

Socialist Worker

After the Referendum: Let's fight all inequality

The massive YES vote in the Marriage Referendum was a great victory for the principle of equality. It demonstrated beyond doubt that Ireland has changed for the better and it showed the commitment of the Irish people to equality for all.

It was a victory for the LGBTQ community who were the core of the campaign and now know they have the respect and support of the majority of their fellow citizens.

It was a victory for the young who canvassed door to door and on the streets in big numbers who came home to vote in droves, and who represent the future.

It was also a victory for the working class. There is a persistent media myth that it is the middle classes who are 'liberal' and 'enlightened' whereas the working class tend to be prejudiced and bigoted.

The referendum results gave the lie to this. The largest most overwhelming Yes votes were in solid working class areas like Ballyfermot (85%), Cheery Orchard (90%!) and Fingal - one box came in 100% Yes!

Ireland has also led the way internationally giving inspiration to LGBTQ activists and putting legislators on the spot across the globe.

So we can all celebrate, but we can't rest on our laurels. This win is just a stepping stone in the struggle for equality in society as a whole. Ireland remains a deeply unequal society.

Unfinished Business

In terms of gender and sexuality two issues stand out as unfinished business. The first is a woman's right to choose. Without free, safe and legal abortion women cannot achieve real freedom and equality. And in Ireland that means repealing the 8th Amendment to the Constitution.

The second is ending discrimination against trans people.

The Gender Recognition Bill recognising Trans identity is going before the Dail and the issue has considerable momentum behind it in Ireland and internationally.

There is also a huge amount that needs to be done in relation to racial and ethnic equality. The atrocious Direct Provision system for asylum seekers is an abuse crying out to be tackled [See article P.7] So too is the terrible discrimination and deprivation inflicted on Travellers, who also urgently need their identity to be recognised

And there needs to be an ongoing campaign against the idea promoted by politicians and the media that 'foreigners', 'migrants' and, especially, Muslims are a 'problem' or 'threat' to Irish working people when really they enrich our society.

Economic Inequality

But above all there is the problem of economic inequality. There is a horrendous gap between the tiny minority of super rich at the top, the 1%, and the large majority of ordinary people at the bottom and this gap is getting wider.

There are now 90,000 millionaires in Ireland and the richest 300 - the likes of Denis O'Brien, Dermont Desmond, Galen Weston, Michael O'Leary and Bono - own

between them €70 billion! That's up 15% on last year.

This in a society where rents are skyrocketing, there's an epidemic of homelessness, children are going hungry to school and single parents are being hammered, community programmes are cut to the bone, the health service is in crisis and most people are set upon with charges and taxes which leave them struggling to make ends meet.

It is this economic inequality which weighs heaviest on the lives of working people and it disfigures the whole of society. As much research has shown the higher the level of inequality the worse the level of all social problems such as suicide, drug addiction, crime, domestic abuse, street violence and so on.

But tackling economic equality is a much bigger task than removing marriage inequality. It can't be done just by a referendum or a new law and it won't be supported by the political establishment. On the contrary they will resist it tooth and nail.

In the end achieving any degree of economic equality means challenging the whole economic and political set up in society - it needs a real revolution and that can only be achieved by the mass of working people themselves.

First steps

As a start in this direction we need to defeat the water charges, austerity and the government. These tasks go together. Water charges, like the Property Tax and the Universal Social Charge before them, are deeply unfair and hit the poor hardest.

They are the key issue for rolling back austerity as a whole. And we can defeat them by holding firm on NON - PAYMENT.



Breaking the water charges and sinking Irish Water will also sink the Government. We also need resistance across the board - from workers against rotten conditions like at Dunnes Stores, against privatisations like Aer Lingus and the buses, from communities seeing their services decimated and from every group of working people under attack.

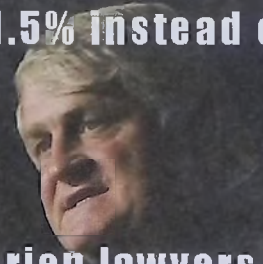
But we also need a new political

movement of the Left to challenge the establishment - the rotten troika of Fianna Gael, Fianna Fail and Labour, - and willing to go further than Sinn Fein in cancelling the bankers' debt and taxing the rich and the corporations.

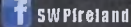
These are big tasks and they will need a huge struggle but that is what is necessary to build on the referendum victory and make Ireland a more equal society.

Don't let him get away with it!

Catherine Murphy TD reveals in Dail IBRC let Denis pay back loans at 1.5% instead of 7.5%



Denis O'Brien lawyers prevent media from reporting. SHARE.



In solidarity with Catherine Murphy TD who has exposed Denis O'Brien in the Dail and with all the water charges protesters who have fought to stop him getting his hands on our water,

Socialist Worker is pleased to print an extract from Catherine Murphy's censored speech.
"We are now aware... that the former CEO of IBRC made verbal agreements with Denis O'Brien to

allow him to extend the terms of his already expired loans...

I understand that Mr O'Brien was enjoying a rate of approximately 1.25% when IBRC could, and arguably should, have been charging 7.5%.

Given that we are talking about outstanding sums of upwards of €500 million, the interest rate applied is not an insignificant issue for the public interest.

We also know that Denis O'Brien felt confident enough in his dealings with IBRC that he could write to Kieran Wallace, the special liquidator, and demand that the same favourable terms extended to him by way of a verbal agreement be continued.

We now have Kieran Wallace, who has been appointed by the government to conduct the IBRC review, actually joining with IBRC and Denis O'Brien in the high court to seek to injunct the information I have outlined from coming into the public domain. Surely that alone represents a conflict".
Catherine Murphy TD, Dail Eireann, 28/5/15

Inside:



Michael Wallace on Recovery for the Rich: p 4-5



Owen McCormack on The Drive to Privatisate p 3

SOLIDARITY WITH THE DUNNES WORKERS (See p.2)

Richard Boyd Barrett condemns Aer Lingus sale

In a statement, Richard Boyd Barrett TD for the People Before Profit Alliance has slammed as an outrageous betrayal and act of national sabotage, the decision of the government, and particularly the Labour Party to sell off its remaining 25% stake in Aer Lingus to multinational airline IAG

Richard Boyd Barrett said: "The decision to sell-off the remaining public share in Aer Lingus is an outrageous betrayal and act of economic sabotage.

The government are sacrificing an absolutely vital and hugely valuable public and strategic asset to a multinational company - driven by their blind commitment to neo-liberal economic dogma.

It is no wonder that this should be done by Fine Gael - who wants to privatise everything the people of this country own - but it is yet another utterly monstrous betrayal by the Labour Party, who are supposed to stand for something different.

This is a profitable, growing

and successful company of huge strategic and historic importance for our country - a company with one billion in cash assets and another billion in tangible assets - and it is to be sold for €1.3 billion.

It is total madness.

The revelations about the Aer Lingus NYRA report, with plans for "savings" in ground handling, catering and maintenance confirm that direct jobs and conditions will come under the axe to be replaced with out-sourcing.

Experience

The experience of Iberia, when it was taken over by AIG, and Willie Walsh's previous history at both Aer Lingus and British Airways, make it clear that his modus operandi is to attack jobs and conditions and replace them with outsourcing.

All the so-called assurances about the Heathrow slots and maintaining connectivity are also totally bogus.

The ECJ ruled against the British government's so-called "golden share" in BAA, as it did against the Portuguese govern-

ment's "golden shares" in the case of Portugal Telecom and Energias de Portugal.

This means either the government are deliberately deceiving the public or they have been totally hood-winked by Willie Walsh and IAG - whichever it is these assurances must be exposed for what they are.

Another, important consideration and irony is the fact that AIG is actually loss making currently, and while they predict future profit increases and new jobs, it is equally possible things will go badly for them in the future.

This is a crazy and unnecessary risk to take with a company that is successful and of such national importance.

In reality, we are giving away for a song something of enormous value that we will never get back.

We are putting the jobs, conditions, pensions and an island nation's air connectivity into the hands of multinational that cares only about profit and has no loyalty to this country or its citizens.

Even now, we should do everything to stop this sale and the



Former Aer Lingus Boss Christoph Mueller will pocket €4million from sale

government should be ashamed of itself for trying to ram this

through before the public even know what has happened."

