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lhey say Ireland is in recovery. They say we should vote for stability and not risk chaos

They say that after eight years of austerity, eight years of pain, everything is coming good – just in time for the election. And just in time for election they have promises to make and crumbs to

give out, so long as we don't rock the boat. Now there's an election coming they're going to abolish the Universal Social Charge going to abous i die comes.

Now there's an election they're going to find something for the pensioners. Just vote Labour again and they will abolish the 8th Amendment that they've spent the last five years defending.

We say what sort of recovery is it where

the rich are getting richer but the housing crisis is getting worse than ever with 90,000 households on the waiting list?

What sort of a recovery is it where the

Health Service is in bits and nurses have to threaten to go on strike to try to get something done about the crisis in the A&Es.? [See Nurses fight Overcrowding p.2]

Recovery for 1%

We say that's a recovery for the 1% not a recovery for the people. We say do they really expect us to forget what they've done to the ordinary people of this country over the last 5 years?

Do they really expect us to be grateful that now, with the election only weeks away they are trying to bribe us with our own money, with the money robbed from us during all the austerity years?

Do they expect us to forget the massive wage cuts and the long wage freeze? Do they



expect us to forget the extra unfair charges and taxes, the USC, the household tax, the property tax and the hated water charges? Extra taxes imposed on the people while the giant corporations – the likes of Google

and Starbucks - got away virtually scot free and in the case of Apple are protected by the government from having to pay back the €19 billion – yes €19 thousand million! - that they owe this country.

Do they expect us to forget the endless vicious cuts to essential services: to SNAs, to Home Helps, to DEIS schools, to child benefit, to unemployment benefit, to the community services, to Travellers' accommo

dation, to all the basic needs of the people, while the bankers got bailed out and the Denis O'Briens and Dermot Desmonds got an ever larger slice of the cake?

No stability

We say this is not going to happen. Even on the most favourable opinion poll pre-dictions Fine Gael and Labour will not be returned with an overall majority.

Some of the better off classes are rallying

round Fine Gael but Labour are going to be decimated in working class areas.

They will need numerous 'independents' to form a government. 'That is not stability.

Besides what they call a 'stable' government is one that cannot be held to account

or pressurized by the people and is 'free' to break all its promises as Labour did last time. We say that in this election we need

three main things to happen
The anti-water charges and anti-austerity

movement has to be seen on the streets in big numbers.

People are not paying the charges but we need to make the water charges a central issue in the election. All out for the Right2Water demonstrations on 23 January and the Saturday before the election

Clear out the Establishment parties: no votes for Fine Gael, Labour or Fianna Fail. Voting Labour won't restrain FG, it will just strengthen them and don't forget Fianna Fail wrecked the country and brought us austerity in the first place. They haven't changed their spots.

Vote for the radical left, first and foremost

People Before Profit and the Anti-Austerity Alliance, as a strong voice for people power and a real challenge to the system.

Then Larkin left us - we seemed

The night was black for the work-

But on came Connolly with new hope and counsel His motto was that we'd rise again.

or the next three months all or the next three months all Ireland's gombeen politicians will wrap themselves in the green flag and lay claim to the mantle of the martyrs of 1916.

In a display of deep hypocrisy Enda Kenny and Joan Burton will – if they

are given the chance - stand on the steps of the GPO and express their gratitude to the heroes who gave their lives for Irish freedom and paved the way for the foundation of the state, while at the same time presiding over

the desecration of Moore St. by their developer friends. As the poet said: Now charlatans wear dead men's shoes, aye and rattle dead men's bone. 'Ere the dust has settled on their

tombs, they've sold the very stones
[Liam Weldon, Dark Horse on the

Wind]

What Enda the Blue Shirt and Brutal oan will not want us to remember is that their political forebears, far from supporting the Rising, denounced it bitterly. James Connolly was the ONLY member of the Irish Labour Party to take part and in 1915 the Labour Party cancelled its Conference so as not to have to say whether or not it supported



the First World War.

'Sedition'

The Irish Independent, the paper of the southern middle class, owned by William Martin Murphy - the
Denis O'Brien of his day - wrote that
it was important that 'the worst of the
ringleaders be singled out and dealt

with as they deserve' i.e. be executed while The Irish Times called the Rising 'sedition' and demanded that it be 'rooted out once and for all ...with a severity which will make any repetition

... impossible for generations to come'
Equally clear is that none of the establishment politicians has any connection to the ideals for which the

Rising was fought. The Volunteers of 1916 fought for 'the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland' not for it to be handed over to Apple and Google, crooked bankers and dodgy developers. They declared the control of 'Irish destinies to be sovereign and indefeasible' not sold to the highest bidder or mortgaged to the US military in Shannon.

They wanted to 'cherish all the children of the nation equally', not see thousands of children go to school hungry while others ride in Mercedes.

To make these ideals a reality Socialist Worker believes we need another rising. Winning seats in Dáil at the election will help – it is useful to have tribunes of the people in parliament - but it's pe enough. We need a rising of the people.

Revolution

That's not a repetition of 1916, with a few hundred people seizing the GPO, heroic as that was, but a mass movement with the spirit of the water charges movement in November 2014, only even bigger. And not only marching in the streets but also seizing their workplaces as workers did during the War of Independence and taking control of their communities and towns

through local assemblies.
We need a real people's revolution rooting out the gombeen politicians and their billionaire cronies and making every elected representative accountable to their electors.

And we need to seize the wealth of the country, its main industries and its natural resources, from the 1% of the super rich that have stolen them, so that really come before profit – the socialist republic for which Connolly fought and died.

Corruption Irish Style: A Timeline

■ 1935 Wicklow Gold Inquiry into mining licenses. Fianna Fail Minister for Industry and Commerce Sean Lemass granted mining licences to two politicians. Michael Comyn and Bob Briscoe. They leased the land to a British mining company in exchange for £12,000 and royalties on gold found. Lemass was accused of favouring Fianna Fail colleagues. Lemass was cleared on the grounds that he did not benefit financially!

■ 1943 Tribunal was set up after allegations that advance information was selectively made available when Great Southern Railway and the Dublin United Transport Company were merged to

Dublin United Transport Company were merged to form CIE, allowing shareholders to make massive profits. Tribunal found several bodies and people were tipped off before the plan went public were typed off before the plan went public including Bank of Ireland, the Representative Body of the Church of Ireland and the Archbishop John Charles McQuaid. It found that they all made financial gain yet no action was taken against any

of them:

1991 Tribunal established into the Beef Industry
which looked into the relationship between Charlie Haughey and beef magnate, Larry Goodman. The government was accused, of providing export insurance to Goodman for sale of beef in Iraq and giving him favourable treatment. The tribunal uncovered many serious malpractices in the industry, but cleared Haughey of any wrongdoing.

■ 1997 McCracken Tribunal investigated secret

payments by Ben Dunne to Haughey and, former Fine Gael cabinet minister, Michael Lowry. It found that Haughey had given untrue evidence under oath and that Lowry was knowingly assisted by Dunne in evading tax. However criminal proceedings against Haughey failed when it ruled that Haughey would not get a fair trial due to prejudicial comments!

that Haughey would not get a fair trial due to prejudicial comments!

1997 Moriarty Tribunal investigates the financial affairs of Haughey and Lowry. Report not published till 2011. It finds that:

Haughey stole a "sizeable proportion" of a medical fund established for Brian Lenihan

Haughey accepted cash for favours throughout his political career.

■ Confirmed facts regarding payments by Dunne

In Haughey accepted cash for favours throughout his political career.

In Confirmed facts regarding payments by Dunne to Haughey and Lowry.

In Denis O'Brien gave substantial sums of money to Fine Gael to make friends in the party.

In Denis O'Brien, or persons close to him, gave large amounts of money to Michael Lowry.

In Lowry, in return, sought to be involved to a greater degree in the licensing process, influencing the decision in favour of O'Brien's ESAT company.

In 1997 Mahon Tribunal investigates planning decisions and land rezoning in the 1990s in Dublin. Runs till 2012 (!) at a cost of about €300 million (!!). As a result former assistant county manager, George Redmond, who devised a system that if a new planning application was made without his assistance, the service charges and levies would be fixed at least 100% more than with his help, and former FF minister Ray Burke, have served prison sentences for tax evasion and Liam Lawlor has served three prison sentences for non-cooperation with the inquiry.

