

Socialist Worker

Let's put them under pressure...

Protest against another rotten budget

Pictures show people protesting at Leinster House at the People's Assembly on 18 September

In their own words

"The protests in Sudan are the result of a cumulative period of brutal theocratic dictatorship. The regime has oppressed the Sudanese people for over ten years sucking resources from the people and destroying the country's infrastructure. Meanwhile a small clique has enriched itself on the backs of the workers and the peasants. The elites on both sides of the border want to talk up a national conflict but the truth is that the people of Sudan are starting to rise up."

Yasir (A Sudanese activist at the recent protest in Dublin's O'Connell Street)

"The government thought it could cut the subsidies for food and fuel without resistance. When the struggle started the government reacted with massive oppression, killing hundreds of people in an attempt to intimidate the masses. This hasn't worked and more and more people are joining the resistance every day. This will hopefully be the start of a revolution that will reignite the Arab spring across all of Africa."

Sara (A Sudanese activist at the recent protest in Dublin's O'Connell Street)



FOR the past few years, the Fine Gael-Labour government has behaved as if it is invincible.

They thought they could face down any opposition and get away with it.

Small concessions were made when people protested about home helps or disability cuts but, broadly speaking, the strategy of 'not an inch' appeared to work. But now the cracks have begun to appear.

Senate Defeat

THE first pressure point is their defeat on a Senate referendum.

Transport Minister, Leo Varadkar has acknowledged that it is a 'big blow' while Sunday Business Post commentator, Pat Leahy, has written that, 'the result closes the first chapter in the Coalition's life - the 'We are the masters now' phase.

In itself, the issue is not of major importance. The Senate offers no protection against a 'power grab' by Fine Gael-Labour. And illusions about 'protecting the constitution' may have convinced many to vote no.

But even though there are different elements in the vote it showed that the majority of people have no trust in the government.

They realise that Kenny's rhetoric about a 'political revolution' is a sham and there is a palpable sentiment for real democracy where politicians cannot get away with false promises to win their seats.

The second big pressure point on the government is the decline in Labour's popularity.

The party has shrunk to less than 10% in the polls and is facing wipe out.

With local elections in 2014, Labour politicians have suddenly started to talk about 'being more Labour'.

This means they will try to 'throw shapes' and pretend they have concern for low and middle income workers.

But this can also lead to the destabilisation of the government.



Labour's shame

Despite these manoeuvres, the truth is that Labour has done everything to muzzle Irish workers by ensuring that their friends in SIPTU and the ICTU do not organise effective protests against austerity.

They are traitors who need to be driven out of the ranks of the labour movement.

The third pressure point is the bubbling of resistance in the unions. Secondary teachers, junior doctors, ESB workers and bus workers are all discussing the possibility of taking action against the attacks on their conditions.

The ASTI are the first union to break clearly from the Haddington Road agreement - and there are many other workers who are looking on their struggle with sympathy.

Throughout the health service, for example, there is growing anger with union leaders who sold an agreement - under duress - which has led to a loss of overtime and much worse conditions.

The government strategy is to isolate unions like ASTI and use the example to terrify everyone.

That is the reason why a Labour Minister, Ruairi Quinn, has threatened 300 fixed term contract teachers with the loss of employment - simply because they are ASTI members.

But this weakened government can be beaten back - if there is a rise in the protest movement.

Many are reaching an end of their patience but there is a conflict between the demoralisation - which the union leaders have encouraged - and anger.

Over the next few weeks, socialists will look at the specific items in the budget and start calling protest meetings.

We want to help to 'join the dots' and link protest campaigns together through a People's Assembly movement.

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ESB workers threaten strike action

By Kieran Allen

ESB workers are threatening strike action over a major attack on their pension rights.

In a shocking move, the ESB began to describe their pension as a 'Defined Contribution' (DC) scheme rather than a 'Defined Benefit' scheme in reports issued after 2011.



A DC scheme means that the pension is based on stock market returns that accrue after years of investment.

The worker risks their savings in the gyrations of the stock exchange.

A Defined Benefit scheme by contrast means that a worker is guaranteed a proportion of their final salary.

The ESB wanted to remove pension liabilities of its balance sheet so

that it could borrow more.

And it assumed that the rights of its workers mattered little.

Most workers in the ESB have been in their jobs since before 1995 and this means that they have not been paying a social security contribution which would entitle them to a state pension.

They are entirely reliant on their occupational scheme.

Deficit

To make matters worse, there are indications that the ESB pension scheme may be in deficit.

Yet instead of addressing this issue the management have made a special payment to the government of nearly €500 million.

The Labour Minister, Joan Burton, has given the pension regulator power to wind up schemes that are in deficit and workers are therefore very worried.

Water metering commences

WATER metering was rolled out in Maynooth in late August, in the first run of metering in the country.

In response, members of North Kildare's CAHWI organised a public meeting to discuss possible responses to the installation.

Speaking at the meeting were Martin Grehan, People Before Profit's candidate in Maynooth for the local elections next year, and Reada Cronin from Sinn Féin.

The meeting was attended by about 40 people and the speakers from the top table and floor demolished the government's claim that water metering is about conservation of water.

Around 28% of Kildare's water is lost through leakage, but instead of fixing the problem at source, the government wants to charge us.

Metering is estimated to conserve merely 1% so it is hardly effective.

In reality, the government is only interested in commodifying water to generate revenue for big business and the state.

Resistance

In terms of resistance, the meeting agreed to produce a leaflet debunking the government's conservation claims.

We also agreed to try to resist the installations physically.

However it became clear after the meeting that this would not be possible.

Martin Grehan summed up the position stating: "Upon discussing the installation with workers on my road, I discovered that they are instructed to ignore people resisting installation, move onto the next house and the house that resisted will get an estimated bill."

"The government has learned from their defeat in the Household Tax campaign. I think it's important to note that resistance on a mass scale, like organising a street, or whole estate to resist, might prove more effective."

"But I really think the main form of resistance will come once the first bills arrive."

"There can be no threats of revenue this time. And our main focus in North Kildare will be building a campaign of non-payment in 2015."

Another attempt to push a rotten deal on drivers?



By Owen Mc Cormack

DUBLIN bus drivers are facing a possible fourth ballot on cost cutting plans after the intervention of a "high level" investigation into why drivers rejected three previous ballots.

On each occasion drivers faced threats and massive intimidation by both the company and their own officials to try to get them to accept cuts in earnings and widespread changes in their conditions.

Now a committee comprised of IBEC's Danny McCoy, David Begg of ICTU and a couple of civil servants are investigating why drivers won't take cuts to their wages and conditions!

