

# Socialist Worker



## BAIL OUT JOBS AND SERVICES NOT BANKERS

WHAT IS the difference between Iceland and Ireland? One letter and six months.

It has become the standard joke. In Iceland, thousands have marched and rioted on the streets and pushed out a government that protected the speculators. We need to do the same here.

The government and the media are trying to railroad through wage cuts and crippling cuts in public services. Already they have announced devastating cuts in Dublin Bus and Bus Éireann and Community Employment schemes across Ireland.

These cuts will hit the poorest hardest and exposes the lie that the Greens are somehow a progressive party in government. They are going along with all the rightwing budget cuts.

All the talk of needing to enter government because of the crisis of climate change has come to nothing as public transport is sacrificed to save the super rich and the bankers.

Instead of wasting money on bankers we should do what Barrak Obama is doing in the US. He is putting money into job creation and environmental programs. This is a much better use of the bail-out money than throwing it into the black hole of corrupt banks.

The government is pushing for a public sector pay cut under the guise of a 6% "pension levy". Disgracefully it seems union leaders are going along with this pay cut on top of the 1% pay levy imposed this month.

This is at the same time that they are giving the banks another €2 Billion and guaranteeing their loans to the tune of €500 Billion.

Already this has meant the state picking up the tab for Anglo Irish's gambling. It also means the insurance rating for Ireland has been reduced to AA+, so we pay more for any borrowing – all to bail out FF's banker and developer friends.



Ireland in six months time? Crowds in Reykjavik protesting weekly to demand change of government over the economic crisis that has engulfed the country

Instead of a "pension levy" why is there no "wealth levy" to take money off the super rich who made billions during the Celtic Tiger?

This should be introduced as part of a package aimed at widening the tax base and forcing the wealthy to pay

their fair share. We need:

■ Emergency legislation to close the tax exile rule which allows the wealthy to abscond from paying taxes.

■ Removing all property based tax incentives, a special levy on all assets including property other than family

homes.

■ A surcharge rate of tax for high earners.

■ Eliminating all tax subsidies on private pension funds for high earners

■ Increasing capital gains tax to 40 percent.

■ Removing inheritance tax allowances on all large business and large farms.

■ Moving Ireland away from the status of the Atlantic tax haven. Increase Corporation Tax and remove all tax loopholes.

## Profiteers bring jobs crisis to the North

By GORETTI HORGAN in Derry

IN THE first two weeks of January alone, over 5,000 people signed on the dole in the North. More than 8,000 jobs have already been lost or are under threat in construction sector. Hundreds of jobs have also been lost in the manufacturing sector.

This is on top of redundancies at Ulster Bank, Woolworth's, Zavvi, Adams,

Marks and Spencers and other high street retailers.

Job losses have been happening so quickly, the dole offices are overwhelmed; 150 new staff are being recruited to the Social Security Agency to deal with these extra benefit claimants.

Meanwhile, Belfast has been picked out by an independent research consultancy as being at high risk of suffering further extensive job losses in 2009.

Centre for Cities released

a new report in January that reveals the UK cities most exposed to recession.

The report pointed out that nearly a quarter of Belfast's working population have no formal qualifications - making recovery more difficult.

Many of these newly redundant workers will be shocked at the low level of benefits in the North—about a third of those in the South. A single person, over 25 years old, receives

£60.50 per week dropping to £47.95 for those under 25 years old.

The UK is near the bottom of the Western European league table in comparative rates of unemployment benefit. As a result, the TUC has called for urgently raising Job Seekers Allowance by £15 per week.

Most of the companies laying off workers are making very healthy profits.

Johnson Press, which owns

320 newspapers, posted a 4.6% fall in profits in 2007 but still made a £178.1m profit. Its chief executive Tim Bowdler received more than £1m that year.

The company now wants to cut 31 jobs. Why should journalists and other staff who are taking home a few pounds above the minimum wage have to lose their jobs altogether?

The Ulster Bank made profits of £378m in the first six months of 2008 and its workers

are expected to pay for the mess that Royal Bank of Scotland, which owns it, has made gambling on the sub-prime market?

The money is there to keep workers in their jobs and to keep pay at the rate it is now. The bosses will try to keep their profits by making workers' lives a misery. So, the only question is whether workers will be forced onto the dole or whether they fight to save the jobs and wages they can.

# Israel is guilty of war crimes

Human rights worker Caoimhe Butterly speaks out from Gaza

ISRAEL HAS been using banned weapons such as white phosphorus and Dime bombs during its assault on Gaza, according to eyewitness evidence from Irish activist Caoimhe Butterly.

Caoimhe is a human rights worker based in Gaza since September. She was out of the country when the bombing started, but managed to slip back in around two weeks ago. She has since visited some of the places shelled by the Israelis.

"I was in the city of Beit Lahia and the Jabalia refugee camp not long after a UNRWA [United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East] school was hit," she told Socialist Worker on Tuesday of this week. "Two young brothers were killed and over 40 people were wounded.

"The boys were killed by tank shells fired into the school – but there was also white phosphorus dropped there. When we arrived there were still sponge-like particles on the ground. They remain ignited for hours after they've been dropped.

"I've visited lots of hospitals and talked to doctors. They point to the burns that are coming in and saying they've never dealt with such burns before.

"Doctors also point to the use of Dime bombs. These contain a type of explosive that fragments into tiny metal filaments. These get carried around in the bloodstream and shred your internal organs.