Bertie Ahern

3 October 2006 Ahern made a statement in the Dail defending his actions in taking loans totalling IR£39,000 (€50,000) from friends in Ireland and £8,000 (€11,800) as a gift from businessmen in Manchester in 1993 and 1994.

When questions were raised about IR£50,000 (€63,300) he had lodged to his bank account in 1994, he claimed this was money he had saved over a period of time when he had no bank account! May 2007, it emerged that Ahern's partner, Celia Larkin, received £30,000 from the businessman Micheâl Wall towards the refurbishment of a house that Ahern was to buy. Mahon Tribunal chairman commented that there were "significant gaps" in the money trail provided by Ahern.

Michael Fingleton

Chief executive of Irish Nationwide Building Society until 2009, found to be response.

■ Michael Fingleton
Chief executive of Irish Nationwide Building
Society until 2009, found to be responsible for
arranging loans for politicians and other public
figures, with some loans totalling over €10 million.
Among those who received loans were: Charlie
McCreevy (FF), Don Lydon (FF), Francis O'Brien
(FF), and Celia Larkin who received a loan without
requiring any proof of income.
■ Denis Foley
FF Kerry TD and businessman, had offshore
account to evade tax. Eventually had to pay
€580,000 to Revenue Commissioners to cover
undeclared income.

undeclared income.

Neither Haughey, nor Ahern, nor Fingleton nor Foley were ever prosecuted.

Nurses fight overcrowding

Socialist Worker stands in complete solidarity with nurses in the campaign they are waging to combat the crisis in the Health Service. We are pleased to publish this article by Nurse Jo Tully of INMO explaining the issues involved.

his week the nurses in Emergency Departments (E/D) are to take strike action against the increasingly more dangerous and unbearable conditions for both patients and staff. The key problem can be summed up in a few words - too few beds and

The main pressure on A&E is caused by the inability to move patients in ED who require admission into beds in the main hospital. This is due to an ongoing crisis in bed capacity which has been worsened significantly by the crippling austerity measures imposed over the last

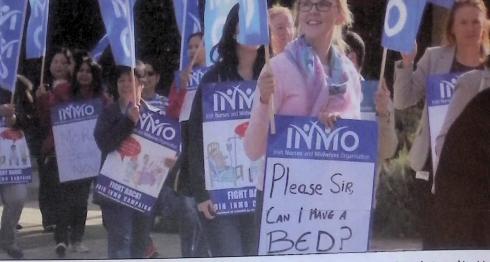
6 or 7 years.
According to OECD Report 2014, Ireland has only about half of the acute hospital beds per capita of comparable income countries – 2.8 per 1000 population as opposed to an OECD average of 4.8 per 1,000. This is further compounded by a lack of capacity in chronic and community facilities for patients whose acute stage of treatment is complete but who have no step-down facilities to go - so resulting in delayed discharge from the acute hospital

settings.

Along with a variety of serious cuts Along with a variety of serious cuts - to community services and to wages - austerity also imposed a 10.33% cut (approximately 5,000) to existing nursing staffing numbers, driving thousands of young nurses abroad while leaving conditions in our hospitals utterly impossible. According to the OECD 2014 Report, Ireland now has the lowest spend on health as a proportion of its GDP of any country in western Europe

Trolley crisis

Pressure in the Emergency Departments has been an issue since the mid 1990's and in March 2006 the national daily number of patients on trolleys in our EDs reached record the Holey in the Est seather lecture levels of over 500. Mary Harney, the then Health Minister, declared the ED situation a 'National Emergency'. Shamefully, rather than increasing bed capacity the opposite happened. The austerity years saw truly eye-watering cuts of 2.7 billion to the health budget



and a further reduction of more than 2,000 beds. This has inevitably radically worsened a 'national emergency 'crisis sending trolley figures soaring. The annual trolley figures are now 63% higher than they were in 2006, up from

It is against this background that ED nurses voted by 92% for Strike action last November. In December, shortly before the strike was to commence, the INMO leadership in talks with the HSE agreed to put new proposals to its members aimed at avoiding the strike.

Proposais

These new proposals involved a reit-eration of the Escalation Policy brought in by Mary Harney whereby a particular and specific level of overcrowding in an ED is to trigger a specific process to relieve the numbers of patients in

ED. This process included:

1: the ED going 'off call' so that ambulances will be diverted to other EDs in the city or region.

2: if necessary cancelling all elective procedures and surgery in the affected hospital in order to make beds available to the emergency patients in E/D thereby relieving the trolley overcrowding 3: by way of compensation it offered some minor (felt by many nurses to be rather insulting) concessions such as 2 days extra leave over the next two years in lieu of missed meal breaks. It also offered €1,500 to new recruits as a one-off education bursary paid at the end of the first year of employment

Despite the fact that the union leadership pushed for acceptance of these proposals the members, rightly in my view, voted by 58% to 42% to reject

them.

The point is that while these proposals may ease the situation very temporarily in ED they will not solve the capacity crisis in the Health Service. For instance when one ED goes 'off call ' it simply The cancelling of elective procedures and surgery will have inevitable negative repercussions. It will inevitably add to already lengthening waiting lists and patients on ever lengthening waiting list will get sicker and sicker with increasing potential to ultimately present in ED

as emergency patients.

On the recruitment issue - a once off €1,500 education bursary is hardly likely to entice nurses back from abroad to work in deplorable conditions for wages that have been decimated in cities which have seen rocketing rent rises.

The truth is that on their own these

proposals can not resolve the ED crisis. The overcrowding and trolley crisis in the Emergency Department is only the most obvious manifestation of a Health Service which is imploding. The austerity measures imposed to save the banks since the 2008 crash have compounded the problems in a health service that

was already in deep crisis.

For both patients and nurses conditions throughout the Health Service are now unbearable.

The situation is that while Health Minister Varadkar announced before Christmas his intention to open 300 beds, he acknowledged, just last week, that there is now a serious 'nurse recruitment crisis' and that he cannot attract nurses back into the system. The fact is that despite his new recruitment drive we continue to lose nurses and have less nurses in the system than we did last year.

last year.

The crisis is far bigger than the Emergency Departments alone and requires a wider action and broader demands than those being made by the union leadership.

Students resist fees and loans

Rory O'Neill, TCD student

rish third-level education is facing a big funding crisis. Public funding has been cut extensively since the beginning of the economic crisis, while the student body is expected to have grown by approximately 30% by 2028. It has been the policy of the government to shift the cost of third-level education on to students themselves.

third-level education on to students themselves.

Ruairi Quinn's infamous pledge not to increase the student contribution was quickly scuttled after the formation of the coalition government in 2011. The registration charge has been gradually raised to €3000 a year.

Now, as the government looks for new answers to Irish education's funding system, the leaking of the Cassells Report indicates that they will look to a student loan system.

look to a student loan system.

The idea that student loans are a benevolent measure designed to assist students and improve access to

assist students and improve access to education is a myth.

The purpose of the Cassells Report is to examine new methods of funding Irish education. Any student loan system will be for the purpose of



Ruairi Quinn TD signs pledge against fees in 2011.

facilitating a dramatic increase in

facilitating a dramatic increase in student fees.

This should come as bad news to all current and future students in Ireland. Wherever third-level loans have been introduced, the result has been to saddle students with a pile of debt upon completion of their degree.

The average student in the United States will graduate with over \$25000 in debt.

There has been speculation about

the possibility of raising fees here to as high as £16000.

Campaign formed

Students Against Fees is a campaign group formed in Trinity College Dublin to fight the introduction of student loans

to hight the introduction of student loar and any accompanying increase in fees. The campaign's first goal was to win the university's Students' Union to an anti-fees and anti-loans position

- a position which had been rejected by SU Council earlier in the year. In December, however, after weeks of campaigning, a second, more radical motion brought to Council members of the group was nearly unanimously passed. This means that TCD SU is now mandated to oppose and campaign against the introduction of student loans and any increase in fees.

