamist group, ISIS.

This has sparked outrage across the Western world and further fuelled calls for military intervention.

ISIS is undoubtedly a brutal, exceptionally violent sectarian organisation.

As it expands across northern Iraq and in to Syria, religious minorities and political opponents come under attack.

However, calls for Western intervention to protect the people of Iraq are misplaced.

The truth is that the sectarian horrors unfolding across the country are ultimately the product of American imperialism, and further military action in Iraq can only create further devastation and division.

Whilst sectarian divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims existed in Iraq before the American invasion of 2003, there was nothing like the savage violence of the 2006-07 Civil War.

This is now being repeated in the battle between ISIS forces and the central Iraqi state for control of the country.

When the US invaded Iraq, they relied on the classic imperialist tactic of divide and rule.

Imperialism always tries to protect its position in an occupied country by playing one group off against another.

In Iraq, the US was happy to encourage sectarian divisions between Sunnis



and Shias to alleviate the threat of united resistance against their own imperialist agenda.

Sectarian Shia parties were recruited to govern the new post-Saddam Iraqi state, whilst Shia paramilitaries were encouraged to join the police and security forces and repress the Sunni fighters and population.

The US also allowed al-Qaeda to grow within Iraq (an unprecedented development), in the knowledge that this sectarian Sunni organisation would target

Shias and further drive a wedge in any potential resistance movement.

It is out of al-Qaeda that ISIS would emerge.

(Co-incidentally, the US would also later support ISIS in the Syrian Civil War against dictator Bashar al-Assad).

Following the victory of Shia forces in the 2006-07 Civil War, Nouri al-Maliki ruled Iraq, supported by the US.

His violent sectarian regime was despised by the Sunni population, and the country

even had its own 'Iraqi Spring' throughout 2013 as Sunnis protested peacefully against the regime of al-Maliki.

The government responded with mass arrests and attacks on Sunni neighbourhoods.

In desperation and the absence of any genuine non-sectarian revolutionary movement, sectarian Sunni groups like ISIS were able to grow in strength.

But the sectarian split has been intensifying for years.

Not all calories are equal...Dying for that sugar high?

Ireland - along with most of the developed world - is in the midst of an obesity epidemic. According to some studies over half the Irish population is overweight and levels of childhood obesity are growing at an alarming rate.

Obesity has been linked to many health problems from type 2 diabetes to an increased prevalence of cardiovascular disease, stroke and certain cancers.

Hardly a day goes by without a new study or article reporting rising obesity levels and the dangers of an unhealthy diet or lifestyle.

As a society we have arguably never been as well informed about diet and nutrition as we are today and yet for a frighteningly large - and rapidly growing - section of the population our diets are increasingly unhealthy bringing with it an increase in a whole range of diet-related medical

problems.

How can we explain this strange state of affairs? The answer lies in how our food is manufactured under a capitalist system of production.

Producers seeking profits must reduce their costs and it is cheaper to produce lower quality food loaded with additives than to produce nutritionally balanced food.

The very fact that your food has a label detailing its nutritional content is an indication that it has been processed in some way.

The chances are that the cheaper - and often the more convenient (think 'ready meals') your food is, the more processed it is.

Processed food tends to have reduced levels of protein and fiber while at the same time having higher levels of fat, salt and

sugar. In recent times much attention has been focused on the dangers of these high levels of sugar present in our foods. Our bodies - like those of almost all animals are hardwired to like sugar.

Sweet foods are rarely toxic and as a result most animals have evolved to seek out those foods that are high in sugar.

Sugar is also a very cheap food additive and so it is more profitable for producers to add large amounts - whether as processed granular sugar or in some other form such as 'high-fructose corn syrup' to nutritionally poor foodstuffs than to produce nutritionally balanced products.

While a moderate level of sugar is not a problem for most people, the high levels in processed food can be very problematic.

When combined with the other qualities of processed food, such as low fiber content, the human body cannot process

the high levels of sugar and the excess can build up as fatty deposits in the liver.

This in turn increases the body's production of insulin, which in a vicious cycle leads to yet further fat retention and accounts for much of the prevalence of type 2 diabetes in the population.

The capitalist system exacerbates these problems in other ways. Trends such as falling wages, longer working hours and rising food prices all combine to make it harder for people to buy high quality food and spend the time cooking nutritionally balanced meals.

Financial and time constraints continually push people in the direction of cheap convenience food. Similar constraints on access to regular, varied exercise exacerbate this trend to obesity and diabetes.

Capitalism is a system riven with



contradiction.

In the developed world it gives us an overabundance of often unhealthy food while in the developing world millions suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

The human race is more than capable of producing enough healthy and nutritious food to supply the entire world population but the tyranny of the market and private production for profit prevents an equitable distribution of food.

