

Socialist Worker

Show the government your anger... March to the Dáil on 18 July



THE anti-household charges campaign has set 18 July as the date for a national protest. It is inviting other organisations who are fighting the cuts to march with it to the Dáil.

On 19 July, Dáil Eireann will close for a long summer break. But before they head for their holidays, they need to hear the voice of anger that is growing across Ireland.

During the referendum on the Fiscal Treaty, the government deliberately hid bad news to help swing a Yes vote. But now they have returned to their bully boy tactics as they follow orders from the Troika.

Anglo pay out

Last week, for example, another cheque for €1 billion was written for unsecured bondholders of Anglo Irish Bank. Enda Kenny will not even show us enough respect and tell us who the lucky recipient of our generosity is.

Instead, the anonymous bondholder probably bought up the IOU for a fraction of its original price and then bet that a cowardly government would pay up. This gambler has made a fortune from our misery.

Health Minister James Reilly sits in a cabinet that decided to make that bond payment. But the day before, he was calling for immediate action to deal with the 'overspending' of €200 million in the health service. He, apparently, wants workers to do without double pay on Sundays.

Reilly lives in a stately home and has claimed a tax break for its refurbishment. So naturally, he thinks nothing of paying off rich people so that they can continue to live in the manner they are accustomed to.

Any decent, sensible working class person knows that we should stop paying off bondholders and start looking after people who are suffering. Yet this is not on the agenda of this right wing Fine Gael led government.

Threats and intimidation

They are about to mount a major campaign to intimidate people to pay the household charge. Personalised letters will soon come through the doors of non-payers reminding them that they are acting 'illegally'. They hope to frighten more people into paying.

The government is also about to launch a major attack on public



sector workers. They are working with their friends in the Independent Group of Newspapers to whip up a campaign against workers who get paid for overtime or who receive increments.

After they have done their propaganda preparations, they will move on what they term 'non-core payments' and cut allowances.

Their other target is social welfare recipients. The Labour Minister Brendan Howlin has said that more cuts 'cannot be ruled out' even though Labour promised to protect social welfare in its election manifesto.

Instead of fighting these issues separately, we need to come together in a big, people's movement against austerity. 18 July is an important start and Socialist Worker urges all

MARCH TO THE DAIL 18 JULY

Assemble at Central Bank Plaza 5pm.

its readers to actively build for it. Specifically, you can

Take up a petition in your workplace to garner support for the demonstration.

Distribute leaflets to your friends and neighbours.

Get any organisation which is opposed to health cuts or school closures to back this march.

Inside

People Before Profit : time for the left to experiment

Page 3

Industrial struggles on the rise

Page 2

**Join the Socialists—Text JOIN to 086-3074060
Visit our website—www.swp.ie**

Industrial News

Industrial Correspondent – Donal Mac Fhearraigh

Water workers in strike ballot

By DONAL MAC FHEARRAIGH

GOVERNMENT plans to introduce water charges have hit a major stumbling block with 2,500 local authority staff preparing for strike action out of fear for their jobs.

A strike ballot of SIPTU members employed in local authority water services commenced on Monday 18 June, and will conclude on Friday 6 July.

Plumbers, inspectors, water/sewerage caretakers, and network staff are to be balloted by SIPTU over the “transfer of assets and duties of SIPTU members to Bord Gáis and other sub-contractors” as part of the establishment of Irish Water.

When the creation of the public water utility was announced, the Department of the Environment said there would be a “phased transition of functions from local authorities to Irish Water” and that local authorities would be engaged as “agents” for a “considerable period”. “These arrangements would end in 2017 at the earliest based on the independent assessment,” it said.

However, the department says staffing levels would ultimately be a matter for Irish Water.

In recent weeks, SIPTU has held a series of meetings with its members in regions including Cork, Dublin, and Galway.

Participants at these meetings expressed anger at the decision by the Department of the Environment to proceed with removing their jobs and responsibilities, transferring it out of the local authority system without consultation or discussion with people who have worked for decades delivering water services.

SIPTU sectoral organiser Michael Wall said “Any move to transfer the work out of the councils would trigger action, and he also accused the Government of refusing to sit down with staff representatives”.

Impact, which represents thousands of officials in the water service, has warned that once Irish Water is established with an income from water charges, the temptation to privatise it will be “immense”.

The result of the ballot will be announced on Monday 9 July.

Bord na Móna workers escalate industrial action



By DONAL MAC FHEARRAIGH

UNIONS at Bord Na Móna Group are set to escalate their industrial action with a two day stoppage on 27 and 28

June.

This follows the one day strike on 5 June.

As many as 1,500 Bord na Móna workers across the Midlands will join the two-day stoppage.

Union members agreed an escalating campaign of strikes because they felt that what was offered by management was a far cry from the 6% they were originally promised in 2009 as part of the national wage agreement and paid out to all other semi-state companies.

The chairman of the group of unions, Oliver McDonagh of SIPTU, said, “As the company ignored the one day stoppage on 5 June we were left with no choice but to escalate to a two day action.”

“The company has said it is available for clarifications but the unions are fully au fait with the deal on offer and clarifications are not necessary at this time.

“Discussions must bring about improvements to the offer on the table and not simply clarify its detail.”

Lagan Brick workers plan escalation



By DONAL MAC FHEARRAIGH

WORKERS at the Lagan Brick manufacturing plant in Kingscourt were informed it was closing only hours before it ceased operation on Friday 15 December. Since then, 25 SIPTU

members employed at the plant have been in dispute with the management over its failure to pay established redundancy terms.