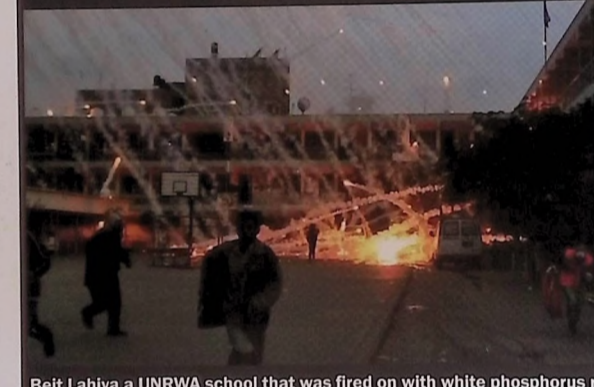
"The doctors pointed to patients who had been admitted in a stable condition – but later died of these Dime wounds.

"There has to be recognition that the Israeli army perpetrated war crimes against a captive civilian population."

Caoimhe explained how Israeli ground troops used bulldozers to clear areas of Gaza that had already been devastated by three weeks of bombing.

"Yesterday I went to a farming village in the north of Gaza," she said. "There's not a single building

## How Israel showered White Phosphorus on a UN school



Beit Lahiya a UNRWA school that was fired on with white phosphorus reprinted from <http://leninology.blogspot.com/>

left standing – they bombed every single house.

"People are completely alone. You just see people in shock sitting in the ruins of their homes. Others are still digging in the rubble, often with their bare hands, looking for the bodies of loved ones. The Palestinians have very little access to earth-moving machinery or bulldozers. Help from relief agencies

is also very scarce."

As Socialist Worker spoke to Caoimhe over the phone we heard explosions in the background. "That's more shelling starting, by the way," she casually commented.

"There are regular ceasefire violations by the Israeli army. I was working up north on the first day of the ceasefire when they started shelling. Four people were killed

– a mother and child and two farmers."

Caoimhe initially tried to return to Gaza on the boat Dignity, which set sail from Cyprus to try and bring in medical supplies for the Palestinians. But the Israeli navy rammed the boat and it had to divert to Lebanon.

She eventually managed to return via the Rafah crossing to Egypt

– despite the border being kept shut on the orders of Egypt's dictator Hosni Mubarak.

"Israel's siege has had a devastating effect on Gaza's humanitarian structure," said Caoimhe. "But this would have been so much less if the Rafah crossing had been open. People understand that the Egyptian government has been complicit in perpetuation of the siege."

## Israel's bloody war failed to achieve its aims

by SIMON ASSAF

ISRAEL CLAIMED victory over Hamas and other Palestinian resistance organisations as it announced a unilateral ceasefire last Sunday after spending three weeks pounding Gaza.

Israeli leaders hoped they could destroy the resistance by demolishing Palestinian government buildings, schools, offices and homes. They launched wave after wave of attacks, which killed over 1,400 Palestinians.

But Israel failed in its objectives. Despite the devastation visited upon them, Hamas survived and was not driven from Gaza. Many Palestinians have rallied to its support.

A second central aim of the war was to stop the Palestinian rockets, but they were still flying as the ceasefire came into effect.

Huge protests around the world have also increased the pressure on Israel, and opposition to its oppression of the

Palestinians has grown.

Israel's military has not regained its aura of invincibility, which it lost after its defeat at the hands of the Lebanese Hizbollah group in 2006.

And the huge movement that has sprung up against the slaughter in Gaza has severely weakened the pro-US Arab regimes.

You can measure the fear felt by these regimes by the size of the new fortifications that have appeared around the Egyptian embassy in west Beirut, Lebanon's capital city.

Rolls of razor wire surround the neighbourhood near the embassy. Behind them soldiers point machine guns at groups of demonstrators who often gather to demand Egypt open its border crossing with Gaza.

Public criticism of Egypt's dictator Hosni Mubarak, a key US ally in the region, has become common, as have street clashes between demonstrators and security forces.



Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and the Ehud Olmert

From Egypt to Jordan, Turkey to Saudi Arabia, diverse and spontaneous protests have rattled the regimes. When they appeared in Arab capitals, they were met by riot police, tear gas, rubber bullets and mass arrests.

In response ordinary people have taken to the streets of villages and towns – a wave of protest made up of thousands of local actions.

These protests have put immense pressure on opposition

parties such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt to call for major demonstrations.

One indication of the depth of the mood was an unprecedented vigil held in the heart of Christian east Beirut, a place long under the control of right wing parties who are deeply hostile to the Palestinians.

These protests have galvanised opposition to imperialism into harsh criticism of the Arab regimes. In protesters' sights are Egypt, Jordan and Saudi

Arabia – all of which have close links to the US.

Mubarak has become the main focus of anger. Other leaders who were also seen as complicit with Israel's actions could not escape the public humiliation. Protesters denounced Mahmoud Abbas, the head of the Palestinian Authority, along with the Jordanian king.

Israel's strategy of mass terror relied on the Arab regimes to deflect blame for Gaza's suffering onto the "intransigence" of the Palestinian resistance.

But this plan backfired, with pro-US regimes finding themselves isolated across the region.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia boycotted a conference for Arab heads of states organised by Qatar to push for a ceasefire. During the conference, Qatar, which has some diplomatic ties with Israel, announced these links would be suspended.

In response to the Egyptian

and Saudi boycott, Qatar invited Iran – considered a pariah state by the West – and Turkey, which has longstanding military links to Israel and is a key member of the Nato military alliance.

The Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan used the meeting to demand that the United Nations expel Israel from the world body for refusing to implement its ceasefire resolutions. Iran seized the opportunity to break its international isolation.

Egypt and Saudi Arabia found themselves out in the cold.