The inclusion of a representative of the employer's organisation IBEC alongside the thoroughly discredited Begg means most drivers have reacted negatively to the "investigation" and any possible outcome.

Many believe it is just another elaborate attempt to dress up the same proposals and justify yet another ballot on the same deal.

Strike

All Dublin bus workers had initially rejected the company's cost cutting plans and held a three day strike in early August.

Other grades then accepted a revised deal pushed by union officials, but drivers have held firm and voted down two more attempts to push the deal through.

On each occasion the company and officials have warned of dire consequences and an immediate strike if the package was rejected.

However, rejection of the deal has been followed by yet another attempt to push a revamped agreement on drivers.

It is clear that despite their tough talking, both Varadkar and the com-

pany are reluctant to take on drivers in a full scale attack.

Privatisation

There was widespread support for the three day strike by many other workers who were happy to see drivers reject the austerity agenda and fight to defend their pay and conditions.

Since the strike Varadkar has announced that the National Transport Authority will contract out 10% of Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann routes to private non union firms.

The NTA also announced it was effectively "fining" Dublin Bus for the three day strike.

This is another way of trying to browbeat drivers into accepting a rotten deal.

The aim of the overall strategy by Varadkar and the coalition is to break up CIE and hand routes over to non union companies.

They hope this will mitigate any impact of a strike by a militant and well organised group of workers in the future.

Union silence

Disgracefully both SIPTU and the NBRU officials have remained largely silent on Varadkar's privatisation agenda while cooperating fully with company attempts to push down drivers earnings under the cost cutting plans.

Drivers have repeatedly pointed out that the key issue in the dispute is chronic government underfunding of public transport.

One shop steward summed up drivers feelings when he told the 'investigating officials' 'we have nothing else to give, the USC, property tax and the other cuts to our earnings means many of us are on the breadline, we are ready to fight any more cuts to our livelihoods'.

Junior doctors set to strike

By an anonymous doctor in a Dublin Hospital

JUNIOR Doctors are set to strike on Tuesday 8 October over working conditions.

For generations, junior doctors have been forced to do shifts, frequently in excess of 24-36 hours, during which time they do not receive any protected sleep or food breaks.

IMO

In a recent survey by the union representing junior doctors, the Irish Medical Organisation (IMO), it was found that 70% of junior doctors worked in excess of 60 hours a week.

This breaks EU law which states that no worker can work more



than 48 hours per week. The survey also found that 85% of Junior Doctors work continuous shifts in excess of 24 hours with 37% working shifts in excess of 36 hours.

These working conditions negatively impact on the mental health of these front line health care workers.

Depression, substance abuse and suicide are all

too frequent among this section of doctors.

HSE failure

For over 10 years the HSE have made promises to make changes to this inhumane system, but have failed time and again to deliver.

Junior doctors have decided to strike on the issue because the HSE have failed to negotiate in

any serious manner with the IMO.

The HSE have told the media that doctors are asking for triple pay for hours worked in excess of a 24 hour shift.

This is untrue. The dispute has never been about pay, but rather the demand for an end to exploitative working conditions that are forcing Junior Doctors to emigrate.

Minister James Reilly has said that patients will suffer if the strike goes ahead.

This is an extraordinary statement when he has overseen a health system that allows patients to be looked after by sleep-deprived doctors.

This system is dangerous for both patients and doctors, and this strike is the only way to ensure that patients are looked after in a safe way.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Wallis Strike

WORKERS in two outlets of Wallis clothing shops in Limerick went on strike on 21 September.

Staff voted unanimously in favour of industrial action following the announcement of plans to make workers redundant.

Mandate backed the action and stated that Wallis reneged on an agreement to pay workers a redundancy package of five weeks per year of service.

Ballots for industrial action will take place in the three Dublin stores ahead of the restructuring of those stores, scheduled to take place on 5 October.

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WHAT THE SOCIALIST WORKERS PARTY STANDS FOR

Capitalism is wrecking the lives of millions and endangering the planet. A new society can only be constructed when the workers take control of the wealth and plan its production and distribution for human need and not profit.

REVOLUTION
The present system cannot be patched up or reformed. The courts, the army and police exist to defend the interests of the wealthy.

To destroy capitalism, we need to remove the present state structures and create a workers' state based on much

greater political and economic democracy.

AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND WAR
War is a constant feature of capitalism today as the imperialist powers try to dominate the earth.

The "War on Terrorism" is a crude device to attack any country which threatens US military, strategic or economic dominance.

END RACISM AND OPPRESSION
We oppose all forms of oppression and racism. This divides and weakens the

working class. We are for full social, economic and political equality for women.

We oppose immigration controls which are always racist.

FOR WORKERS' UNITY IN THE NORTH
We stand for workers unity against the Assembly politicians and Cameron government.

Like great socialist James Connolly, we believe that partition has brought about a 'carnival of reaction'. We want to see an Irish workers republic where all

workers gain. Our flag is neither green nor orange but red!

FOR A REVOLUTIONARY PARTY
To win socialism socialists need to organise in a revolutionary party.

This party needs to argue against right-wing ideas and for overthrowing the system.

We call for co-operation between left-wing parties and the formation of a strong socialist bloc.

We stand for fighting trade unions and for independent rank and file action.

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What socialists say



Ed Walshe: Hypocrite of the highest order

ED Walshe never tires of telling vulnerable people that they should grin and bear their poverty and misery.

When single parents need some bashing, Ed is always ready to take up the challenge.

When a group of workers need to be taken down a peg or two, Ed is rolled out to stick the boot in.

Just last week Walshe was heard on almost every radio station decrying the fact that teachers in ASTI were holding the country to ransom.

According to Ed, teachers, many of whom now need to wait five years to earn around €27,000, should do 'more with less' and accept some pain like the rest of us.

What Ed didn't care to mention was that when he retired as President of Limerick University he was given a lump sum of around €285,000 and a yearly pension of €100,000.

That is almost four times that of a currently practicing teacher for a man that does nothing more than blight our airwaves with reactionary drivel.

Ed was recently heard asking for heroes in the public sector.

This apparently refers to those people who would be willing to work for nothing for the good of society.

Shame Ed never thought to give back any of his obscene pension.

If he really wants to help, the best thing Walshe can do is shut his mouth for the good of the rest of us.

Abortion rights help to liberate all women

ONE of the most important ways in which women are oppressed in Ireland is through the control of their bodies in reproduction.

Capitalism keeps women's reproduction as a private affair with little or no resources provided by the state.

At the same time, the Irish elites want to control this 'private affair' in the interests of controlling women.

Socialists believe in the absolute right to bodily autonomy.

However we also believe in the need to have the required levels of material resources to ensure that women's choices are increased not diminished.

