Socialist Voice

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"If we see that Germany is winning we ought to help Russia, and if Russia is winning we ought to help Germany, and that way let them kill as many as possible."—Senator (later President) Harry Truman (New York Times, 24 June 1941).

The world is at a crossroads. We can change the system, or the system will change our climate catastrophically. The World Meteorological Organisation has shown that global warming is increasing in pace—along with the growth in capitalism—despite measures being taken to stop it. **Jimmy Doran** reports

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Climate change or system change?

AS A RESULT Of the damage capitalism has done to our environment a huge environmental debt is owed to nature. If we are to survive, it has to be repaid, as we are fast approaching the point of no return.

If we compare the carbon dioxide emissions of a capitalist country with the poorest areas on earth we see, for example, that the population of Ireland put the same amount into the atmosphere every year as the poorest 400 million people in the world. This is replicated throughout the capitalist world.

The "developed" world is developed at the expense of the people and resources of the global south. The countries of the global south are not intrinsically poor: they have many natural resources. Imperialism keeps them poor by exploiting their workers, plundering their resources—in the past through colonisation, today by foreign direct investment and labour arbitrage; and if they don't toe the line and act in the interest of imperialism "democracy" will be brought to them through war and regime change, followed by the inevitable reconstruction "loans," investments, and debt.

Imperialism has murdered millions of people and kept millions of others in abject poverty. Now, through its insatiable greed, it threatens the very existence of the whole of humanity and the planet we live on.

Capitalism can only prosper at someone else's expense; otherwise it ceases to exist. It will not be part of the solution. Already the solutions coming from capital are in their interests: "new technology" and "green growth," or, put another way, new methods of creating more profits and new income streams from the commodification of the climate catastrophe.

Everything is a commodity to capitalism: death, debt, war, disaster, poverty, and—yes—climate change: all are ways of increasing income and making more profit.

The other suggestion is a carbon tax, to be added on top of the price they leverage from us on other resources they exploit while they—the exploiters, the source of the catastrophe—pay little or nothing in tax. They have all the power, as they control political decisions by subsidising politicians, political parties, and elections. Governments act in the interest of the capitalist class, who own the economy and control the provision of employment.

Political statement
Communist Party of Ireland

September 2019

The National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland at its regular meeting in late September discussed and evaluated both the national and the international situation.

There are growing signs of a deepening global economic slowdown. The system may be facing into a new recession, with a combination of the slowdown in manufacturing and a growing level of personal, state and corporate debt.

Workers need to learn from the last global crisis, which resulted in a massive attack on their living standards and savage cuts in public and social spending—a sly and underhand way of making workers pay for the crisis of the system. If the workers' movement does not prepare to defend itself, then workers will face further attacks and once again will pay a heavy price in job losses and cuts in wages and living standards.

The government of the United States, working on behalf of American monopoly capitalism, continues in its policy of shoring up US global economic hegemony. This has resulted in its increased use of tariffs and in trade wars and sanctions against a growing number of states that it sees as a threat to its global hegemony.

The imperialists' use of war and threats of war against a growing number of states has the potential to spiral out of control with the constant exacerbation of tension across the globe, resulting in another potential massive loss of life. The party notes the continuing war by the imperialist proxy state of Saudi Arabia in Yemen, and the continued violence and repression inflicted on the Palestinian people by Israel.

The party calls for the stepping up of solidarity by the Irish labour movement and other progressive forces with socialist Cuba and the people of Venezuela, who continue to be in the front line, facing a continuous blockade and the imposition of new sanctions by the United States, its allies, and its client states.

We welcome the mass strike by tens of thousands of students and workers around the country and the millions across the globe over the growing environmental crisis. It is also clear that all the ideological tools of imperialism are now being employed to shape and determine the outcome of these mobilisations and to prevent them becoming a force against the true cause of the environmental crisis: the capitalist system itself.

Under pressure, the political establishment is pretending to take the situation seriously, announcing half measures with long time scales that do not meet the urgency that is needed. They wish to peddle the illusion and the lie that there is some new "green capitalism" that can save our planet. This is a ruse to divert the people's attention away from challenging the system itself.

While we welcome the mass mobilisation as a necessary first step, the workers' movement needs to take the lead and bring its anti-capitalist understanding into the heart of the debate. What needs to be done is to bring a class understanding of the system and the economic forces involved to these new, emerging young activists.

Capitalism can only prosper at someone else's expense; otherwise it ceases to exist. It will not be part of the solution.

As usual, capitalism seeks to take advantage of crisis, as there is no crisis that capitalism cannot solve so long as the working class are willing to pay for it. This repugnant system, as it enters its final stage, refuses to face reality in its solutions.