Despite their overwhelming military superiority, the Israelis found they had run out of time and friends.

Whatever its claims to victory, Israel's war has rebounded badly on it and pro-Western regimes in the Middle East.

The mood of anger and frustration against imperialism has grown deeper and become more widespread.

# Protests demand: Expel the Israeli ambassador

TENS OF thousands marched throughout Ireland to protest Israel's attack on Gaza. Over 5000 marched in Belfast on the 17th January in a demonstration called by the Irish Congress of Trade unions.

Thousands took to the streets of Dublin and Cork as well. In Dublin protesters were joined by prominent artists like Christy Moore and Robert Ballagh.

Cork protestors descended on local shopping centres to demand Israeli goods were taken off the shelves.

Stunned managers looked on as hundreds of protestors invaded the stores.

Similar protests were held in towns from Tralee to Galway to Derry.

There was a lot of support from Ireland's Palestinian and Muslim communities.

At all the protests people demanded the government do more than make statements, they should expel the Israeli ambassador to Ireland and demand the EU end its special trading relationship with Israel.

As journalist Naomi Klein said, "The best way to end the bloody occupation is to target Israel with the kind of movement that ended apartheid in South Africa", which was a movement that the people of Ireland played a noble and leading role in.

The effect of the protests was seen when Dunnes Stores said they would remove Israeli goods from their shelves.

There is now a renewed campaign to boycott Israeli goods throughout the country.

Firms operating in Ireland with particular connection to Israel include Fyffes, CRH and Veolia. Fyffes import and distribute Israeli fruit in Ireland, CRH are involved in building the illegal apartheid wall in the occupied territories, Veolia (who run the Luas system and are involved in waste management in Ireland) are operating a "settler only" rail system in occupied East Jerusalem.

The protest organisers also announced details of a specific campaign to pressure Irish Telecommunications company, Eircom, not to give a major contract for a new software billing system, to an IBM led consortium, which includes as its major sub-contractor, Israeli company, Amdocs.

Amdocs is a large Israeli multinational corporation, involved in the telecommunications industry worldwide.

Amdocs employ over 4000 people in Israel and by their own admission have close ties with the Israeli military.

The effect of Israel's war has been to create a global feeling of revulsion at Israel, but only a grassroots movement will force these companies and our government to act.



Photos of protests in Belfast, Cork, Dublin Galway and Tralee  
Pic credits: Marty McCann; Paula Geraghty; Renee Kelliher, and Socialist Worker

## A cultural and sporting boycott needed

**By DETTE MCLOUGHLIN**

LAST YEAR Egyptian soccer star Aboutrika celebrated scoring a goal by raising his shirt to reveal "Sympathise with Gaza" on his tee-shirt. His actions were to highlight the economic blockade and embargo that Israel had imposed on Gaza after the election of Hamas.

Earlier this month Sevilla soccer player Kanoute raised his shirt after scoring a goal to display a vest with "Palestine"

in many languages printed on it.

On 9 January Israeli forces bombed Gaza's "Palestine National Stadium" which was also the head of the Palestinian Football Association. The stadium was built less than 4 years ago, FIFA having donated funds towards its construction. It was bombed in 2006, and now it will need to be rebuilt yet again. It was meant to be symbolic of a Palestinian state, uniting the West Bank and Gaza. It is now symbolic of Israel's oppression

of the Palestinian people.

In January 1970 6000 people took place in an Anti-Apartheid rally in Dublin and then marched to the Irish Rugby Union's grounds in Lansdowne Road. They were protesting against the South African Rugby team playing in Ireland. A mini riot broke out. This was one of the first mass demonstrations in Ireland against apartheid, and caused an upsurge in Irish support for the Anti-Apartheid Movement.

One of many effective tools against apartheid South Africa was the South African Non-Racialised Olympic Committee, which used sports to highlight the inequities of the South African government. South Africa was formally expelled from the International Olympic Committee in 1970.

Sport can attract international political attention on a society, and a sporting and cultural boycott is another legitimate way of constructively voicing anger against a particular regime and demanding change.

The Israel Football Federation has no fears of being political, it has banned any club matches from being played in Palestinian towns. This is yet another insult in a soccer crazy area.

Israel's attacks on Gaza and treatment of the Palestinian people are being condemned by the international sports world. Protests should happen at any sporting events involving Israel.

**WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR**

<p><b>Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet.</b></p> <p>A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.</p> <p><b>REVOLUTION</b></p> <p>The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy.</p> <p>To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based on much</p>	<p>greater political and economic democracy.</p> <p><b>AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR</b></p> <p>War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.</p> <p>Bush's "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.</p> <p><b>END RACISM AND OPPRESSION</b></p> <p>We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the</p>	<p>working class.</p> <p>We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.</p> <p>We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.</p> <p><b>FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH</b></p> <p>We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Blair government.</p> <p>Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction'</p> <p>We want to see an Irish workers republic where all</p>	<p>workers gain.</p> <p>Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!</p> <p><b>FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY</b></p> <p>To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party.</p> <p>This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system.</p> <p>We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.</p> <p>We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.</p>
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Join the Socialists

Fill in the form and send to  
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Name.....

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# How deep is the Irish ec

IT IS the greatest economic crisis since the 1930s. There is no precedent for a change from a 'miracle' economy to one that will shrink by 5 percent next year.

Government finances to run the country are in free fall.

During the Lisbon Treaty debate, the right wing parties claimed that the EU Growth and Stability Pact was necessary for economic stability. This limits borrowing to 3% of GDP - but Irish state debt is now running at 10%!