This dispute has dragged on for more than six months due to the complete intransigence of Lagan

Brick.

These workers are still on the company payroll but are not getting paid. The workers are simply seeking the same redundancy terms that their colleagues received in 2009 while the company is offering a fraction of this.

At a press conference in Kingscourt on Friday 15 June, the workers announced that a Rights Commissioner had upheld a complaint by the Lagan Brick workers that the company had failed to comply with the Protection of Employment Act, which stipulates that the company must engage in a 30 day consultation period before the enforcement of any compulsory redundancies.

SIPTU has now referred the issues in dispute to the Labour Court. However, the company has refused to attend the Labour Court under normal industrial relations procedures.

The workers threatened that if an equitable solution to this dispute is not found in the coming days they will be left with no option but to embark on a major escalation of their campaign.

Dublin Bus attack on pay and conditions



By DONAL MAC FHEARRAIGH

THE Dublin Bus Chairman, Paddy Doherty, stated in a letter to all Dublin Bus Drivers recently that there is to be a reduction of €16.2 million in the subvention to the semi-state company; a fall in passenger numbers, costing €49 million; and a loss of fuel rebate.

Doherty made a subtle threat to the drivers, saying while he had no plans to reduce basic pay; this is dependent on successful completion of a cost reduction plan. He stated that he will meet with unions and the plan will be introduced by 13 August 2012.

The government is cutting €3.5 billion out of the economy this year and about €4.2 in the next three to four years.

This means that the subvention to Dublin Bus is going to be cut even further. The current reduction plan includes

- Cuts in rest days & overtime.
- Cuts in Premium Payments - Sunday currently two & half days reduced to two days
- Bank Holiday's reduced from three to two days & flat time for weekday overtime,
- Incentive schemes to be scrapped by 30 September 2012.
- Income Continuance Scheme company to pull out, leaving drivers to pay the full cost.
- Welfare scheme cuts - no payment for the first three days; reduction from 100% to 70 % first four weeks; next eight

weeks reduction from 70% to 60%, next 14 weeks reduction from 60% to 50%.

■ Uncertified Illness from 7 days to 2 days.

■ Illness & Annual Leave Payments to be made at relevant flat daily rates.

■ Travelling time no longer built into driver's working day. Drivers were on dispute for a week to fight for this agreement. It will mean a longer working day for drivers.

Other items include Late Breaks, New Driver Rates, Driver Feedback Technology, Schedules, Part Time Staff changes and a Pay Pause for 2014.

Drivers must be under no illusions that the union officials will sit down and negotiate this package. It is up to drivers in Dublin Bus to call meetings in their work places and campaign for a NO VOTE to this deal. It will set drivers back thirty years of hard won pay & conditions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

By GERRY CARROLL

DOCTORS across the UK and Northern Ireland struck on Thursday 21 June for the first time in over 40 years.

The strike by members of the British Medical Association was against the pension's on-slaught led by the Coalition government and implemented by their friends in Stormont. Stormont Health minister, Edwin Poots, tried to claim that the strike would be futile and that there was no public support.

However NIPSA and other unions in the North showed solidarity with the striking doctors and most surgeries where hit by the action.

The next steps are to be decided at BMA conference next week.

NEVER miss an issue of Socialist Worker

Six month subscription €15/£10stg

Name _____
 Address _____
 _____ Tel _____
 Email _____

I would like to receive _____ copies of Socialist Worker each issue
 Return to PO Box 1648, Dublin 8, with a cheque/postal order or a bank lodgement receipt. Bank Details: Socialist Workers Movement, AIB, 37/38 Upper O'Connell St, Dublin 1. Account No: 85173469. Sort code: 93-11-36

WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet.
 A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.
REVOLUTION
 The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy.
 To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based on much

greater political and economic democracy.
AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR
 War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.
 The "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.
END RACISM AND OPPRESSION
 We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the

working class.
 We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.
 We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.
FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH
 We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Cameron government.
 Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction'
 We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain.
 Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!
FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
 To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party.
 This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system.
 We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.
 We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

Join the Socialists

Fill in the form and send to
SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

Name _____
 Address _____

 Email _____
 Phone _____



What Socialists Say



Vulnerable children abandoned

THIS week's report by the Independent Child Death Review Group (ICDRG) into the deaths of children in HSE care makes damning reading.

In the ten years to 2010, no less than 196 children died from what are described as 'non-natural causes'. These were some of the most vulnerable young people in the country.

The least they could have expected was a state that took its duty of care seriously.

But what the report found was a litany of failings including incomplete records, inappropriate and multiple placements, a lack of proper aftercare provision and serious cases where no social workers were allocated.

Describing the report as 'deeply disturbing', Fine Gael Minister for Children, Frances Fitzgerald has promised the "most radical reform of child welfare and protection services ever undertaken by the state."

But this is somehow to occur at the same time as €750 million is to be cut from the HSE budget.

Many of these problems stem from a lack of adequate funding. But when asked if there would be extra cash to support child protection, the Minister stated: "It's a very challenging environment to be getting new funds".

Since 2007 the health service has lost 8,700 staff as funding has been savaged.

Contrast this with the €1.1 billion handed to unsecured Anglo bondholders just this week, and one gets a sense of the real priorities of this government.

There is always money for the bankers. Pity our children are not afforded the same privilege.

Egypt's revolution hangs in the balance

THE revolution in Egypt is at a critical moment. Some commentators in the mainstream media have even declared it finished.