Portlaoise Hospital Crisis caused by Austerity

Kieran Halpin

THE crisis at the Midlands Regional hospital in Portlaoise is a warning for all local hospital services in Ireland.

A series of baby deaths there since 2008 were investigated locally by the HSE without properly informing parents and failing to follow up on the important safety lessons in each case, distressing parents and leading them to believe their child's death was not being taken seriously.

Portlaoise along with other local Hospitals such as Roscommon, Loughlinstown, Navan, Monaghan and Mallow have been threatened with closure for over ten years. Often the first steps to closure are squeezing the hospital budget and closing some services, usually A&E and Acute Surgical services. The downgradings then are either carried through such as in Monaghan and Ennis or, if postponed due to local protests such as in Portlaoise, the hospital may be left in a dangerously understaffed state. Five years of Austerity and a baby boom in Laois meant that the hospital was overwhelmed by an increasing workload and restricted staff levels. Health workers, like other public service workers were told



Large protest at downgrading of Portlaoise Hospital in 2011

that they could do 'more for less' but the scandals of baby deaths and cover-ups over the last five years shows this was always a lie.

Frontline staff in Portlaoise raised the alarm for ten years writing to local HSE managers and the Ministers for Health and Finance but were ignored.

The Irish Nurses and Midwives Organisation (INMO) complained last year that:

"Midwives in this unit, as far back as 2006, raised their grave concerns and warned that poor staffing, and conditions, at the unit were putting mothers and babies at risk"

The INMO recommended: "The immediate introduction of increased staffing levels, in the unit, so that they reach the Birtheate Plus ratio of one

midwife to 29.5; this requires 33 additional midwives to be employed immediately in the unit in Portlaoise."

The HIQA investigation published recently blames the senior managers who oversaw this scandal. HSE chief Tony O'Brien went to court to protect his senior managers. O'Brien said he didn't think it fair to allocate blame to managers without taking into account the available resources. However, this defence was not offered to the frontline staff who carried the brunt of the poor staff levels. Disciplinary proceedings and fitness to practice investigations are only against frontline staff and not against the HSE or Dept of Health officials or the Minister of Health, Leo Varadkar, who were responsible

for the decisions.

Varadkar's recent 'apology' highlighted the ongoing cover up. Varadkar said: "I am ashamed at the manner in which patients were treated without respect, care and compassion when they most needed it by members of my own profession and other professions." Varadkar did not admit his own personal responsibility as Minister nor that of his predecessor James Reilly or Senior HSE or Department of Health officials.

The lessons for staff and communities in areas where cuts and 'downgrading' are threatened is that further attacks are planned but can be resisted by being clear what resources are required to run the hospital safely with high quality services.

This means resisting downgrades as well as closures. Downgrading A&E or Surgical services is usually preparation for closure later on; death by a thousand cuts will follow.

Varadkar's solution to cutbacks is to deliver more cutbacks. Closing Portlaoise hospital and other small hospitals is the overall plan to cut public and promote private healthcare. Varadkar's plan to set up 'Hospital Groups' should be vigorously opposed as this is a backdoor way of closing smaller hospitals. Larger hospitals in 'groups' can squeeze the budgets

of the smaller hospitals and this will lead to closure without the Minister or senior managers being implicated directly.

Finally, all senior managers, health officials and the Minister and former Ministers of Health should be called to account for the understaffing and cover-ups in Portlaoise Hospital and end the scapegoating and witch-hunting of the frontline staff who fought to bring concerns about safety and the quality of patient care to the attention of their superiors. All health workers should support their local communities demands for safe, quality services and local communities should support their local healthworkers as this is how those services will be delivered. The work-to-rule of psychiatric nurses in Galway hospital to protest against unsafe staff levels is a step in the right direction.

All health workers should approach their union leaders to fight for better staff levels and safe services. Health Unions need to break with partnership and Haddington Road agreements and fight for proper pay and pension restoration as well as improved staffing and safer better quality services. This is no less than the bereaved parents, stressed healthworkers and concerned local communities around the country deserve.

What they said

★ Joan Burton justified capping the rent allowance in 2012 by claiming in the Dail the cut would "ensure rents would not increase" and "not cause homelessness for anyone." Rents have skyrocketed again in Dublin compared to last year and now average €1,358 euro a month. And according to the Dublin Local Authority Homeless Services, there are now 442 families and 1,000 children homeless in emergency accommodation

★ Enda Kenny says he wants to "make Ireland the best small country in the world in which to do business." Tax-shy multinational corporations based here eagerly agree with him. In 2013, they paid just €4 billion on declared profits of 70 billion made in Ireland. This is just 6% of the puny 12.5% corporation tax they're supposed to pay

★ Michael Noonan recently said "there will be people who will never work. They're allergic to work." That there are still 20 unemployed for every job and the unemployment rate is still double what it was in 2007 before the banks and establishment politicians destroyed the economy escapes him. When not insulting people unable to find work, Noonan's busy speculating on Wall Street and UK stock markets that's making him extra millions. He also bought up Portuguese government debt which makes him a bondholder. Not exactly an honest day's work, Michael!!

Dunnes Workers - A Pawn in her Game

Tom Hendy reports from Gorey

Dunnes in Gorey has reopened leaving staff traumatised after a week of muscle flexing and using them as a pawn in her game by owner, Margaret Heffernan.

The dispute was allegedly over an entrance to the store. Dunnes sought to use this entrance, but this was not in their contract.

This resulted in an injunction on Dunnes by the shopping centre management and the response of Dunnes was to

announce immediate closure of its store,

No explanation or details were given to staff.

Speaking to staff, who did not wish to be named, it was obvious, they felt betrayed, hurt, and worried about their future employment.

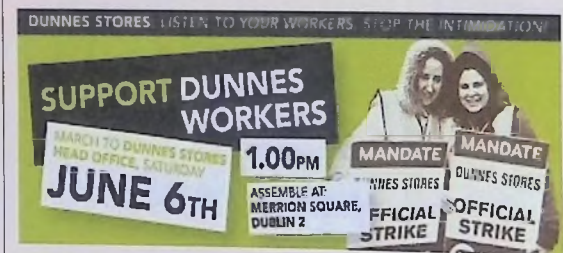
Some of these 100 staff, many of whom have many years' service, spoke of how management at the store refused to clarify what was going on and offered no assurances about job security.

Notices were placed in the store windows informing the public of immediate closure until further notice.

Mandate trade union officials met with Dunnes management, but received little better result. This practice of disregarding the interests of both staff and union is an old habit of the Dunnes.

The workers, while glad to be back at work, still suffer the insecurity of low hour contracts, and uncertainty about their future.

The huge success the Dunnes



group have experienced in Ireland, is down in large part to their workers and it is a disgrace that they should be treated in this way.

The staff will be taking part in the June 6 Decency

for Dunnes Workers protest in Dublin and have asked that everybody who can, to join them in their march for respect and decent pay, and conditions of employment. Assemble 1pm Merrion Square.

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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 workers 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

Text JOIN to 086-3074060 or fill in the form and send to SWP PO Box 1648 Dublin 8

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The Drive to Privatisise

Owen McCormack,
SIPTU and Dublin Bus driver

The Government plan to privatise bus routes and its remaining stake in Aer Lingus is just the latest episode in the ongoing neoliberal agenda driven by the interests of a corporate elite both here and internationally.

Despite claims that privatisations are about efficiencies, better services and value for customers, the repeated experience of past privatisations is that workers' pay and conditions are decimated, jobs are shredded or contracted out to non-union subsidiaries while actual services do not improve.

Only an elite connected to multinational corporations has benefited and the current privatisations will be no different to past experiences. Privatisation has been the chief neoliberal policy across the globe that has shifted massive wealth and resources to these tiny elites at the expense of most of humanity.

The real aim is not economic efficiency but to deepen the neoliberal agenda started in the 1980s by Thatcher and Regan. Neoliberalism wants to force states to privatise all services and ensure multinational corporations can boost their control and profits in every sphere of the economy.

It aims to commodify and marketise all services from health and education to water and transport. This agenda attacks the very idea of democratically elected governments using the state to provide vital public goods such as housing. They argue that only the market and private companies should provide these services as the public sector is inefficient and full of well-paid unionised workers.