This is an important victory for any prospective provement against student.

prospective movement against student loans. The Students' Union is the body with the most resources and mobilising capacity at its disposal. But if it is to be successful, this is only a start.

Last year we saw a current of student activism across the globe, most notably in Amsterdam where there was a major occupation in protest at the corporatisation of education.

Here in Ireland, students in NCAD successfully fought for the resimption of

successfully fought for the resignation of their college's Director and highlighted the corrosive effect of austerity on students' education. 2016 should be a year of wide-scale student mobilisation and activism in Ireland.

The victory in Triaing should

and activism in Ireland.

The victory in Trinity should encourage students in other colleges and universities across the country to start organising and discussing how to fight back against the government's ongoing attacks on education. When students units and organism that say win

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WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR greater political and economic democracy. DIA MELIAIRAMI TANIADA

unite and organise, they can win. Join the Socialists Fill in the form and send to SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8 Name

People Before Profit election campaign: Meet our Candidates

eople Before Profit is fielding its strongest ever team of candidates for the coming general election. For our second Meet our Candidates feature Socialist Worker talked to four of candidates in the

Dublin area: Richard Boyd Barrett TD in Dun Laoghaire, Cllr. Gino Kenny in Dublin Mid West, Cllr. John Lyons in Dublin Bay North and Cllr. Brid Smith in Dublin South Central.

We asked hem how they got involved in politics, what are the main national and local issues they want to highlight, their attitude to the new AAA-PBP alliance and for general comments they wanted to make about the election and state of Ireland and the world today.

Richard Boyd Barrett, elected in 2011, is a sitting TD. He is from Dun Laoghaire and has been active in politics since he was nineteen. He says, 'As a student I travelled to Palestine and was shocked at the oppression of the Palestinian people by the Israeli state. I came home determined to get active and became involved with the Anti-War Movement and socialist politics.'

Whether its Palestine or water charges I believe it is people power that is the key to change. Parliament is useful so long you understand that the real force for change lies with ordinary people themselves.

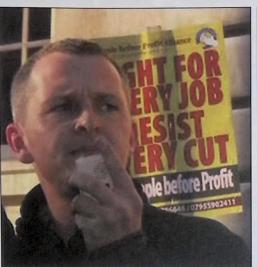
Richard stresses that on the issue of housing we should declare a national emergency and need to massively expand the provision of social and affordable housing. He's sees this as part of an 'overall need to deal with growing inequality and poverty' which means 'abolishing unjust water charges and USC for low and middle income earners' and 'forcing the big corpora-tions and very wealthy to pay their share of tax'.

Housing, he says, is also a major issue in Dun Laoghaire where there are nearly 6000 on the waiting list for up to 18 years. Protection of Dun Laoghair Harbour and seafront from greedy developers are also key local issues as are defending local bus services and protecting health services in Loughlinstown and St.Michael's Hospitals.

Gino Kenny first became po-litically active when he joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1994. He is from Clondalkin and was elected a Councillor there in 2009 and reelected in 2014.

'I have been at the forefront of the anti-water charges campaign in Dublin
Mid West and in supporting workers'
rights at Greyhound and Rhattigans.

at a Palestinian protest they helped to
organise' and 'I was elected Councillor
for Beaumont-Donaghmede in 2014









Clockwise from top-left: Richard Boyd Barrett TD; Cllr Brid Smith; Cllr Gino Kenny; Cllr John Lyons

want to give people an alternative to the sell outs of Labour and fight against the neo-liberal agenda of the

austerity parties.'
Gino has been particularly involved in alternative initiatives for young people in the constituency campaigning with Clondalkin horse owners for permanent premises and with the Clondalkin-Ballyfermot Motocross Campaign. He also highlights the need for better public transport links from Dublin Mid West.

John Lyons first involvement with politics was with Sinn Fein, 'but I left because I felt it wasn't really a campaigning party. My re-involvement came in 2009 when I joined the SWP

and have played a considerable role in the great anti-water charges movement in the area and nationally

'My aim,' says John, 'is to fundamentally redistribute wealth in favour of the majority as the only way of resolving the current crises we're faced with in housing, health and our water services'.

'Locally I want to focus on building a truly participatory People Before Profit Alliance movement that translates every issue raised locally into an opportunity to mobilise more and more people.

Brid Smith who was first elected a Councillor in Ballyfermot in 2009 and then re-elected for Ballyfermot-Drimnagh in 2014 says, 'I have been a socialist most of my adult life. The Ireland I grew up in, then as now, was marked by injustice and inequality. And then as now I wanted to do

something about that.'

Brid is well known locally and across Dublin as an activist playing a leading role in the bin tax, household charges, property tax and water charges campaigns often addressing national rallies. She was jailed in Mountjoy in 2001 for resisting the bin tax and stood for People Before Profit in the MEP elections in 2014.

Like all the candidates Brid thinks Like all the candidates who housing, health and water charges are housing and local issues. 'Every ordinary family has its own horror story whether it's a sick relative needing a hospital bed or stuck for hours in A&E or generations living on top of one another in overcrowded homes for lack of social or affordable housing'.

Locally she campaigns to defend Home Help Services, local education

services, Traveller services and to resist all cuts.

Election prospects

All the election candidates are very optimistic about the challenge People Before Profit is mounting in this election

Gino Kenny believes, 'This is a historic chance for the radical left to make a breakthrough. We can be voice and cheerleaders of resistance inside and more importantly outside the Dáil.' Richard Boyd Barrett adds,

'Together with the Anti-Austerity Alliance we have over 30 candidates across the country. This is the biggest intervention by the socialist left in the history of the state. It is an indication of the huge change taking place in Irish society and the demand for an alternative to the conservative establishment of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael and the fake leftism of the Labour Party.'

'If the left can make significant gains in this election it can open the door for a victory on the water charges, give people the confidence to demand real change and lay the basis for a fundamental transformation of Irish society.
On the AAA- PBP alliance **Brid**

Smith comments, 'Now more than ever we need unity on the left. Both People Before Profit and the AAA have taken the lead in mobilizing people against the right wing agenda of making working class people pay for the crisis of capitalism. Unity is strength – long may it continue.

And John Lyons says, 'The coming together of the two most significant political forces on the left is a sensible and necessary step toward the creation of a new mass participatory movement of the working class?

The bigger picture

The candidates also see the Irish election as part of a bigger global picture. **Bríd Smith** says, 'I think more and

more people are beginning to see the bigger picture. Globally they see the same agenda for the system - privatisation, cuts and making ordinary people pay for the crisis – and globally they see resistance, for example in Greece and Spain. Issues like the refugee crisis and climate change and its consequences like flooding show we have to challenge the system internationally.'

John Lyons believes, 'The world in 2016 is in desperate need of revolutionary change. The capitalist system creates vast inequality wars, racism, hunger and homelessness. We can and must do better. Another world

Moore St occupation - defend our revolutionary heritage

Dave O'Farrell

n the 7 January activists occupied the national monument site on Moore Street where the leaders of the 1916 Rising surrendered.

Earlier in the week a hoarding was erected around the site and building work was underway.

Despite the historical

significance of the site no information was made available regarding the nature or extent of the work and given the shameful history of both local and national government in relation to Moore Street and its environs protestors felt compelled to act.

The national monument site itself, 14 - 17 Moore Street, is a protected structure along with five other buildings in the adjoining area added to the list of protected structures following the passing of a People Before Profit motion on Dublin City Council.

This motion was opposed by the

unelected and unaccountable city management due to fears it would interfere with the development of a shopping centre on the nearby Carlton Cinema site.

Typically the interest of private profit trumps all – even when it comes to such an important part of

our national history.

As we enter 2016 political parties from across the political spectrum are trying to lay claim to the legacy of the 1916 Rising.

This is a particular problem

for the government who like to portray themselves and the Irish state as the inheritors of 1916 while downplaying the nature of the long, radical and militant struggle for independence - of which the Rising

was a major part.

For those who truly believe in the radical message of revolutionary heroes like James Connolly it is vital that we remember that the Irish State did not develop out of the ideals of Easter Week 1916 but rather developed from the

conservative counter revolution who emerged as the victors in 1922 following the civil war.