But what happens over the next weeks will be decisive. A revolution is a process, not just a single event. Gains can be won and sometimes pushed back.

But there are moments when the forces of revolution and counter-revolution hang in balance. This is one of them.

The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) sensed an opportunity to secure its power—and took it. The generals changed laws restricting who they could arrest, dissolved parliament and put themselves in charge of rewriting the constitution.

This does not mean the counter-revolution has won. But it does mark a surge in their confidence. The danger is that if SCAF is not pushed back now it will go further to crush the opposition.

SCAF has unleashed repression against protesters before, but each time it has provoked a resurgence of the revolution. The generals are gambling that revolutionaries cannot deliver such resistance this time.

The Muslim Brotherhood, which had won a majority in parliament, now finds itself on the streets fighting for its future.

This is an organisation full of contradictions. Brotherhood youth fought to the death to bring down the dictatorship. Yet its leadership sees its role as one of being absorbed into Egypt's ruling establishment.

It's important revolutionaries are uniting with the Brotherhood in broad mobilisations to defend the gains of the revolution, while building their own independent organisation on the ground. These mobilisations can push SCAF back.

Since the fall of Hosni Mubarak millions of people have fought for a future without poverty and oppression.

They know what defeat would look like. During the 18 days that brought down Mubarak, a placard in Tahrir Square read "We are not Chile"—where a revolution was drowned in blood after a coup.

In the final days of Mubarak's rule the decisive force was the entry of the organised working class into the struggle. This is the social force in Egypt that has the potential power to bring down SCAF—and drive the revolution forward.

PEOPLE BEFORE PROFIT:

It's time for the Left to experiment

By KIERAN ALLEN

THE crisis is politicising Irish society in less visible but dramatic ways. Half the population have defied the law and refused to pay the household charge.

The vote on the Fiscal Treaty broke down on class lines with manual working class areas voting overwhelming NO and more affluent areas voting YES.

The Yes side won only through fear. Yet there is one significant weakness in these diverse forms of protest.

They need a language and a strategy to generalise their opposition against the system that is causing the problems.

Generalising

The key features of Irish society are that many of the national organisations that could articulate grievances have been co-opted by social partnership.

So the question arises: through what vehicle will the left politicisation of Irish society express itself?

More specifically, where will it arise to the left of Sinn Féin because it refused to support the boycott on household charges?

The reality is that no one fully knows and there is no set blueprint. But it is time for the left to experiment.

The plain fact is that there are hundreds who are coming to the conclusion that Ireland needs a revolution and we are encouraging them to join SWP.

But there are thousands more who want to fight on a more general basis, but have not yet drawn revolutionary conclusions.

The People Before Profit Alliance is one vehicle that can help connect revolutionaries with the wider numbers who want to fight.

It has a number of key advantages that can help it relate to the growing



politicisation.

First, it is a campaigning organisation.

Last week, for example, the People Before Profit in Inchicore heard that home helps were being pushed away from the HSE and being forced to work for private companies (see page five).

Opposition

It immediately called a meeting in the area to help mount opposition. Seventy people attended and now local protest activity is underway.

By building itself in struggle, the People Before Profit relates to where the current level of politicisation is at.

Second, People Before Profit embodies a tradition of grassroots democracy. No component holds a veto and there is not a top down committee that dictates what can

be done and what can not be done. It relies on the initiative and energy of local affiliates.

Third, the style of People Before Profit is not shaped by an internalised left sectarianism. There is no requirement for participants to adhere to a pure programme.

This means that it can relate more easily to the emerging political consciousness of Irish workers.

At this particular moment, the greatest politicisation is concentrated at a community level in manual working class areas. These are the areas that have been the backbone of the household charges campaign and they voted overwhelmingly No on the fiscal treaty.

People Before Profit can break out of the city centre back room discussions of the Irish left – and win a base in these areas.

Over the next period, it is vital that scores of these groups are established around the country. Sometimes they will take the form of an extended campaigning network – while at other times they will have a more formal structure.

Organisation

The key issue, however, is that they develop the sinews of an organisation that can quickly reach thousands of people to mobilise them on issues of immediate concern.

People Before Profit is a component part of the United Left Alliance. This has operated as an effective electoral alliance and has helped bring left organisations together.

People Before Profit will remain part of the ULA but it needs now to move rapidly to develop its own ethos to meet the new situation.

PROTEST WITH PRIDE

By WILL SHANNON

TODAY we live in an Ireland that is more accepting of LGBT people than could have been imagined only 20 years ago - one where to be openly homophobic is less acceptable than to be openly gay.

A 2011 poll showed that 73% of people supported full same-sex civil marriage rights.

The same year hundreds of thousands of people backed openly gay Senator David Norris's campaign for president.

However the movement in Ireland is still handicapped by being wed to legal challenges and political lobbying.

The Irish Labour party in particular has been a vehicle for gay rights agitation, but this top down style of politics only bears fruit when it is pushed from below.

Labour's national



conference only voted for gay and lesbian equality before the law in 1989, one year after the European court of human rights passed a ruling that Ireland would have to decriminalise homosexuality.

This is indicative of

their foot dragging and as pride comes around we need to link the struggle against LGBT oppression with the struggles of oppressed people generally.

Socialists should of course support specific demands for LGBT marriage,

for LGBT couples to adopt children on the same basis as straight couples and an end of the ban on gay men giving blood.

But we don't limit ourselves to the immediate demands of the movement.