The Class Agenda

Behind the rhetoric of efficiency and competition lies a very clear class agenda.

Attacks on the public sector and early privatisations in Britain for example were about undermining unionised workplaces and the potential power of organised labour. They were also seen as a quick fix for a crisis of falling profitability in the global system in the late 1970s. State assets were sold off cheaply to private operators and windfall profits were generated in newly privatised industries that remained monopolies, but were now private ones operating for profit.

Since the 1980s, the ruling class has used institutions like the World Trade Organisation and the International Monetary Fund to police and enforce new global trade and financial rules that insure both more "open markets" (i.e. the privatisation of previously nationalised industries) and that Governments comply with "competition" rules.



The purported TTIP agreement is yet another episode in the deepening of neoliberal rules aimed at enforcing a corporate agenda in all spheres of social and economic life.

Because of disastrous past experiences and widespread opposition, new forms of privatisation such as tendering competitions and Private Public Partnerships (PPPs) are increasingly pushed instead of outright privatisation; but the end goal remains the same; enrich the few, attack workers' rights and bring the free market into every part of the economy.

Ireland's record of privatisation as well as international experience exposes the myths and realities of privatisation.

Buses;

The Government plan to privatise 10% of Dublin Bus and Bus Eireann routes. The National Transport Agency (NTA) wants to organise tendering competitions for these routes, i.e. private companies bid for the state subsidy to operate the route. The NTA wants ALL services to face similar competitions in the future. Only larger private companies can tender, and most of these have connections with multinational transport companies such as First Bus and Arriva.

The winners will get buses directly from the state company. The aim is to get lower paid workers in the private sector to drive down the wages and conditions of the unionised public sector by forcing competition for routes; the lowest bidder

will inevitably win and labour costs are always the single biggest variable cost in providing transport.

Similar policies in London decimated drivers' wages and conditions, while bizarrely the actual subsidy paid for public transport had to rise to satisfy profit demands of these private companies. Not a single extra bus or service will be provided by this policy.

The NTA justifies its policy by citing a report from Ernst and Young, one of the various "expert" consultancy firms that are paid to produce reports that always say privatisation is better regardless of any conflicting evidence.

Aer Lingus.

Despite so called guarantees from new owners IAG workers in Aer Lingus face more attacks on jobs, pensions and conditions in the years ahead having already made huge sacrifices supposedly to rescue their company.

The company made €72 million in profits last year, has over one billion in cash reserves and 24 Heathrow landing slots that are estimated to be worth 30 million each.

Guarantees from IAG on a registered employment agreement are meaningless; similar agreements were smashed by court rulings when hoteliers and others took legal cases against them to avoid having to pay their workers a basic decent wage. IAG will have no interests in Ireland's "connectivity" its only interests will be

profits for shareholders and directors

Aer Lingus's Board of Directors pushed the deal claiming it had a "compelling economic logic"; the deal will see the twelve board members and executives personally pocket about €30 million between them.

Bord Gais.

Privatised last year, the Government and Labour minister Pat Rabbit sold it to British giant Centrica and two other firms.

The deal allowed Centrica to defer part of its payment, making it dependent on how much profit it actually earns in the first few years. It was estimated that the state lost €350 million on the sale of Whitegate power plant in Cork as part of the deal. It also sold wind farms belonging to Bord Gais, worth over €950 million to Brookfield Renewable energy for just €495 million.

The Government tried to claim the Troika made them sell off the company, but privatising the state's energy companies was always Fine Gael policy.

Irish Sugar/Greencore, privatised in 1991, set the standard for corruption when its directors pocketed over £10 million by fraudulently buying shares in a subsidiary and then reselling the company back to themselves at an inflated price.

Then they closed down all sugar processing factories and instead bought up profitable food companies abroad in pizza

and sandwich making. By 2006 the last sugar processing factory in Ireland was closed with the loss of 300 jobs.

Telecom Eireann / Eircom; Privatised in 1996, it was used by the Fianna Fail Government and minister Mary O'Rourke to push the idea of a "shareholding democracy": we could all be capitalist now, not just a small elite.

Thousands of ordinary workers were encouraged to borrow money and buy shares. Many did, but within two years the share price collapsed and small investors lost. The company would be repeatedly sold from one vulture capitalist outfit to another, each time making huge profits as they loaded the company with new debts while also failing to adequately invest in the country's IT infrastructure.

Private Public Partnerships have been used to build public housing, roads, motorways, schools and even the Dublin Convention centre.

The schemes mean taxpayers end up spending vastly more for each asset than if the state simply funded it directly. Private operators and investors are guaranteed profits and take no risk in their investments.

The reliance on private sector involvement mean that if profits are in doubt the schemes can collapse, thus the redevelopment of public housing schemes in Inchicore, and North Dublin were abandoned when a private builder (Bernard McNamara) pulled out of developments during the crash.

Third World Privatisations; The IMF and World Bank forced third world countries to privatise large sections of their economies in return for bail outs under structural adjustment programmes throughout the 1980s and 1990s in a process similar to Ireland's bail out.

This saw widespread corruption and the devastation of vital social services for already weak states; user fees were introduced for basic services like water, education and health.

Multinational corporations, often from the original European coloniser, moved in and got state assets at bargain prices while corrupt local elites and politicians became partners in the privatised industries. Military and political elites in many parts of Africa from Nigerian generals to the family members of dictators like Dos Santos in Angola now head up privatised companies and amass fortunes despite widespread poverty for most of their populations. Water privatisation in South Africa saw French MNC Suez introduce user fees and water metering that cut off over 10 million poor people's supplies. A subsequent cholera outbreak killed hundreds and affected over 80,000 people.

Victory! Marriage Equality Finally Won!

Freddie Trevasakis Hoskin of the Liberation campaign, responds to the Referendum victory

The overwhelming support Irish people have shown for marriage equality, online, on the ground and at the ballot box has been stupendous.

In a country where just 22 years ago homosexuality was still illegal we now have the right to marry regardless of sex.

While the vote was just on marriage the activism and the result were something much more, they were a reaching out, an acceptance and indeed an apology.

People all over this country, particularly young people in unaccepting environments have been sent a clear message of validation and hope from their fellow citizens.

We are perhaps seeing the

beginnings of an Ireland of openness and respect.

The vote is also a huge hit to the old guard of catholic Ireland who fought a despicable and homophobic campaign.

The people who brought us Magdalene laundries, bans on contraception and continue to fight against the right to choose are clearly losing their grip on our society.

The likes of Breda O'Brien and David Quinn have lost credibility and people now see them for what they really are, hateful bigots.

This will hopefully take the wind out of their sails in their future campaigns against the right to choose.

There was huge mobilisation amongst young people with record numbers of registrants and many young emigrants returning home to vote.

This is the same generation

which has been extremely active in pro choice campaigns and marches in the past number of years and is beginning to realise its own political strength.

It is also vital to note the extremely large yes votes in working class communities particularly those who have been active in fighting the water charges.

It is clear that across the country ordinary people want a new kind of society and are seeing that they have power to bring it about.

The joining of these elements is heartening: economic and social issues are not two separate spheres but are rather intrinsically linked and must be fought for together.

But its important to remember that for the last leg of this struggle, though not the many years of campaigning beforehand, the political



establishment was for once on our side.

Even if they did very little in terms of achieving the historic result they were at least for once not obstacles to change.

This most likely will not be the case in the struggles for more reform.

So it is imperative we attempt to sustain the

mobilisation and politicisation which has occurred during this referendum.


We must still fight for the rights of trans people, the right to choose, the rights of migrants and asylum seekers and economic rights such as the right to water.

There remains a long battle ahead of us both in terms of

LGBTQ rights and in bringing about a society which is built for and by its people. For now though let us celebrate.

We have been through a bitter campaign of hatred pitted against love; this time love has won but the fight is far from over.

See you all at what is set to be one hell of a Pride parade.

#socialism  1.01
John Molyneux

Who are the wealth creators?



Margaret Heffernan - is she a wealth creator?

"Entrepreneurs are the wealth creators." How many times do we hear this, stated more or less as fact, on the media?