The crisis is causing huge social suffering because Ireland has the largest personal debt to disposable income ratio in the EU. So you can imagine the panic about job losses.

## WHAT HAS brought about such a disastrous collapse?

The root causes arise from an inherent contradiction in global capitalism.

As rates of profits fell from the 1970s onwards, our rulers embraced neo-liberalism as a cover to reduce the share of an economy distributed to wages and social welfare. US workers, for example, are work an extra month on average each year compared to the sixties but their pay levels did not rise accordingly.

But capitalism needs to find markets for goods and the more they cut the share allocated to wages, the greater is the fall in 'consumer demand'.

In the nineties, they developed a two-fold solution to this problem by, firstly, expanding working class debt based on inflated home prices and, secondly, shifting capital into newer forms of speculation. About 35% of profits in the US now come from finance compared to 15% in the 1960s.

Today this global financial system has come crashing down and is triggering a 1930s style crash. Yet few of the so-called economic experts who lectured workers about market forces never saw it coming.

According to JK Galbraith, of the 30,000 economists working in the US, only about 15 came near to predicting the current crash.

Far from being a science, conventional economics has become a form of propaganda that hides the contradictions of capitalism.

## WHY IS Ireland's crisis worse than elsewhere?

The main reason is that Ireland followed the neo-liberal model more slavishly than elsewhere.

The government adopted a trickle down philosophy and cut taxes on wealth and profits to encourage the rich to invest. Today Ireland has the lowest level of state spending in the EU. The boom was squandered and little investment was put into schools and hospitals.

The constant message was that 'market forces' should be given a free hand.

This worked until 2001 when the Irish economy was caught in a minor US recession and capital began to flow to elsewhere.

The government's response was to stimulate property speculation by forging an unholy alliance between state officials, bankers and property developers. The end results of their efforts are incredible.

Up to recently, 20 percent of state finances come from property taxes. 14 percent of the labour force was employed in construction - double the average elsewhere. 60 percent of

bank loans went into property,

As US capital continued to withdraw from manufacturing - today only 13 percent of the Irish workforce are employed in this sector - the neo-liberals dreamt that Ireland could become a service economy, supplying financial services in particular.

Ireland was marketed abroad as a location for 'light regulation' to attract the speculators. Even before the current crash, it was known financial 'Wild West' where a business friendly government turned a blind eye to all sort of 'financial engineering'.

The turning of a blind eye to the Anglo-Irish scams was therefore not accidental - it was part of state policy.

## WHAT IS the official strategy for overcoming the crisis?

They don't have any - they engage in pure fantasies about their long term prospects. Up to recently they talked about Ireland becoming the 'knowledge economy' of Europe. This was despite that fact that we have a woful scientific culture because of the refusal to invest in elementary items like science lab in schools.

The latest buzz word is 'the smart

economy'. We are supposed to imagine that Irish capitalists who thrived on profits from beef and property speculation will risk all on 'innovation'!

Behind the fantasies, the real strategy is to cut workers wages in order to regain competitiveness and benefit from reflationary policies elsewhere. The immediate target is the public

sector because 80% of union members work there.

If they can impose pay cuts - in the guise of a pension levy - this will be a signal to every private capitalist to cut



## Anglo Irish: Fian

THE NATIONALISATION of Anglo Irish Bank represents another handout to FF's banker and developer friends. It is a classic example of nationalising their losses and bad debts.

Sean Quinn, Ireland's richest man, was Anglo Irish Bank's biggest debtor. He also owned 15% of the bank and coincidentally he happens to be a major donor to FF.

Sean Fitzpatrick, the disgraced chairman of the bank who hid €129 million in personal loans from the bank, was also a major fundraiser for FF.

Another developer Sean Dunne - the man who borrowed heavily to build 'Trump Towers' in

Ballsbridge, has millions in loans from Anglo. He too is a big FF financier.

Did any of this influence Cowen and Lenihan's decision to bail out Anglo Irish Bank?

UCD Professor of Economics, Morgan Kelly, thought so. Using well connected sources, he claimed in a recent Irish Times article that Cowen and Lenihan overruled state officials to press through the rescue plan.

He argued that the only effect of the state guarantee is that the Irish taxpayer will make up the losses of Anglo Irish's bondholders instead of the insurers who had already been paid to underwrite the risk.

"In the view of international investors, piling Anglo Irish's gambling losses on top of a spiralling national debt could easily suffice to sink the Irish State into bankruptcy," Kelly said. According to Kelly, Anglo's bad debts could easily exceed €20,000 per household.

The Anglo Irish Bank scandal exposes that the golden circle is alive and well in Ireland.

While Sean Fitzpatrick, the bank's chairman, was dipping his hands into the banks money, he was also a managing partner in auditors Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC) and a director in Greencore.

Ned Sullivan, another director

# conomic crisis?



wages and pension benefits.

It really is disgusting! Irish people must contribute billions to help the banks which helped cause the problem – and take pay cuts as well!

## WHAT SHOULD socialists advocate as an answer to the crisis?

*First, the banking sector should be nationalised and the whole sector*

*consolidated into one state bank that bans speculation and provides credit for socially useful projects.*

Why should €500 billion be made available as a guarantee for toxic debts run up by speculators? The existing capitalists should be declared bankrupt so that their debts are liquidated and the state should nationalise the remaining assets.

*Second, instead of supporting bankers state money should be used to fund an emergency job creation programme.*

We need a state construction corps to take on unemployed building workers and embark on major projects in public transport, a housing insulation programme; the building of crèches and social housing.