In order to fight for

real liberation, there needs to be a real popular grassroots LGBT movement. LGBT groups in the trade unions need to be strengthened and reflecting its original purpose, pride needs to once again become a political protest.

HOUSEHOLD AND WATER CHARGES

CAHWT delegates meet in Dublin

By BRIAN O' BOYLE

UP to seventy delegates from around the country met last Saturday 23 June to discuss the progress of the campaign against household and water charges (CAHWT).

After six months of frantic activity, the meeting was a useful opportunity to take stock and plan for the battles ahead.

July Demonstration

In the opening session on political perspectives, numerous delegates highlighted the need for the campaign to broaden its focus to include all groups fighting austerity.

Top of the agenda here is the upcoming national protest on 18 July, where it is expected that a whole series of groups will join the CAHWT in opposing the government before the summer recess.

To this end, Tina McVeigh (Dublin South Central) proposed that the campaign write to affected groups both locally and nationally to invite them on the demonstration.

This was agreed after some discussion and amended to include local councillors who have been vocal in opposing the household charges.

The style of protest was much more contentious.

Members of the SWP along with many others argued for an open ended structure that would



allow for flexibility on the day and a stewarding arrangement that would respond to the mood of protesters in situ.

This was opposed by delegates who preferred a more traditional style of protest, consisting of a march from the Central Bank to the Dáil with speeches etc.

In the end it came down to a vote with 36 voting for the latter option and 30 for the former.

The event therefore will follow the traditional format.

The issue of Mick Wallace was also raised in this session.

Delegates were almost unanimous in their condemnation of a tax cheat who fails to pay pension contributions for workers and a formal motion to exclude Wallace from speaking or appearing on campaign platforms was passed without any real controversy.

Threatening Letters

In light of Phil Hogan's latest promise to send 650,000 threatening

letters, numerous contributors spoke of the need to be extremely pro-active.

Hogan's bully boy tactics have the potential to frighten people and the campaign agreed to counter the government with a series of measures.

Firstly, it was decided to produce 200,000 leaflets that will need to be distributed immediately following any government publication.

This will obviously take a lot of organisation and local meetings

will be very important in allaying people's fears and in mobilizing networks of activist to go out into their own communities leafletting and posterling.

There will also be a leaflet with legal information available at all public meetings.

Organised Workers

The issue of CAHWT trade union work was also raised.

Local authority water workers are currently balloting for strike action in response to the threats to move their jobs into Irish Water (see page 2).

This is extremely important in the context of the government's threats to impose water charges and the campaign agreed to send a delegation of councillors and members of the industrial committee to meet these workers.

More generally, it was also agreed that union members of CAHWT call on their local branches to campaign against the threats to impose household/property taxes by deducting payments from employees PAYE or social welfare.

This turn towards organised workers is extremely significant in the broader fight against austerity.

Other issues raised included campaign finance and referred conference motions. The next NSC meeting will take place on Saturday 28 July.

Turf cutters fight for their rights



Interview by KIERAN ALLEN

GERRY Farrell, Chairman of Moate Anti-household Charges was at a recent stand off at Clonmoylan bog.

Here he describes what is happening.

"Domestic turf cutters at Clonmoylan bog in Galway have been cutting turf on their legally held private properties for the last

hundreds of years.

"Now they find themselves in a bitter battle with the Gardai."

"The Government have issued orders that turf can no longer be cut on their private plots.

"No proper law was enacted or an agreement signed by either parties. Instead bullying tactics, intimidation and pressure have been used against ordinary citizens, similar to

the household charges."

"Army helicopters, private spotter planes, armed response units of the Gardai and Crime Scene Investigation vans have been deployed".

"The turf cutters are all law abiding citizens, but they are being intimidated while they try to carry out their right to cut their own turf for domestic use".

"The Government with instructions from Angela

Merkel can now walk into your house and say 'we want to preserve that land without going through any proper legal channels!'

"Enda Kenny stated that Fianna Fail signed up for preservation of our bogs a decade ago.

"But nothing was done about it when they were busy giving away our gas and oil".

"The questions we now want answered are what is the cost of running the helicopters and aeroplanes that now watch turf cutters every day?"

"Where is the money coming from?"

"Bord na Mona have dug up and destroyed millions of acres of our bog land to generate electricity, when emphasis should have been on wind power and solar energy. So why the bullying of turf cutters now?"

A temporary deal was agreed between the turf cutters and the government representatives, but the issue is far from resolved.

It looks like all Irish citizens are now under threat from the European Parliament and Angela Merkel.

REVERSE THE RENT CAPS

By KIERAN ALLEN

THE government is reducing rent supplement.

Everyone must now pay at least €30 a week towards rent in private accommodation.

But on top of that, there are new maximum rent caps.

If you live in the Dublin area, for example, the maximum rent you are allowed is €475 a month for a single person.

Once you deduct your own contribution of €120 a month, the social welfare will only provide you with €355.

But remember this is the maximum.

Local social welfare offices can impose even lower rent caps. So in certain parts of the city, they will give you a lower rental supplement.

People on social welfare are getting review letters telling them to supply information on accommodation.

It is a way of cutting your rent supplement.

Housing crisis

If your rent is above the maximum, you will be told to leave your accommodation because social welfare will no longer pay any supplement.

You will get about two months to leave. In other words, people are being thrown out on the street and being made homeless.

These moves are a scandalous attack on poor people. Their sole purpose is to pay off bondholders and bankers.