How many times do we hear it from Enda Kenny and Michael Noonan or from Fianna Fail and Labour politicians (on both sides of the Irish Sea)? Indeed Martin McGuinness, Pearse Doherty and Mary Lou McDonald would probably go along with it too. After all it's 'common sense'.

And then there's that other well known 'fact': that it is business that creates jobs.

All of which suggests that when workers come into conflict with entrepreneurs or corporations, like Margaret Heffernan of Dunnes or Michael O'Leary of Ryanair, they are selfishly jeopardising the living standards of the rest of us.

As for socialists who are 'anti-business', they are probably going to plunge the whole country into poverty and joblessness.

In reality the idea that wealth and jobs are created by entrepreneurs or business people is one of the main myths generated by capitalism to justify the system and the immense riches of the capitalists within it.

But the moment we think outside this capitalist imposed box it is clear that money is only a measure of wealth not wealth itself.

Wealth consists of things that are useful to human beings ie meet human needs in some way or other.

These things are not created by entrepreneurs but by nature and by the application of human

labour to nature. Thus nature creates trees and labour turns the trees into timber and furniture. Or nature supplies iron ore and labour turns it into metal for pots, cans and tools.

Similarly 'jobs' arise from the simple fact that people have needs which require work to be done for them to be met.

There was wealth and jobs long before there were entrepreneurs or capitalism.

Even back in the Stone Age there was a certain amount of wealth acquired by human beings and there were jobs done by people such as making cutting tools or hunting animals.

And work will be done and wealth created long after capitalism has disappeared.

What capitalist entrepreneurs, otherwise known as bosses, do is not create wealth but control the creation of wealth and make off with it.

They do this through their monopoly of the means of production - the land, machinery, equipment etc necessary for effective work.

Entrepreneurs have not always owned the means of production and they were not given them by God. In the Middle Ages the means of production were mainly owned by feudal lords and aristocrats.

The capitalist entrepreneurs gained control of them through centuries of struggle which involved such methods as dispossessing peasants, enslaving Africans, robbing native peoples and indeed overthrowing the feudal lords by revolution.

Once they established this monopoly workers, the real creators of wealth, could only work if they were 'given' jobs by the entrepreneurs.

So far from creating jobs the bosses were really limiting access to them.

And they would only 'give' workers jobs on condition on two conditions: first that they, the entrepreneurs, own everything that is produced; second, that the workers agree to work for wages that are lower than the value of the goods or services their labour produces. This is how the bosses make their profits.

Think about it: bosses do not employ workers out of charity or to make donations to their families.

They do it to make a profit and the moment they stop making profits from employing them they 'let them go', i.e. make them redundant.

Capitalist entrepreneurs are not wealth or job creators; they are job hoarders and profit takers.

Unfortunately you never here this in school or college or on the media who continually lionize the entrepreneurs and business people as heroes and saviours of society.

But actually most workers know from their own experience that their being ripped off and taken at advantage of at work.

What socialist ideas do is articulate that gut knowledge and show that it doesn't have to be that way.

And when workers go on strike, especially a mass strike, and the company or the the country grinds to halt it becomes very clear

A recovery f



Michael Wallace

Government ministers, right-wing economists and the media are telling us an economic 'recovery' is well under way.

We are being hit from all directions by self-congratulatory propaganda from our rulers on how austerity is a distant memory now that 'we've turned the corner'. However, for the majority of working class people who continue to struggle under the legacy of brutal taxes and cuts to wages, welfare and public services, there's little appetite to celebrate.

For the Irish super-rich however, there are plenty of reasons to party like its 2005 again as, according to one newspaper, they 'flock back once more to the country's most expensive restaurants to toast the end of the bad times'.

Brian O'Boyle

Over the last few weeks the establishment spin machine has cranked into action.

With an election months away, the government are busy constructing a message to try to secure their re-election.

After seven years of brutal austerity talk of recovery is hardly surprising. But where is the recovery for working people?

Speaking on the *Week in Politics*, Minister for Jobs, Richard Bruton boasted that the government had secured its promised 100,000 new jobs 21 months ahead of schedule.

Anxious to get in on the action, IBEC have also been talking up our economic fortunes.

According to their latest forecasts, the Irish economy will grow by as much as 5.4% this year alone.

Coming on the back of 4.8% growth last year this may seem like progress, but there are at least three reasons to be suspicious.

Massaging the figures

First, there is blatant massaging of the unemployment figures.

Both the Sunday Independent and Sunday Times Rich Lists have recently revealed that a tiny minority of the population are richer now than even at the height of the Celtic Tiger. The wealthiest 300 people were busy enjoying a massive €35 billion increase in their fortunes. Among the 13 billionaires on the Rich List in the mood to party is tax exile Denis O'Brien, who saw his wealth increase by 1.5 billion in 2014. Thanks to 450 million in debt write-downs from AIB, Bank of Ireland and IBRC in order to buy the likes of Siteserv, The Beacon and Topaz, O'Brien is now worth 5.97 billion.

This small elite group are now worth a staggering 85 billion, equivalent to 35% of the entire wealth the country produces in a single year and 20 billion more than the entire bottom half the population. Thanks to a soaring stock market and rising

corporate profits plus a rapidly inflating property bubble and government tax cuts for the wealthy, this extraordinary transfer of wealth from the poorest to the richest is creating vast levels of inequality.

Economic and Employment Mirage

Our leaders tell us we have the fastest growing economy in the EU. In reality it's an economic mirage that masks a stagnating domestic economy and a recovery in employment based on a race to the bottom for tens of thousands of workers.

Economic growth is measured by both Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross Net Product (GNP) figures but both are heavily inflated by multinational profits and accountancy tricks such as companies temporarily parking their profits in Ireland before shipping them

No recovery for

During the worst phase of the Irish crisis a whopping 330,000 people lost their jobs.

The government claims that it has secured employment for over 100,000 of these, yet nearly 89,000 people have merely been moved onto *labour activation programmes*.

These schemes, which include JobsBridge, are designed to give workers a nominal increase in their social welfare payment in return for what used to be paid employment.

Meanwhile, the labour force participation rate has also fallen thanks to the emigration of almost 10% of Ireland's youth.

According to figures published by the IMF, Ireland's unemployment rate would be at least 19% if the involuntarily underemployed and those forced to emigrate are taken into consideration.

When one considers that almost 300,000 have left the country, and that nearly one fifth of the workforce is underemployed, the government's employment figures look decidedly less rosy.

Recovery on workers' backs

Next is the class dimension of the economic recovery. According to the *National Competitiveness Council*, Ireland's recovery is being powered by an 18.5% increase in international competitiveness.

What they fail to reveal however, is that this 'newfound competitiveness' has come on the backs of Irish workers. Speaking to an employers' convention, IBEC director, Danny McCoy, admitted that Irish workers had increased their productivity by 12% in 2009 and 10% in 2010. Despite this, their pay had actually deteriorated, as unit wage costs fell by 7%.

Meanwhile, in the public sector the combined effects of Croke Park and Haddington Road have seen wages eroded by between 15-25%. Research by *Unite* the trade union, indicates that Irish wages are now around 14 per cent below the EU average, and that in the last two years, wage increases have been minimal compared to other European countries.

How have employers achieve this wage repression? During the crisis, the Irish government worked hand in

or the rich



back to other countries to avoid taxes. Exports are the only real growing sector, yet even here a \$14 billion fall in imports and companies headquartered in Ireland contracting manufacturing overseas distorts these figures too.

Overall investment in the economy is still down 23 billion from 2007 and a collapse in government spending of 5.6 billion below its peak puts a halt to any real economic recovery.

Falling unemployment figures do not take account of the 90,000 in activation programmes such as JobsBridge or the nearly 290,000 people forced to emigrate since 2009.

And there are still 20 unemployed for every vacancy and 200,000 less jobs today than there were six years ago. The numbers underemployed and on zero-hour contracts have risen sharply to 128,000,

one of the highest in the EU as bosses impose low-pay/no-pay and temporary or no contracts onto growing numbers of ne workers.

Fighting back

Clearly this is a recovery where the rich get richer and FG/Labour play tricks with statistics ahead of the next election. They are also continuing to embrace the same boom-bust economics by stoking up another disastrous property bubble, even as examples of the social misery and destruction caused by the last crash are everywhere.