We need alternative industries that provide jobs rather than condemning a new generation to emigration and the dole queue.

*Third, we should immediately take the natural resources such as those in the Corrib or Dunquinn fields back into public ownership and use the surplus to develop alternative sources of energy.*

*Fourth, instead of cutting wages we should increase the tax base by claw-back taxes on wealth.* The super-rich made an extra €41 billion in the last years of the Celtic Tiger. We should impose a 70% sur-tax on everyone earning over €100,000; we should impose an annual wealth tax on all assets; we should restore capital gains tax to at least 40% and eliminate all property relief taxes.

*Fifth, we should adopt a strict Right to Work policy which penalises employers who sack workers and gives full protection to those declared redundant.*

Workers should be encouraged to occupy firms that declare redundancy to demand that their account books are opened.

Where they show continuing profits, their assets should expropriated to pay back all state grants and tax subsidies. Where they are bankrupt, they should be taken into public ownership to facilitate alternative job creation.

To save jobs we should cut the working week, share out overtime and maintain living standards.

These are radical measures – but they are needed.

And there is lots more we can do if we build a real political alternative – one that sees capitalism as a dead end system that needs replacement.

## Fail's bankers

at Greencore was also a director in Anglo Irish.

Gary McGann, a director in Anglo Irish was also the boss at Smurfit-Kappa, where Sean Fitzpatrick was also a director.

Sean FitzPatrick was also on the board of Aer Lingus.

Anglo Irish's main investor was Sean Quinn and his main advisor is Dermot Reilly, a partner in - PWC.

Anne Heraty who is running the largest Irish recruitment agency CPL was also a director in Anglo Irish Bank.

Anglo Irish's new boss Donal O'Connor succeeded Anglo's recently resigned director Lar Bradshaw as chairman of the

controversial Dublin Docklands Development Authority — just as Sean Fitzpatrick was departing the same DDDA as a director.

Donal O'Connor is also a former managing partner of guess who - PricewaterhouseCoopers!

This is the clique of the super rich want us to pay for their crisis.

Anglo is the Republic's third largest lender.

An estimated 80% of its loan book relates to property and construction markets.

Strangely the amount of money on deposit in the bank shrank from €80 Billion to €51 Billion (and possibly even lower) before the state moved in to guarantee the bank's debts of €100 Billion.

The question many are now asking is: Were the super rich given a chance to get their money out in case it would be used to cover bad debts?

There are now plans to turn Anglo Irish Bank into a 'Toxic Bank'. Essentially the state run bank would take on all the bad debts of the other banks. This is the ideal solution for the bankers and the rich. They get to dump their bad loans onto the taxpayer and walk away.

The government is also proposing to continue the failed policy of 're-capitalising' AIB and Bank of Ireland to the tune of €2 Billion each. Which means: More Bail Out for the Rich.

# Work till you drop



Working at Waterford Crystal but what happens when you retire?

AFTER 40 years of work and paying into pension schemes, many workers now face retirement without anything to live on except the basic state pension. Nearly a million workers in Ireland who have pensions could find that they are worthless when they retire.

While the government steps in to save bankers and developers, there is no similar guarantee scheme to safeguard workers pensions. If companies go bust or the returns from pension funds are down workers are left to suffer, even if they paid into pension schemes for decades.

In Britain since 2005 the government guarantees 90% of a pension's value. There is no similar guarantee in Ireland. In fact the Irish government intervened to try to stop an EU directive giving such a guarantee.

Workers across Ireland who are near retirement now face an uncertain future if their company collapses or the pension fund is depleted.

Complaints to the Pensions Ombudsman rose by 43% in 2008 and the number of complaints relating to the construction industry almost trebled.

The Pensions Ombudsman says that in some cases, bosses working in the construction industry simply stole the pension money given to them in good faith by workers. In other cases, employees were not made aware of their pension entitlements.

A significant number of those complaints came from Eastern Europeans who moved to Ireland when the building trade was booming and who were not made aware of their rights.

Socialist Worker spoke to Tom Hogan who just retired from Waterford-Wedgewood. The company has just gone into receivership and as a result Tom has no pension despite paying into the pension scheme for nearly 40 years.

Tom explained, "Waterford Glass had a defined benefit pension scheme. Under our scheme we were supposed to get two thirds of our salary

when we retired.

Most workers thought they had a guarantee of comfort in their old age. Instead we discovered we only had a promise, not a guarantee".

"The current pension legislation allows any pension scheme, if declared insolvent, to abandon contributors to the scheme.

"They can even cut the amount paid out to current pensioners. Workers in Waterford-Wedgewood in Britain are guaranteed 90% of their pension, while workers in the same company in Ireland get nothing".

"Most workers with a defined benefit scheme think they are better off than those on defined contribution schemes.

"The second sort doesn't guarantee a proportion of your salary on retirement, say two thirds, instead your pension is completely determined by how much the pension fund earned on the stock market the year you retire. Some workers who invested €80,000 have come out with just €35,000 pensions".

"However all pension schemes are invested on the stock market. When the market crashes pension funds can collapse.

"Most pension funds today are struggling to stay solvent, over 50% could go to the wall. The idea that the stock market is the best investment for pensions is a lie.

"Pension funds lost 40% of their value in the last two years. We need a state guaranteed, or state run pension fund to guarantee people can look forward to a retirement".

"If the state can step in to guarantee the banks or the pork producers, then they can step in to guarantee pensions".

"The trade union UNITE is taking a test case in Ireland similar to the case that resulted in the British state giving a guarantee to pay 90% of the value of the pension in the event of insolvency. UNITE is also organising protests at the Waterford Glass factory to demand workers get the pensions they saved".