The reality is that there is already a housing crisis in Dublin. Everyone knows that it is hard to get accommodation for under €475 a month and so people are being forced to make 'under the counter' payments to their landlords.

Already some people have to contribute €50 or €60 a week from their dole just to live.

A better policy

The Minister for Social Protection, Joan Burton, says these attacks are necessary because the state is spending €500 million in rental supplement to private landlords. But there is a better policy for dealing with this.

The government could bring in rent controls.

Landlords should be ordered to reduce rents and no increases should be allowed during this economic emergency.

After all, social welfare and wages have been cut – so why not rents? Rental controls exist in New York and Berlin. So why not Dublin?

The government could provide social housing. The state is now the biggest property owner in the world through NAMA. Some of its houses and apartments should be used for social housing.

Ronan wants Bacon to bring home the NAMA

By MICHAEL WALLACE

THE right-wing economist responsible for proposing the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA) has recommended that the government now sell of some, or all, of the organisation.

Peter Bacon made these proposals in a document commissioned by Treasury Holdings Ltd, a major NAMA debtor, supposedly with the aim of contributing to 'the debate on national economic recovery.



Peter Bacon

Treasury Holdings is jointly controlled by Johnny Ronan and Richard Barrett and is currently involved in three high court cases centring on the almost €2 billion it owes to NAMA.

Bacon, appointed by the previous FF/Green government to 'advise on solutions to the banking crisis', is pushing the case for the current government to 'consider privatising the agency in order to realise some of its value'.

'It would be consistent with the approach being

crisis has cost taxpayers upwards of €88 billion in government guarantees for bailing out the super-rich.

Part of this cost has come from paying over the odds for all manner of property portfolios and now Bacon wants us to lose on the double by flogging these assets on the cheap.

Jobs for the boys

In reality NAMA was only ever about bailing out one wing of the Irish elite as a quick list of its employees immediately demonstrates.

Whilst hundreds of thousands languish of housing waiting lists, a former banker, Frank Daly, is paid €430,000 a year to act as the organisation's CEO, whilst between 110 to 120 former developers are being employed to impart 'their unique skills in managing assets'.

These are the very people who wrecked the Irish economy and in return they are being paid salaries of between €75,000 and €100,000 per year. Indeed two of them actually getting around €200,000.

All of this amounts to an enormous transfer of wealth from tax payers to the golden circle, and Bacon goes further by asking the Central Bank to 'put greater pressure' on banks to harass struggling mortgage holders!

Having been bailed out by Irish tax payers, Bacon and his cronies are now looking to privatise any future profits from a NAMA

Home Help workers start helping themselves



By ALICE SHERIDAN

AROUND 70 people attended a meeting in Inchicore on 20 June to discuss the threat of privatization to Home Help Services.

If this process goes ahead Home Help will be outsourced; workers pay and conditions will suffer and patient care will be diminished.

One of the organisers of the event was People Before Profit councillor Brid Smith, who spoke to *Socialist Worker* about the importance of workers beginning to help themselves

"This government is hell bent on pushing social care right down the political agenda. Not only do they prioritize the banker's needs above everyone else's, but they are now destroying the services that ordinary people need to cope with the ongoing austerity. That is why it is so important for local workers to get organised and join the dots of the

resistance to austerity"

This mood was reflected at the meeting more generally, with numerous women stating that they are prepared to fight for their pay and conditions, and that they are ready to bring their protest onto the streets. Indeed one of the first speakers stated that we had to bring the fight onto the streets to win.

The meeting also endorsed the call to join with other protest groups - Stop the Closure of Local Hospitals, Household and Water Charges Campaign, Special Needs Assistants, Community Sector, Lone Parents (SPARK) - who will be protesting outside the Dáil on 18 July.

Union failings

Comfort Keepers, one of the companies who have won a contract to provide Home Help, are employing workers at a lower rate than is currently being paid, whilst reducing the

amount of time that carer's spend with their clients.

Paul Bell the local SIPTU organiser argued that the HSE were within their rights to outsource care, but he couldn't explain why his Trade Union had failed to prevent *Comfort Keepers* breaking Irish Labour law by offering the work it was taking over to those workers who had previously provided the service.

Other contributors criticized the poor level of communication by Head Office particularly as union members are not located in one work place.

One woman reflected the general experiences when she said that by getting people together at meetings like this and planning to take to the streets she could see how the HSE could be challenged.

She was not alone in the fight to protect her job and the Home Help service which so many elderly and disabled people rely on.



Ronan and Barrett of Treasury Holdings

considered in relation to other State-owned assets', claims Bacon.

As a former developer himself, Bacon was quite happy to originally argue that the banks had to be purged of their bad debts by moving toxic loans onto the balance sheet of Irish tax payers.

The key rationale at that time was the States longer time horizon which meant it would not have to engage in fire-sales of assets that would further damage the Irish property market.

But now we are being told that the State must privatise NAMA assets!

To date the banking

sell-off bonanza.

Instead, we demand that all zombie banks and property agencies be replaced by one good State bank that would be run without profiteering and speculation in the interests of the Irish people.

The tens of billions being poured into the black hole of gambling debts, dead banks and free handouts could be used to stimulate real productive investment.

This would create thousands of desperately needed jobs, instead of lining the pockets of the millionaire elites who helped to destroy the economy in the first place.

Government ministers sharpen the knife

By JAMES O' TOOLE

DURING the Fiscal Treaty referendum the government made a clear decision to bury bad news stories.

All through May their talk was of the 'stability' and 'recovery' that would come if we voted yes.