As Socialist Worker goes to press the Moore Street occupation is ongoing and answers as to what the government has planned are in short supply.

Socialist Worker will continue

to stand in solidarity with those who want to protect our heritage and history from the greed of the developers and speculators as well as the indifference of the government.

Do we need political parties?

n recent years it has been quite common to hear, in the water charges movement and in working class communities, the view that all political parties are bad or 'all the same' and that we would all be better off without

This idea is not confined to Ireland. For example it was dominant in the Indignados mass movement which swept Spain in 2011 and in the Occupy movement in America and sewhere.

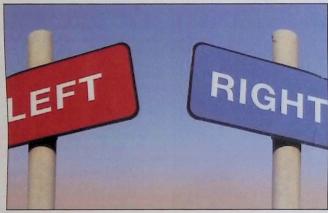
This rejection of political parties as such is understandable given the treacherous

The fact that many campaigns in the past have failed and some campaign leaders have let people down or that strikes can be defeated and union leaders can, and do, sell out, does not change this basic reality. Without organisation NO serious resistance to the government or the employers is possible. Working people will simply be trampled on.

But if that's the case with demonstrations and strikes why do we also need a political party? Because all the issues we campaign over - water charges, housing, workers'

(e.g. tax breaks for landlords) and those, like socialists, who want to build social housing, and there will be similar divisions on every issue, no matter how basic or fundamental

Consequently, if working people don't have a political party that defends their interests the whole field of politics, that is the whole running of society, will be dominated by the parties that represent the bosses and the rich. Similarly if socialists don't organise a party that fights for socialism, the whole of politics



behaviour of so many parties, particularly the Labour Party and its equivalents in Spain Greece and Britain, but socialists believe it is socialists believe it is mistaken. We believe that it is essential for working class people to develop their own party – one that fights for their interests in the way that Fine Gael or the British Tories, for example, fight for the interests of the rich.

Why is this so important? The basic argument is very simple. A party is an organisation that brings together records with similar people with similar goals to campaign for those goals. It's pretty obvious that if people work together in an organised fashion this makes their activity more effective.

Campaigns

If you want to stage a protest or demonstration then that involves trying to get a lot of people in the same place at the same time and that needs an organisation of some kind, e.g a campaign.

If you want to resist an employer imposing wage cuts you need an organisation of the workers in that

rights, refugees, racism, equality etc – are political issues. They are part of politics and shaped by politics because politics is about how our society

When people say that an issue they feel passionately about e.g. homelessness, is or should be above politics it may be a worthy sentiment but it is also an illusion. In reality no issue is above

It is politics that decides what priorities society has, what resources are allocated to different groups in society – in short who gets what.

But shouldn't everyone (or all the TDs) just agree to do what is best for the people? Maybe they should but the fact is they won't because in a class divided society, a society with rich and poor, 'people' will have different interests and different views.

Take the issue even if we grant that 'everybody' cares about the homeless, which is not really the case, there will be those who think the way to tackle the problem is through the capitalist market

will be monopolized by parties that support capitalism. And if ALL political

parties were banned this would simply strengthen the position of the rich who already control the state apparatus and the media and who would have the resources to campaign as so-called 'independents'

It is relatively easy to see how this applies to elections but it applies in campaigns and workplaces as well. Campaigns, workplace struggles and elections are all part of the overall political struggle, the class struggle between workers and capitalists and in all these fields there is battle going on between pro-capitalist ideas and socialist ideas - ideas that represent the interests of the rich and those that represent the workers. To take the issue of homelessness again: do we blame the housing crisis on the foreigners or on the

That is why working people need a socialist party that is active in campaigns, unions and elections working to join all the dots in an overall strategy to challenge the system

#socialism 1.01 An embarra the history (

Memet Uludag went to speak to a Syrian refugee who made it to Ireland a

t was the wrinkled hands of an elderly refugee, holding my hand firmly, while he was telling me his story, that made it

truly real, what it means to be a refugee.

He told me of his journey, his fears and hopes, but most of all of his life in the past that now seems so long ago in a

the past that now seems so long ago in a faraway place that is no more.

His journey, he called "was one of the few lucky ones". One that is repeated a million times without a lucky ending. "The unlucky ones" he said, "are stuck either in Syria, or somewhere along the way. God belot there" help them". We talked about Syria, his family, his

new life in Ireland and other things, but not much - hardly a few words - about the refugee deaths at sea. "It breaks my heart"

retuge deaths at sea. To beass my heart".

As I left him his words were repeatedly playing in my mind: "At the age of 60, I didn't know how to start a new life,

ou, I didn't know how to start a new life, learn a new language and so many other things. But I don't complain, I must and I will. We are the lucky ones".

He repeated the word 'lucky' a lot. I think he is right. What a shameful world it is, that one's life, safety and future depend on luck.

EU Programme

The EU Refugee Resettlement Program, agreed in September 2014, had established a quota system to relocate 120,000 refugees (66,000 from Greece and Italy, 54,000 from Hungary). Ireland, along with the UK, had opted out of this program but offered to take 4000 refugees without committing to any specific timeline or schedule. Switzerland, Denmark and Norway had also offered to the take in some refugees. With offered to the take in some refugees. With the previously agreed number of 40,000 the total number to be relocated was to be. 160,000.

Hungary objected to the program and did not commit to taking any refugees. In response the EU froze the relocation of 54,000 from Hungary and therefore the actual number to be re-settled had been reduced to 66.000 instead of 120,000, thus

reducing the total number to a tiny 106,000.

The EU program is already in disarray. There are now many more objections and disagreements from various other EU states who have a strong anti-refugee stand. Furthermore the relocation of 66,000 refugees has been significantly delayed, if not stalled, due to inaction of the EU governstalled, due to inaction of the EU governments. Since September, only 272 people from Italy and Greece, out of the initial total of 160,000 have been relocated. This equates to just 0.17% and 0.03% of the 1,008,616 asylum seekers who arrived by sea in 2015.

4 months on, with thousands of peo-

tiny quota has in fact stalled before even

starting.

With this speed it will take years to settle all of the 160,000 refugees.

The Syrian man was indeed right to call

himself lucky.

ireiand's record

Between 2000, the beginning of UNCHR Refugee Program, and September 2015, Ireland had resettled a tiny number of 1,314 UN registered refugees. The Syrian refugees who came last year as part of this program have been brought over from refu-gee camps in Lebanon.

Towards the end of 2015, 32 Syrian's ere taken in by Ireland. The Irish government is in no hurry to

4 months on, with thousands or peo-ple living in various make shift refugee camps, trying to survive the winter, the EU Resettlement Program with its already

settle tne promised 4,000 refugees. In late 2015, the government, we were told, was 'suitable' a composition of the suitable o settle the promised 4,000 refugees. In late

people according to a pre-determined set of criteria and bring them to Ireland. In October 2015, the Minister for Justice

Frances Fitzgerald had told that Irish officials to go to Italy to select first intake of refugees. It was promised that almost 2,500 were scheduled to come to Ireland before Christmas under new EU programme. In fact, only 32 came.

On top of not being implemented, the selection process in itself is a shameful one. The criteria are not based on the needs of the refugees but on their 'suitability' to Ireland, such as language, skills, historic links with the country etc. What this means 'pick and choose your own refugee'

Basically, two people fleeing from the same place and from same threats could be dealt with differently, one, deemed to be 'suitable' and given protection, the other rejected and left in Italy, potentially to be



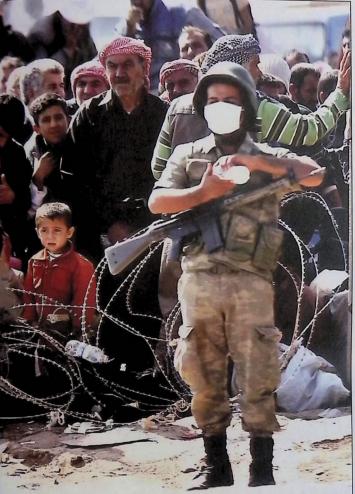


international huma 🤰 🗥 its members parac cruel and draconian with a Bill such as this could be population to flee in desperwire in Greece and elsewing assistance and refuge

What we should have what we should have which thes away with to their the parties of t

ssment to fits people'

d condemns the record of the Irish government on dealing with refugees.



