

# Socialist Worker

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# SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

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**PUSHED THROUGH WATER CHARGES**

**STARTED WATER METERING PROGRAMME & AGREED TO WATER CHARGES**

**CUT CHILD BENEFIT BY €19/MONTH FOR THIRD CHILD**

**CUT CHILD BENEFIT BY €16/MONTH**

**CUT SOCIAL WELFARE FOR UNDER-24s TO €100 A WEEK**

**AGE DISCRIMINATION: THEY CUT SOCIAL WELFARE FOR UNDER-20s TO €100**

**VOTED FOR THE BANK GUARANTEE THAT COST US €65 BILLION**

**LOOKED AFTER BANKERS AND VOTED FOR A BANK GUARANTEE THAT COST US €65 BILLION**

**CUT DISCRETIONARY MEDICAL CARDS**

**CUT MEDICAL CARDS FOR PENSIONERS**

**VOTED FOR 14 YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR WOMEN WHO TAKE ABORTION PILL**

**VOTED FOR 14 YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR WOMEN WHO TAKE ABORTION PILL**

**LET US TROOPS USE SHANNON AIRPORT**

**LET US TROOPS USE SHANNON AIRPORT**

**SUPPORT TAX BREAKS FOR BIG CORPORATIONS**

**SUPPORT TAX BREAKS FOR BIG CORPORATIONS**

**INCREASED THIRD LEVEL FEES BY €1,500**

**INCREASED THIRD LEVEL FEES BY €600**

**OPPOSE RENT CONTROLS**

**OPPOSE RENT CONTROLS**

**OPPOSE BINDING TARGETS ON CARBON EMISSIONS**

**OPPOSE BINDING TARGETS ON CARBON EMISSIONS**

**USED SAME LEGISLATION TO CUT PUBLIC SECTOR PAY**

**INTRODUCED SPECIAL LEGISLATION TO IMPOSE A 'PENSION LEVY' ON PUBLIC SECTOR WORKERS**

Despite the fact that you can't slide a piece of paper between them on policy and principles these two bosses' parties have wasted more than 60 days on farcical negotiations about how to divide up the spoils of power. Meanwhile patients are on trolleys and the homeless are on the streets. Socialist Worker says we need to build a movement to get them both out!

**Inside: James O'Toole on Why Ireland has two Tory parties: p. 6**

# EU-Turkey: a disgraceful deal

Robert Ranson

Over 400 people drowned off the coast of Libya on the 17-18 April. At the time of writing, the exact figure is unknown but what is clear is that it was the single largest tragedy in the Mediterranean over past 12 months.

This tragedy is an indictment of the European Union's migration policies and a timely illustration of why the deal agreed with Turkey last week is shameful and will only exacerbate the regular tragedies we are now witnessing.

These people are fleeing war, extreme poverty and the catastrophic effects of climate change.

Closing one route will simply lead migrants and refugees to take other, more dangerous routes.

We will see increased attempts by desperate families to reach Europe by sailing from the Libyan coast seeking to reach Italy and there have even been recent reports that Syrians have been travelling through the Arctic to reach Norway without having to pass through Fortress Europe.

Most activists working with refugees now fear that after agreeing the reprehensible deal with Turkey, the EU will now attempt to arrange a similar deal with the UN-brokered "national unity government" in Libya and seek to close off another route for migrants and refugees.

## History

The EU has history in this regard as Italy pledged to pay Muammar Gaddafi's Libyan government €5 billion over 25 years, ostensibly as reparations for the Italian occupation of Libya in the



Smiles and Congratulations while (above) Misery and Death

## From War to Uncertainty

The heavy police presence in Victoria Square is backed up by two very large mobile tactical units, converted buses where the armed police take meals and breaks, conduct briefings and store their equipment.

On one end of the square a sentry post complete with parasol sunshade looks like something from a West Bank checkpoint. Uniformed police in pairs and larger groups stand around the plaza smoking and chatting.

All are armed, some are wearing leather-armor and riot gear. As well as the holstered pistols some carry large machine guns. At each corner of the square an officer stands with a large riot shield and wears or carries a visored helmet.

This is not a place where the US President is on a visit, neither is it a place where there has been a "terrorist" attack or threat. No this is Victoria Square a small plaza in Athens, "migration central" for many desperate people seeking to travel deeper into "Fortress Europe".

## Midnight

In the past the migrants stayed on the square 24 hours a day while waiting for paperwork or opportunities to travel on. Now police ensure that the families, single men and children who inhabit the square during the day are cleared out

**Jim O'Connell, People Before Profit candidate in Cork South Central, was recently in Athens where he visited Victoria Square, a gathering point for many refugees. He sent us this vivid and moving report.**

by midnight. Where do they go?

It's hard to say, most seem to melt into the surrounding areas and some bed down in nearby parks most of which are already the dormitories of victims of the Greek economic crisis and the punishment inflicted by the EU, IMF and World Bank.

The heavy policing of Victoria Square is just one of the worries of its many inhabitants, the refugees hoping to make their way to freedom and security.

Basic facilities such as public toilets are not available. Some of the owners of the surrounding cafés and bars allow limited use of their toilet facilities by women and children from the square. Few if any will accommodate the males migrants unless they have money to spend.

Despite the harsh conditions that many of the refugees have endured, there is very little evidence of despair. Yes, weariness and fatigue is written on the faces, especially of the very young and the old, but there is an unmistakable air of optimism among the various groups of many nationalities and cultures.

Al's family sits on the edge

of a concrete planter on the square. Even here where there are many different ethnic clothes styles evident, his family is recognizable as a group because they all wear similar jackets and leggings and all have the same black sports bags.

There are two young women, an older woman and two teenage girls and a boy and three very young boys and a girl who sit on their bags. One of the boys seems to be asleep leaning against his brothers back while the other two prod each other playfully.

## Afghanistan

Al who speaks near-perfect English with an American accent tells me that he and his family have been travelling for many weeks since they left Afghanistan. The last leg of their journey took them from Turkey and across the Aegean by way of the islands.

They arrived in the port of Piraeus in the last few days and made their way here. They want to go on to Germany but for now they are happy to rest somewhere.

Al points to one of the policemen nearby. He tells me that this policeman has told

20<sup>th</sup> century, but primarily in return for Libya closing any route from North Africa to Europe.

This deal was suspended in 2011 after the outbreak of the Libyan civil war but the EU-Turkey deal paves the way for a similar deal in future.

The United Nations, NGOs and activists have raised concerns about the legality of the EU-Turkey deal and whether it contravenes European and international law.

The EU argues that Turkey is a "safe third country" and that "returning", or more accurately, forcibly deporting, refugees to

Turkey does not breach international law.

However, Turkey only applies the Geneva Convention on the Status of Refugees to people fleeing from Europe and only they are classed as "Convention Refugees", and receive the full protections of international law.

Turkish law allows for others to be classed as "conditional refugees" while they await resettlement and these conditional refugees are not always granted access to the labour market.

This leads to refugees not having crucial labour rights such as an entitlement to the minimum

wage, and increased instances of minor refugees forced into child labour.

## Syria

Turkey announced a scheme to allow access to the labour market for Syrians in January 2016 but it has yet to be worked out how this will work in practice and how employment discrimination can be avoided.

Even more worryingly, Turkey has returned Syrians back to Syria violating the principle of *non-refoulement* – a principle of international law which forbids the rendering of a true victim of persecution to his or her persecutor.