# Government plans to slash Dublin Bus services and jobs

DUBLIN BUS have announced to the trade unions that will sack 160 bus drivers and slash services on routes throughout the city from March 1st.

In addition workers in other grades including maintenance, cleaning, shunting and clerical will be sacked. In total 290 Dublin Bus workers are set to lose their jobs.

In many areas the impact on our bus service will be dramatic. For example around a quarter of the scheduled services on the 13/13A route will be scrapped along with similar cuts on the 19/19A route. The Finglas 40/A route will also be cut-back along with the 3 route serving Larkhill. The Tallaght and Clondalkin services will also be badly affected.

In addition to the sackings and cut backs, Dublin Bus workers will not be paid the rises due to them under partnership in April and October this year. Working practices like overtime and travelling time are to be curtailed.

This will mean fewer buses, more crowding and buses being too full to pick up passengers, longer waits and more traffic congestion as more people are forced to use their cars because of the



160 Buses are set to be removed from the Dublin Bus fleet

wrecked bus service.

Six months ago the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Transport recommended that there should be an increase of 350 buses to ease traffic congestion in Dublin.

If this were done there would be an important reduction in greenhouse gases which are leading to environmental crisis and life would be a little bit easier for the harassed inhabitants of Dublin.

The Greens commitment to cleaning up the environment did not survive long. Instead the Fianna Fail-Green Party government is more concerned to bail out the crooked bankers

of Anglo-Irish and other banks than maintain jobs and services for working class people.

If Fianna Fail's rich friends and the Corporations were taxed equitably there

would be plenty of money to ensure the Dublin Bus service was improved rather than slashed and jobs could be saved.

Residents Groups, Community Associations,

local activists and trade unionists are coming together across the city in alliance with the Dublin Bus workers to fight these cuts. Together we can stop the government in its tracks.

## Ex-Green Party councillor speaks to Socialist Worker

JANUARY SAW a growing crisis inside the Green Party. Two prominent councillors, Chris O'Leary in Cork and Bronwen Maher in Dublin, quit the party.

Chris O'Leary spoke to Socialist Worker about why he left the Green Party and what he thinks the future strategy for the left and the environmental movement should be.

**SW: WHAT do you think of the Governments response to the economic crisis.**

I believe the Government has buried its head in the sand, shown very little leadership towards the workers of this country.

The Government has only focused on rescuing and bailing out incompetent banks/bankers, greedy developers and investment speculators. The government has failed to critically act on internal indigenous industries and businesses over the past decades.

The dependency on multinationals, along with state handouts by way of a carrot to these investments has been proven to be worthless, the race to the bottom means workers and their families are soon forgotten as businesses move to cheaper

countries.

At a time when we were told we never had it so good we experienced a rush towards consumerism and a must have society.

Irresponsibly, credit became a lot easier, workers were encouraged to take out large mortgages or remortgage their homes beyond realistic terms. We also experienced workers being exploited particularly in the building industry.

The consumerism we experienced was being shoved at us from all angles, the state instead of leading the way, encouraged projects with state capital that over ran in some cases by billions but very few questioned the morality of this.

**SW: HAVE the Greens been compromised by going along with the governments right wing economic policies and votes like the Lisbon Treaty.**

As someone who supported the Green Party in entering government I have always felt that it is better that you are inside bringing about change as long as you retain your identity, your principals and your values and that you work to bring around change for everyone in society



Ex-Green Councillors Bronwen Maher and Chris O'Leary

and not the elite.

Being in a position where you're in as an equal regardless of your size or representation should have been ring fenced in the negotiations for government by the Green Party.

Failing to do this or allowing one self to be grateful for the invitation to join government weakened the Green Party's negotiations and the outcomes in the programme for government.

Always seeing themselves in there for the long haul and only setting objectives under their ministers portfolios is a critical mistake.

Surely, being at a cabinet table means collective decision making along with collective responsibility.

I never saw the Green Party as being a Niche Party, I joined what I believed to be a radical party that cared as much



about social justice as the Green agenda, that viewed change in a holistic approach.

As a campaigner and advocate to the NO side of the Lisbon Treaty I am happy to say I played my part at the time in securing the non decision for the party to actively support the Lisbon Treaty.

As a patron of the Peoples Movement I played my part within the Cork area in getting the message out the Lisbon was not good for our economy or for workers rights.

**SW: WHAT is the alternative strategy for the Environmental Movement and the Left in Ireland.**

I am a great believer in Abraham Maslow's theory of the Hierarchy of Need.

Basically starting where people are at, addressing their issues

before they can become part of their community and actively participate in bringing about the much needed change that we can collectively make together.

At one level facing the challenges of climate change we must also recognise the principles for climate justice. As we know social movements around the world are calling for urgent and radical action, broadly based on four principles

- 1) Rich take responsibility
- 2) Leave fossil fuels in the ground,
- 3) Fair and Effective Solutions,
- 4) Equal access to resources.

I believe these principles can bring about a broad based movement of environmental and the left in Ireland as well as the international connection across the globe.

Focusing on elections can bring about mobilisations of voters on issues which affect them in every day life. Issues such as the current economic and social crisis which faces our country, the lack of vision in replacing dole queues with full time employment.

The threats of workers having invested

in their home now facing repossessions by the banks should be materialising into strong anger at the ballot box.

As well as using elections to express their anger people need to build social movements for change.

**SW: SHOULD the Left Wing Independents come together under a wider umbrella in the next elections.**

There is always room for alliances of the left, in sharing strategies and putting like minded policies before the people.