In essence we campaign for women to have the right to a full, equal and valued role in society and in its transformation.

The popular anger around the failed attempt to block the X case legislation should be channeled towards building a united campaign of popular support and mobilisations.

However, this isn't all we can do.

We can also campaign for open and legal provision of medical abortions which would render the incredibly restrictive 'Protection of Life During Pregnancy' bill unenforceable.

Every pro-choice action we do helps to sustain the movement for the long haul, and every fight against capitalism as a system of production is also a pro-choice action.

Where next for the ASTI?

In the wake of a vote to reject the Haddington Road agreement, Socialist Worker spoke to Socialist and leading ASTI Fightback activist, Mark Walshe, about the next steps in the fight against the government's austerity



Q1 - Mark perhaps you could start by telling our readers about the events that led to ASTI rejecting the Haddington Road Agreement.

Ans - The rejection of Haddington Road actually goes back to Croke Park 1 (CP1).

ASTI members voted 2 to 1 to reject CP1 in 2010. Unfortunately, the ASTI leadership managed to drag us back into talks and we ended up voting a second time.

The frustration and anger at that turn of events was one of the key factors that led to the establishment of ASTI FIGHTBACK in January 2011.

I was one of the founding members, along with Andrew Phelan (formerly of the Socialist Party) and a few other ASTI members.

We recognised that CP 1 was an agenda for the destruction of teachers' pay and conditions into the future and we set out to build a rank and file movement that could mount resistance.

I believe our campaigning helped other activists to understand the implications of the Croke Park agenda, and by the time Haddington Road came around, many more members had been alerted to the dangers of these so-called 'social partnership' agreements.

In August 2013, at a meeting of the 180 members of the ASTI Executive, we pushed hard for the union to recommend a No vote.

We also succeeded in getting support for a motion to set up an ad-hoc sub-committee to draft the official ASTI 'reasons to vote No to Haddington Road'.

As the proposer of the motion, I was automatically elected as one of five members of the committee.

In addition to our work on the executive, we maintained a strong social media presence on Facebook and Twitter, constantly updating members on the evolving situation (even during the summer) and we published a comprehensive eight-page critique of Haddington Road.

Q2 - That sounds really systematic Mark, but we both know that teachers will now be in the firing line. Just this week the ex president of Limerick University Ed Walshe has been on the airwaves arguing that teachers must get real about the need to accept cuts, what would you say to him from a teachers perspective.

Ans - Well, Ed Walshe would have all teachers working

for free if he could get his way.

He is a reactionary hypocrite as he himself claims around €100,000 every year in a pension pot and asks teachers on a quarter of that to take a pay cut.

Walshe has always been a conservative and he knows that high quality education is an extremely labour-intensive endeavor.

The extra hours that the Government/DES has been piling on teachers over the past decade, and particularly since Croke Park 1, were actually making teachers less productive, rather than more productive, in terms of delivering quality teaching and learning.

Under CP 1, teachers had to stay back after school regularly for meetings of dubious educational value, leaving us suffering from fatigue, and some on the point of burnout.

Our union's decision to pull out of all out-of-hours meetings will enable teachers to spend more time focusing on our core role, that of teaching and learning.

The sense of relief among members that we have got rid of the extra hours after school is immense.

In my dual-union school, some TUI teachers are now looking to join the ASTI.

I think the ASTI has set a very positive example to other union members: it is possible to fight back.

You don't have to accept the sell-outs of ICTU General Secretaries.

Q3 - Conservatives like Walshe always bang on about pay and conditions. These issues are obviously important for teachers and rightly so, but you've actually referenced a lot about the quality of education. Perhaps you could explain to our readers exactly what the costs are for the education of the next generation

Ans - Another very important element of our industrial action has to do with the proposed new Junior Cycle.

As well as all of the additional workload that it would impose (more than likely for free) on second level teachers, many of the aspects of the new Junior Cycle are educationally regressive.

Quinn wants to remove the Junior Cert as an independently certified State exam.

He wants to introduce Standardised Testing in English, Math's and Science to tie in with OECD PISA league tables.

This will be highly regressive for society as schools will be forced into competition and poorer schools will be rife for being labeled as underperforming etc.

What Quinn seems to forget (ignore?) is that you can't reform an education system simply by changing the curriculum.

You need more teachers, smaller class sizes, and an increase in overall investment.

I wonder if this is what Quinn is planning in the Budget? Not a chance.

There'll be more cuts to student supports such as guidance counsellors, possibly a further increase in the pupil-teacher ratio, probably more cuts to Special Needs etc.

This is all making it extremely difficult for schools to deliver a quality education system.

Q4 - This fight is extremely important for all aspects of our education system. Not only will educational outcomes improve with more funding but if ASTI wins it could help to galvanise workers more generally - where next for the struggle?

Ans - I think the ASTI has shown that it is possible to break with the fatalism of many of the General Secretaries within ICTU.

I think unions should seek to follow the ASTI and break out of the Croke Park/Haddington Rd 'more with less' agenda.

It's time for union members to assert ourselves more generally, assist with the fightback against the Government's austerity measures and insist that we do not accept that the workers of this country are liable for the debts of gambling, speculating bankers and their political supporters.

Part of that process will be breaking out of the ICTU prison and getting rid, once and for all, of David Begg, Jack O'Connor, Bernard Harbour, Sheila Nunan and their ilk.

As unions members we must put an end to the bloated salaries and political cronyism of these so-called union leaders.

Throughout the crisis to date, they have acted as an obstacle to worker and trade union solidarity.

That obstacle must now be removed. Finally all unions should stop funding the Labour party and members should put pressure on them to do so.

Will Irish workers fight back?

By James O' Toole

“A H Irish people just won't get up off their arses”, “Ah the Irish just moan but do nothing”, “Ah sure what's the point of protest when no one will turn up”, “Ah the Irish always let the right-wingers back in.”

We've all heard these pessimistic declarations at some stage in the past few years. Sometimes on the left these pessimistic sentiments are expressed by talking about how the working class has been 'restructured' or that workers now have a 'neo-liberal' soul.

Is it true that Irish workers don't fight? Is there some inherent flaw in the Irish working class? If we take a look at the course of working class struggle over the last 100 years we find that far from being passive, the Irish working class has fought back again and again.

Revolution

From the 1913 lockout until the end of the civil war in 1923 Ireland was a country in turmoil.

At the end of the First World War revolution spread from Russia right across Europe. British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, said that the old order was on the brink of collapse. Ireland was no exception to this wave of revolt with General Strikes, factory seizures, land wars and mass protests. Right wing farmers even formed a 'white' army to battle revolutionary farm labourers.