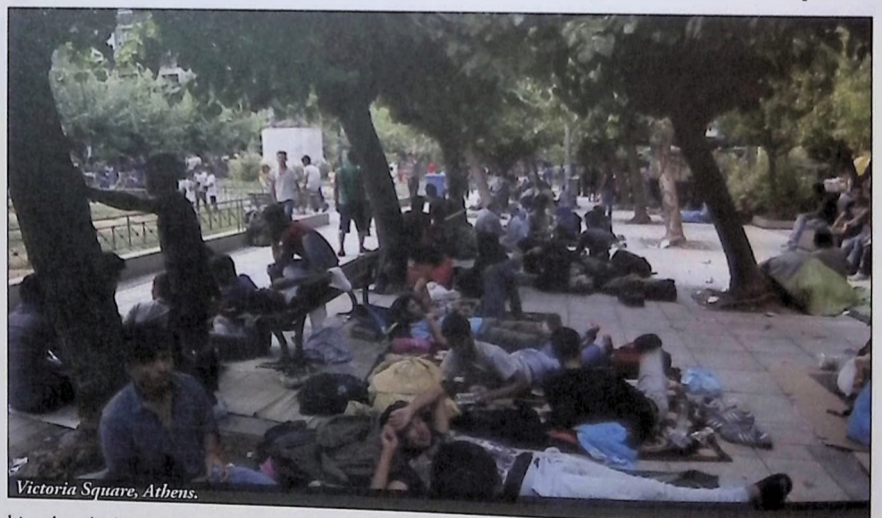
We must object to this rotten deal.

Our acting government has indicated its support for this deal but as we await the imminent formation of a new government, we must make it clear that the Irish people do not condone this agreement.

The water charges campaign has shown the power of that mass movements of people can yield over government decision making and our future government will only depart from the failed EU elite consensus when it fears that the unpopularity of its actions threatens its re-election.

Rather than seeking to close borders, we should seek to establish a greater number of safe and legal pathways for refugees to come to Europe.

We must campaign for the government to increase the numbers of refugees that we pledge to take in resettlement programmes and argue for the wealthy European Union to open its borders for refugees rather than insisting that neighbouring Arab nations host the vast majority of refugees.



him that the bus will be arriving soon to take them to a camp. Al says they are happy to go to the camp so they can get some proper food and some medical aid for the children who have been ill on the journey.

He says they will rest there at the camp for a few days before continuing on.

He is aware of the recent closing of the border with Macedonia but is confident that they will be able to travel on and that the European Union will reward his and his family's willingness to work hard with a safe place to live and schools for his children.

His home town in Afghanistan has never recovered from the constant upheaval of wars and there is little hope for a future for his children back there.

Later that evening I come back to the square. The area has not yet been cleared for the night by the police and people are still sitting and standing around.

A group of international volunteers is distributing food packs, coffee and baby supplies. Al's family are huddled together sharing some food. I look around for Al. He is across the square speaking with one of the policemen. I move on.

An hour later I return and find that Al and his family are nowhere to be seen. The square has been cleared and all is quiet. I visit the square regularly in following days I make inquiries. No one knows of Al's family.

In the days following the news of a new deal between the EU and Turkey is announced. Many of the migrants transiting

through Turkey and into the EU are to be returned to Turkey. Have Al and his family been sent to the camps of Turkey? We have no way of knowing.

We must fight to bring down this system that supports the wars and oppression inflicted on people such as Al and his family and then further victimises those people fleeing such wars and oppression.

Western intervention in Afghanistan led to the chain of events that brought Al's family to Victoria Square. Similar interventions and invasions in the Middle East and elsewhere result in many others taking similar routes. We must fight to end imperialist wars and interference and we must open the borders to persons fleeing the appalling situations our rulers helped to create.

# Luas drivers fight for decent pay



Brid Smith, Richard Boyd Barrett and other TDs support the Luas drivers at St. Stephen's Green

Owen McCormack

As Socialist Worker went to print, the Luas drivers fight for a decent pay rise was at a critical point. The driver's union SIPTU had called off two planned days of strikes in return for a new offer of talks with Transdev.

This followed the company's outrageous bullying of its workforce with threats of layoffs, pay cuts and even legal action against drivers if more strikes went ahead. Drivers who spoke to SW were unhappy with calling off the strikes and sceptical of any new offer from Transdev's head Gerry Madden.

In a letter to all drivers Madden admitted the company would now be faced with huge costs for further strikes, as the previous ones were effectively paid for by the drivers losing their annual bonus and their pay on the days of the strike.

Drivers were angry that officials had agreed talks on behalf of other grades and seemed to be recommending a deal for those workers even before the drivers had started their negotiations.

## Worse

The "new offer" from Madden still sees cuts for new recruits and increased productivity and seems likely to be worse than the deal rejected by drivers last month. It is likely any such deal will be rejected and the strikes will then go ahead.

If so, Luas drivers will need solidarity and support from other trade unionists and transport workers. Transdev are backed by both the Government and mass

media in their attacks on the drivers.

Despite Minister Donoghue's previous claims, he was forced to admit in a reply to a Dail question by Brid Smith that his officials and those of Transport Infrastructure Ireland (who had a role in awarding Transdev their contract) have met with and are in regular contact with Transdev officials.

LUAS drivers suspect that Transdev are working closely with Government officials.

The Government and all bosses in Ireland have a huge interest in stopping Luas workers from winning.

They understand that if Luas drivers win it will inspire many groups to demand wage rises after eight years of austerity and pay freezes and cuts.

## Support

While social and mass media have been filled with attacks on Luas workers, many workers understand what is at stake and why the Luas fight is so important. One tactic of the media is to compare Luas workers to new recruits in teaching and nursing. SW spoke to some workers involved in fighting for equal pay in these professions and found widespread support for Luas drivers and their stance against lower pay rates for new recruits.

A newly qualified primary school teacher in West Dublin said:

"I fully support the Luas workers action. When I heard of the attempts to impose lower pay rates on new entrants to the job, I was really impressed by the solidarity of drivers when they went on

strike rather than sell out anyone who may join the job in future.

"In teaching, three different pay scales exist for teachers who all do the same work. Some receive more pay than others simply because they started their career on a different date. It's a disaster and I think it should not be accepted anywhere.

"I will be delighted if the Luas workers win a pay rise because I think they have a just cause and to be honest it will give all of us fighting for pay equality a big boost."

Jo, a nurse at Dublin's St James Hospital said: "I'm amazed at the concern from some quarters about the poor rates of pay for new nurses, when we tried to resist the Government's imposition of those rates I don't remember hearing their concerns voiced then.

"Their new found concern is a ruse to justify attacking the first group that stood up for itself. Yes, young nurses deserve better pay, but the very people who put them on these rates are the ones attacking the Luas workers now"

An INTO activist said: "The drivers rejection of that deal should inspire all trade unionists here; for too long we've accepted cutting the starting rates of new entrants into our work places and it is undermining basic solidarity among workers. I hope the Luas guys win and start a trend for all trade unionists"

## Global empire

Far from being a struggling company. Transdev are part of a global French multinational with appalling human and employee rights records across the globe.

While claiming to be losing money in Ireland, they still managed to repatriate almost 10 million Euro in profits back to their parent company since 2009 from the Luas operation.

One Luas driver explained "Transdev won't negotiate with their workers when the contract is up for tender, they delay, and drag their feet hoping you go away". They also put in a low tender bid which understates the labour costs or ignores any outstanding claims.

"Workers do not believe the company's supposed loss of €700,000 in 2014 as at the time they claimed it was just an accounting change in how they audited accounts and their costs didn't rise while revenues and passenger numbers increased. Their contract to run the Luas is secret but we suspect they receive large bonuses for meeting targets"

Their tactics in the Luas dispute echo their way of operating across the world.