Average incomes since 2009 have shrunk 15% and the real incomes of the poorest 10% have collapsed by 20%.

There are now 1.4 million people living in deprivation, unable to afford basics like two pairs of shoes, a warm coat or a

proper diet.

There is a catastrophic housing crisis with 100,000 without social housing, homelessness at epidemic levels and no debt write-downs for the nearly 60,000 families in long-term mortgage arrears in danger of losing their homes.

The public health system is in meltdown with hundreds on hospital trolleys. Children are particularly made to suffer, with 138,000 living in consistent poverty, over 1,000 homeless and one in five going to school or bed hungry.

Talk of recovery in the face of such appalling inequality is an insult and is fuelling anger among ordinary people. The demand to tax the vast incomes of the super-rich and take back some of the wealth they've taken off us to invest in a sustainable and genuine economic recovery for all will be the next great battle for equality.

working people

glove with the bosses to make Irish labour markets more precarious. This, helped employers to achieve their so-called 'cost saving measures' by making workers increasingly insecure.

Boasting the success of this policy, IBEC currently advertise Ireland as "1" globally for flexibility and adaptability of the workforce". But this is code to prospective investors that Irish workers have been squeezed so badly that they will accept precarious employment and lower wages just to get a job.

Meanwhile, the 'social wage' has been obliterated as welfare payments and vital services have been slashed. After seven years of austerity, the very least that Irish workers should expect is a share of any economic recovery.

But speaking in the *Irish Examiner*, neoliberal economist, Jim Power, argued that "any rush to pay increases could damage the long-term health of what is still a very fragile economy".

Richard Bruton made similar remarks, whilst IBEC are consistently pouring cold water on the pay demands of Irish workers. The implications of this are obvious. Although any recovery will have been paid for by the sacrifices of working people they should not

expect to share in the benefits.

A class recovery that is shaky

Finally we look at the sustainability of the current upturn. One of the decisions made to achieve recovery for the Irish rich was to accept a disproportionate amount of the EU banking debt. By Eurostat estimates, Ireland makes up around 1% of the EU population but was made to shoulder 43% of the total bank debt.

The decision to accept this burden was made by Irish elites anxious to protect their place within European capitalism. However the knock on effects will constitute a major drag on any recovery. The Irish state collected around €42 billion in 2014, only to hand over €8.75 billion in interest payments.

This is around 1/5 of the overall tax take, representing dead-money handed over to the richest Irish and European citizens.

To put this in context, the Irish water network would only need around 20% of this to fix the infrastructure over the next two years. The National Children's Hospital will

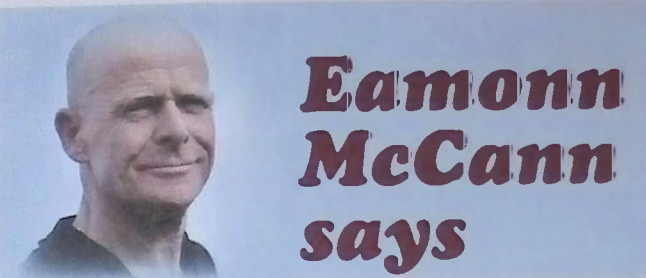
cost somewhere in the region of €500 million, meaning that we are being deprived of around 17 such hospitals every year.

This level of interest is not only unjust but it will mean that any fanfare around Irish growth rates could prove short lived.

With debts of €203 billion and a Debt to GDP ratio of 110%, interest payments of 4 or 5% annually will quickly wipe away all the gains associated with the supposed recovery. Once payments to foreign multinationals are brought into the picture the figures look even worse, as Ireland's Debt to Gross National Product is 135%.

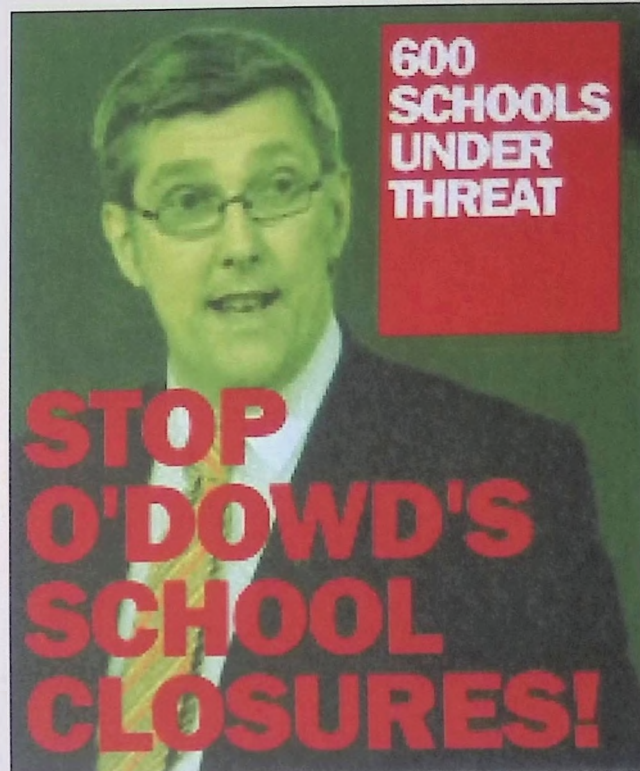
Behind all the talk of economic recovery, the Irish debt burden therefore remains unsustainable.

Moreover, the fact that European capitalism is still struggling to escape its own difficulties means that any export led recovery is highly unlikely. The Irish establishment currently want to throw a few crumbs at workers to buy the election –but a shallow recovery on the backs of workers is not the same as a sustainable recovery in wage and conditions.



Eamonn McCann says

Having your cuts and eating them



There are posters and placards all over the North shouting "Fight the Tory cuts!" Many have been erected by socialists or trades union groups. But the majority carry the logo of Sinn Fein.

Meanwhile at Stormont, the axe continues to rise and fall, rise and fall, cutting, cutting, cutting.

Education Minister John O'Dowd is regarded as one of SF's star performers. He is regularly sent out to do the rounds of television studios hammering the other parties for failing to fight hard enough against the cuts.

His self-confidence in arguing the case is apparently not dented by the fact that 3,000 teachers' jobs have been lost on his watch, while a further 560 and upwards of 1,000 support jobs are set for the chop before September.

O'Dowd and his party are not alone in hunting with the hounds and running with the hare. All five Executive parties rage against the reductions in funding imposed by the Treasury and decry the resulting cuts in jobs and services suffered by their various departments.

Even DUP spokespersons have been heard to complain that Westminster is cutting the North's budget in order to fill the black hole gouged out of the public finances by rampaging bankers and their political sidekicks.

But, complaints ritually registered, they get on with the job of making the working class pay.

Thus, one of the differences between SF and their Executive colleagues is that the others don't make such a song and dance about opposing what they are doing. Education and Learning Minister Stephen Farry of the Alliance Party recently hit a note of sad defiance in saying that, "I did what I had to do."

What he'd done was to accept a 10.8 percent cut in his budget, putting 1,500 jobs in Further and Higher Education in jeopardy. Around 2,500 university places and more than 10,000 places in Further Education are to go.

Neither in principle nor in practice has Farry done anything that John O'Dowd hasn't done, too. Unlike O'Dowd, however, Farry hasn't been spotted out at night plastering his constituency with anti-cuts posters and issuing press statements calling for resistance to the malign plans of the perfidious Brits.

As Socialist Worker goes to press, the air in the North is trembling with anxiety as to whether the Stormont institutions might be brought down by SF and the DUP failing to agree on "welfare reform", aka cuts to benefits. (Actually, it's members of the Assembly and their "special advisers" who are doing most of the trembling, knowing that even a sensational upturn in the world economy is unlikely to deliver them jobs as juicy as these.)

The last week in May saw a passionate, fractious Assembly debate on a DUP motion to push ahead with the welfare "reforms". Bile and spittle flew. But, in fact, a "petition of concern" had been submitted by SF, the SDLP and Steven Agnew of the Greens, which, without going into the dense detail, meant that there was no procedural way of passing the motion.