The Limerick 'Soviet' of 1919, named after the worker's assemblies in the Russian Revolution, was one of dozens of examples of workers seizing factories and other workplaces.

Even creameries were decorated with banners that read “We make butter not profits!” But this massive revolutionary wave was broken.

The Labour Party had no interest in leading this people power movement, handing that role over to the middle and upper class nationalists whose vision of a future republic was capitalist and not socialist - a republic where Irish bosses got to exploit Irish workers.

“Labour must wait” the so called heirs of Connolly said as they lined up to be an official and tame 'parliamentary' opposition.

The conservatism of the first Irish government that ran the Free State has to be understood as a counter revolutionary response to the chaos of those revolutionary years.

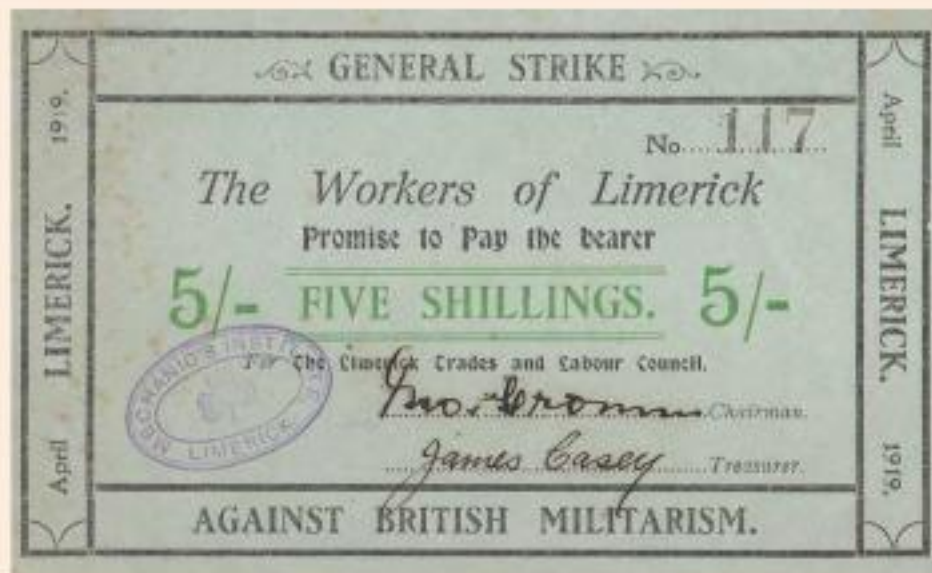
The 1930's were a dark period for the working class because the ruling class and the Church took revenge for the previous revolutionary period. Every time the struggle dipped the Church put the boot into workers and the poor.

The hold of the Church and the Right in the decade that followed was not because workers wouldn't fight - it was because we fought but lost.

In every working class there will always be one section that fights, an opposing section that is conservative and a rump of people in the middle. In a revolutionary period the militant workers pull the middle ground their way.

When the struggle dips the militants are demoralised and the middle ground then get pulled over to the right. It's not that everyone suddenly becomes right wing it's that the militants can no longer exercise enough pull on the middle layers.

The conservatism of the Labour Party gave Fianna Fail a chance to get working class roots by talking more left than Labour. Fianna Fail blamed all our economic woes on the British and promised economic advance. The same pattern emerged when there were huge struggles in the 40's after the Second World War and De Valera's calls for wage restraint led to huge



protests and strikes. The Irish Independent declared that the country was on the verge of 'anarchy'.

Once again Labour entered into a coalition Government which let people down and gave an opening to the right. Labour wouldn't even stand up to the Church for Noel Browne's proposals on health care for women and children.

A million strike days

In the final year of the 1960's Ireland had over 1 million strike days lost. One of the most intense strike waves in Europe at the time.

The Chair of the union congress, Charles McCarthy, was worried. He “feared a general revolt of workers, as was experienced in France.” Instability in the North coupled with groups of workers taking action in transport and other industries such as the ESB, meant that the viability of both states in Ireland could have been called into question.

But tragically workers were moving to the Labour Party who grew massively with over 15,000 members by 1969. After their earlier betrayals, Labour suddenly discovered they were 'socialists' again, even joining the 'socialist' International.

Meanwhile, Fianna Fail's election rhetoric aided this perception by saying Labour stood for 'Stalin and burning homesteads in Meath!' Being the main beneficiary of worker's growing radicalism, Labour were once again going to sell them out and by the 1970s, after stating Fine Gael were a party of 'free enterprise' and that Labour would never deal with



them again, they were participating in government as the Blue Shirts coalition partners.

This betrayal left workers extremely demoralised. By 1977 Fianna Fail returned to power with their highest vote since 1938. Labour's vote predictably collapsed. Despite this workers turned out in hundreds of thousands to protest against the PAYE rates and in solidarity with the Hunger strikes.

Again and again Irish workers have fought back only to be betrayed by those who led the movement back into safe channels and undermined militancy. The weakness of Labour and the absence of a strong revolutionary organisation to the left of Labour let Fianna Fail sail back in on the back of worker's demoralisation and with promises of economic advance.

Nationalism allowed the Irish ruling class to pre-

sent themselves as somehow defenders of the nation against Britain when they were just as much a part of the pack of exploiters as any other ruling class.

Lessons for us today

We are now in a transitional period in the working class. There have been tens of thousands on the streets in the last few years, but the union leaders, often members of the Labour party, have focused those movements on getting Labour into power as the strategy to bring about change.

People were repeatedly betrayed by this strategy and whilst betrayal always brings demoralisation it also brings awareness. People are rapidly learning who their real friends are with Labour now a 6% in the polls and ICTU's leaders' reputation in the gutter.

Every struggle throws up a new layer of working class fighters. The most significant layer since this present crisis began has been the Campaign Against the Household Taxes which took a huge blow with the high registration rate in the middle of the year. Labour and Fine Gael effectively bullied people into submission.

But new cuts and new struggles will produce new layers of workers with the confidence of those in the Household Taxes campaign.

The task then will be to unite those militant minorities into a working class movement that breaks from the Labour party and their like, throws off the nationalist illusions that tie us to our own rulers, and overthrow this rotten political and economic system once and for all.

Cutbacks target child abuse victims

By Michael Wallace

CHILDREN at Risk Ireland (Cari), the voluntary organisation that provides vital therapy and counseling services to child victims of sexual abuse, is facing cutbacks to its funding yet again.

Despite a huge increase in calls to Cari's national helpline - almost 40% related to sexual assault and rape - the state-run Family Support Agency is cutting funding to Cari and all its services by

12% next year.

After suffering shameful cuts of 13% in 2012, the group was forced to close its therapy service in Cork, the only specialist service for child abuse victims in the region.