Transdev's parent company Veolia profits directly from the illegal occupation of Palestine and had supplied transport and water services to illegal settlements.

It still has shares in Jerusalem's light-rail service, which provides exclusive Israeli-only transportation to the illegal West Bank settlements. "Veolia and its subsidiaries like Transdev — which is 50 percent owned by Veolia and 50 percent owned by a French financial institution — have a horrendous track record of violations to human rights, labour rights and the environment globally. Veolia is the largest privatiser of public water services in the world."

## Workers force Tesco climb down

Owen McCormack

A show of unity and the threat of pickets on all Tesco stores forced the company to delay its plans to slash the pay of long term staff. The company has also been forced to make more concessions such as a redundancy and once off compensation package.

However as we go to print, Tesco's threats still hang over the 1000 long term staff who they want to see suffer cuts of up to 35% in their earnings. Many workers would lose over €6,000 a year.

Tesco management were clearly caught off

guard by the wave of anger and solidarity from all grades of workers to their announcement that they would unilaterally cut the long term staffs wages down to same levels as workers who joined since 1996.

Tesco employs over 14,000 workers in its stores and it expected the 1,000 long term staff to be isolated. In fact while these staff voted by over 99% for strike action, both the Mandate and SIPTU unions was forced to ballot newer staff as well, as it became clear that there was huge support across the stores to strike in defense of the targeted staff.

If management went ahead with the cuts, it faced a total shutdown of all 149 stores.

## Incensed

Workers were incensed at the attack coming at the same time of Tesco's head office announcement of €162 million profits in the first three months of the year. Tesco Ireland has reported total revenue of €2.5 billion and growing sales. The Irish branch has traditionally been amongst the most profitable in its global empire, earning Ireland the nickname of "Treasure Ireland" from the



Tesco bosses in London.

While the solidarity of the Tesco workers has forced the bosses to back down for now, the dispute also holds a warning for trade unionists. The attempt to cut newer entrants pay and conditions has often been accepted by union officials as a way of avoiding a dispute.

Such moves can be used

later by bosses to try to divide the workforce. This is why the stance taken by Luas drivers and the campaigns in teaching and nursing unions for equal pay for new recruits are so important. The magnificent example of solidarity by Tesco workers shows it is possible to unite different grades and fight back



Minister Bruton launches Workplace Relations Commission

## WRC: THE MASK SLIPS

The controversy over Workplace Relation

Commission head, Kieran Mulvey's remarks on the Luas strike has shown the true nature of Ireland's supposed independent dispute arbitration system.

Mulvey attacked the Luas driver's rejection of Transdev's offer and called on SIPTU to accept the deal and show "leadership".

The deal was a con job that would have slashed the pay of new drivers, extended shifts and lengthened to 14 years the time needed to reach the top scale of pay.

SIPTU's Jack O'Connor was right to demand Mulvey resign over the comments.

Mulvey's attack on Luas drivers fed into the media campaign against the workers and didn't even look at the reasons why the deal was rejected.

But O'Connor and most of the trade union leadership will ignore the real problem, which isn't just Mulvey's comments but the whole structure and purpose of the WRC (and its predecessor the Labour Relations Commission and Labour Court).

Far from being an independent body that adjudicates in an impartial manner, the system is designed to police workers and impose restrictions on what workers can win.

The Labour Court and the LRC were used to insure that national pay deals under social partnership were strictly adhered to.

Even where company's and firms were making huge profits, their workers were limited to low percentage pay increases agreed nationally.

Similarly the court was used to police nurses and teachers unions when they attempted to win awards outside of the partnership process.

In individual cases, workers looking for justice in unfair dismissal cases or over non-payment or wages have always faced extreme delays in accessing the arbitration and appeals panels, often waiting over two years, with another lengthy wait for the employers inevitable appeal to any decision against them.

Workers then often find it next to impossible to actually get employers to abide by the rulings without taking further legal steps.

The entire system is weighted heavily in favour of employers.

The new Workplace Relations Commission replaces the old LRC and Labour court but despite claims by the Government, it will still result in lengthy delays and emphasize wage restraint and the need for workers to remain "competitive" and not jeopardise the "economic recovery". In other words to accept that profits come first.

The WRC is often used by full time officials and the union bureaucracy to stifle or delay workers' demands; both the Luas drivers claims, alongside bus and rail workers have been lodged for over 12 months awaiting a hearing at the commission!

The Government will claim that the makeup of the WRC strikes a balance between employers and employees.

In reality it is staffed by conservative full time officials like Shay Cody of IMPACT, and heads of employers' organisations and multinationals.

Its current chair is Paul Duffy, former head of Pfizer, a company that skilfully avoids paying tax on its profits. No doubt Duffy will use his new position as head of the WRC to lecture workers on the need for restraint while his multinational pals continue to escape their tax bills.

# #socialism 1.01

John Mobyneux

## Corruption and capitalism

For the last thirty or forty years it has been clear that professional sport is riddled with drug taking. From North American sprinters such as Ben Johnson, Carl Lewis, Florence Griffiths Joyner and Marion Jones to Chinese long distance runners, to the whole East German team in the 1980s to the Russian and Kenyan Athletics teams now.

Then there is cycling with Lance Armstrong and others or American baseball or swimming and so on.

Plus there are other forms of sporting corruption. For decades it was an open secret that the Mafia ran

body else on the inside, know that its more likely to happen if you grease the palms of those who will make the decision.

But sport as big business is just a microcosm of big business as a whole, i.e. of capitalism. Capitalism is based on competition to make profits and, at the top level, that competition is even fiercer and more ruthless and for far bigger rewards than Olympic competition. So capitalism, even more than sport, has always been riddled with corruption.

The economist, David McWilliams, thinking of Bertie Aherne, Charlie Haughey, the Galway

process then this is what will be done.

And if profit is what drives the system it will inevitably create a culture of greed and entitlement that makes the super-rich believe they are justified in accumulating millions and billions and not paying tax on it.

### Politicians

Also inevitable under capitalism is the widespread corruption of politicians and this has been going on for centuries. The English parliament in the 18th century was notorious for it – they called it ‘the Old Corruption’. The Act of Union between England and Ireland in



Sport with Sepp

American boxing and fixed fights. Recently there is evidence of match fixing in cricket.

And, of course, it goes all the way to the very top with the International Olympic Committee and bribery in the awarding of the Olympic Games and FIFA with Sepp Blatter giving the 2022 World Cup to Qatar.

Always the authorities issue statements that this will not be tolerated, that they are holding an enquiry and that there will be crackdown. Always the doping and and the corruption start up again.

### Competitive

The reason is simple. Modern sport has become big business. There are huge rewards and it is fiercely competitive. If you want to win an Olympic medal or the Tour de France you know you are up against people who may be doping so you take the drugs too. You need them to win.

And if you want the Olympics or the World Cup to come to your city because of the lucrative contracts involved you, and every

tent and the bankers, said that what we have in Ireland is not capitalism but ‘crony capitalism’. The implication was that somewhere in some other country there was a pure ‘un-corrupt’ capitalism. In fact capitalism is, always and everywhere, crony capitalism. That is how capitalism works and has always worked.

And again the reason is simple. Capitalism is a system driven by cutthroat competition between different companies – competition on the basis of who can make more profit.

Even if you are ExxonMobile (the biggest oil company) or Toyota (the biggest car company) you still face competition from BP and Shell and Volkswagen and General Motors. And if you are CEO of one of these companies and you lose out in this competitive battle you will lose your job. So there is an immense amount at stake.