Direct provision

Furthermore, unlike the people coming as part of the UNCHR refugee program, the EU refugees to be brought to Ireland have to apply for asylum and only if they are successful, be granted the refugee status. This means putting these people into the Direct Provision System (DPS) without the guarantee of long term protection. These people were to be, supposedly, fast tracked. people were to be, supposedly, fast tracked.

Ireland did not fulfil its promise for

2015 refugee settlement. But the same lazy attitude did not exist when Minis ter Fitzgerald rushed the International Protection Bill through the Houses of the Oireachtas, without much time for mocratic debate. Irish Refugee Council (IRC) described

the bill as, "it may see asylum-seekers swiftly deported". Sue Conlon of IRC said, "The outcome of passage of the Bill, as it stands, states. It is clear that this government is refugees in Europe is an embarrassment to will lead to people being at risk of being not going to do anything significant to the history of its people.

returned to persecution or serious harm and refugees separated from family members". There are over 4.500 asylum seekers in Direct Provision Centres (DPC) in Ireland. The Working Group on Direct Provision System (DPS) has produced none of the results promised by Minister Aodhán Ó Ríordáin who was tasked with inning the Working Group.

Despite promises, and hopes raised, the

repeatedly proven to be inhumane and dys-functional DPS was left untouched in the commendations of the Working Group.
With the International Protection

Bill giving the state further powers to fast tracked deportations; the DPS left untouched, 12 more Direct Provision Centres planned, and the virtually non-existent resettlement process, Ireland has taken its deserved place in the 'shame list' of EU

before the next general elections.

The EU has repeatedly congratulated

itself for being so generous and taking in 160,000 refugees. This number is not only a fake one but the timeline to settle people

There is no transparency on what the Irish and other EU states are doing. There are no deadlines or measures to validate the progress of the refugee resettlement.

Ireland has a very low acceptance rate for asylum applications. Historically it is one of the lowest in the EU.

Recently, the EU and Turkey have signed

a refugee deal, known as the '63 Billion Deal'. This comes on top of the previously signed Readmission Agreement.

Deal with Turkey

The International Protection Bill, and The International Protection Bill, and the arrangement put in place with Turkey will enable all European states to deport back the refugees who crossed into Europe from Turkey and failed in their asylum applications.

Furthermore, the deal with Turkey, with the assistance from Turkey, is designed to create much tighter 'Fortress Europe' borders to stop the refugees.

The current refugee crisis did not start in 2014. It began in 2011. There are now millions of Syrian refugees in countries such

millions of Syrian refugees in countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and other North African states. There are also - still - hundreds of thousands of refu

gees fleeing the post-war conditions and ongoing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The conditions in refugee camps in above host countries are getting worse by day. People outside the camps live in dire conditions, without the hope of going back to Syria. These are the reasons why refugees started to come to Europe.

More than a million refugees crossed into

Europe in 2015. More than 800,000 arrived in Greece. Of those, a huge percentage came via Turkey. Hence the urgency by the EU to make a deal with Turkey. It is simply to

stop the refugees, not to look after them.

Ireland is not a champion of human rights. For a long time the Irish government played with numbers to be settled. Given the progress to date, the final figure of 4000 refugees to be settled is meaning-less.. The Irish government consistently didn't play a humanitarian role at EU level and at refugee summits. It did not press for EU to act. More than 15 years ago, the Direct Provision System was put in place as a temporary measure. Today it is

clear that it plays a crucial rule in Ireland's inhumane refugee/asylum process.

Today, the way the Irish government deals with the asylum seekers here and the

bring the promised numbers to Ireland

Eamonn McCann says

Saudi Executions and **Western Hypocrisy**

The beheading of the senior Shia cleric Nimr al-Nimr in Saudi Arabia on January 2nd prompted an outpouring of anger across the world. But the protests of governments, particularly in the West, are phony, selfserving and won't lead to meaningful

not even the most vicious barbarity would persuade the US or European Union governments to break off relations with the feudal dictatorship of the Saud family. There's too much profit involved. The Republic's government has been just

Forty-six other prisoners were put to death on the same day as Nimr al-Nimr. They included four protestors against the regime who had been under 18 at the time of the "offence".

Numbers rising

The numbers falling victim to the Saudi executioner's sword have been steadily rising - 26 in 2011, 79 in 2013, 157 in 2015, and now 47 in the first week of 2016.

Capital offences in the kingdom include sedition, blasphemy, idolatry, apostasy, adultery (by women),

for construction contracts in the dictatorship, were early members, as was, shamefully, the Athlone Institute of Technology. The council's formation was enthusiastically welcomed by Tanaiste and Foreign Affairs Minister, Eamonn Gilmore. Saudi Arabia, the Labour leader told the Dail, was seen by the Irish Government as "a priority market with significant potential for Irish companies.'

Gilmore

Asked about the regime's rubbishing of human rights, including the most basic rights of women, Gilmore scurried for cover from the EU: "Ireland and our EU partners have an active discussion with Saudi Arabia within the framework of the EU-Gulf co-operation council on a wide range of issues, including human rights", he babbled.

Clare Daly responded: "The Minister's answer is heavily loaded in favour of the money, with very little adherence to the concerns raised about human rights and the systematic discrimination experienced women in particular and the Shia minority, and the stifling of peaceful



homosexuality, witchcraft, sorcery and possession or sale of drugs.

If a country in the region opposed to Western interests had a record like this, Obama, Cameron, Hollande and the rest would have sent in the bombers long ago. But the Saudi dictatorship backs Western capitalism all the way; in return, Western governments give a nod and a wink to state terrorism.

The most despicable example came, naturally, from Blair. In 2007, the Blair clique rode roughshod over every British constitutional convention and wrote to the supposedly independent attorney general, Lord Goldsmith, successfully demanding an end to a probe into more than £1 billion of British taxpayers' money being used to grease the palms of Saudi royal fraudsters and thieves in order to secure a vastly profitable deal for arms giant BAE. BAE arms have helped crush human rights protestors in Bahrain and are currently being used to bomb civilian targets in

Irish governments don't have the clout to play any decisive role in relation to the killer kingdom - but have mustered whatever influence they can manage to buttress the rule of the beheaders.

Just three years ago, an Irish-Saudi Arabian Business Council was formed. Engineering companies Sepam and Mercury, bidders protest by the regime. Clearly the Saudi regime benefits enormously from its export and import relationship with Ireland.

Gilmore finally resorted to the lastditch excuse of the global hypocrite
- the "building of trade relations the "building of trade relations gives us an enhanced opportunity to engage on human rights with the countries concerned" - word for word the justification offered by Margaret Thatcher for opposing sanctions on apartheid South Africa.

This has also been the rationale for the Southern state allowing Shannon to be used as a staging post not only for US soldiers and weapons en route to the killing fields of Arabia but also for kidnap victims being trafficked to "black sites" to be tortured: if we don't provide this facility, we will lose out on US investment.
This is blackmail, which the Fine

Gael/Labour government - like Fianna Fail before them - has consistently given in to. Only what most of the media disparage as the "hard left" has any record of standing up to the

Buy into the political logic of capitalism and you tie your hands when it comes to taking on the misogynist torturers and war-mongers of the world.

Only a strategy which links the struggle for justice everywhere to the fight against inequality and oppression at home makes any sort of sense

RRETT TO SPEAKS OUT IN THE DAIL

Itterly ashamed of itself for the Bill and for bringing it to the Dáil on day. The Labour Party should be especially ashamed of itself, as a schampions of equality, but they will support a Bill which is regressive, some of the most vulnerable people in the world. It is deeply ironic that ward when we have a disaster in Syria which has forced half the country's sumstances. They have been herded into camps surrounded by barbed of have drawing in the Modiforcapean and they are desperately in need of have drowned in the Mediterranean and they are desperately in need of

hich offers a compassionate, generous and independent system of asylum and of direct provision and gives rights to asylum seekers, particularly lives them the support they need and gives them the right to work and system should be in the Bill, especially at this time, are not in the which is about fast-tracking cruel deportations, making them easier to ards necessary to vindicate the rights of some of the most desperate and sutterly shameful."