Sometimes it is necessary to stare into the abyss for people to wake up to the real danger—the source, the cause—not merely the symptom of the problem. When faced with eviction, poverty pay or discrimination one realises that it is not the religion, nationality or sexual preference of an employer, landlord or government that is the cause of the problem: it is their ethos and the way they treat you, the relationship you have with them. Under capitalism, all these relationships are exploitative. They operate for the maximum benefit of the capitalist class. One class dominates the other. They do not care what damage is done to achieve the maximum profit.

The results of this can be seen everywhere: in housing, precarious employment, inequality, and poverty. This time the working class will not pay for another crisis of capitalism. The solutions they propose only offer a route to more chaos.

If the planet is to survive and thrive for everyone, the economy must be taken into democratic ownership and control, out of private hands. Only a planned economy, democratically owned and controlled in the interest of the common good, can stop this catastrophic change that capitalism is causing.

This is going to take maximum effort, as they will not give up their privileged position easily.

It's great to see young people mobilising against the climate emergency, getting out on the streets, demanding change. They will discover class politics and realise that millions of people marching against the interests of capital will not result in change unless we change the very system itself. They need only look back at the millions around the world who marched against the invasion of Iraq to realise that there is no such thing as people power in a bourgeois democracy. As Connolly pointed out, "governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class."

Socialism, on the other hand, operates in the interest of the common good. Everything that is done is for the maximum benefit of society as a whole. It is the only way to stop the pending disaster. We need to work for each other so that we can all share what we create within the confines of nature and build a society in which no-one is hungry, where everyone is treated with dignity, where the planet can flourish along with society, and where war will be confined to history, along with poverty, and no-one is left behind.

It's socialism or extinction. ★

There can be no lasting or permanent solution to this growing environmental crisis within the system that has created it: monopoly capitalism. While individual changes in life style play a role, they are ultimately not, and cannot be, the solution. It is only through a fundamental, radical economic transformation to socialist planning and the rational use of the limited global resources that we can begin to slow up and reverse the impending catastrophe.

We need to target institutions, corporations and states that are guilty of preventing or weakening the urgent measures that are needed to confront climate change.

Brexit continues to cause division and uncertainty both within the ruling class in the British state and throughout the EU as well as causing consternation within the Irish ruling class and their subservience to the interests of the EU and global capital, whose interests they serve. This subservient role is in their own class interests, driving them to pursue those class interests, as do all comprador ruling classes.

The CPI again reiterates its opposition to any physical EU or British state border across our country. Ireland's border with Britain should be down the Irish Sea, giving expression to a united, sovereign state outside the European Union.

The British political establishment, both Conservative and Labour, continues to fracture in its efforts to respond to the crisis created by the decision to leave the EU. It continues to struggle to protect and secure the interests of the ruling class.

Unionism is also experiencing tensions and contradictions from its attempts to grapple with economic pressures now building, brought about by the need to sustain the all-Ireland economic market. The Irish labour movement must respect the decision of the peoples within the British state to leave, and we must act in solidarity with them.

This poses challenges to communists and other progressive forces concerning how we advance our national-democratic demand. In the event of a border poll the CPI will support the unification of the country and will advocate a new and democratic constitution. We will continue to advocate and struggle for an advance towards a socialist, workers' republic.

The CPI expresses its solidarity with all workers now engaged in struggle to advance their interests and to protect their jobs, including the shipyard workers, school secretaries, and Tesco workers.

The CPI calls for a maximum turn-out for the March for Choice on the 28th of September in Dublin and stresses the need to build upon the successes this movement has garnered throughout the country.

It again reiterates its solidarity and support for the Freedom Walk by the two American peace activists from the organisation Veterans for Peace who have been prevented from returning home through the confiscation of their passports by the Irish state. This happened after they were arrested, charged and imprisoned for taking part in a peaceful protest against the use of Shannon Airport by the US war machine.

We do not doubt that their treatment by the Irish government is in conjunction and collusion with the Trump regime. This is an outrage and in clear opposition to the long-held policy of neutrality supported by the people of Ireland. ★

Building the mass movement

Tommy McKearney

HAVE YOU ever wondered why the Fine Gael government, supported by its Fianna Fáil bedfellows, decided to publish the budget a few short days before it was expected that Britain would leave the European Union?

Let's face it, who in Dublin could have anticipated the mess Boris Johnson created for himself?

If, as we were constantly being told, Brexit would have a profound impact on the Irish economy, why not wait until after 31 October and take those important decisions in the light of concrete facts? Surely a few weeks couldn't make a huge difference if the outcome were to be neutral as regards the budget. Alternatively, if adjustments were required, applying specific measures to specific needs would appear to be the obvious course of action.