Every Assembly member who contributed knew as she or he stood up that nothing they were about to say was going to make a blind bit of difference to anything.

But they still had to have their polemical debate. It's what they do. And it would be wrong to suggest that the proceedings had no purpose.

They generated wondrous noise and provided a smokescreen behind which the destruction of jobs across the public sector could continue.

Seen in this light, the welfare reform "crisis" was a diversionary tactic.

And say what you like about the Shinners, they are far better at this sort of thing than anybody else, North or South. You have to be good to get away with a slogan like, "We say cut back! We say fight back!"

The SNP sweeps Scotland

Keir McKechnie, Glasgow SWP.

A political earthquake has shaken Scotland. The SNP landslide annihilated the unholy alliance of anti-independence Unionist parties with Labour, the Tories and the Lib Dems clinging onto only one seat each at Westminster.

The scale of the meltdown for the Labour Party, who paid for climbing into bed with the Tories to save the union, is best summed up by the fact that it lost all 7 of its heartland Glasgow seats to the SNP by a margin of 3 to 1.

The SNP won 50% of the vote with Labour only taking 24.3% of the vote.

Who are the SNP?

The SNP now have 56 out of 59 Scottish MPs at Westminster. So who are the SNP?

The new batch are made up of 4 lawyers including a QC; 3 doctors; 2 journalists and 2 television producers including John Nicolson a former speech writer for New York Democrat Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan.

There are also 4 teachers and one Human Resources professional.

Their youngest MP is 20 year old Mhairi Black who trounced Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary Douglas Alexander. 18 of the new crop served as former councillors in Scottish local authorities including two former labour councillors and one former MSP (Member of the Scottish Parliament).

The SNP are a nationalist party but of the 1.5million people who voted SNP the overwhelming majority are not nationalists.

The campaign for a YES vote in the referendum last year was characterised predominantly by opposition to austerity, war and racism, not a narrow nationalism.



The electrifying mood during the referendum campaign was shaped by a new grass roots social movement that was dominated by left wing ideas.

It was this mood for real change and the hope of an alternative to neoliberalism and the politics of austerity that rolled over into the election and found its expression in the historic victory for the SNP.

This was a vote to end zero hours contracts. It was a vote to defend the NHS, protect trade union rights and challenge racist scapegoating.

SNP leader, Nicola Sturgeon was extremely astute at positioning the SNP to the left of Labour as the anti-austerity party and the best place for old labour voters to turn to protect them from the ravages of Tory rule.

High Expectations

Expectations of the SNP are running very high amongst workers and in its swollen membership of over 100,000. People are expecting the SNP to lead a serious fight against Tory austerity and many are rightly saying that there is no mandate for Tory rule in Scotland and that the SNP must refuse to implement a penny of Tory cuts in councils, at Holyrood or from Westminster.

However, they are most likely to be disappointed. In reality the SNP, despite its rhetoric, has a policy of austerity lite - with a commitment during the election campaign to increase public spending by a paltry 0.5%.

The key thing that Nicola Sturgeon has been emphasising since the election is the need for what she calls "primary devolu-

tion" powers to cut taxes for businesses to make them more competitive.

The SNP are supporters of NATO and leading the campaign to remain part of the European Union - the bosses club that is currently trying to strangle the people of Greece and wreck the new Syriza government.

The SNP are going to be confronted with sharp choices over the next year or so. Either they lead and mobilise millions of ordinary people against Tory austerity and the savage onslaught on the trade unions, low paid, the weak and the vulnerable or they do the Tories dirty work by implementing their cuts.

The warning signs are already present. SNP councils in Dundee and Edinburgh have voted to implement millions of pounds worth of Tory cuts.

The left in Scotland must test the SNP and raise concrete demands on them like intervening to settle the all-out strike of porters at Ninewells hospital in Dundee. Health is a devolved matter and the Scottish health secretary happens to be the local MP in Dundee. This dispute is a key litmus test for the SNP.

The left in Scotland needs to rise to the challenge of uniting to offer an effective alternative to both Labour and the SNP. That unity can best be served by preparing to confront the Tory war on the poor and the working class head on.

We need to make Scotland ungovernable for Tory rule through strikes, protests and civil disobedience.

We can't afford to wait for another referendum somewhere down the line. The fight starts now.



Ada Colau, leader of left wing Barcelona en Comú Party celebrates victory

Andy Durgan reports from Barcelona

Local and regional elections in Spain on 24 May saw the left make major gains. Coalitions backed by Podemos and other left forces will now run many towns and cities, including Madrid and Barcelona.

The elections also saw the continual decline of the two dominant parties of the last 30 years: the Conservative People's Party (PP) and the Socialist

Party (PSOE); their share of their vote went down from 80% to around 50%.

Having lost two and half million votes since the last local elections in 2011, the ruling PP has been thrown into crisis. Agreements between the left and PSOE could also see the PP lose control of most regional parliaments. In many places, the conservative vote has gone to the new Citizens (Ciudadanos) party which is now seen as the main hope to save the

Big Gains for Left in Spain

existing political setup.

But the traditional left has also lost out. The Communist Party-led United Left (IU) has, with few exceptions, seen its vote plummet as their voters have opted to support the new formations.

In some places, IU has avoided being wiped off the map by integrating into broader left platforms.

Swinging cuts to an already under-funded public sector, mass unemployment (still at 25%; over 50% for under 25s) and a rise in poverty have combined with numerous cases of political corruption to push the electorate to the left.

In 2011 around 25% of the population took part in some way in the indignados movement's occupation of public squares calling for the end of austerity, corruption and for radical democratic reform.

Last year the dramatic emergence of Podemos in the European elections with 1.25 million votes was the clearest sign that a major shift in Spanish politics was underway.

In Madrid the new mayor, Manuela Carmena, a retired judge and former Communist Party member, was backed by a list (Now Madrid) including members of Podemos, social movement activists and ex IU members.

Barcelona's new mayor, Ada Colau, was the spokesperson for the militant anti-evictions campaign (PAH) and stood in coalition (Barcelona Together) with Podemos, the Catalan green left (ICV), IU and others. In both cases they will be the first women to head these cities' governments.

The radical left has also done well: both as part of broader coalitions and, in Catalonia, through the pro

independence and overtly anti-capitalist CUP which has seen its vote double to over 220,000 and now has 374 councillors compared to 101 in 2011. At the same time the fascist Platform for Catalonia saw its councillors slashed from 67 to eight thanks to a magnificent campaign by the Unity against Fascism and Racism movement.

Now it is to be seen if real change can be brought about.

Both Carmena and Colau have promised to stop all evictions, introduce measures to alleviate poverty, root out corruption and push through democratic reform.

But it is what happens outside the Town Halls and Regional Parliaments which will determine if such measures become reality. Both mobilization and the pressure from the anti capitalist left will be crucial to ensure this.



2009 but it has yet to be made into law.

Nepal is a political nightmare born of struggles against its powerful neighbours of China and India, of colonialism, the caste-system, ethnic divides, Maoist-led rebellions, and a ten-year civil war. Only in 2008 did Nepal formally end the 240-year monarchy and become the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. The development of Nepal - from roads

to schools, homes to hospitals - has been put on hold while the ineffectual, arguing government parties attempt to draw up a constitution. Nepal's national identity and legal system are in limbo.

What the tragic fate of Nepal shows is that when natural disasters strike it is always the poor that suffer most. It will be the same with the not-so-natural disasters caused by climate change.

Nepalese Earthquake - unnecessary tragedy

Linda Kehoe, who has worked in Nepal, explains why the earthquake claimed so many lives

Natural disasters cannot be prevented but they can be prepared for. While the risk of earthquake occurrence cannot be reduced, the risk of devastation can be and showed the devastation that nature can wreak. Despite the warnings that an earthquake was "scientifically inevitable and historically overdue" and the fact that it is the world's 11th most-at-risk country for earthquakes (2nd-most-at-risk for natural disasters) Nepal was not prepared. As a result the April 25 earthquake in Nepal took 8700 lives, injured 17000 others.

We prepare for risk because it makes social, economic, medical and common-sense. The higher the risk the better it is to plan for the event. Preparation saves time, energy, money and in event of natural disasters - buildings, jobs and lives. So

why was Nepal so ill-prepared? The fact is that preparation itself takes money and good governance - both of which are in short supply in Nepal.