Jobstown 27 - the attack continues

John Lyons, People before Profit candidate for Dublin Bay North

awn raids by swarms of Gardai, press leaks of summonses to appear in court, charges of violent disorder. criminal damage and false imprisonment, potential as a result of a sit-down protest which delayed an Irish politician in her car for a couple of hours in the Jobstown area of Tallaght in What Is Colim

What Is Going On Here?

The treatment of the Jobstown 27 is clearly an attack on peoples right to protest and to engage in civil disobedience and is an at-tempt to attack and discredit the Irish Water tempt to attack and discredit the ITISH water. Movement and the Left, which combined are the single biggest threat to the Irish estab-lishment and their way of life – riches and nfort for the elite, cutbacks and misery

comfort for the elite, cutbacks and misery for the rest.

The decision by the Irish establishment – the political class, the police force, the judiciary – to use a minor incident that involved protestors delaying Joan Burton, Tánaiste, Labour Party leader, Minister for Social Protection and all-round champion of austerity, back on November 15 2014 is a true indication of their sheer desperation.

A very similar incident involving the same

A very similar incident involving the same politician occurred just one month previous to Jobstown but not one arrest was made. Why was this? What happened to make the state come down heavily upon one group of protestors in November 2014 and not on the other?

New Movement hits the National Stage

The first six months of 2014 had witnessed a The first six months of 2014 had witnessed a new of movement of opposition to the introduction of water charges and the installation of water meters as people in communities in Cork and then Dublin began blocking the installation of water meters; this grass roots activism soon spread to every part of the country as new anti-water charges groups sprang up inspired by examples of people power that spread speedily through Facebook.



Alongside this resistance a new campaign called Right2Water was initiated by People Before Profit and soon included Sinn Fein, the Anti-Austerity Alliance, several independent representatives and five trade unions, including Unite and Mandate, and it became the ing Unite and Mandate, and it became the vehicle through which the new grass roots activism would explode onto the national stage and rock the political establishment to its core.

to its core.

On 11 October over 100,000 people took to the streets of Dublin to express their opposition to the water charges and austerity more generally and thus "the people" became an active force in Irish politics.

This mass demonstration of people power was quickly followed by a day of regional local protests on 1 November when close to

200,000 people filled their villages, towns and cities across the 26 counties.

A new movement of people power and civil disobedience not witnessed before in Ireland was now firmly established as a political force.

Concessions and Coercion

In the face of such widespread resistance, Fine Gael and the Labour Party had no option but to retreat: concession after concession was made – the threat to cut-off peoples' water was removed, the costs per household were reduced, capped and the period for the assessed charge extended from nine months to three years; a bribe was dangled too – a free €100 via a conservation grant if people would please just register and begin paying

their water charge bill.

None of this worked: the numbers that took to the streets in rejection of the Government concessions and bribes was Government concessions and bribes was truly inspiring: on a bitterly cold working day on December 10, just two weeks before Christmas, 80,000 people marched through Dublin on the third Right 2Water national demonstration in just two and a half months.

The Government's legitimacy in shreds, it registering her converge sprices.

its privatisation plans for our water services in ribbons, their mandate to govern lost, Fine Gael and Labour, alongside their at-Fine Gaet and Labour, atongstice their ac-tempts buy people off, resorted to coercion, desperately relying on the Gardai and the courts to spy upon, arrest and charge those people who dared to declare that there are alternatives to austerity and who actively go

about fighting for a better future.
With leaks to the press of summonses and dawn raids and arrests timed to coincide with the Right2Water December 2014 and March 2015 demonstrations, it was quite clear the actions of the Gardai and the DPP were attempts to spin a pregnitive arround the were attempts to spin a negative around the joyous resistance that thousands of people and families had been actively engaging in.

Of those arrested and forced to appear in court, seven are children under 18, the young

court, seven are children under 18, the youngest aged just 14, three are the Anti-Austerity Alliance's TD for Dublin South-West Paul Murphy, along with Councillors Kieran Mahon and Mick Murphy who, with 17 others, face very serious charges.

Speaking to Socialist Worker. Paul Murphy TD is adamant about what lies behind the arrests and charges: "This repression is not an action taken by the state from a position of strength, but from weakness.

They are seeing the political parties of the establishment significantly undermined, at the same time as a majority are engaging in civil disobedience through the mass boycott of the water charges.

This is a desperate attempt to send a

of the water charges.

This is a desperate attempt to send a strong message and scare people off from protesting. The false imprisonment charge tepresents an attempt to outlaw sit-down protests and criminalise civil disobedience.

It is an attack on the anti-water charges

novement as a whole and on basic demo-cratic rights. It should be met by a united and determined defence of the right to pro-test by all sections of the anti-water charges movement.

All Out of January 23

With eighteen of the Jobstown 27 appear-With eighteen of the Jobstown 27 appearing in the Circuit Court on January 22 to face what Murphy rightly describes as "the most serious charges to be brought against protesters in the last number of decades", it is vitally important that the Irish Water Movement responds and makes the National Day of protests on Saturday 23 January a major demonstration of not only the movement's strength – the boycott of the water charge bills currently standing at just over 50% – but an expression of support and solidarity for all those facing persecution defending their right to protest. defending their right to protest.

Why I oppose bombing Syria

nterview with Eoghan Ó
Ceannabháin, who after attending a
public meeting and a protest outside
the Dail against the bombing of
Syria, got involved with the Irish Anti
War Movement.

What was your reaction to the UK 's decision to bomb Syria?

I was not particularly surprised by the UK's decision to bomb Syria given the Tory majority in parliament. However, I was very disappointed with the number of Labour MEP's who voted in favour of the airstrikes.

It was very worrying how the British government and their support have managed to quell the narrative which links the rise of Da'esh to the Iraq war.

A lot of people who support the airstrikes are aware of this link, but do not make that mental leap of deciding that perhaps it might be time to try something slightly more imaginative than

What led you to become actively opposed to war?

In the last few years, I have been studying systems of oppression although not really been actively involved in

This year I attended a number of talks related to the war in Syria and Iraq and the refugee crisis. I think it was at this point that I decided to become actively involved.

involved.

For me, it has been a case of not only being horrified by the destruction inflicted by war, but also becoming more educated about the causes of war and the

The more one becomes aware of these alternatives, the more likely it is that one will strive to implement them.

As you know, many thousands of US troops have passed through Shannon on their way to Iraq. Why do you think the Irish government flouts neutrality like this and how can it be pressurised to stop?

The Irish government flouts neutrality in order to maintain good relations with the US. I think it manages to do so because public opinion does not seem to view Shannon as having a major role in the bombing of Iraq in the grand scheme of

things.
People believe that the invasion would part in it will not make much difference.

Raising public consciousness as to the number of planes that go through

Shannon is important in order to pressurise the government. Mick Wallace and Clare Daly's recent actions raised awareness of how these planes are not inspected for weapons, although many elements of the media did their best to portray their refusal to pay their fines as an act of petulance.

It is important to build on their actions and to keep the focus on the

Do you think that the Paris attacks have made the anti-war case harder to make?

I think Da'esh achieved what it wanted

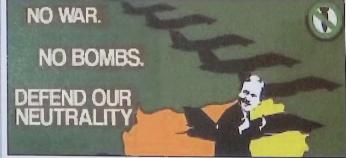
I think Da'esh achieved what it wanted with the Paris attacks, which is to promote a war of civilisations.

Many politicians in Europe and the US have also bought into this narrative, making it increasingly difficult to stop the polarisation of opinion on this issue.

Any critique of France's oppression of Muslims may be branded as victimblaming by government mouthpieces.

As a result, it more important than ever to highlight the links between imperialism, racist laws and radicalisation when making the case against war.

Governments have tried to use the Paris attacks to restrict the number



of refugees entering Europe. Do you think this is right?

you think this is right?

I think the fact that all of the Paris attackers were EU citizens answers this question. Da'esh do not need to send fighters to infiltrate Europe as refugees.