It is more important that after the election left wing independents and like minded elected public representatives should form alliances to advance political gains.

**SW: WHAT do you think of the People before Profit Alliance**

It is a worthwhile alliance, my own view is that it should be more broad based with a more grass roots based membership.

It also needs to move beyond being identified with one political party, you might say the same about the Peoples Movement which I am a patron of.

These issues need addressing to successful movements and alliances.

## €13.5 million for Shell's cops

THE Department of Justice announced in January that it has spent €13.5 million since 2003 on Shell Oil's pipeline in Mayo. The gardai have used heavy handed tactics against peaceful protestors who have the backing of the local community.

The operation cost more than €1m in October 2008, the month Shell called in the world's largest pipelaying vessel, The Solitaire.

Scores of extra uniformed gardai, the Garda Water Unit, two navy ships and divers, private security firms and garda surveillance teams were sent to Rosspoint to join the nearly 200 permanent garda force in the area.

It is a disgrace that the state is spending so much money trying to push through a dangerous pipeline against the wishes of the local community. In these times of economic crisis this funding should be the first to get cut.

# Raytheon war machine disrupted again



By GORETTI HORGAN

ON MONDAY 12th Jan, nine women from the Derry Anti War Coalition tried to decommission the computer systems in the Raytheon plant.

Raytheon is one of Israel's main suppliers of the weapons that were used in the attacks on Gaza.

We hoped to do what the Raytheon 9 did during the Israeli assault on Lebanon in Aug 2006 and prevent or delay war crimes being committed by the Israeli Defence Forces in Gaza with the use of Raytheon weapons.

It became clear during the trial of the Raytheon 9 that the company doesn't care that its weapons are used to commit war crimes.

We knew that the security had been increased since the occupation in 2006 and particularly since the protestors were found not guilty of any crime.

However, we did hope to disrupt the activities at the Raytheon plant for a while – which we succeeded in doing and to try to force a criminal investigation into the activities of the Raytheon

company in Derry which, we believe, amount to complicity in war crimes.

Five women were arrested during the occupation and are in court on the 5th February. The nine women who joined the occupation are to be questioned under caution on suspicion of burglary, criminal damage and common assault.

In the course of trying to get us to leave, the PSNI agreed to meet a deputation from the Derry Anti-War Coalition to present evidence which, we believe, warrants a criminal investigation into the Raytheon company.

Adossier we presented has been sent to the PSNI's legal officers and human rights officer. But after the political interference seen in the Saudi Arabian BAE bribe scandal, no one expects Raytheon to be prosecuted.

If, as expected, nothing happens with the police investigation, the Anti War Coalition will have exhausted the possibility of State intervention to hold Raytheon responsible for war crimes and we will be able to consider what other course of action to take.

# Why there must be No Platform for Irving

*We are once again seeing attempts by right wing elements to invite convicted Holocaust denier David Irving to speak in Ireland's main universities. Here Kiran Emrich a student in NUI Galway looks at the argument about giving fascists an open platform to deny the Holocaust.*

AVID IRVING, one of Britain's leading fascists has been invited to speak at NUI Galway and possibly other universities in Ireland. Irving has spent his career as an apologist for Hitler in far right and fascist circles. He served time behind bars in Austria for promoting Holocaust denial. Since his release he claims that "the Jews are the architects of their own misfortune". His life is dedicated to those who would crush all human freedoms.

"Irving is an active Holocaust denier...is anti-Semitic and racist and... associates with right wing extremists who promote neo-Nazism" said Judge Gray finding against Irving in a libel case.

The British Nationalist Party (BNP) today stands in the political tradition of Hitler and Mussolini. David Irving shares platforms with the BNP, organising a political force that aims at smashing democracy and instituting a racial reign of terror.

Where the BNP has gained a foothold racist attacks have increased by nearly 1000%.

Those who agree to giving Irving a platform argue that we have to tolerate the expression of abhorrent views in the name of free speech, and that he should be defeated through debate.

However Fascism is not a political current like any other. It is more than obnoxious racism – it is an ideology that aims to destroy every vestige of democracy, and fascists have no misgivings about using thuggery to achieve their aims. Mere words are not enough to defeat them – they must be excluded from public space.

"No platform" is not an attack on free speech, but opposition to those who utilise it in order to remove the freedoms of others. Fascists have a strategy - a platform gives a veneer of credibility to promote their message of hate, leading to violence against their targets. Hate speech aimed at ethnic minorities encourages physical attacks.

Fascism appeared in 1920s Italy. Thuggery was one aspect of Mussolini's strategy. The other was courting respectability by pretending to be committed to democratic norms. This two-pronged attack has remained a feature of fascism ever since. Parliamentary parties insisted that the fascists had to be treated like any other party and granted the same rights. The results were disastrous. Fine words about democracy disappeared as the fascists abolished press freedom, suspended all democratic



Child in the Holocaust

rights and went about expunging every trace of opposition, protest or criticism from their new "corporate state".

10 years later in Germany the pattern repeated itself with genocidal consequences.

Students should discuss and debate the nature and origins of fascism. We should ask WHY, not IF, the Holocaust happened. To confuse debate with offering respectability to fascists who try to claim the Holocaust didn't happen, and who are trying to rebuild a fascist project in Europe is a mistake.

Unfortunately, fascists are grabbing electoral success across Europe. They can attract a significant vote despite having relatively few members in an area. That is because they can feed off disillusion with mainstream political parties by exploiting the climate of racism against Muslims and immigrants whipped

up in the media. When a recession is biting, those who look or sound or pray differently can become scapegoats for society's problems, especially if there is a weak parliamentary left as there is in Ireland.