And if bribing politicians or officials, or hiding wealth in offshore tax havens gives you an edge in this competitive

1801 was procured by large scale bribery.

Lloyd George was famous for his corruption of politicians by dispensing peerages. John F Kennedy’s father was linked to the mafia and bought his son’s election to the Presidency in 1960.

Margaret Thatcher enriched her family by using her son as an arms dealer. Tony Blair and Hilary Clinton have accumulated millions for giving ‘lectures’. Not to mention the shenanigans of Silvio Berlusconi or Haughey and Aherne.

Politicians earn a lot more than ordinary people but a lot LESS than top capitalists like Denis O’Brien so the capitalists will try to buy the politicians and often enough they will succeed.

And governments, like the sports authorities, issue statements, establish enquiries and tribunals and promise crackdowns.

But really nothing much is done and it all carries on.

For the fact is that capitalism produces corruption like an athlete produces sweat.

# The Panama Papers

Memet Uludag

Oxfam says 1% of population own half of world’s wealth. According to a report published in January 2016 by Oxfam International, the world’s 62 wealthiest individuals now own the same as the poorest half of the global population.

Global refugee numbers have doubled to 60 million over the past 15 years.

Nearly half of the world’s population — more than 3 billion people — live on less than \$2.50 a day.

More than 1.3 billion live in extreme poverty — less than \$1.25 a day.

According to UNICEF, more than 20,000 children die each day due to poverty.

More than 750 million people lack adequate access to clean drinking water. In Ireland our water is sold to us to finance the bank bailout program.

Big corporations, like Apple in Ireland use every trick in the book to resist paying back taxes for the billions of profits they make.

In Dublin, 292 families, including up to 600 children have become homeless in the first 3 months of 2016 alone.

Politicians continue to insist that there is no money for wages, pensions, benefits or public services.

### Evidence

In a world like that, what the Panama Papers have revealed is even more evidence of how the global elite, including corporations, banks and powerful politicians operate to protect their wealth at the expense of billions of people.

The Panama Papers show not a simple case of corruption by a small minority but a widespread and systematic operation by the global rich.

From Britain to South Africa, the files reveal the offshore holdings of 140 politicians and public officials from around the world.

More than 214,000 offshore entities appear in the leak, connected to people in more than 200 countries and territories. Major banks have driven the creation of hard-to-trace companies in offshore havens.

Panama off-shore accounts are not

## Panama Papers leaks: political connecti

Most of the alleged dealings are believed to be legal but political fall-out 140 political figures from more than 50 countries are implicated

**Icelandic Prime Minister Sigmundur David Gunnlaugsson**  
Used the offshore company owned with his wife to hide millions of dollars of investments

**Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif**  
3 of his children involved in offshore companies with properties in the UK

**British Prime Minister David Cameron**  
Father set up a firm in Panama that promoted itself as a tax evasion option

**Mossack Fonseca**  
Panama-based law firm where the 11.5 million leaked tax documents originated

**Ukrainian President Petro Porochenko**  
Holds a majority stake in an offshore comp

Source: KU

a result of lack regulation or laws but precisely because of how the capitalist system organises itself and enables the rich to operate.

For them, when it comes to shifting their wealth around the globe there are no borders.

They can seek refuge anywhere they like.

London-based campaign group, the Tax Justice Network, estimates that worldwide there is a total of \$21-\$32 trillion [that is \$21-\$32 thousand billion!] deposited in shell companies that have been set up in offshore tax havens like the British

Virgin Islands, Bermuda and Cayman Islands etc.

With every scandal or crisis the politicians speak of regulating the financial markets. But in practice, the states act as protectors of the super rich.

Before the banking crisis of 2008 in Ireland, how many ‘reform’ packages were implemented?

How many costly tribunals were held? What have these really changed?

British Chancellor George Osborne has described tax avoidance as ‘morally repugnant’ but over half of all the tax havens used by Mossack Fonseca are in

# Tyrrelstown tenants battle Vampire Squid

Michael Wallace

The threat to throw families out of their homes following a deal between a vulture fund and a pair of greedy developers exposes the most unacceptable face of capitalism.

Tenants of 208 houses in Cruise Park, Tyrrelstown residents are receiving eviction notices to quit their rented accommodation from Twinlite, a company owned by indebted developers Michael and Richard Larkin.

Ulster Bank sold the Larkins’ debts to Beltany Property Finance, a vulture fund controlled by Goldman Sachs, once infamously described as the Vampire Squid of international finance - by Rolling Stone Magazine - for its ability to suck value for itself out of deals.

The families are refusing to vacate their homes of more than 10 years, and have organised into the Tyrrelstown Tenants Action Group. They have marched to

the Dail to take on the Vampire Squid and its supporters there.

The tenants have received little sympathy from their former landlord, with Richard Larkin saying that “we are a business, not a charity.”

The Larkins are sole directors of Twinlite, the company that issued the eviction notices, and paid themselves €254,000 from it in 2014.

They are expecting to split the profits generated by the sale of the Tyrrelstown homes between themselves and Goldman Sachs’ vulture fund.

### Toxic

These global vultures have been attracted to Ireland by the prospect of making huge profits from buying ‘toxic’ or ‘distressed’ loans at knock-down prices and then selling them on when the market rises.

The number of vulture funds in Ireland has exploded in recent years, helped by Nama and

government policies.

Nama, the agency set up by Fianna Fáil (and continued by Fine Gael-Labour) to handle the bad debts of banks and developers, have sold 90% of their assets worth tens of billions to vulture funds at massive discount prices.

Over 47,000 residential homes are now owned by vulture funds and are in danger of facing a similar fate to the residents in Tyrrelstown.

The potential for a tsunami of evictions in the middle of a housing crisis is a real possibility.

While shedding crocodile tears for the residents of Tyrrelstown, the government rolled out the red carpet for these vultures in recent years by encouraging them to come to Ireland to get the property boom going again by offering generous tax breaks.

The Department of Finance met with funds such as Blackstone, Apollo Capital and Lone Star 65 times in two years

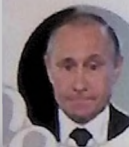
# How the rich rob us

S expected

Argentine President **Mauricio Macri**



Brother and father run offshore companies



Russian President **Vladimir Putin**

2 billionaire childhood friends of Putin own several offshore companies



Chinese President **Xi Jinping**

Brother-in-law has shares in 2 companies in the Virgin Islands

AFP

## The Panama Papers include:

- The President of Argentina;
- The former prime minister of Georgia;
- Iceland's prime minister;
- The ex-prime minister of Iraq;
- The former prime minister of Jordan;
- The former prime minister of Qatar;
- The former Emir of Qatar;
- The King of Saudi Arabia;
- The former president of Sudan;
- UAE President;
- Abu Dhabi emir;
- The former Ukraine prime minister;
- The President of Ukraine;
- Azerbaijan's first family;
- The brother-in-law of the Chinese President;
- The daughter of a former Chinese Premier;
- Childhood friends of Russian President Putin;
- A close friend of Russian President Vladimir Putin;
- Cousins of Syrian President Bashar Assad;
- The father of British prime minister;
- The son of former Egyptian President Mubarak;
- The personal secretary to the King of Morocco;
- Children of Pakistan's prime minister;
- The son of Ghana's former president;
- The son of Malaysia's prime minister;
- The "favorite contractor" of Mexico's president;
- The former king of Spain's sister;
- An associate of Cote d'Ivoire's former president;
- A nephew of the South African President;
- The widow of Lansana Conté;
- The former dictator and president of Guinea



## Goretti Horgan says

### Change is coming!

The conviction of a woman in Belfast for inducing an abortion using pills bought on the internet made abortion an election issue in the North for the first time.