The issue for Europe is the alienation of Muslims within its own borders who may go to join Da'esh in the Middle East or commit further attacks in Europe itself.

The restriction of refugees is yet another symptom of the racism and xenophobia which many European governments continue to promote, and the Paris attacks are being used as a tool for these ends. used as a tool for these ends

In 2003, many young Irish people including school children, came out to show their opposition to the war

on Iraq. Do you think people can be mobilised again against war?

I think the context of this war makes it difficult to mobilise people to the extent that was done in 2003.

The brutality of Da'esh is very apparent, and the feeling seems to be that something must be done, whatever that

may be.
 Unfortunately, the imperialist powers have peddled the narrative that not bombing equates to doing nothing.
 As the war goes on however, I would imagine that the public will become less and less accepting of it.
 This is something we have already seen with the British public, with support for airstrikes falling consistently since the decision to bomb was made.

Spain: Voters punish mainstream parties and swing left

The two party system in Spain has suffered a massive blow as huge numbers of Spanish voters punished the mainstream parties at the ballot box. For decades the Tory 'Popular Party' and the Blairite 'Socialists' have dominated the political scene. But now the ruling class face major political instability as none of the mainstream parties have a majority of seater.

major political instability as none of the mainstream parties have a majority of seats. These two parties may be forced into coalition with the leader of the Right, Mario Rajoy, stating that it must be a coalition of 'like minded parties'.

The media and elite in Spain are demanding a coalition of the Popular Party, Socialists and Ciudadanos (the right wing 'citizens' movement.)

After the new parliament convenes on Jan. 13, King Felipe VI will consult party leaders and nominate the candidate he believes is

best able to lead a stable government.

Rise of Podemos
The real success story of the election is the rise of the radical Podemos who got 21% of the vote and took 69 seats in the Parliament and yet is less than two years old.

This follows elections in Catalonia where parties defending Catalan independence won a majority in September, including ten MPs from the anti-capitalist CUP (Popular Unity Candidatures). Candidatures).

Years of austerity have led to growing anger which expressed itself in the Indignados movement, strikes and mass protests- where tens of thousands have protested.

Moderate

When the popular movement went into a lull several left wing intellectuals like Pablo Iglesias launched Podemos and quickly captured the mood for change.



But Iglesias and the leading members of Podemos, while using rhetoric about popular democracy, actually began to

construct means by which power in the party was focused at the top and not in the grassroots circles.

Podemos has begun to moderate rodemos has begun to moderate its politics as the prospect of power approaches. It now speaks of only reforming the constitution, rather than far-reaching democratisation.

democratisation.

It has dropped its pledge for a minimum social wage for all and is no longer calling for Spain to leave Nato.

But the rank and file at massive preelection rallies showed an expectation that their party would confront austerity.

The massive radical vote shows how

The massive radical vote shows how much people want real change but that change can only come by mobilising on the streets and in the workplaces not by stitching up deals with the parties of the elite.

elite.
The challenge ahead for the anticapitalist left in Spain is to work with
Podemos members while pushing against a
focus on the institutions as counter-posed to
a strategy of people power.

Ireland's floods and Global

Jim O'Connell, People Before Profit candidate for Cork South Central. reports

n 24 December land west of Kinsale had for weeks been in a state of complete saturation. A relatively short spell of rain deposited huge volumes of water on fields completely sod den for weeks.

With rain actually stopping, lower fields filled like fish-tanks and over spilled ditches, breaking them down in the process. Surges converted roads into a series of lakes and rivers laden with rocks and debris. Helen Williamson, a local resident called it "the most frightening thing ever seen in the locality". Nearby, the current spell of storms again

caused havoc in the town of Bandon. After floods in 2009 the government had promised protection works. No works were even begun commenced and again businesses and homes

were ruined. From early December Bandon experienced multiple severe floods.

In East Cork the main Cork Waterford road is still impassable with a major flood . Homes in Mallow and Midleton are uninhabitable. Margaret Daly of Midleton is visited by the Red Cross with bottled water and told to triple-boil any water she uses from

the town supply because of contamination.

Afric Prendergast whose home in

Castlemartyr was flooded with 1m of water
said "We've never before seen floods of this severity and speed. We've had many floods but the water usually recedes within two or three days, I never remember the N25 closed for long before due to flooding. It's a wonder nobody was swept away!" The accounts of flooding, land and prop-

erty damage and contamination are repeated throughout the country with farmhouses and huge tracts of land under water. In Galway 100 roads were flooded and new lakes appeared everywhere with just the tops

of electricity poles showing.

The Taoiseach has been nearly as invis ible as usual. Some ministers slither out of their comfortable lodges, don waders or even wetsuits and wade in for photo-ops. Some are pulled around in boats. There are the "concerned" statements, the promises that "this time something will be done". No coincidence at all that an election is in the offing, "this time".

Ignored

"This time" some people have had enough. The people of Bandon are taking their protest to the streets of Dublin likely to be joined by more from around the country devastated by storms and floods who rightfully feel ignored by government.

We all should show solidarity with protests

and pressure on this government to live up to its responsibilities. This would go some way toward alleviating the devastation. Commentators make the case for learning

to live with the vagaries of weather, taking measures like not building on flood plains, better management of our rivers and watercourses and taking positive steps toward reforestation etc. to mitigate the effects of severe weather and increased rainfall.

BANDON

DEMANDS

FLOOD RELIEF

We should support such efforts but no matter how hard we work to alleviate the

problems of the effects, unless we recognize and properly address the cause, the time we can buy to avert catastrophe grows less with each severe weather cycle.

DEMANDS

FLOOD RELIEF

Measures to alleviate floods will always be necessary. However, unquestionably the worsen-ing extremes of weather are caused by climate change. Also unquestionably the economic system we live under, capitalism, is incom-

system we live under, capitalism, is incompatible with the fight against climate change.
Under capitalism, the health and well-being of people will always come a distant second to the interests of the energy-hungry, atmosphere-polluting corporate corporation that lay waste to our environment in relentless pursuit of profit.

Without question, human activity is re-sponsible for rising CO2 levels and increased

global warming.

This is compounded and accelerated by the effects of an overly competitive wasteful industry where the only goal is wealth accumulation for the few.

With capitalism ih control "agreements" like those announced recently in Paris are heralded as major steps toward fighting climate change instead of recognizing them for what they are, more fudges and lost opportunities.

Socialists fight capitalism because it enslaves workers, breeds greed and unfair competition for resources, thrives on racism, war and oppression and violently resists all efforts to emancipate the working class. It does all this for its own self-preservation. However its survival instinct is a parasitic

contradiction. It destroys the very host it feeds on - the environment. We have to fight against capitalism for all of the above

We must defeat capitalism for the survival





Karl Marx: Wage Labour and Capital

classic text by Marx which introduces his fundamental ideas about how capitalism

age Labour and Capital is an excellent example of a Marxist text which unravels the mystique of the capitalist system of production, and exposes it for the flesh-devouring monster that it truly is. In this short work Marx explains the economic base of capitalist production focusing on the relations between

labour power and capital.

The pamphlet first appeared in the form of a number of articles in the Neue Rheinische Zeitung (New Rhineland Gazette) of 1849. The text was compiled from a series of lectures that Marx had delivered to the German Workingmen's Club in Brussels in

In the pamphlet, Marx examines the means by which labour becomes a commodity, the economic principle of supply and demand, and how capitalism is chiefly concerned with the constant accumulation of capital above all other considerations.

Marx begins by establishing the position of labour under capitalism.

Workers sell their labour power to the capitalist for a certain amount of money. This same money could have been used to buy a certain amount of commodities and, as a result, labour power is as much a commodity as anything else.

anything else.

The exchange value of labour power is measured by money, which becomes its price. As Marx points out, wages are simply a name for the price paid for 'this peculiar commodity which has no other repository than human flesh and other repository than human flesh and

No Meaning

Naturally the question arises as to why the worker sells labour power to the capitalist? The answer: to live.

While the exercise of labour ought

to be the workers' own activity, they instead sell it to another person to obtain their means of subsistence.