Nepal is poor - one of the poorest countries in the world. According to the UN Human Development Index Nepal ranks 145 of 187 countries. It is a small Himalayan nation of 28 million people squashed between the giants of India and China (Chinese-occupied Tibet!).

North to south, Nepal is split into three regions: the Mountains (Himalayas), the fertile hills and the hot grasslands. This geography means Nepal suffers from floods, avalanches, earthquakes, heavy snow, monsoons and drought.

Each new disaster is yet another setback in a country already struggling to develop. 30% of the rural population do not yet have access to running water or electricity. The headquarters of 15 of the Nepals 75 districts are not connected

to a road at all. This major hindrance to development became even more of an obstacle when trying to distribute aid following the earthquake.

As in many developing, and indeed struggling, nations, the villages empty into the cities as youth search for education, employment and excitement. Kathmandu is a beautiful, bustling and vibrant capital city of 2 million people today compared to the 700,000 of a decade ago.

The city has sprawled outwards and upwards in that time with no regard for the paltry building regulations that do not call for earthquake-proof structures. There is a severe lack of policy and regulation, and those which exist are rarely enforced.

The governments of richer nations, such as Japan, have successfully implemented disaster risk reduction policies. But Nepal has lagged far behind. Nepal drafted a Disaster Management bill in 2008 which was endorsed in October

Language: their political weapon - and ours

Marnie Holborow, who lectures in Applied Linguistics at DCU and is author of a new book on 'Neoliberalism and Language', discusses the political uses of words.

Language is a powerful weapon. *Collateral damage* was used during the Gulf War to describe dead or wounded civilians.

Israel military commanders described the massacre of 1,200 Palestinians as *mowing the lawn*. Drone operators, from the safety of the Creech Air Force base outside Las Vegas, describe the humans that they kill as *bug splats*.

The US military talks about *shaking and baking* for flushing people out with phosphorus and then killing them with high explosives.

These ways of using language remove the human element; dehumanising acts require dehumanising language.

And everyday language is used to make us think about the world in ways that suit those that run it.

When an illness like rheumatoid arthritis is described as a *competitive market*, a medicine like insulin as a *market-leader*, or when we are told that Dublin Bus is in need of *competitive tension* from private operators, language is being used to turn sickness, medicine or a public transport system into a commodity with a price tag.

People are defined in terms of buying and selling.

Everyone is now a *customer*: patients, passengers, phone users, students and school children. Even asylum seekers are described by the Irish Immigration Service as their *customers*, although they must be the worst



treated customers in the world.

Irish Water carefully chooses to speak of its *customers* because they want to make it natural to think that we have to pay for water. In this language the market is elevated to the status of god.

The government must listen to the markets, the election of the Tories has reassured the markets. Market entrepreneurs now drive public policy.

The old Department of Labour has morphed in the *Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation*.

The Taoiseach tells us that 'after one of the darkest periods in the history of the state' (caused, by the way, by a mad market) 'entrepreneurship has never been more important to the country, its people and its future.'

Richard Bruton wants Ireland to be 'one of the most entrepreneurial nations in the world'.

We have the *Irish Entrepreneur of the Year* courtesy of giant multinational Ernst and Young and on TV the budding entrepreneurs of *Dragons' Den*. Students are encouraged to take

entrepreneurship modules as part of their degrees and university staff told to think of themselves, even if they teach literature, as *entrepreneurs*.

The latest thing is *social entrepreneurship* promoted by the government to allow the shortfall of public services to be met by willing local people.

The use of language to pull the wool over our eyes comes to the fore in times of crisis because more is at stake. *Austerity* is according to Brendan Howlin 'not a choice', but 'learning to live within our means', as if *auster-*

ity is the logical response to everyone having over-spent and lost the run of themselves during the boom.

A more spectacular linguistic trick was the translation of the toxic debts of six private banks into *sovereign debt* and, in one fell swoop, into our responsibility. T

his paved the way for the cause of the *national debt* being attributed to public sector spending. Still today, the myth continues. Restoration of public sector pay, we are warned, must not return to pre-crash *unsustainable* levels as if it was the cause of the problem.

In other words, language, as it is put across in public speech, is one of the main ways that the ruling class gets their ideas across. Neoliberal language makes it seem that the capitalist market is the only possible way society can be organised.

So when we hear the need to be *entrepreneurial* or *market competitive* we should remember that this is the language of capital and capitalists, not ours. That is why in periods of struggle, their language is challenged across society.

As a result of the social struggles of the late 1960s and 1970s racist and sexist words were ditched and *black* and *women* became universally adopted. In the anti-capitalist movement, the language of social values and solidarity were taken up by political movements from Latin America to Europe. *Our world is not for sale* was a popular slogan because it expressed an alternative to the profit-seeking market, just as *Right to Water* in Ireland or *People over Markets* in Greece do today.

Slogans are an important way of taking on capitalist 'common sense' and forging for ourselves words with meanings that reflect the kind of world we want to build.

End Direct Provision Now!

Rory O'Neill

SINCE the tragic deaths of over 1200 migrants in the Mediterranean in April, the issue of migrants and asylum seekers is back on to the political agenda.

This crisis has once again highlighted the barbarity and inadequacy of Ireland's asylum policy.

Contrary to popular myth, Ireland does not have a 'migrant problem' or an 'asylum seeker problem'. A

2013 Eurostat report confirmed that Ireland ranked last out of all EU countries in granting refugee status to asylum seekers.

It has just been announced that the EU is to take 40,000 migrants currently in Italy and Greece, yet Ireland will retain a right to opt out of this measure.

This is consistent with previous

policy.

Ireland accepts only 8% of applications on a first instance basis, compared to the EU average of 25.2%.

Thousands of asylum seekers have subsequently been forced in to a lengthy, arduous appeal process which typically results in further rejection of their application.

Refugees caught in this system spend on average 4 years in a Direct Provision Centre where they are not allowed to work and are expected to live on €19.10 a week with only €9.60 per child.

Unhygienic

There are 34 Direct Provision centres in Ireland. Here, asylum seekers live in small, unhygienic living spaces.

Entire families are forced in to a single room, and children are at a

drastically higher risk of suffering mental and physical health problems, such as depression and anxiety.

Children make up 1/3 of Ireland's Direct Provision population.

The whole system is deeply inhumane.

In May, the streets of Ireland were covered in posters proclaiming slogans such as "Equality for Everyone" and "Let's treat everyone equally".

If the government are serious about equality, then direct provision must be abolished and replaced with a humane system which welcomes asylum seekers and offers them the right to earn a living.

Working class people in Ireland should reject the argument that "we have our own problems to worry about here".

Direct Provision is not in our



interests. On the contrary it would benefit all of us if asylum seekers were allowed to work and live in the community.

They would support themselves and contribute to society at the same time.

Isolating and stigmatising asylum seekers only serves to stoke up racism and divide us.

This may be what our rulers want but we should stand together and fight for our rights together. Direct Provision must go!

BOOK REVIEW

'An Unsocial Socialist' by George Bernard Shaw

Freddie Trevaskis Hoskin

SHAW'S *An Unsocial Socialist* is a mixed bag of a book to say the least. It begins in an upper class boarding school for girls where we are introduced to the students.

However the focus quickly shifts to a labourer Jeff Smilash who is in fact Sidney Trefusis a wealthy gentleman who has disguised himself in order to pursue his socialist ideals.

The book is an extremely contradictory one and befuddling this is either to it's credit or deficit depending on which way you look at it.

Trefusis' contradictions are the most obvious. He has disguised himself as a labourer in order to

better relate to the working class and further the cause of socialism. However while in disguise he spends most of his time either with the upper class people who are associated with the college or locked in his cabin writing pamphlets, neither of which requires this disguise.

Even when he does try to interact with the working class he seems to still do so as an upper class gentleman, trying to cajole them into his ideology without seeming to believe they could really understand ideas behind it.

Trefusis' psychology is also contradictory. He jumps between claims that he has no true feelings and what seem like sincere and passionate moments of emotion. Indeed in the beginning he leaves

his wife both because he cannot love her and because he loves her too much. He seems to hold these ideas simultaneously.