While she got a suspended sentence, she now has a criminal conviction which will affect her ability to travel to America, or Australia and exclude her from some jobs.

Everyone, even the judge who sentenced her, said that she was on trial because she was poor. She had tried to save up the money to travel to England for a legal abortion, but she couldn't. So she did what hundreds of others do every year and ordered pills from the internet for a safe, but illegal, abortion at home.

The outcry over the prosecution and conviction was such that no politician has been able to say that they believe she should have been prosecuted. As the topic of abortion is raised at every hustings and every radio/TV debate, it's been wonderful to see politicians squirming as they try to keep to their anti-abortion stances while saying the law should not be enforced.

The DUP, SDLP and Sinn Féin

were legalised, before women had the vote. It says any woman causing her own abortion is liable to life imprisonment and anyone who procures any "poison or other noxious substance" for the purposes of abortion faces up to five years in prison.

Since March 2013, campaigners in the North have twice published open letters admitting to breaking the law. When the mother who got pills for her daughter was charged last June, the second open letter was published. Some 200 women and about 30 men admitted to having procured pills over the internet for someone, just as the mother had for her daughter. This act of solidarity was signed by 230 people; hundreds more wanted to sign but couldn't because of work or family.

The truth is that states can no longer control women's ability to end pregnancies safely. The pills obtained over the internet are the same as the ones used by the NHS for legal abortions. They are incredibly safe; safer even than penicillin. Statistically, five times more men have died from taking



Fighting for the right to choose

all describe themselves as anti-abortion, although SF thinks the law should allow abortion in cases where the woman is a victim: fatal foetal abnormalities and when the pregnancy is a result of rape. The UUP and Alliance have a free vote on the issue, but only People Before Profit and the Greens trust women and support a woman's right to choose.

While in the past only anti-abortionists raised the question of abortion on the doorsteps, now People Before Profit canvassers are congratulated on taking a strong stance on the issue.

Even people who are ambivalent on abortion say they trust PBP candidates because they are honest about their position, unlike the mainstream politicians.

The powers-that-be must regret the decision to prosecute women for getting abortion pills. As we go to press, another woman is set to appear in court just 6 days before the election.

She is a mother charged with obtaining the pills for her teenage daughter under the totally out-of-date law that governs abortion in the North.

The law dates back to 1861; the Offences Against the Person Act was passed while Queen Victoria was still young, before the light bulb was invented, before trade unions

Viagra than women have died taking abortion pills.

As long as they are obtained from one of the not-for-profit sites like WomenHelp.org, the pills bring on a miscarriage up to 9-10 weeks of pregnancy. Women manage early miscarriages themselves all the time, they are very common in the first few weeks. This is why happily pregnant people don't tell too many people until after 12 weeks.

While the Health Products Regulatory Authority seize all drugs, even vitamins, coming into the South (the websites have ways of getting around this), packages are not seized in the North.

So, it is hard to see how the state can stop women from taking control of their own lives by getting the pills over the internet and taking them in the privacy of their own homes.

It is even harder to see how they can justify prosecuting women when benefit caps mean that mothers will not get any benefits, not even child benefit, for a third or subsequent child.

The logjam keeping the North stuck in the 19th century in relation to abortion has been broken. Every time a woman is prosecuted, there will be more protests, more difficult questions for politicians who prefer turning a blind eye than to bringing in a law that deals with the realities of women's lives. Change is coming.

done nothing illegal. But avoiding tax payment is only 'legal' because governments have written the rules that way. These rules are necessary for the capitalist rich. That is the problem.

The Panama Papers confirm that the system of capitalism cannot be tamed or reformed.

Even the massive scale of the Panama leaks does not give the full picture.

Mossack Fonseca is just one company that is part of a massive industry helping the 1% to hide their fortunes from the tax man.

The Panama Papers are evidence of how

the powerful of the world are united in protecting their wealth. The only solution to this is to put the wealth under true democratic control of the working classes.

The capitalist system may pretend to give us political democracy where we have free elections etc. but what we need is a true economic democracy where the economy is run for the benefit of the ordinary working class people.

To achieve this we need to build a strong internationalist socialist alternative to this rotten system that kills children; creates wars, forces millions of people into poverty and creates refugees.

British-administered territories.

### Cameron

Prime Minister David Cameron is holding an international summit in May 2016 supposedly to tackle tax-evasion and corruption.

This is the same man whose family has been named in the Panama Papers but the British Parliamentary Commission for Standards refuses to explain the reason for the decision not to investigate his financial affairs.

Britain's David Cameron and the law firm Mossack Fonseca say that they have



Tyrrelstown tenants protest

with Michael Noonan personally attending eight of these meetings.

### Advised

There's also a strong connection between the Vampire Squid and the Irish establishment. Goldman Sachs 'advised' successive governments on restructuring the banks between 2008 and 2013 are 'advising' the Dept. of Finance on the sale of AIB and being well paid for it.

They also use Beltany Property Finance for tax evasion purposes. Despite buying €750 million in loans from IBRC, Ulster and Danske Bank and holding half a billion in financial assets at the end of 2014, its accounts show it made profits of '€1,000' and paid corporation tax of just €250.

We can stop these vultures. Emergency legislation must be brought in to give tenants security of tenure and allow families in distress to get a write-

down on their mortgages.

Nama have already given write-downs of €8.9 billion to bankrupt developers.

Right-wing politicians and their backers will resist this to protect the privileges of the rich.

The battle to guarantee the human right to a home ahead of the interests of profit will be decided on the streets as people organise to drive out the vultures.

The tenants of Tyrrelstown are showing the way.

# From Pearse and Connolly to Kenny and Burton

John Molyneux

It was, of course, right and proper that the Easter Rising should be commemorated. Unfortunately completely the wrong people were in charge of the commemorations.

The simple fact is that Pearse and Connolly and all the other Volunteers were rebels and revolutionaries.

They were rising not only against the British Empire, the most powerful empire in the world at the time, but also in defiance of all the Irish political establishment of the day – the likes of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party.

In contrast Enda Kenny and Joan Burton personify the contemporary Irish establishment.

All their attitudes, values and instincts are hostile to those who resist and protest. Just look at Burton's response to the people of Jobstown who sat down round her car.

And look also at their attitude to the world's top imperial power today i.e. the United States.

Not only do they fawn over the likes of Obama and Trump but they directly assist Americas numerous imperialist wars and interventions by allowing the US military to use Shannon.

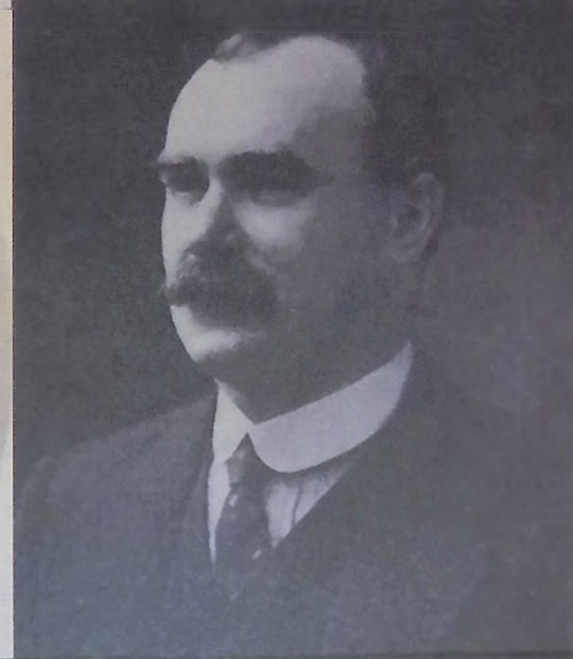
## Elitist

The immediate consequence of this was that the actual State Commemoration on Easter Sunday was elitist, exclusionary and very dull. First of all the ordinary public, apart from invited relatives, weren't allowed to be there – only big wigs.