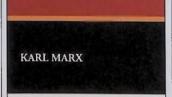
The worker works to live, and the

work has no meaning other than as

carnings.

Marx puts it well when he states:
'What he [the worker] produces for himself is not the silk he weaves, not the gold he draws from the mine, not

the palace he builds. What he produces for himself is wages, and silk, gold, palace resolve



Wage-Labour and Capital

themselves for him into a definite quantity of means of subsistence, perhaps a cotton jacket, some copper

coins and a lodging in a cellar.'
While the worker is free to sell their labour power to any capitalist who will buy it, this is merely a veneer of freedom. The worker may move from one capitalist employer to another, but they cannot leave the whole

capitalist class without renouncing their existence. The worker does not therefore belong to a particular capitalist, but to the whole capitalist

Expansion

The constant need for economic and prothe constant need for economic and productive expansion is innate within the capitalist system. The need to simplify and speed up the rate of production division of labour resulting in the simplification of labour is a product of this.

This in turn leads to the skill of the labourer becoming worth less.

the labourer becoming worth less.

Machinery (which is controlled by the capitalist) does this to a greater degree.

It replaces the skilled worker with the unskilled and oftentimes throws the

worker onto the streets altogether.
This reduction of the importance of skilled labourers plays right into the hands of the capitalist.

hands of the capitalist.

They no longer have to spend the same amount of time training workers, and there is always a ready supply of new workers to replace the old. This fact, of course, proves to be a useful threat when bosses want to lower wages or change working conditions.

Wage Labour and Capital is very useful to the modern reader and highly recommended. Importantly, it provides

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down effect, which claims that workers, and society as a whole, benefit from the competitiveness and expansion of business and capital.

This mantra is nowadays sung from on high as the credo of austerity economics. Enda Kenny and Joan Burton – the high priests of hardship – might well try to convince us that we must sacrifice our interests upon the twin alters of big business and the market, however, Marx shows that 'the interests of capital and the interests of interests of capital and the interests of wage-labour are diametrically opposed to each other.

The prevailing economic ideology of our government - that the worker has an interest in the rapid growth of capital - means only that the crumbs that fall from the table will be slightly larger, and that a greater mass of workers can become dependent upon the capitalist class for their very

The aim, therefore, must be the overthrow of capitalism. It is by understanding the contradictions inherent within that system and the lies of its ideology that we are better equipped to rip it up. Wage Labour and Capital is a worthy text for anybody to spend some time studying.

Socialist Worker Stormont's £72m education cut: Resistance is essential!

f there was ever any doubt as to the blis-tering scale of the attacks in the Fresh Start Agreement, they should be dispelled following Minister John O'Dowd's announcement that £72 million is to be cut from the Department of Education in 2016. This should come as a call to arms to all trade unionists and a warning sign of the severity of attacks to come.

The Assembly aims to cut 1.2 billion over

the next four years in a deal which will devastate services across the board, including the loss of 20,000 jobs in the public sector. No Fresh Start then, just more of the same, resh start their, just indice of the same, as Stormont seeks to repackage a rotten deal from last year.

Cllr Gerry Carroll has condemned the cuts and the deal and called for resistance:

cuts and the deal and called for resistance:

"The truth is, Stormont is fully supportive of these cuts. If they weren't, they would warn people, tell them to get organised, work with government agencies and Trade Unions to make them unworkable. Instead, they are implementing them and demoralising young people about their futures.

"These people are powered by despair, by inaction, by the idea that nothing other than their little charade on the hill is possible.

"Our job in 2016 is to give hope that a

"Our job in 2016 is to give hope that a different way is possible; one that combines the skills and talents of our young people with collective action, people power and working class unity. Or the politics of socialism for short."

The Stormont House Agreement hit the rocks in 2015 when thousands of public sector workers took to the streets in opposition. Sinn Fein were forced to back track over their implementation of welfare reform, and the Assembly went into a crisis over the budget. People power forced their hand then. Similar action today from teachers, classroom assistants

and support staff, can do it again. We need rank and file pressure on Trade Union leaders to get them to come out and clearly oppose this deal.

ICTU, in a massive climb down has already



stated it won't be opposing Fresh Start. This is a bitter disappointment; one that will have severe consequences for the future.

Now anytime the Tories want to implement cuts, they will think they can get away with it because the Trade Unions here are afraid to fight lest they annoy Stormont.

It also means that if ICTU stand by the deal they are shackled when it comes to opening with the standard of the standar

posing attacks on jobs or services, rendering them powerless in the face of O'Dowd's £72 million cuts to Education.

This is a dark day for the trade union

movement in the North and it is vital the ICTU position is challenged.

ICTU, along with certain parties in the Assembly, would have us believe there is no alternative but to accept this deal; it's either that or collapse Stormont and have the Tories implement austerity through direct rule. Not so.

Mobilising

There is, after all, a much better strategy than simply 'bargaining' with the Tories. It involves mobilising the trade union movement, mobilising community campaigns, and mounting a real opposition to austerity through strikes, protests and People Power. That's what will really give the Tories something to worry about. That's our greatest bargaining tool, and the only strategy which stands a chance of mounting a real

opposition to Tory austerity.

NIPSA have come out against the deal, along with PCS and with other Unions expected to make announcements in the coming period. Health workers are also set to strike over pay in the run up to the Assembly elec-

tion in May.

They are demanding a pay rise, and have stated they will undertake a series of actions, including industrial action, in the run up to the Assembly election, with the intention of making the demand for a Living Wage a

central issue in the campaign
Also Unison have already rejected
Stormont's pitiful offer of a 1% pay rise; an
insult and deeply hypocritical as the Assembly
recently gave MLA's a pay rise of 11%.
A Trade Union campaign has also emerged
in the North against the closure of Mental
Health Day Contres in Bulfast, Activities have

Health Day Centres in Belfast. Activists have held protests, collected thousands of signatures and sent thousands of letters of complaint into the consultation process, which is seeking to cut mental health services in the city.

We need to continue to build these cam-paigns, and give people the confidence that when we fight back, we can win

Fiona Ferguson for North Belfast

iona Ferguson has been selected as the North Belfast candidate for People Before Profit for the forthcoming Assembly election in 2016. Ferguson, a 23 year old activist with the party, says she believes that North Belfast is "in dire need of an alternative voice:

"The latest stitch up at Stormont may be a 'fresh start' for the big parties", said Fiona, "but it will mean more of the same for the communities in North

"More cuts and hardship heaped onto ordinary people. Meanwhile corporations get a tax break to line their pockets." "North Belfast continues to suffer

North Beliast continues to suffer high rates of poverty, unemployment and mental health problems. Sectarianism has not been overcome either. Instead it continues to fester with working class people on both sides of the divide losing out. We need a new movement here: a grassroots movement on the streets and in the workplaces; one that breaks

down the communal divisions that our politicians have no interest in tackling.

New politics

"North Belfast has been left behind." says Ferguson, "the promised 'shared future' hasn't materialised for working class people here. Instead, we've seen sectarianism on the rise and muchsectaranism on the rise and much-needed community services being slashed. There is a dire need for an alternative—for a new kind of politics." Fiona argues that she intends to

Fiona argues that she intends to mount a serious campaign: "People Before Profit is a growing movement across Ireland, both North and South, with more and more people realising the power of left-wing, street politics. We believe that there is a thirst for a socialist alternative. Gerry Carroll has shown that in West Belfast, and we intend on building on that success in the North. We are going to work night and day to We are going to work night and day to get the message out that a better way is

possible."

"In this election I will be a voice for the working class people of North Belfast that have been left behind by the politics of cuts and bigotry; a voice for women and the LGBT community who face discrimination on a daily basis. I will be a voice against recism and exercising an a voice against racism and sectarianism, and a voice for socialist politics that puts the interests of working class people

Gerry Carroll, People Before Profit Belfast city councillor, welcomed the

"I am delighted that Fiona has put herself forward. She is a hardworking and dedicated activist, and I think she can really shake up politics in the North of the city. People are sick to the teeth of the failures at Stormont. The time of People Before Profit has come.

Fiona will be one of several PBP candidates fielded across the North, including in Belfast and Derry.