As a result, Cari now have 50 children waiting up to one year for counseling after an abuse is confirmed along with a 7% drop in therapy.

Due to HSE/Government cuts in recent years, Cari was also forced to shut services in Naas and Wicklow and cut its

number of therapists by one third.

New cases

Further state funding cuts means that the organisation would be forced to pare back even more services as it struggles to fund itself to the end of the year.

This comes at a time when over 3,000 new cases of child sexual abuse are being reported each year.

According to Cari acting National Clinical Director Majella Ryan, the lack of

treatment for these children can develop serious problems later in life, such as poor social skills, mental illness, addiction and suicide.

It's a shocking disgrace that child victims of sexual abuse should have to go without vital counseling services because these are being starved of funds.

Once more the most vulnerable are being targeted for vicious cutbacks to pay for the debts of bankers.

No one is safe from the cruelty of austerity - even victims of child abuse.



CARI

Shining a Light for Children

O'BRIEN WATCH

Expanding his empire



By Maewu Mc Grath

DIGICEL, the Caribbean based Phone Company controlled by media tycoon Denis O'Brien, is moving to buy up the Dominican Republic operations of Orange for €1 billion.

If it goes ahead, O'Brien would find himself competing with Carlos Slim, the richest man in the world.

O'Brien and Slim have been rivals in the wider region's telecoms industry for years.

Orange Dominicana, a daughter company of Orange, has about three million subscribers which is growing at the rate of 3% annually.

Yearly revenues amount

to €450 million.

Orange dominates the country with 38% of the Dominican Republic's mobile market.

Digicel already has a firm hold of the mobile phone market in neighbouring Haiti.

As capitalism develops, free market competition yields inevitably to the formation of monopolies.

These conglomerates form networks which provide a stable return by effectively carving up the world's territories between them.

This results in super-profits for the few that sit on the boards of these trusts and widens the ever expanding gap between this 0.0001% and the workers who produce the wealth.

Ryanair's tax dodging

A French court has ordered Ryanair to pay €9 million after it found the airline was in breach of labour laws.

Unions brought the action on behalf of a Marseille-based crew, who originally had Irish contracts.

Having an Irish contract was used as a loophole for



O'Leary: Two fingers to safety

not paying social security and taxes in France.

This saved Michael O'Leary 30% in revenue for his company by claiming that these workers were "mobile" and working on Irish registered aircrafts and therefore on "Irish territory."

The court in Aix-en-Provence ordered Ryanair to pay €200,000 in fines, in addition to damages including

€4.5m of backdated social charges, €3m in pension contributions and €450,000 in unemployment charges.

This is only the latest in a series of legal battles between Ryanair and the French State.

In 2011, a petulant O'Leary pulled his operations out of Marseille, aghast at the labour laws.

He moved his Marseille-based aircraft and 200 jobs to rival airports in Spain, Italy and Lithuania.

Since then, Ryanair has operated a summer-only operation to the southern French port city.

Cost cutting

This comes on the heels of the scandalous revelations about dangerous cost cutting reported in a Channel 4 documentary.

The one pilot who did not appear in his interviews anonymously - Captain John Goss - was subsequently fired, allegedly via a memo, for participating in the production.

Furthermore, the airline received further attention for charging Dublin surgeon Muhammad Taufiq Sattar - whose family was tragically killed in a house fire - €188 to switch flights.

O'Leary's response at the company's AGM was to declare that they may need to "soften" their "image."

This is just another media ploy for a company dedicated to destroying labour law and maximizing short run profit.

Honohan's decision is an insult to victims of austerity

By Michael Wallace

CENTRAL Bank boss Patrick Honohan has declared there is 'no new evidence' on the Anglo Tapes to suggest any criminality-even after admitting he hadn't bothered to listen to all the recordings.

His astonishing decision has been defended by Fine Gael and Labour ministers.

Released during the summer, the tapes revealed how Anglo bosses planned to defraud billions from the state while attempting to hide the full extent of their bankruptcy.

These infamous recordings outlined how Anglo executives were ordered by former chief David Drumm to go to the Central Bank with "arms swinging" to demand "moolah" just before the bank guarantee in September 2008.

Drumm's sidekick John Bowe was caught admitting that a demand for a €7 billion bailout was a figure he 'pulled out of his arse.'

Arrogance

The arrogant contempt of these bankers inspired massive revulsion and angry protests calling for their jailing.

This popular outrage forced Honohan's Central Bank to launch an 'immediate investigation.'

The result is an insult to the tens of thousands thrown out of work, forced to emigrate or threatened with eviction following the €35 billion bailout of Anglo.

Days after his farcical decision to clear the bankers, Honohan was left with egg on his face.

More tapes released on 29 September showed how Drumm, Bowe and Anglo planned to move €6



Central Bank boss Patrick Honohan



billion "around in a circle" between Anglo and Irish Life & Permanent.

This was done to illegally inflate corporate deposits, hide true levels of bankruptcy and 'draw the State bit by bit' into providing the subsequent bailout.

But this isn't about a few bad apples. Honohan's decision reflects willingness by an arrogant elite to preserve its rotten system and protect the guilty in their ranks.

Only a mass movement of people can win justice for the many victims of austerity and ensure the Anglo bankers receive their proper punishment.

McFeely's fraud the tip of the iceberg

By Tina MacVeigh

FORMER Priory Hall resident Stephanie Meehan captured the hearts of the nation with her heartbreaking open letter to Enda Kenny following the suicide of her partner of seventeen years and father of their two young children, Fiachra Daly.

The story made huge national headlines, putting the issue of Priory Hall back in the media.

Ironically, a short time later the man who developed the site would also be making headlines.

Two weeks ago approximately €140,000 was found 'under the bath' at the ex-home of Tom McFeely, one time IRA Prisoner, latterly turned Celtic Tiger property developer.

McFeely originally shot to fame in October 2011 when 65 families were forced to move out of his Priory Hall development as a string of construction defects, including fire hazards, were found.

McFeely avoided going back behind bars last July after successfully claiming he was unable to carry out the required repair work as he was effectively bankrupt.

Now it transpires that he had plenty of cash to stash under the floorboards at Ailesbury Road, and



Tom McFeely: cash under the bath

goodness knows where else.

Celtic Tiger bad boys

This story was heralded by the media as an example 'what was wrong with the Celtic Tiger', as numerous 'bad boys' like McFeely took advantage of a booming property market to make a quick buck.

The truth is that McFeely, like fugitive solicitor Michael Lynn, recently arrested in Brazil, are just small fish in the big capitalist pond.

If they can scam their way to a couple of millions the big bankers, top developers and top state officials actively collude to grab billions.