Second, the whole of Dublin City Centre was subject to an unnecessary lock down far more effective at paralysing the City than



Patrick Pearse and James Connolly



the much derided Luas drivers' strike.

Third, not a single rebellious or dissenting voice was allowed to be heard in the whole thing, apart from a few coded hints from Michael D.

Fourth, the Parade, was an entirely military affair.

The truth is the Irish Defence Forces of today bear as much relation to the Volunteers and Citizen Army of 1916 as Putin's Russian Army with its tanks and nuclear missiles does to the Red Guards who stormed the Winter Palace in 1917 or the French Army that occupied Algeria or invaded Mali did to the citizens who stormed

the Bastille in 1789.

This points to a deeper issue. The emphasis on Irish Defence Forces was there to assert continuity between the Irish State of today – not just the individual politicians but the State structure as a whole – and the rebellion of 1916. This claim of continuity is a fraud.

## Counter-Revolution

The Irish State of today derives not from the 1916 Rising or from the revolutionary War of Independence with its general strikes, its mass boycotts of the British police stations and its numerous factory occupations and

workers' "soviets" – all of which together with the 100,000 strong IRA drove Britain out of the South.

It derives from the counter-revolution which followed with the victory of the pro-Treaty forces in the Civil War.

When Michael Collins launched an attack on anti-Treaty forces in the Four Courts he did so with heavy artillery supplied by the British and with the explicit backing of the British Government.

Winston Churchill, an arch imperialist, sent a telegram congratulating Collins on his successful capture of the Four Courts saying he had kept 'the title deeds of

Ireland safe'.

The present State structure, including the court system, the Garda and the undemocratic local administration was mainly established by Cumann na nGaedhal Minister of Justice, Kevin O'Higgins in conjunction with later fascist Blue-Shirt, Eoin O'Duffy.

From the start it was an apparatus designed to protect the interests of the rich against the working people.

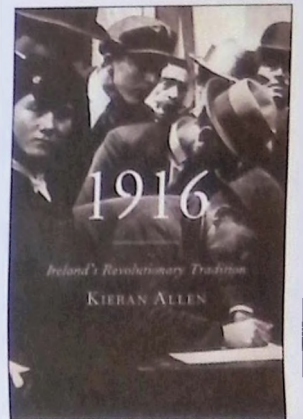
At the same time O'Higgins and co-established the absolute domination of the Catholic hierarchy in the political, social and cultural life of the country.

This also brought with it the deeply conservative repression of women's rights, the restriction of women to the home and the horrors of the Magdalen Laundries and such like. Again in complete contrast to the heroic women of 1916 who fought as equals alongside the men – with the particular support of James Connolly.

Enda Kenny and his colleagues are the direct heirs to this conservative counter-revolution.

This is why it has been important there have been grassroots citizen's initiatives to reclaim the real legacy of the Easter Rising from those who falsely claim it.

Realising the vision of the Proclamation of an Ireland that really 'cherishes all the children of the nation equally' remains unfinished business and will require a new revolt.



■ The themes in this article are explored much more fully in Kieran Allen's recently published book, *1916: Ireland's Revolutionary Tradition*, Pluto Press.

# Why do we have two Tory parties?

James O'Toole

Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael dragged out government formation negotiations for weeks. Yet both parties are identical in terms of policy and politics – they are both right wing, neo-liberal parties. Why won't they just unite?

Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael are both parties of the Irish elite, but have different historical origins. Fine Gael emerged from the counter-revolutionary Cumann NaGael government which attempted to put an end to the social flux of the Irish revolution.

The Irish ruling class split over which direction to take the newly emerging state. There were those who represented the Anglo Irish elite, the Church and the big farmers who wished for Ireland to remain an agricultural nation and hence sign the treaty with Britain. And those who represented small local businesses and the middle classes who wanted to break with Britain and use tariff walls to build up Irish industry.

It was this split in the newly forming Irish ruling class that led to the formation of two right wing parties.

De Valera led some of the more conservative elements of the anti-treaty movement into the formation of Fianna Fáil in



Michael Collins and Eamon De Valera



1926. When they first took their seats in the Dáil Fianna Fáil TDs had guns on their belts and the whiff on gunsmoke gave them a radical reputation.

The weakness of the Irish Labour Party meant that Fianna Fáil could pose as friends of the working class while serving the interests of Irish capitalism. Fianna Fáil first formed a government in March 1932 – the campaign saw De Valera rail

against 'British' banks.

The country was initially very poor and so the state treasury became a coveted source of initial investment for those setting up businesses. Fianna Fáil built up a cosy golden circle of state handouts and corruption becoming the 'A team' of Irish capitalism.

They maintained a working class base through the building of state enterprises, building

social housing and by wrapping themselves in the green flag. The political spectrum in Ireland was skewed with most workers voting Fianna Fáil, leaving the Labour Party on the margins of political life.

When Charles Haughey was inaugurated as Taoiseach a trade union band played 'A Nation Once Again'. The twisting of the political spectrum saw trade unionists celebrating the

election of a Tory politician. Haughey ranted about Fine Gael's 'monetarism' yet once in power proceeded to implement the exact same policies.

Fianna Fáil presented themselves as a 'national movement' which successfully wed the Irish working class to the interests of the Irish elite for several decades. This left Fine Gael as the 'B team' of Irish capitalism. The opposition between two right wing parties meant that political debate never strayed into radical territory.

In periods where anger accumulated towards Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael could step up to the plate and, with the assistance of the Labour Party, govern temporarily in a manner that was safe for the elite. As Ireland industrialised the historical distinction between both parties blurred as they merged with the same wealthy donors.

Fianna Fáil remained the preferred choice for the ruling class because of their support amongst workers. Fine Gael's base was amongst members of the D4 elite and the wealthy farmers but they never won over large sections of workers, necessitating deals with Labour when in government.

Since the 2007/2008 crisis the purchase of the right wing parties amongst workers has been diminishing. They have

gone from 80% of all votes in the 1980s to 50% of all votes in the last election. Fianna Fáil had their worst election result ever in 2011, in what we described as a 'riot at the ballot box'.

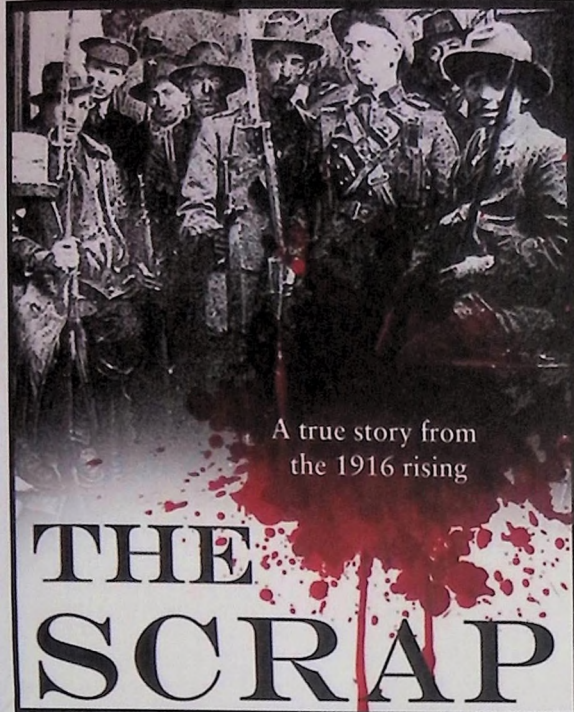
The ruling class would like to see a strong right wing government but the key activists in Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael realise it would give the game away. Fianna Fáil would rather stay out of a Fine Gael government, supporting them from opposition and prepared to bring them down to gain credibility.