There is no organised fascist movement in Ireland. This is a direct result of the strategy for stopping the neo-Nazis adopted by anti-fascist movements anytime people like Irving try to gain a foothold of credibility. No respectability for fascists has proven to work: "unite, and prevent fascism from getting public space". What scares and defeats fascists is mass grassroots opposition to their presence.

There should be a resounding NO to Irving at NUI Galway and other colleges and a mass protest preventing him from having a platform there.



Holocaust denier David Irving

## WHATS ON

### PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT ALLIANCE

SAVE OUR BUS SERVICES  
MORE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NOT LESS!  
Public Meeting

Thurs 5th Feb @ 8pm, Loughlinstown Community Rooms  
More info: Hugh Lewis 087-3276267 Richard Boyd Barrett 087-6329511

SAVE OUR BUS SERVICES  
MORE PUBLIC TRANSPORT NOT LESS!  
Public Meeting

Thurs 5th Feb @ 8pm, Axis Centre Ballymun  
More info: 01 8622209; 086-3074060

People Before Profit Election 2009 Fundraiser  
Featuring: Theywantcontrol; Decapitated Jaysus; Brian Dunne & Guests, Including South African Samba & Brazilian Capoeira  
Madison Bar, Rathmines, D6, 5 Euro, Doors 8.30pm

### CORK SOCIALIST WORKER DAYSCHOOL

Sessions on Socialist solution to the crisis in Capitalism & Resistance & Imperialism with Kieran Allen & Marnie Holborow  
Sat Feb 7th from 2 - 5 PM, Victoria Hotel Patrick St

### IRELAND PALESTINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN

IPSC Public Meeting: After Gaza, what now for Palestine? Thursday 5 Feb, 8:00PM, Clubhouse Hotel, Patrick St, Kilkenny  
Speakers: Freda Hughes (IPSC) and Adnan Shabab (IPSC)

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# Socialist Worker



**JOIN THE REVOLUTION MARCH**  
**Wed 4<sup>th</sup> Feb 1.30pm Parnell Sq, Dublin**

## PROTEST, MARCH, OCCUPY TO STOP FEES

THE DECISION in the budget to increase third level registration fees by 67% to €1,500 and Education Minister Batt O'Keefe's proposed reintroduction of third level fees will mean many secondary school pupils who would have gone to college will now not do so.

At an age before they have even entered the workforce, they will be paying for the country's economic mismanagement over the last few years.

Third level fees were abolished in 1995, giving many students the opportunity to advance their learning during Ireland's boom years.

When Education minister Noel Dempsey proposes the reintroduction of fees in 2002 students – including many secondary school pupils from Dublin – marched in protest and the idea was dropped.

Secondary School pupils have also been involved in classroom walkouts in protest at war.

Now, with the country facing economic peril, the government continues to let the super-rich off lightly whilst demanding ordinary working people and their children carry the can for years of economic mismanagement.

Wealthy exiles benefit from tax loopholes, the banks have their bailouts and corporations pay a measly 12.5% corporation tax.

And yet students are being told they must pay fees as part of the government's desperate bid to make up the financial deficit they now face.

This situation is unfair. Even without fees, the average cost of a three year college education is already €34,000.

In 2003, Taoiseach Bertie Ahern left open the option that students from families earning more than €200,000 a year could be charged college fees.

Now Batt O'Keefe claims that fees would be restricted to the children of families who earn €100,000 or more.

This idea does not merely represent a halving of the proposed income threshold at a time when the recession is hitting everyone hard.

In reality, it will also affect those earning less than that amount.

As happened in Britain, this is an attempt to bring in fees by the back door.

The presidents of Dublin's top universities have called for the reintroduction of fees to make up the gap in funding for third-level institutions.

These same men earn colossal salaries while poorer students will not be able to attend university as they are unable to pay.

Secondary school pupils and their parents were involved in the demonstrations against the



introduction of fees and education cuts before Christmas.

Now they can join again with the movement of university lecturers, teachers and students in opposing third level fees.

You can resist the cynical introduction of fees by marching with the Union of Students of Ireland's Demonstration on Wednesday 4th February. Remember, your education is a right, not a privilege.

### Occupations Spread across Britain

STUDENTS ACROSS Britain have taken part in demonstrations, rallies and occupations in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

Students at the School of Oriental and African Studies (Soas) were the first to occupy on Wednesday 14 January.

The students won all of their demands and held a series of meetings on issues related to the conflict.

On Thursday 15 January hundreds of London School of Economics (LSE) students started a week-long occupation of a lecture hall.

On Friday 16 January students at Essex University occupied in solidarity with the people of Gaza.

On Tuesday 20 January, the University of Sussex went into occupation.

King's College in London also went into occupation on Tuesday, one demand being that the university revokes the honorary doctorate it has given to Israeli president Shimon Peres.

Around 150 students have been in occupation at Warwick University since Wednesday 21 January.

Students have taken over a lecture theatre and are holding meetings, film showings and debates about Gaza.

Thursday 22 January was an Anti-War student day of action.

It unleashed a wave of mass meetings, demonstrations and occupations.

At Oxford University 80 students charged into the historic Bodleian library building to demand that the university cancels a series of lectures due to be given by Shimon Peres.

By 6.30pm the same day, Oxford students had won these demands.

Manchester Metropolitan University students also went into occupation on Thursday 22 January after a successful demonstration.

Students across the country are continuing to demonstrate and occupy in solidarity with the people of Gaza.