The real crooks

Rather than the problem being one of a few rogue

traders, what actually happened during the Celtic Tiger was that developers were given carte blanche by the state to borrow obscene amounts of money to purchase land at premium rates and to build shoddy housing on it.

This then allowed them to make huge profits and inflate a property bubble.

Banks and developers were in collusion with each other to cover up huge holes in their balance sheets with, as we now know from the Anglo tapes, no sense of responsibility or duty to society.

Profit was their only motive as they moved around with an arrogance born of a deep understanding that the capitalist system would always protect their interests.

The cumulative cost of the baking crash is some €64,000 million.

Anglo Irish has cost the tax payer €34.7bn on its own and yet none of the main players have been held to account.

Instead of putting these economic traitors in jail the state hides behind legal manoeuvring - claiming that the case is so complex that the evidence has to be painstakingly prepared.

This is supposedly the reason for a five year delay, but does anyone believe that any of these banksters will actually face justice.

Five years after the crash and the bankers are getting back to business as usual.

Meanwhile, we can expect more scapegoats like Tom McFeely and Michael Lynn to hit the headlines.

March for Abortion Rights, Dublin

Interviews by Inessa Armand

A MARCH, organised by the Abortion Rights Campaign, was held in Dublin on Saturday 28 September.

This coincided with a global 'day of action' for access to free and safe legal abortion.

Socialist Worker caught up with a few participants after the march.

Sarah McCarthy travelled from Galway to Dublin to attend stating - "for my whole lifetime, women's lives have remained unprotected, and I won't be silent anymore."

Young women are here and we won't stop shouting until we get it [free safe legal abortion], and many other things".

Robert Murphy told us that he would like to see a unified repeal of the 8th campaign, "I think we need to see a unified pro choice campaign around the demand to repeal the 8th amendment and the odious parts of the recent legislation such as the 14 year sentence for procuring an abortion".
 (See Editorial for What Socialist's Say).

Protests force Greek government to turn on fascist Golden Dawn

The arrest of Nazi leaders is an opportunity the left can use to its advantage, says Panos Garganas

The Greek coalition government was forced into a spectacular U-turn last week over the Nazi Golden Dawn party.

After 15 months of offering all kinds of protection for the fascist gang, Greece's rulers now admit it is a "criminal organisation". The leader of Golden Dawn and a number of its MPs were taken to prison on charges of organising several murderous attacks.

This development was triggered by the murder of Pavlos Fyssas by a Golden Dawn member on 18 September. Pavlos was a musician and active anti-fascist from the working class area of Keratsini, near Athens.

The murderer was arrested on the spot and the connections with the Nazi hierarchy were too open to ignore. The Public Prosecutor's office had to intervene and order the arrests that have exploded like a bomb on the Greek political scene.

To understand the extent of the authorities' U-turn we have to go back a few months.

Last January a young Pakistani worker, Sahzad Luqman, was stabbed to death in Petralona in central Athens by two thugs with Golden Dawn connections.

Connections

They claimed Sahzad was blocking their way with his bicycle and they hit him in the quarrel that followed.

The police concluded that there was no racist motive for the murder. Now though, the murder of Sahzad is part of the charges the Nazi leadership faces.

The central reason for this change is the explosion of anti-fascist strikes and protests since Pavlos' murder (see below).

The government was clearly worried that the situation might get out of control and had to act against the Nazi gang quickly. A combination of strikes and antifascist demos was the last thing they wanted.

The strikes played a crucial role in another respect too. Until recently Golden Dawn focused on attacks against immigrants as a way to establish terror squads in working class areas. Emboldened by police protection during such racist activities they decided to go for trade unionists and the left as a show of strength in the middle of a strike wave.



Fascist Mihaloliakos gives Nazi salute at a Golden Dawn rally.

Two weeks before the murder of Pavlos they attacked a group of the KKE (Communist Party) who were flyposting near Piraeus—among them shipyard workers and trade unionists.

Golden Dawn's escalation was a bridge too far. A weak government struggling to survive against workers' resistance to its austerity attacks could not afford to continue protecting Nazis on a murderous rampage.

There is now an opening for the left to counterattack.

We have to make sure the arrests of the Golden Dawn leadership lead to convictions and the net is spread wider to include all the Nazi squads, their backers and protectors.



Workers marched on the Golden Dawn headquarters last Wednesday. These placards, from the civil service workers' union POE-OTA, call for 'Nazis out of our workplaces' (Pic: Workers' solidarity)

Strikers marched on Golden Dawn HQ

IN the evening of 18 September tens of thousands of people took to the streets in Keratsini, the home of Pavlos Fyssas, and in cities across Greece.

The anger linked up with strikes against redundancies in schools, hospitals, colleges and social security offices.

Mass meetings of striking teachers voted for action against the Nazi Golden Dawn.

Unions called a 48-hour

general strike across the public sector on 24 and 25 September and anti-fascist rallies on the second day of the strike.

The 50,000-strong rally in Athens turned into a mass march on the Golden Dawn headquarters led by the far left.

The parliamentary left, however, put out calls for people to stay away.

Katerina Thoidou of the Movement Against Racism and

the Fascist Threat (Keerfa) said, "All the roads in the area were just full of people, and lots of union placards saying 'Nazis out of our workplaces'."

"People didn't just want to dissolve the Golden Dawn, but to bring down the government."

"They are so angry at the government, the courts and the police that spent so long trying not to notice the Golden Dawn and all its attacks."

The state colluded with the fascists

THE government in Greece has sacked a leading official in the intelligence service EYP with Golden Dawn links.

He obstructed an investigation into the phone calls between hit squads and the party's leaders.

Prime Minister Antonis Samaras reinstated him last year but has now had to sack him.

There are many more links between the state and the fascists.

We have to uproot them.

The mainstream parties Pasok and New Democracy used to claim the left was to blame for the rise of the Nazis. Their mantra was "The two extremes feed on each other".

Now they are urging the left

wing Syriza to cooperate with them in isolating Golden Dawn.

The left cannot allow those who protected the thugs to evade all responsibility. Samaras and public order minister Nikos Dendias must resign.

The struggle against the fascists must continue alongside the fight against those who spread poverty and racism.

Sudan protests defy dictator

by Ken Olende

THE Sudanese dictatorship has been shaken by the biggest protests since it took power 24 years ago.

Demonstrations have continued for over a week, since the government cancelled subsidies on fuel and basic foodstuffs.



Police have killed more than 50 protesters, and activists say the death toll is now over 100.

A doctor who has been helping treat the wounded spoke to his sister Marwa in London.

"He counted 21 shot protesters in the morgue at his hospital himself."

