

Socialist Worker

For latest news visit www.socialistworkeronline.net/

Text JOIN to 086-3074060

CLEAR OUT THE ESTABLISHMENT

They 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 for low and middle incomes.

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-

modation, 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 predictions 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.

WE NEED ANOTHER RISING!

Then Larkin left us – we seemed defeated. The night was black for the working man, But on came Connolly with new hope and counsel His motto was that we'd rise again.

For the next three months all Ireland's gomben 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 bones '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 Joan 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 not 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 gomben 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 we can create a society in which people really come before profit – the socialist republic for which Connolly fought and died.

People Before Profit election campaign: Meet our Candidates

People 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 them 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.'

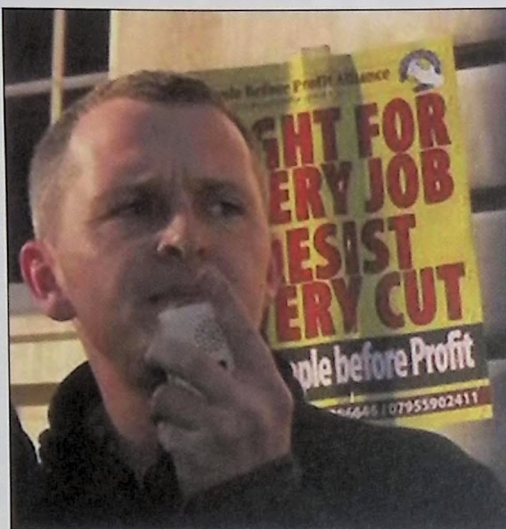
'Whether its Palestine or water charges I believe it is people power that is the key to change. Parliament is useful so long you understand that the real force for change lies with ordinary people themselves.'

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 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 corporations 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 Laoghaire 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 politically active when he joined the Socialist Workers Party in 1994. He is from Clondalkin and was elected a Councillor there in 2009 and re-elected 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 Rhettigans.



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

I 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 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 Féin, 'but I left because I felt it wasn't really a campaigning party. My re-involvement came in 2009 when I joined the SWP at a Palestinian protest they helped to organise' and 'I was elected Councillor for Beaumont-Donaghmede in 2014

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-Drinnagh 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 housing, health and water charges are key national 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.

Brid 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 is possible.'

Moore St occupation – defend our revolutionary heritage

Dave O'Farrell

On 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.

#socialism 1.01

John Molyneux

Do we need political parties?

In 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 them.

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 elsewhere.

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

i.e. a trade union.

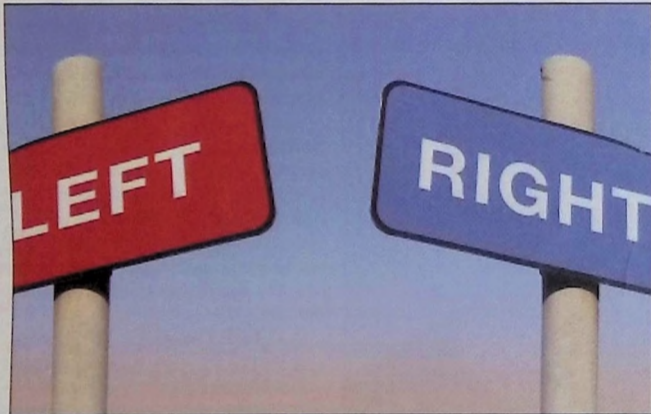
The fact that many campaigns in the past have failed and some campaign leaders have let people down or that strikes can be defeated and union leaders can, and do, sell out, does not change this basic reality. Without organisation NO serious resistance to the government or the employers is possible. Working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

Politics

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 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 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 workplace or industry,

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

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 politics.

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 of homelessness; 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 system?

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.

'An embarrassment to the history of Ireland'

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

It 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 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 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" he said, "We are lucky. It breaks 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, 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