It is only by challenging this system that we can ensure access to healthy and nutritious food for all of the world's population.

Scotland, Independence and the Left

There is a serious whiff of panic coming out of Westminster as a referendum on Scottish independence threatens the breakup of the United Kingdom. The ex-NATO general secretary and former UK minister of defence, George Robertson, has warned that: "Independence would be cataclysmic for the world", and that: "The forces of darkness", Britain's enemies, "would love it".

Socialists, however, see two main anti-imperialist reasons why Scottish independence is worthy of full support.

Firstly, independence for Scotland would diminish Britain's role as the junior partner to US imperialism, seriously weakening both sides of the so-called "special relationship".

In practice the break-up of the British state would make it much harder for what's left of the rest of the UK to support further US military adventures and illegal wars in countries like Syria and across the wider Middle East.

Secondly, the removal of Trident nuclear submarines from the Clyde would be a massive blow to Britain's position as a leading nuclear state and a real threat to the ability of the US to use Britain as a launch pad for its missiles in Europe.

The generals in Washington and at NATO HQ are terrified of losing the Faslane nuclear naval base.

This is because they are acutely aware that finding deep waters around the UK to host the nuclear-armed "Trident" submarines would mean spending tens of billions of pounds to relocate it.

The NATO question in the referendum campaign is significant because Alex Salmond and his Scottish National Party (SNP) have ditched an immensely popular 30-year-old policy of opposing NATO, while still opposing Trident.

Socialists and anti-war activists will need to fight to ensure that an independent Scotland quits NATO and be ready to oppose Salmond and an SNP which is committed to staying in this nuclear club.



A central plank of the independence movement has been opposition to more Tory austerity.

The campaign has not been char-

acterised by a narrow and hardened Scottish nationalism.

On the contrary, the independence movement and its various offshoots

— Radical Independence campaign, Women for Independence or Tommy Sheridan's Hope Over Fear tour — have fast become a political lightning



Alex Salmond: Ditched an immensely popular policy of opposing NATO

conductor for much of the class anger that exists against austerity.

This class anger is finding its political expression in raised hopes and expectations of a Scotland that is opposed to privatisation, zero-hours contracts, child poverty and the whole package of neoliberalism on offer from Britain Plc.

Opposition to Tory austerity is shown in a recent opinion poll, which showed that if Scots consider another Tory government in 2015, then support for independence increases from 43 percent to a majority, 59 percent.

Yet there are many good trade unionists and labour movement activists who are opposed to independence.

The Red Paper Collective, which is made up of Labour Party members, the Communist Party and some left trade union officials, is putting a left-wing version of the 'No to independence' position.

They argue that a Yes vote will lead to a divided working class and is tantamount to abandoning the unity of Scottish, English and Welsh workers that was forged out of the great battles of the Chartists, the General Strike of 1926 and up to the defeat of Thatcher's hated poll tax in 1990.

Workers' unity

But the unity of the British state and the unity of the working class are not the same thing.

Unity between workers north and south of the Scottish border does not rest on the maintenance of the British state or the capitalist interests it represents.

Neither will the need and opportunity for solidarity between workers north and south disappear if Scotland becomes independent.

There is a rich history of workers supporting each other against unscrupulous bosses: from the great miners' strike of 1984-85 to the poll tax.

That should continue after the referendum.

Smoke Out The Rats: The Case for Cannabis Legalisation

By Freddie Trevaskis Hoskin

On the 23rd of August hundreds mobilised on a demonstration in support of the legalisation of cannabis in Ireland.

In the US, the states of Colorado and Washington are allowing the drug to be used recreationally and Colorado sold \$14 million worth in the first month alone.

Why then should socialists be interested in the legalisation of cannabis and the decriminalisation of drugs in general?

Socialists see locking people up for using drugs as unhelpful but also do not want to see drugs promoted for profit the way alcohol and tobacco are. Safety has to come first and people before profit.

Cannabis is a relatively safe drug and has been shown to be less harmful than alcohol or tobacco.

One of the arguments sometimes used against its regulation is its supposed position as a 'gateway' drug. This is a flawed argument because if you are using harder drugs, the taboo around softer drugs wouldn't deter you.

This does not mean that all who smoke cannabis will wind up on harder drugs, merely that people on



harder drugs have probably used cannabis.

When cannabis is criminalised in the same way as other drugs, a person usually goes to the same kind of people to buy it and then can be more tempted to move onto the harder drugs used within those circles.

Karl Gill, a speaker at the protest and a People Before Profit councillor

pointed out that the production of cannabis is now a global industry.

He raised the issue of workers' rights within this drug industry because human trafficking, low wages and bad conditions are the norm.

This is down to the very fact that it is illegal.