Fianna Fáil may be down but they are not out. They are seriously trying to rebuild their working class base and have even sent representatives to meetings with striking workers. These snakes would say anything to chain the working class to an elite project.

It's up to us to build a serious left that doesn't bow to the parties of the establishment the way Labour have always done. We also have to remind workers that there is a difference between the rhetoric of a party and what they will do when in power.

Fianna Fáil began with guns on holsters and then used the aura of radicalism to attack workers. There are Stormont politicians who are every bit as adept at that two faced approach to politics.

# A CRACKIN' READ



Gene Kerrigan, *The Scrap*: a true story from the 1916 Rising, reviewed by Mary Smith.

**T**he *Scrap*, by Gene Kerrigan is, among other things, a crackin' read. Kerrigan's journalistic style is great anyway, but here he's used it to make history read like an adventure novel.

But of course it's more than that. The enormous respect and affection he rightly holds for those 'ordinary' people, who did extraordinary things that Easter week, shine through, and he tells their stories in ways that will make you laugh and cry and ultimately feel hugely proud of what those rebels did.

And what they did was extraordinary by any measure, 1500 or so of them, challenging the world's number one super-power, the British Empire.

Badly equipped, poorly armed, and bedevilled by confusion and betrayal, their insurrection held out for a week, and it took 20,000 of the best trained and equipped soldiers in the world, to subdue them.

Kerrigan's main source is the wonderful Bureau of Military History (BMH) archive, which

can be accessed free online (<http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie>). The BMH took statements from as many participants as they could in the 1940s and 50s, from those involved in the struggle for Irish freedom between 1913 and 1923. Public access to these rich testimonies was not available until 2003, but since then, has been a rich source of information for historians and others.

## F Company

Kerrigan chose at random, F Company, 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion, Dublin brigade of the IRA, and using first-hand evidence, mostly from the BMH, tells the story of the unfolding rebellion through the experiences of the men and women of F Company, and those with whom they came in contact.

Some amazing stories about the leaders in 1916 also emerge, stories that fly in the face of a common narrative of hardened zealots with little but victory or blood sacrifice in mind.

Take for instance the humanity of Sean Mac Dermott. On day one of the rebellion when MacDermott, Tom Clarke and other Volunteers were on their way to occupy the

GPO, they came upon detective Hoey, who had form in surveillance of nationalists for the Crown. One of the Volunteers suggested shooting Hoey. MacDermott would have none of it – shooting a man in cold blood like that!

A couple of weeks later, after the surrender, MacDermott, unrecognised hitherto as one of the leaders, was being marched along with other Volunteers to the docks, to board the boat for internment camps in the UK. Detective Hoey watched the column of marching men: "Sorry Sean, but you can't get away that easy", he said, as he recognised MacDermott. Days later, the firing squad did to MacDermott what he would not allow be done to Hoey.

As great a read as this book is, there are aspects of it with which I would disagree. Dealing with the aftermath Kerrigan says: "*Under Michael Collins, the reorganised IRA, successor to the Volunteers, waged a ruthless guerilla war of independence. This brought the British to the negotiating table in 1921.*"

This common interpretation of events leaves out the importance of workers' actions, not military might, in making the country

ungovernable.

## Workers

The years that directly followed the Rising from 1917-21 saw workers' action paralyse transport systems, saw over 1000 strikes and occupations, many of these declaring themselves 'soviets' (after the actions of the workers in the Russian Revolution of 1917); saw the land of big ranchers seized by those who worked it, saw a flowering of popular democracy (and women's role in it) that shunned the British state, and left it unable to govern in the way it wanted.

Tragically, a military strategy to get 'Brits Out' was pursued, rather than a strategy based on worker militancy and 'People Power', and the 'carnival of reaction' predicted by Connolly, became a reality. An understanding of how and why this happened is a crucial part of the 1916 story, and has real relevance to the present day struggle for a better society through-out Ireland.

And so I would encourage, alongside Kerrigan's wonderful book, reading Kieran Allen's 1916 – *Ireland's Revolutionary Tradition*, for a clear account and, crucially, a Marxist analysis of the birth of Irish 'freedom'.

## 1872-2016: 144 Years of the Housing Crisis

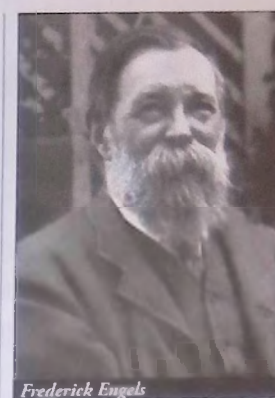
In the latest in our series on socialist classics James Grannell reviews Frederick Engels: *The Housing Question*, (1872)

"It is perfectly clear that the existing state is neither able nor willing to do anything to remedy the housing difficulty. The state is nothing but the organized collective power of the possessing classes, the landowners and the capitalists as against the exploited classes, the peasants and the workers. What the individual capitalists (and it is here only a question of these because in this matter the landowner who is also concerned acts primarily as a capitalist) do not want, their state also does not want."

So says Engels, in his pamphlet *The Housing Question*, which was originally written as a series of articles in response to the French anarchist Pierre-Joseph Proudhon who had called for the outlawing of private landlordism and turning tenant's rents into purchase payments for their dwellings among other measures.

Engels argued that there was no such thing as a housing crisis in itself, rather, the crisis was within capitalism. The housing crisis itself was an evil caused by the exploitation of workers by capital. The capitalist economic system, which is one and the same as the political system under capitalism, would constantly generate housing crises due to its very nature. This fact makes it apparent that the only way to finally solve the problem of housing is the overthrow of capitalism and the abolition of private property.

Since the economic crash there has been an exponential rise in homelessness and precarious housing conditions in Ireland. Focus Ireland estimate that there are up to 5,000



Frederick Engels

homeless people in Ireland at any one time, and in 2013 they worked with over 10,000 people, providing support for families and individuals who were either homeless or at risk of become homeless. On top of this very immediate crisis, figures released by the Central Bank this year show that there are over 117,000 mortgages in arrears across Ireland.

These and many other deplorable incidents, such as the deaths of a number of "rough sleepers" in Dublin, have spurred the political establishment into the type of action they love – the creation of an Oireachtas Committee on Housing and Homelessness. This Committee will, no doubt, thrash out and rehearse the same arguments that were made during nineteenth century debates on what to do about the housing question. Their solutions will also fail in the long run, because they (the capitalist government) are attempting to treat the housing question alone, without admitting the true cause of this evil.

At the same time those who are hard-pressed to pay their mortgages and those who have been made homeless are the subject to the most revolting moralism from the press and politicians. In December 2015, Senator David Norris said that poor (those on social welfare) people shouldn't be allowed to buy drink.

This is part of the age-old moralism that the poor are poor because they squander their money on frivolous things like alcohol and cigarettes. Yet Engels pointed out that the rich drink just as much in their clubs, and who can deny that the rich squander immense amounts of money on all manner of frivolity?