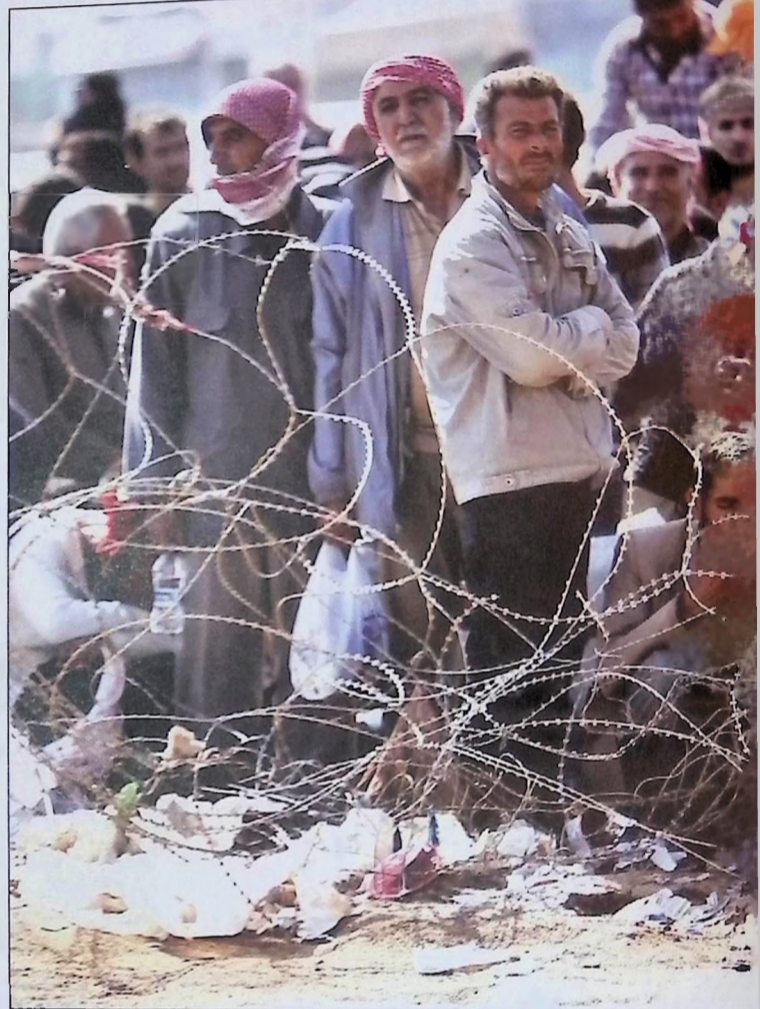
The EU Refugee Resettlement Program, agreed in September 2014, had established a quota system to relocate 120,000 refugees (66,000 from Greece and Italy, 54,000 from Hungary). Ireland, along with the UK, had opted out of this program but offered to take 4000 refugees without committing to any specific timeline or schedule.

Switzerland, Denmark and Norway had also offered to 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 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 people living in various makeshift refugee camps, trying to survive the winter, the EU Resettlement Program with its already



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.

Ireland'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 refugee camps in Lebanon.

Towards the end of 2015, 32 Syrian's were taken in by Ireland.

The Irish government is in no hurry to settle the promised 4,000 refugees. In late 2015, the government, we were told, was going to send officials to Italy and Greece to individually interview, vet and select

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 is, '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 deported.



Direct provision in Athlone 2013

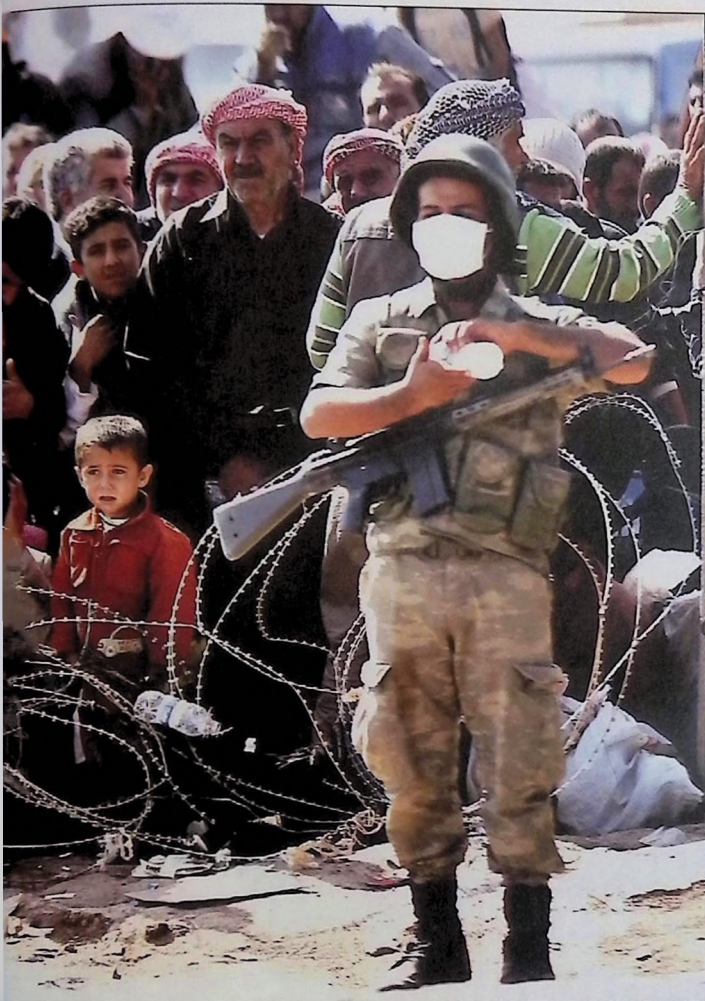
RICHARD BOYD

'The Government should... international humane... its members par... cruel and draconian with... a Bill such as this could be... population to flee in desper... wire in Greece and elsew... assistance and refuge'

What we should have... which does away with... to their... pat... B... try out...

Assessment to of its people'

and 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.