"He said most were killed with gunshots to the head and chest," she said.

"The morgue's manager resigned on 28 September because the army demanded that he falsify death certificates to say people died of natural causes."

"Now they are moving military doctors in. Civilian doctors like my brother are sometimes not even allowed into the hospital."

But so far the levels of repression have not quelled the movement.

Omar al-Bashir's dictatorship faced similar demonstrations in 2011 and again in 2012.

It was thrown into crisis by the loss of the oil fields that had produced most of its income when South Sudan became a separate state in July 2011.

Marwa said, "Protesters are shouting 'Down with Bashir'. They want the regime to go."

She pointed out that women are taking a leading role in the protests.

"The current protests started with a walkout by secondary school girls in Omdurman, Sudan's second city. The boys soon followed."

Women

"Women have been at the front ever since. Even the support protest we had in London was led by women."

"It's not surprising. Women look after the home."

"If families can't afford food and fuel, finding a solution is the responsibility of women."

Wider sections of the poor are joining the protests.

Marwa said, "People talk about the need for workers to go on strike against the government, but it is difficult."

"Many workplaces are closed. So are most schools and colleges. It can be difficult to travel outside your neighbourhood. But so far this has only made people angrier and angrier."

"They know their friends, relatives and classmates have died, so they come out onto the streets."

"People from everywhere are coming out."

CLIMATE CHANGE BRIEFING

IPCC Report: Diagnosis without solutions

By John Molyneux

LAST week's IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) report confirms what has long been known: that the world is heading rapidly towards catastrophic climate change which will be a disaster for humanity.

The IPCC is, in establishment terms, the world's most authoritative body on this matter. Its report tells us that:

"Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, and since the 1950s, many of the observed changes are unprecedented... The atmosphere and ocean have warmed,

the amounts of snow and ice have diminished, sea level has risen, and the concentrations of greenhouse gases have increased

Each of the last three decades has been successively warmer at the Earth's surface than any preceding decade since 1850 in the Northern Hemisphere, 1983–2012



was likely the warmest 30-year period of the last 1400"

The world is on course for a 4 degree rise in average temperature which will mean extreme weather events - droughts, destruction of crops, floods, storms and fires - on a truly horrific scale. Indeed the process has already started.

Human Activity

The report also confirms that it is human activity - above all CO2 emissions caused by burning fossil fuels - that is responsible.

This confirmation of existing knowledge is important because of the persistent efforts of right-wing climate 'skeptics' and 'scientists' funded by the oil companies to confuse public opinion; efforts still given credence in the media.

Unfortunately the IPCC report is completely inadequate when it comes to what to do about it.

This is because - as a government funded, establishment body - the

IPCC is limited to proposing market-based solutions within a capitalist framework and these won't work.

Capitalism is committed to production for profit and competitive economic growth by both its major corporations, like Exxon, BP and Shell, and its major states like USA, China and Japan.

On this basis, it doesn't matter what the scientists or environmental activists say these major players are simply not going to cut their carbon emissions because fossil fuels are central to their system.

It is profit and capitalism, not ordinary people, that is the problem and to halt or even slowdown climate change, which is not difficult technically - the global economy needs to switch from oil, coal and gas to wind power, solar power and wave power.

This is yet one more reason why we have to challenge the capitalist system.

Syria deal exposes Obama's weakness

by Judith Orr

A few weeks ago the US looked poised to launch a military attack on Syria. Now a deal on Syrian chemical weapons appears to be sealed—and a historic thaw in relations with Iran has been thrown in for good measure.

The Syria deal was struck in the United Nations (UN) Security Council. It says all production and equipment used to manufacture chemical weapons in Syria must be destroyed by 1 November.

All existing chemical weapons are to be eliminated by the middle of next year.

All sides claim to be satisfied with this solution because it suits their own ends.

Barack Obama, facing problems at home, wants to spin this as a great achievement for him on the international stage.

He is less keen to acknowledge what the deal exposes about US imperialism.

First is that, whatever the rhetoric, the US was not confident or strong enough to launch a military attack on Syria.

Obama was loathe to commit to a military attack. He was forced to talk tough rather than risk appearing weak.

Yet by pulling back and accepting the UN deal as a solution he has confirmed his weakness.

The deal doesn't even include the US's preferred wording, which asserts the right to automatic "punitive measures" if Assad breaks any of the conditions.

The second thing the deal shows up is that the motive for an attack on Syria was never humanitarian.

Only last weekend an air attack on a school killed at least 16 people.

More than 100,000 people have died in the struggle against Bashar al-Assad since the revolt began in 2011.

Obama is content to let the killing carry on—so long as the US has not lost face as the global superpower.

He has managed to avert the risk of the US getting bogged down in yet another war, at least for the moment.

Dynamic

The sudden thaw in relations with Iran exposes the same dynamic.

Obama fears a war with Iran.

But it seems both he and the Iranian regime accept they have reached a stalemate in the battle to force Iran to give up its nuclear programme.

That is why both want to look happy to be talking again.

Last week's 15 minute phone call between Obama and Iran's president Hassan Rohani was the first direct talks since the Iranian revolution of 1979.

Then a revolution brought down the US-backed



Shah, rather like the recent ousting of Western-backed dictators in Tunisia and Egypt.

Western sanctions against Iran have caused much damage.

The main victims are ordinary Iranians who suffer from medicine shortages and rising food prices.

But sanctions haven't forced Iran to give up its nuclear programme.

US imperialism's closest allies in the region are Israel and Saudi Arabia.

They are angry at any hint of detente with Iran, as are the hawks in the US ruling class.

Israeli Prime Minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, is flying to the US to address the UN on the issue.

He is set to challenge Iran's assertion that it merely wants to develop nuclear power and not a nuclear



Barack Obama, facing problems at home, wants to spin this as a great achievement for him on the international stage

bomb. Netanyahu wants to stop any further retreat by the US on Iran.

But pragmatism is driving events—and that says that the US cannot risk a war right now.

What of the plight of the ordinary people that make up the populations of Syria and Iran?

Any Western intervention will make their situation worse.

Western bombs don't discriminate between Syrians who are pro and anti the Assad regime.

And they can deflect people's anger away from their own rulers towards the West.

In Iran the campaign of imperialist sanctions has helped maintain the regime and stifle the democratic opposition there.

The pulling back of a military threat can help create the space for the domestic opposition to repressive regimes.

CULTURE ZONE

Anti-Capitalist Opera at the Gate

By John Molyneux

"WHAT is the crime of robbing a bank compared to the crime of owning one?" says pimp and murderer, Mack the Knife, as he faces the gallows.

This line from Brecht and Weill's *The Threepenny Opera*, now showing at the Gate Theatre in Dublin, tells us this is no ordinary opera or musical.