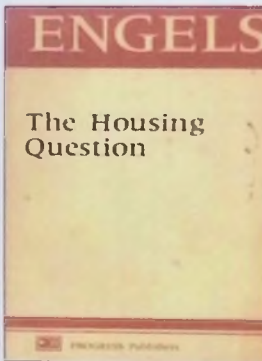
Today's rich are the same as the Victorian do-gooders who only doled out their scraps of charity to the "deserving poor" leaving the "undeserving poor" to starve in the ditches. Our enemy is the same now as it was then, and their tactics are just as insidious.

This housing crisis is nothing new and it will continue as long as capitalism continues. This is Engels' main argument.

While parts of the pamphlet may seem remote to the modern reader who will probably be unfamiliar with the individuals Engels was arguing against; the core of Engels' argument is as true today as it was when he wrote it in the nineteenth century.

The crisis is capitalism. Capitalism leaves people to die in the streets. Capitalism forces people out of their homes. Capitalism leads to extraordinary rises in rent, and tenants having to search further afield for accommodation that is often substandard.

Therefore, if we are serious about solving the housing question there is one clear solution – the abolition of capitalism. We must fight for housing, yes, but our struggle must also be a broader one. We have a world to win.



## Spoken Words of Revolution

Eoghan Connaughton

"No revolutionary movement is complete without its poetic expression", wrote James Connolly in 1907. Those words resonate now as they did then for it is through creative expression that ideals can be brought to life.

The spoken word is a poetic expression of great power and beauty. Within the minds of those who dare to dream lies a wealth of inspiration for change, genius and revolution.

Far beyond what you would imagine a poetry night to be having completed the English leaving certificate; the experience is an enjoyable journey into the unknown and leaves you hungry for more. Words crafted beautifully without any pretentious pattern around the whims and wit of minds that resonate with our colourful lyrical heritage.

Within this atmosphere a stage or a corner (or a table for that matter) becomes an open canvas for a catalogue of ideas and a myriad of rhythms. Dublin is brimming with spoken word

poetry nights, if you know where to find them and most are free. Requiring only an open mind and perhaps a tolerance for obscenity; these two at hand create a joyous playground of possibilities.

## Freedom

This space of freedom allows for lyrical expression which will always surprise and may leave you feeling that this unlikely young man or woman in the corner opening her mind up through her Dublin dialect, truly is a genius.

My first experience with spoken word began in November 2014, in the small and humble basement of the International Bar.

The Monday Night Echo was renowned; of course this was beyond my appreciation at the time but I quickly discovered that this small space was ideal for such a venture. It didn't take long to be taken aback, not so much by the variety of styles as by the canvas of iridescent expression.

In the basement of the International Bar on the Wicklow Street one can still sample the best of what the city has to offer on Mondays nights at Circle Sessions



International Bar on Wicklow Street in Dublin

which kick off at 8pm. The venue has seen playwrights, artists, political figures and even has a mention in James Joyce's *Ulysses*. Frankly I know no better place for a cocktail of spoken word, storytelling, performance and music which is sure to give you a taste for curiosity, leaving you wondering what else is to be had.

There are no mealy-mouthed mumbblings and few modest

thoughts within the crucible of Dublin's spoken word culture where a high standard has been set. Limited only by those who set a limit and unbeknownst to them, that limit is destined to be defied – the only factors are time and place.

Words are powerful instruments; they are the bridges for sharing ideas and the fertiliser for the manifestation of movements. In a world so rampant

of the ridiculous and an Ireland on the cusp of the perpetual unknown there are plenty of words that can be said and those that are being said are churning hearts and minds from the pubs and cafes of the capital.

Plunge into this culture and find yourself soaked in colour and inspiration. These molotov mouths will ignite a fire in your heart and may have you spitting fire too.

# Socialist Worker

## Northern Ireland: The point of change

James Connolly famously predicted that the partition of Ireland would bring about 'a carnival of reaction' both North and South. He was proved absolutely right.

In the South the victory of the pro-Treaty, and in effect pro-partition, forces meant the defeat of the Irish Revolution that had developed after the 1916 Rising. It meant the rolling back of the general strikes, workplace occupations and 'soviets' (people's councils) that emerged in the struggle to throw out British rule.

It led to the consolidation of a very conservative, pro-capitalist, church dominated 'Free State' regime characterised by poverty, joblessness, sexual repression and the virtual exclusion of women from public life.

In the North it brought the establishment of a loathsome sectarian state based on gerry mandering, discrimination and police brutality and also characterised by poverty, joblessness, sexual repression and the exclusion of women.

In the South this was done in the name of rightwing Catholic nationalism; in the North in the name of Protestant loyalism. In both jurisdictions working people of all religions and none were the losers.

Now, 100 years on, we are beginning to see the emergence both North and South of a real radical alternative – a socialist alternative.

What has made the difference is the economic crash of 2008 and the subsequent imposition of austerity, North and South, to make working people pay for the crisis. This in turn led to resistance to that austerity – North and South.

In the South this has produced the decline of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the huge water charges mass movement and the arrival of the radical left with the election of six AAA-PBP TDs and a number of other serious left wingers.

In the North it has led to the rise of People Before Profit as a significant political force, and the election of Gerry Carroll as a councillor.

Now in the coming Assembly elections on 5 May People Before Profit are mounting a serious challenge to



Clockwise from top: PBP TDs Gino Kenny, Brid Smith, and Richard Boyd Barrett with Gerry Carroll in Belfast; PBP candidate in North Belfast, Fiona Ferguson; Eamonn McCann with supporters Dermie McClenaghan and Bernadette McAliskey at Free Derry wall.

the Stormont austerity imposed by the DUP and Sinn Fein alike.

PBP are running three very strong candidates: Cllr Gerry Carroll in West Belfast, Fiona Ferguson in North

Belfast and Eamonn McCann in Foyle. All of them are campaigning for a different kind of politics – a politics of grassroots activism and people power.

A victory for even one – never

mind two or three – of these candidates would be a political earthquake in the Northern State. It would have the potential to start to unblock the sectarian log jam that has paralysed

Northern politics for so long.

The significance of this moment is starting to be widely recognised. One symptom of this is that legendary political fighter, Bernadette McAliskey has come on board as Director of Elections for Eamonn McCann. Another is the messages of support from actor, Stephen Rea, and singer, Christy Moore.

Even the media are beginning to be aware with Gerry Adams being asked if he was feeling the pressure from People Before Profit.

And on Saturday 23 April a coach load of People Before Profit activists, including the three PBP TDs – Richard Boyd Barrett, Brid Smith and Gino Kenny – and a number of PBP councillors came up to Belfast to canvass for Gerry Carroll and Fiona Ferguson.

Another factor in the situation is that both North and South there have been underlying social changes that have weakened the religious conservatism and bigotry that helped to sustain the old order of things.

This was most clearly seen in the South in the massive victory for the Yes side in the Marriage Equality Referendum last year. But that was only the culmination of a developing change which has also transformed the North.

Both North and South a new generation has emerged alienated from and fed up with the old, sectarian or civil war politics and looking for a better alternative; an alternative in which women have the right to control their own bodies and LGBT people have full equality; an alternative where racism is not welcome but refugees are.

And an alternative where Ireland North and South stands in solidarity with Palestine not Israel and US imperialism. It is no accident that Gerry Carroll, Eamonn McCann, Richard Boyd Barrett and Gino Kenny have all made a major impact campaigning for Palestine.

Both North and South the politics of socialism and people power can provide that alternative.

This makes the Assembly elections on 5 May a hugely important turning point. On May 5 make the change: vote People Before Profit!

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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.

### Join the Socialists

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