Ireland did not fulfil its promise for 2015 refugee settlement. But the same lazy attitude did not exist when Minister Fitzgerald rushed the **International Protection Bill** through the Houses of the Oireachtas, without much time for democratic 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, will lead to people being at risk of being

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 Riordáin who was tasked with running the Working Group.

Despite promises, and hopes raised, the repeatedly proven to be inhumane and dysfunctional DPS was left untouched in the recommendations 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 states. It is clear that this government is not going to do anything significant to

bring the promised numbers to Ireland 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 is uncertain.

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 '€3 Billion Deal'. This comes on top of the previously signed Readmission Agreement.

Deal with Turkey

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.

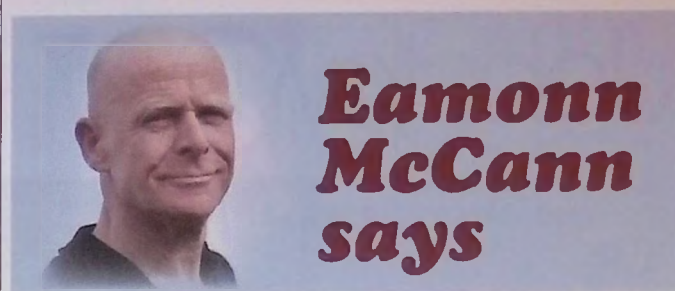
The current refugee crisis did not start in 2014. It began in 2011. There are now millions of Syrian refugees in countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, and other North African states. There are also - still - hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the post-war conditions and ongoing 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 meaningless. 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 role in Ireland's inhumane refugee/asylum process.

Today, the way the Irish government deals with the asylum seekers here and the refugees in Europe is an embarrassment to the history of its people.



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, self-serving and won't lead to meaningful action.

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 as complicit.

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 by 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 Yemen.

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 last-ditch excuse of the global hypocrite - 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 bullying.

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.

Barrett TD Speaks Out in the Dail

utterly ashamed of itself for the Bill and for bringing it to the Dail on day. The Labour Party should be especially ashamed of itself, as it has been as champions of equality, but they will support a Bill which is regressive, and which affects some of the most vulnerable people in the world. It is deeply ironic that the Labour Party should support a Bill which is a disaster in Syria which has forced half the country's population to flee. They have been herded into camps surrounded by barbed wire and many have drowned in the Mediterranean and they are desperately in need of

which offers a compassionate, generous and independent system of asylum and a complete end of direct provision and gives rights to asylum seekers, particularly women and children. The Bill gives them the support they need and gives them the right to work and to study. The Bill, especially at this time, are not in the Bill, which is about fast-tracking cruel deportations, making them easier to deport. The Bill is necessary to vindicate the rights of some of the most desperate and most vulnerable people in the world. It is utterly shameful.'



Richard Boyd Barrett TD

Ireland's floods and Global Climate Change

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

On 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 sodden for weeks.

With rain actually stopping, lower fields filled like fish-ranks 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 property 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 invisible 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.

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.

Measures to alleviate floods will always be necessary. However, unquestionably the worsening extremes of weather are caused by climate change. Also unquestionably the economic 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 corporations that lay waste to our environment in relentless pursuit of profit.

Without question, human activity is responsible 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 in 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 reasons and more.

We must defeat capitalism for the survival of the planet and ourselves.



REVIEW

Karl Marx: Wage Labour and Capital

James Grannell reviews a classic text by Marx which introduces his fundamental ideas about how capitalism works.

Wage 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 1847.

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.

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 blood.'

No Meaning

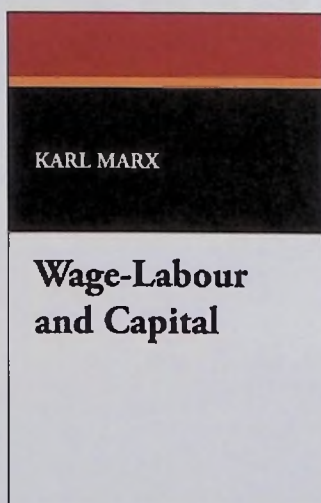
Naturally the question arises as to why the worker sells labour power to the capitalist? The answer: to live.

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 earnings.

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



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 class.

Expansion

The 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. 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.

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

a no-nonsense rebuttal of the trickle-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 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 existence.

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!

Mick Collins

If there was ever any doubt as to the blistering 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, 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:

"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 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 Féin 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



Gerry Carroll calls for resistance

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 opposing 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 election 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 MLAs a pay rise of 11%.

A Trade Union campaign has also emerged in the North against the closure of Mental 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 campaigns, and give people the confidence that when we fight back, we can win

Fiona Ferguson for North Belfast

Fiona 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 Belfast."

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

"North Belfast 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 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 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 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 racism and sectarianism, and a voice for socialist politics that puts the interests of working class people first."

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

"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.



Fiona Ferguson a voice for the working class people of North Belfast