One month later, and the same government has suddenly realised that the economic situation is far from stable and that they will 'unfortunately' have to stick the knife into Irish workers.

Despite election pledges by both government parties, we are now facing a December budget that will see tax rises and welfare reduced.

The total cuts package will be around €3.5 billion, with over €500 million coming from social protection alone.

Labour promised that they wouldn't touch basic payments. But now Howlin has told the



Brendan Howlin and Phil Hogan

Sunday Business Post that "he can't possibly say what he can and cannot touch".

On top of this, Phil Hogan has come out of hiding to announce that the new property charge will apply to those who previously had a waiver because they lived in social housing.

These announcements come on

the back of Joan Burton's recent changes to the Mortgage Relief System which has made it far more difficult to obtain.

Public anger

Last year the government chose to attack a whole plethora of groups with single parents, and the unemployed particularly badly

affected.

This caused a determined backlash by lone parents groups such as SPARK, DEIS schools and the supporters of the Domiciliary Care Allowance.

In response the government is now planning bigger cuts to smaller areas in the hope that they can minimize resistance.

This is a cynical move and we should expect a lot more demonstrations at Labour TD's clinics over the coming year.

Labour's betrayal of their working class base is reflected in the fact that the latest opinion polls have them trailing as the smallest mainstream party in the country (15%).

Meanwhile the radical left and independents are up to 19%. The SWP will continue to build the resistance to unjust taxes and cuts. Everyone should join the anti-cuts protest to the Dáil on 18 July.

Greek election result offers no escape from euro crisis

THE new government faces serious opposition to its austerity plans, writes Panos Garganas in Athens

Greece's parliamentary election results will not resolve the political and economic crisis that is tearing through the country.

The conservative New Democracy party managed to squeeze into first place by a tight margin, overtaking the radical left Syriza by a mere 170,000 votes. But it will not be able to form a government on its own.

During the election New Democracy's leader Antonis Samaras promised he would "renegotiate" the bailout agreement with the European Union (EU) and secure a "softening" of austerity.

He repeatedly stated that only "responsible" and "experienced" parties could do that, and not the "demagogues" of the far left. And yet in his victory speech this was the first election promise that he dropped.

Samaras's real agenda is a new wave of privatisations coupled with a tougher stance against strikes and demonstrations.

But his government will be weaker than its immediate predecessors—which found they could not pass austerity measures because of working class resistance.

Sparks will fly in Greece in the coming months. Any attempt to privatise the electricity or water supply will involve confrontation with some of the best organised sections of the Greek working class.

Syriza

Syriza received 26.9 percent of the vote, up from 16.8 percent in May. The Communists and other left parties opposed to austerity polled 4.8 percent, down from 9.7 percent.

But the total left anti-austerity vote has risen to just under a third of the electorate. In the working class constituencies around Athens and Piraeus this figure



Syriza received 26.9 percent of the vote

rises as high as 43 percent.

This powerful radicalisation to the left is the result of a wave of resistance including 17 general strikes in two years and mass occupations in squares and workplaces.

It comes despite a massive blackmail campaign orchestrated by EU leaders designed to scare the Greek people into accepting austerity.

Angela Merkel of Germany, François Hollande of France and even US president Barack Obama made statements warning that Greeks must accept more austerity in return for the EU bailout.

We were told that voting for the left against the bailout deal would mean expulsion from the eurozone and being plunged into an even deeper economic

catastrophe.

But in reality the economic crisis is still getting worse across Europe. Spain is now caught in a banking crisis.

The "contagion" is threatening to spread to Italy and further. Under these circumstances there is no chance that the EU deal will offer any respite to Greece.

Samaras and the EU leaders have every reason to be worried. A marginal election victory for their side will not be enough to stop workers fighting back in Greece.

Far left vote squeezed

Antarsya, the anticapitalist left coalition, saw its vote squeezed back to its 2009 level of 0.3 percent.

Many militant workers voted for

Syriza to keep New Democracy out.

Now the Syriza leadership is under heavy pressure from the ruling class to be "responsible" and "loyal" in opposition.

On election night almost every TV commentator advised Syriza MPs to distance themselves from movements on the ground.

Many leading figures in Syriza have been adapting to this pressure during the election campaign.

But we are confident that the rank and file are way to the left of these leaders.

Revolutionaries have to relate to this mood and help the fightback unfold.

That is what we in Antarsya will be trying to do over the coming weeks.

Nazis helped by racist campaigning

GOLDEN Dawn, Greece's main Nazi organisation, held on to its share of the vote. It was helped by openly racist campaigning by New Democracy.

The conservatives put forward an agenda that tailed the Nazis—mass expulsions of "illegal" immigrants, talk of "re-occupying" the cities.

The only difference was that New Democracy promised to do this "lawfully" through the police force, as opposed to Golden Dawn's vigilante approach.

Election Result

129 seats for the New Democracy—including a 50 seat bonus for topping the polls

71 seats for Syriza, making them the main parliamentary opposition force

33 seats for Pasok, the other mainstream party that backs the EU's austerity deal

20 seats for right-wing anti-austerity party Independent Greeks

18 seats for the fascist Golden Dawn

17 seats for Democratic Left

12 seats for the Communists, who oppose austerity

French Socialists under pressure following their election victory



by JIM WOLFREYS

FRANCE'S Socialist Party won a majority in the 17 June parliamentary elections, its best result since 1981.

With 346 seats against 228 for the right, this victory has seen the Socialist's gaining control of every level of the French State. Not only did they win the presidency and the Parliament, they now control the senate, the European Parliament, the regions and départements.