The plot in general is also a contradictory one. In the beginning it seems very much like a typical Victorian novel set in a boarding school and following the lives of a number of witty upper class girls.

However with the shift to Trefusis' as the main character the book becomes an argument for socialism made through Trefusis' mouth with the original Victorian novel themes receding into the background.

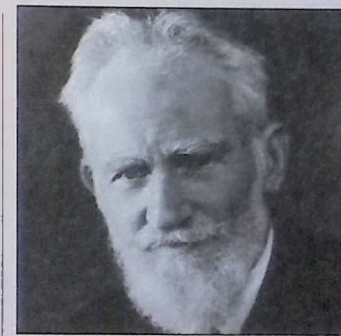
But nothing comes of Trefusis' speeches and he is slowly reabsorbed into the traditional Victorian novel with its dramas of marriage and

property. As result neither strand of the novel reaches a satisfactory conclusion.

Whether or not these contradictions and how they play out are a weakness or strength of the book comes down to whether Shaw was aware of them and I believe he was.

Even the title of the book sets us up for unresolvable internal contradiction. The book is also so starkly dichotomised the whole way through, with the main character having a personality for each side, that it was almost certainly intentional.

So what is Shaw trying to do here? We must remember that Shaw's position in life was much the same as Trefusis, a wealthy gentleman



who is an ardent socialist but has not abandoned the class from which he originated.

Thus the character of Trefusis is used to show us the contradictions and problems within class treachery of a certain sort and can almost be seen as Shaw's critique of himself. All in all while not Shaw's best work *An Unsocial Socialist* is funny and raises some interesting questions.

SOCIALISM RETURNS TO BELFAST

liamentary
ion 2015

Gerry Carroll speaking on election night

Michael Collins

'Socialism is back in this city. The left is back in Belfast', was the announcement made by Gerry Carroll having received a remarkable 6798 votes in the West Belfast general election.

The scale of the achievement is extraordinary. People Before Profit went from having one Councillor elected in 2014, to becoming the second biggest party in West Belfast.

Once the constituency with the highest majority for any party in the UK, West Belfast now boasts the largest socialist opposition, with PBP gaining 19.2% of the overall vote.

It marks an extraordinary breakthrough for the radical left in Belfast, and puts a positive spin on an election which, otherwise, seemed business as usual for politics in the North; with sectarian pacts, polarisation along religious lines, and people employing tactical voting to 'elect the best of a bad bunch.'

On the ground in West Belfast, however, the situation was very different.

An area with some of the highest levels of deprivation, unemployment and poverty in the North had begun to stir, and a conversation took hold about what type of society we were aiming for, and how we could improve our lot.

Carroll's 6798 votes represent a significant shift to the left for a large section of West Belfast, and marks a break from the plan of economic recovery outlined by the Assembly. Enshrined in the Stormont House Agreement, this strategy relies on Celtic Tiger style economics, centered round the creation of a low wage, low tax economy for big business through the reduction of corporation tax.

Austerity measures will mean massive cuts to public services such as Health and Education, a voluntary redundancy scheme, which will lead to the loss of 20,000 jobs.

And on top of this, we are faced with the wholesale dismantling of the community and voluntary sector, with groups across the North losing funding.

Anger over this strategy proved to be the major factor for voters when they went to the ballot box in West Belfast, and the vote for PBP shows that where there is a credible left wing alternative, it can make substantial gains.

Our arguments against the Stormont House Agreement won the hearts and minds of many in West Belfast, as thousands recognised the contradictions of Sinn Fein's self-proclaimed reputation as the party who 'delivers'.

With the highest levels of poverty and deprivation for any constituency in the North, West Belfast also has the highest



Gerry on the picket line at Royal Victoria Hospital.

level of public sector workers. The Royal Victoria Hospital employs 8,500 staff.

The cuts set to be implemented would, arguably, affect West Belfast more than any other constituency and this was something the People Before Profit campaign highlighted.

By keeping the focus on the Stormont House Agreement PBP's campaign harnessed the anger felt by public sector workers, the unemployed, young people, and most notably, by first time voters, who shook off political disillusionment to come out and vote for a radical socialist who provided a message they could relate to.

PBP's campaign had all the hallmarks of small social movement, as opposed to a run of the mill election campaign. Scores of new activists came out to help leaflet, canvass, and put up posters, along with many hundreds of others who campaigned on PBP's behalf: be it in conversations in bars, coffee shops, or on threads on social media.

In marked contrast to other election campaigns in the North, PBP's was led by, and comprised mainly of young people. With this came all the dynamism and vibrancy associated with youth; fundraising events involving local musicians, soccer matches with local football teams, and a high profile social media campaign which took on a life of its own, with young people from across

West Belfast turning their facebook pages into mini propaganda tools, canvassing for Gerry amongst friends and relatives.

A young generation disillusioned with tribal politics, and tired of listening to anti-austerity in rhetoric but never by way of deed, was given confidence by the hundreds, if not thousands, of public sector workers who fought PBP's corner in communities and workplaces across West Belfast.

Gerry has built a reputation over the years as a hardworking representative, now Councillor for the area, by campaigning on the ground, being visible in communities, and standing alongside workers on picket lines.

Slanders and lies

The slanders and lies directed at him by bigger parties, in particular a whole series of personal attacks carried in the *Andersonstown News*, a local paper owned by Sinn Fein's Máirtín Ó Muilleoir, did not weigh up in the minds of those who'd seen the hard work he had put in over the years.

Support for PBP from working class people in West Belfast was one of the most promising elements of the result. You need look no further than the North's biggest workplace; the Royal Victoria Hospital. Unite members expressed their solidarity as far back as November, when they greeted Gerry with applause as he stepped off their

bus as they took strike action over pay.

And reports from Shop Stewards in the Royal describe the post-election scene as one teeming with excitement. PBP members who work there have been deluged with praise from their co-workers. We've established a hearing and respect amongst workers in the biggest workplace in the North, with many key union activists getting behind Gerry's campaign, and a small but significant number of them signing up as members of PBP.

The result means that large layers of people have now broken from the established parties, putting their faith in a radical, left wing alternative in the form of People Before Profit. This presents a massive opportunity for socialists, with the potential for rooting a radical left which can shift the dynamics of politics to the left across the city.

Along with building this broad left it will be crucial to maintain revolutionary politics within it, and to understand that to ultimately change society, working class people must get organised and fight against the system itself.

PBP broke new ground by becoming the first radical left party to poll strongly in a general election in a generation. It is also the only elected only party that is prepared to canvass both the Shankill and the Falls, not limiting itself to campaigning on 'one side' of the community like other parties.

PBP is committed to fighting for a shared future from below, one that we can all have a stake in. We can't break down divisions overnight, but when we unite and fight in common struggle the makings a movement which can challenge sectarianism become possible. To do this we need to get communities and workplaces organised in a sustained fightback. This is a challenge PBP is up for in the coming years, in West Belfast and beyond.

Gerry Carroll's speech on election night

'Today's vote shows people in West Belfast are unhappy with the cuts and that they're unhappy with the Stormont House Agreement.'

I think the parties pushing through the Stormont House Agreement have two options after today's vote: to listen to people who've come out and said 'No More Cuts' or to feel the pain in the Assembly elections next year.

In PBP we've been campaigning in West Belfast for years.

Every time we've stood our vote has gone up, our vote has increased. We're about doing politics differently.

We're about mobilising in working class communities, we're about standing up, we're about people power, fighting back and bringing change in society.

And there's two reasons why people voted for us in this election. The first was austerity. And the second reason was because we're on the ground, working hard in working class communities.

We were the only ones to canvass on the Shankill and on the Falls. Some parties are only about campaigning on the Catholic side, or campaigning just on the Protestant side. Some parties are happy to sit on the fence. We're about something different. We're about smashing down that fence! We're not Nationalist! We're not Unionist! We're Socialist!

What this vote shows is that Socialism is back in Belfast. People Power is back in Belfast. The Left is back in Belfast. And we aren't going anywhere.

To the people in other constituencies who didn't have an alternative to vote for, PBP has a simple message for you: we're coming for you, we're coming to you.

We're fighting for a better world. Join us in that fight!