It also shows it is very relevant to Ireland today. Bertolt Brecht was a committed Marxist and one of the greatest writers of the 20th Century.

The opera was written in Weimar Germany in 1928, just before the Wall St. Crash and the rise of Hitler. Set in 19th century London it uses the criminal underworld to satirise the gangsterism and brutality of capitalism.

Instead of a romantic hero or heroine we are offered the anti-romantic, anti-hero, the menacing MacHeath – chief villain among a cast of thugs, prostitutes, professional beggars and corrupt crooks.

Rather than trying to engage our sympathies these characters present us with a stark picture of how the system forces people to repress their humanity to survive.

Rather than contrasting 'noble' villains to the villainous rich Brecht



offers us monstrous villains but still insists the rich are worse.

In my opinion this production is not ideal but nevertheless the devastating

force of Brecht and Weill's attack on the system shows through, especially in the powerful songs such as *Pirate Jenny* and the *Ballad of Sexual Dependency*.

Tom & Vera at the Samuel Beckett

By John Lyons

THERE is no doubt that in Ireland many tens of thousands of people are suffering as they struggle to deal with the fallout from the crisis: we've heard the figures; the 420,000 people out of work, the 200,000 who have left the country over the past four years, the 180,000 in mortgage difficulties.

With the failure of our democratic system to work in the interests of the majority becoming clearer every day, as the political class work might to ensure that the powerful and wealthy in society suffer no ill effects of the recession; new charges, levies and tax hikes, hit those struggling to get by financially on ever-decreasing incomes as yet another year of austerity bites hard.

Enter Tom and Vera, a debt-ridden middle-aged couple who have to contend with a bullying bank manager.

They worked hard, bought a house, tried to save for their futures only to find that in post-crash Ireland everything that was once solid in their lives is now melting into air.

They have a plan: rob a bank. The premise feels far-fetched and it appears on stage as a rather unreal situation: these characters



have conjured up their own little world with a simple solution to their difficulties.

But what drove Tom and Vera to attempt a bank robbery is what has driven some people in this country to suicide.

As a play, initially one felt that it hadn't worked: the writing too clichéd, the acting too flat.

But perhaps because we are all so familiar with the story of the financial crisis that the challenge presented by the work, to engage with the its central characters and truly empathise with them in all their suffering, powerlessness and desperation, makes it a worthwhile, thought-provoking experience in the end.

Socialist Worker

Keep the Post Public! *No to privatisation in Royal Mail*

By Maoiliosa Scott

SHARES in Royal Mail are planned to be entirely sold by mid-October, completing the Conservative party lead privatisation of the company.

It is therefore vitally important that postal workers in the Communications Workers Union (CWU) vote yes to the call for national strike action.

The ballot has run since 27 September, and will continue until 16 October.

Terms and conditions

Workers' terms at TNT, Royal Mail's private sector rival, show what is at stake: TNT workers are paid £4.25 an hour less than the basic pay for Royal Mail workers, and many of their staff are on zero hour contracts.

Royal Mail workers are currently guaranteed a minimum number of hours.

Clearly, privatisation of Royal Mail is not in its workers' best interests.

Privatisation of the company could also lead to a cutback in services, particularly in rural areas, and an increase in postage costs, making the decision an unpopular one.

CWU's last national strike in 2009 did not achieve all that it wanted, but the benefits won for workers demonstrate the potentials of industrial action.

The fact that workers are given a significant sum if asked to move offices, and that Royal Mail agreed to no compulsory redundancies, and not to implement changes to working practices without negotiating them with the union are a result of the 2009 strike.

Voting yes to this national strike creates the potential for a massive campaign, and could be a turning point in the fight over privatisation, workload, pensions and pay.

It would help defend public services, and protect the rights of workers.

Moya Greene, the chief executive of Royal Mail, has shown in the past that the Royal Mail workers cannot trust her - their Colleague Share bonus system was scrapped, meaning that they lost hundreds of pounds, despite meeting company targets.

Greene has offered her workers £2,000 of shares, a bribe worth much less after taxes.

Undoubtedly the company bosses will try to wear down the union once the company has entered the private sector, and strip away at the rights and wages of the workers.

This privatisation is something all Royal Mail workers should be against.

Campaign

Activists should organise meetings where members can bring ballots and vote together to launch the campaign.



The CWU cannot miss the opportunity to stop privatisation, and it is hugely important that all Royal Mail workers support this campaign at the ballot boxes and on the streets.

In Northern Ireland, Stormont politicians should be questioned and challenged on their position on the privatisation.

They must be made aware that the Royal Mail

workers, and the public are not in support of this decision.

Pressure should be put on the politicians to put a stop to these plans, and to argue with Cameron to do the same.

The five hundred year old company is apparently not providing the government with enough profit, but the government should have the interests of its

workers put before profit.

The postal service is a necessary one, and should be provided without profit being at the forefront.

CWU members need to vote yes in the national ballot to put a stop to this unnecessary privatisation, and the general public should support them in their strike action.

Sectarianism thwarted by union resistance

By Jim Larmour

THE Exploris Centre sits in the quiet town of Strangford in County Down.

It's an aquatic centre popular with families and perfect for a weekend day out?

Well not according to the DUP run Ards Borough Council.

In a move of blatant sectarianism the Council had planned to shut the centre with the loss of 18 jobs and untold damage to the town before using the so called "savings" to build an extension to the existing leisure centre in the town of Ards. Residents of Strangford were

quick to smell a rat.

Strangford with a population of only around 5,000 is a mainly Nationalist town with few votes for the DUP at election time.

Ards on the other hand is a much bigger place and predominantly Unionist.

What better then for the DUP to boast at election time the extension and refurbishment they have provided for "their" community in the sectarian carve up that passes for politics in the North?

Fight Back

What began with a community campaign against the closure

quickly gained the backing of NIPSA the union who represents the 18 workers under threat.

Along with other unions such as UNITE, community activists and socialists a demonstration was called against the closure on Monday 25 Sept.

A noisy and upbeat crowd of around 300 people forced the Ards Council to panic and retreat, deferring the decision for 2 months to see if a private buyer can be found.

One of the organizers told Socialist Worker "The size of the demo and the weight of public feeling certainly frightened the councillors who thought they

only had to turn up and pass the decision, our people in the public gallery said they were quaking in their boots as they called them out"

Since this victory the campaign has gone from strength to strength with thousands signing online petitions and supporting the Facebook campaign from all over the world.

Whilst supporting fully the campaign and applauding the victory, Socialists should argue this is only a partial victory.

The closure threat still remains so we must continue to build and spread the campaign.