However despite their electoral successes, the Socialists are already coming under pressure from financial

circles to reverse or delay some of their spending commitments.

This pressure is likely to become particularly severe since the election results mean that the Socialists and their allies will not need the support of radical left MPs to pass legislation.

On the right, a number of prominent figures in former president Nicolas Sarkozy's UMP lost their seats. The party is in disarray and divided over what attitude to take towards the fascist Front National (FN).

FN leader Marine Le Pen was narrowly defeated by the Socialist candidate in the town of Henin Beaumont.

But the party won two

seats, its best return since 1986—one of them being Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, granddaughter of FN founder Jean-Marie Le Pen. A third far right MP, Jacques Bompard, was also elected.

The Front de Gauche—an alliance of former Socialists, radical left activists and the Communist Party—won more votes than the Communist Party did in the last election. But it took fewer seats. This is because the French electoral system favours parties that make electoral alliances.

"Our autonomy has cost us dear," said Front de Gauche leader Jean-Luc Mélenchon. But he pledged the Front de Gauche would become "the spokesperson for the expectations of the social movement—without concession or naivety or impatience".

Recent elections have shown a deepening political polarisation in France. The record abstention rate of 44 percent indicates that people do not feel represented by the major parties. Battles over austerity in the weeks and months to come are likely to intensify this process.

Thousands march through Rio to demand climate action from UN



The MST delegation on the Rio demonstration (Pic: Martin Empson)

By MARTIN EMPSON
in Rio de Janeiro

TENS of thousands of protesters joined an enormous demonstration through the centre of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, on 20 June to demand economic justice and action over climate change.

The march coincided with the start of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development. Politicians from around the world have arrived in the city for the summit.

Activists have been holding

an alternative People's Assembly in defence of people's rights and against the privatisation of nature. The assembly called the demonstration to bring together those concerned about the environment and those fighting the system that is destroying it.

There was an impressive turnout from Brazil's unions. Bank workers demanded a "Robin Hood tax" on financial transactions and Argentinian trade unionists came in solidarity.

There were also significant

turnouts from other campaigns, such as the MST movement of landless workers. They marched behind a banner declaring "no to the false solutions of green capitalism"—summing up the frustrations that demonstrators have with the UN process.

Politicians are imposing solutions that have nothing to do with saving the planet—and everything to do with allowing multinationals to further exploit the natural world. These solutions promise "green jobs" but only at the expense of the further privatisation of nature.

Focus on the Arab Spring

Unity against Generals' attempted coup in Egypt

by **MOSTAFA BASSIOUNY**,
REVOLUTIONARY Socialists,
Egypt

THE ruling Military Council (SCAF) has launched a number of very serious attacks on the Egyptian Revolution over the last week. The military police can now arrest civilians at will and parliament has been dissolved.

The generals have also announced additions to the Constitutional Declaration of March 2011, which give them virtually unlimited powers.

We have to understand that this military coup has been in the making for a long time. What happened during the last week was the culmination of a process that had been going on for months.

The problem became visible with the reaction to the sentencing of former dictator Hosni Mubarak on 2 June. The protests were not strong enough—they were much smaller than before.

The mass movement had retreated. So SCAF believed it could act without facing a strong reaction. The generals' growing confidence led them to think they could take on the Muslim Brotherhood.

For most of the last year the Brotherhood has worked closely with SCAF, but now it is under attack.

The last round of the presidential election pitted Mohamed Mursi of the Brotherhood against the generals' candidate, Ahmad Shafiq.

Mursi was actually declared victorious on Sunday 24 June (51.73%). But the military had already wrenched most of the key constitutional powers (see box), leaving the Brotherhood with little more than a ceremonial position.

It is important to note that



Anti-Shafiq protesters march to Tahrir Square on 5 June (Pic: Gigi Ibrahim)

we don't equate Mursi and Shafiq.

The Egyptian Revolution was a popular revolution, which involves a broad spectrum of forces from the right to the far left.

Right

The Muslim Brotherhood represents the right wing of the revolution. It is not the counter-revolution.

It saw the fall of Mubarak as an opportunity to work with SCAF in order that the Muslim Brotherhood could take a role in government.

So since 11 February 2011 the Brotherhood has been a

conservative organisation. But Shafiq is the counter-revolution.

That is why we are mobi-

lising for protests against the military coup alongside the Brotherhood. Most political forces are taking part.



Workers' demonstration in Tunis

We are calling on revolutionary forces to build a mass movement against the coup and the changes to the Constitutional Declaration.

However we believe that the role of the workers' movement will be critical in the coming months.

Workers' demands for social justice remain unmet, and whichever candidate becomes president will have neither the desire nor the means to meet them.

Socialists have a crucial role to play in helping build up workers' organisations which can confront Mubarak's regime and get rid of capitalism itself (see editorial).

Egyptian military is taking advantage

by **HISHAM FOUAD**,
Revolutionary Socialists, Egypt

THE people rejected Ahmad Shafiq at the ballot box. This is important because if Shafiq had won the election this would have led to massive demoralisation.

But the ruling military council (SCAF) pre-empted the election results by issuing a constitutional declaration putting full legislative power in its own hands.

This means it will control everything, including the Constitutional Drafting Commission and the incoming president.

SCAF is taking advantage of a downturn in the revolutionary struggle. But we believe that the revolutionary retreat will be temporary.

The revolutionary forces must unite to confront the military coup and build in the streets to restore the masses' faith in the revolution.