Workers are stripped of their ability to fight for their rights as

they will be either arrested for doing illegal work or silenced by the capitalist drug barons who control the industry.

It is indeed a glimpse into what unregulated capitalism looks like. The only solution to this is public control over production and regulated distribution of the drug so that workers' rights and consumer safety is actually respected.

Of course there is an obvious class nature to enforcing drug policy in Ireland.

Someone from a working class area is far more likely to be arrested for the possession of a small amount of cannabis than a CEO who has cocaine flowing out of every drawer in his desk.

Intolerant drug laws are used as a stick to beat people that the state wants to harass but needs a reason to do so.

What then of the decriminalisation of drugs in general? If someone is struggling with an addiction problem, to heroin for example, criminalizing them is an unnecessary and unfair extra burden to place upon them.

People with severe drug addictions tend to be those who have already been neglected by society: the poor, the homeless and the mentally ill.

They may attempt to find some refuge in hard drugs and are then further ostracised for that decision.

It is often claimed that such illegality is a deterrent and prevents more people from using hard drugs. This is simply untrue.

In countries such as Portugal where all drugs have been decriminalised and addicts are encouraged to seek help the usage rate of all drugs has actually declined!

Taking away the romanticisation which surrounds the illicit drugs and actually offering a supportive environment seems to be a far better approach than merely demonising users of hard drugs.

We must be careful, however, to argue not just to legalise soft drugs and to decriminalise hard drugs but to push for proper support services for users and full regulation of workers conditions within the industry including alcohol and tobacco. Advertising encouraging drug use should be banned across the board for all psychoactive drugs.

If big business gets hold of the drug industry — as they do for alcohol and tobacco — then the welfare of people who use drugs will be left by the wayside in the name of huge profits.

Socialist Worker

Hospital crisis as Poots slashes healthcare budget Cancer care; elective care; domiciliary care all targeted Fight the health cuts!

The Royal Victoria Hospital has an excellent reputation for dealing with Accident and Emergency cases.

But now it is under enormous pressure as it faces a huge increase in the number of cases – and has fewer staff to deal with them.

The result is longer waits and greater stress on hospital staff.

Its problems grew after the closure of the Accident and Emergency unit at the Belfast City Hospital which was treating over 40,000 cases annually.

This led to a huge overflow of patients seeking help in the Royal.

And that has produced regular crises, with a 'major incident' being declared last January and scores of people facing long waits for treatment.

Its other problem is Health Minister Edwin Poots.

Poots is a right-wing Tory who sees public services as a nuisance which needs funding reduced. He has just announced a £140 million cuts package.

Among Poots' proposals are huge cuts to elective care; cancer services; a reduction in the amount of locum doctors; cuts in domiciliary care; and pay restraints for staff.



Health Minister Poots

The cuts are so horrendous that they would provoke a major crisis.

But to cover his own backside, Poots says that the Stormont Executive as a whole must take responsibility.

He knows that he might be made legally responsible for any deaths that occurred due to his cuts and he wants to spread the blame.

Poots is also engaging in a strategy of political blackmail.

He claims that Sinn Féin's veto of the Welfare Reform Act caused the funding crisis and is demanding that they also share responsibility for the health cuts.

The reality is that the Tory cuts – which Poots supports – have led to a reduction of the block grant by £78 million.

As good nationalists, Sinn Féin will naturally blame Westminster cuts.

But they go on to argue that

Poots 'cannot manage his budget' – which is code for declaring that he did not bring in smaller cuts earlier on.

The looming crisis in the health services tells you everything about what is rotten about Northern politics.

Public services are already being run down and Sinn Féin and the DUP play a game of 'pass the parcel'.

They are part of the same Executive that draws up budgets which lead to reduced services.

But they want to be part of a government administration and part of an opposition at the same time.

The irony is that both these parties support a reduction on corporation tax for big business.

Even while they cry about cuts, they propose more hand-outs to big business so that they pay

even less tax than they do at the moment.

The health service will not be defended by Stormont politicians playing cynical games while backing austerity.

We need a mass popular movement of health workers and the wider working-class community who come together to demand a proper health service.

When it comes to saving services at the Royal, it is pretty obvious what we need – a re-opening of the Accident and Emergency at the Belfast City Hospital; more hospital beds and the recruitment of more nursing and medical staff.

And when it is asked who will fund it, the answer is also straightforward.

Instead of reducing taxes on big business, we should be forcing them to pay more.

PROTEST:

**End the Crisis at the
Royal Victoria Hospital**

**ENOUGH IS
ENOUGH
NO MORE CUTS**

Saturday 6th September at
2pm Assemble outside Falls
Road entrance of RVH

Protest organised by People Before Profit
and supported by Unison RVH Branch