Some on the left and among the liberals are calling for a united front against both the military and the Brotherhood. It is a big mistake to take this perspective now. However, we have to deal with the Brotherhood on a case by case basis.

This means that we will protest with them against the constitutional declaration and against the dissolution of parliament.

But if they move back in the direction of compromise with SCAF we won't stand with them.

Daily strikes in Tunisia show rulers are losing support

by **MOHAMED BANI**

THINGS never stand still in Tunisia. In the past weeks exiled dictator Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali was sentenced, in his absence, to ten years imprisonment for unlawful killing. He is hiding from justice in Saudi Arabia.

In the elections in October last year, the mainstream Islamist party Ennahda got 38 percent of the seats in parliament.

It has formed a coalition with two centre, secular parties. These two parties have very little say in what goes on.

Ennahda has run into many problems. There have been riots and clashes between conservative Islamists and the state. There are daily strikes in Tunisia and there has been a general strike in some of the mining areas.

Just last week there was a general strike in the northwestern area around Jendouba. This very poor area relies on agriculture. Around 90 percent of workers in

the area took part, demanding secure jobs and proper development programmes.

The global economic crisis and the flight of foreign investors—whose lives had been easy under Ben Ali—have hit Tunisia hard. Unemployment has spiraled since the revolution and Jendouba is one of the areas hardest hit.

The press has given a lot of attention to the actions of Salafist Islamists in Tunisia. But the main problems facing ordinary people are economic. The country has very few natural resources and high inflation due to capitalists profiteering from the situation.

The government faces significant political problems. We say "easy come, easy go"—the votes that Ennahda won easily in the last elections do not represent long-lasting support.

Workers

The areas where Ennahda's vote was strongest in October's elections are now the areas hit by the



Workers' demonstration in Tunis

general strikes. The workers and poor who voted for them are striking for change.

Workers rioted in a suburb of the capital Tunis. They had been promised new jobs, but these went instead to supporters of the regime from miles away.

So nepotism and corruption are still factors in Tunisia, but today people strike and protest

against them.

The police and their thugs attacked the port protesters in their homes and threw tear gas through windows. This caused a huge scandal. Activists posted videos online showing people being beaten in the street.

An iconic moment in one shows a woman saying, "We voted for them and now they

treat us like this". That resonates with a lot of ordinary people in Tunisia.

People swear they will bring down Ennahda like they brought down Ben Ali. There is a lot of anger but a lack of organised alternatives.

The leader of the Tunisian Communist party came second in a recent poll for the most trusted politician. First was the current president, a human rights activist who opposed Ben Ali.

The Communist Party has spoken out against the attacks and repression, and stood with the Islamists against persecution by elements of the old regime.

It sees itself as part of the movement. But things are not standing still in Tunisia. We have brought down two governments and will do it again.

We need to build and maintain a movement on the streets and in the workplaces to give voice to this discontent and push the revolution forward.

Key facts

- The revolution in Tunisia began a wave of uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa.
- The revolt began on 17 December 2010.
- By 14 January Ben Ali who had ruled for 23 years had fled.
- Unemployment currently stands at 13%
- The next elections will be held in march 2013 and will award a mandate for five years.

Socialist Worker

Equality for all now...

SMASH BIGOTRY: KICK OUT POOTS AND MAGINNIS!

THE dinosaurs in the North have once again caused controversy and offence with their attitudes towards gay people.

Ken Maginnis, a former Ulster unionist MP—who now sits in the House of Lords—recently stated that homosexuality was “unnatural and deviant”.

Leader Mike Nesbitt quickly slapped him on the wrist as a form of damage limitation for a party rapidly sliding into oblivion.

But the fact remains that all too often mainstream politicians in the North feel that it is ok to say about gay people what they would never dare say about blacks or other ethnic minorities.

Edwin Poots DUP MLA and Health Minister has also caused uproar because of his refusal to lift a ban on gay people giving blood in the North.

Previously in place across the UK, this ban was lifted after a sustained campaign by gay rights activists.

It's disgraceful that a Christian Fundamentalist minister has upheld the extension of the legislation, offering no argument or justification for his actions.

Mr Poots is clearly unimpressed by scientific arguments that contradict his personal religious beliefs (he is a young earth creationist who has publicly stated that the Earth is only 4000 years old).

Homophobia

More importantly, he is also a homophobe who condemned a local gay rugby team as a form



Bigot: Edwin Poots



of “Apartheid”.

The obvious conclusion therefore is that Poots is holding the legislation back purely

because of his own prejudices and because his position as Minister allows him to do so.

Moreover, the fact that he's been able to delay it this long shows that Minister's in the assembly actually have a lot of

power when it comes to holding up legislation.

The London bogey man has been the mantra of Stormont parties that like to pass the buck whenever they get the chance.

Pity that when they get some autonomy, they are actually more regressive than their mainland counterparts.

Blood Demand

Like others, the NI Blood Transfusion service genuinely needs every drop of healthy blood it can get. Yet they are being blocked by a Minister who believes that rights shouldn't extend to gay people.

With this bigotry Poots's has proven himself unfit for public office and should be forced to resign immediately.

There is simply no place for homophobia in the 21st Century.

People across the North are furious that politicians elected to public office think they can get away with spouting hatred and bigotry.

We need to turn the anger into a campaign which takes to the streets and calls for Poots and Maginnis to go!

Inside

Page 3:
**The politics of
Gay Pride**

Page 2:
**BMA doctors
strike**