Instead of waiting for clarification, what we heard from Leinster House was a mixture of caution and coercion, with the minister for finance, Paschal Donohoe, blethering on about financial prudence while the minister for employment affairs and social protection, Regina Doherty, threatens to launch a full-scale investigation into 750,000 recipients of social welfare payments.

While there was no indication of any intention to increase—or, in some cases, hardly even to impose—corporation tax, apparently there is to be no letting up on austerity for the less well off. This, believe it or not, is at odds with the current thinking of the EU Central Bank.

Over the past decade, Western market economies defied the old Keynesian logic of counter-cyclical spending to avert recession. When neo-liberal certainties crumbled after the economic crash of 2008, governments in the United States and Europe employed a combination of monetary measures, to provide bankers with cheap money, and the imposing of harsh "austerity" policies on working-class communities.

Now, however, as another recession looms ever closer, these governments will be forced to search for different options. In reality there is little left to squeeze from working people; and interest rates can hardly fall further. Therefore some of the more hard-line neo-liberal finance ministries in the EU have indicated a different approach in response to a call from the ECB to alter their fiscal regulations. The Dutch, in particular, have promised a more expansionary package, relaxing spending curbs and planning infrastructural investment. Clearly this will only be a temporary interruption to the EU's default neo-liberal position, but it is significant nevertheless.

So what of the Republic? Having obediently adhered to the orthodoxy as dictated by Brussels since 2010, it would appear strange, on the surface at least, that the Dublin government is not now following suit. We might well ask why. After all, there is no shortage of essential projects crying out for investment: a major house-building scheme to address the shocking homelessness and rack-renting scandal; a health package to end the obscenity of over a million citizens on waiting-lists.[1] Then there is rural broadband. Or what about financing the research and development of renewable energy sources? These are just a few of the many areas in need of investment.

Contrary to the tired old mantra that

we have no money to spare, there are funds aplenty if the will to use them exists. Take, for example, the building of public housing. Borrowing for the state has never been cheaper, with interest almost at nil, and these projects obviously become self-financing as rent is collected. Such areas as broadband internet and renewable energy are actually income-generators. And that is before any responsible government would make transnationals pay their due share for access to the national infrastructure.

There is a simple answer, of course. The Government and its cabal of privileged and wealthy backers are wedded to whatever policies help maintain the status quo and thereby ensure that the ruling elite continues to hold power. As James Connolly wrote, "governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class."[2]

At the present time neo-liberal capitalism suits the parasitic Irish ruling elite best. They fear that conceding that the state can and should invest in the people rather than serve the elite would encourage working people to demand a radical redistribution of wealth in favour of the less well off. Let's call this what it is: it's the rich and powerful fighting a ruthless class struggle; and at the moment they are winning.

As always, the challenge for working people is how best to engage successfully and ultimately emerge victorious in this struggle. The superficial answer is to elect a left-wing government, then sit back and applaud as it builds a workers' state. Reality, unfortunately, is somewhat more complex; because even with a left-of-centre government in office, capitalism will not easily yield its privilege.

Real, meaningful transformation only comes from the grass roots acting as part of a mass movement of the people. This is not to dismiss parliamentary participation but to recognise its limitations. The task, therefore, is to build a movement fit for purpose, a movement that encompasses working people organised through trade unions, community groups, and those engaged in progressive struggle, all acting in concert to transform society and not just pursue single-issue campaigns.

Ideally such a movement would come together spontaneously and sweep all before it. In the real world, however, it requires hard work and determined organisation, coupled with a clear but flexible strategy.

The germ of such a strategy became visible in January this year when the Peadar O'Donnell Socialist Republican Forum organised a celebration of the first Dáil Éireann and simultaneously launched its Democratic Programme for the 21st Century. A central theme of the event was a resolution to convene local assemblies or, colloquially, People's Dálaí.

To this end the Forum organised a local assembly last month in Coalisland, Co. Tyrone. The event included presentations by groups campaigning on such issues as social welfare cut-backs, fracking in Co. Fermanagh, gold-mining in the Sperrin Mountains, and petroleum exploration along the Lough Neagh basin.[3]

Although a first step, this was a significant occasion that demonstrated a welcome amount of common purpose. More important still, it proved that it is possible to build a network of progressive activists throughout Ireland, a network able to build the mass movement capable of breaking the political stasis that allows capital to flourish while working people pay the price.

Based on that event, it is obvious that we have the means and the method to transform society. What remains is to implement the strategy. Otherwise Donohoe and Doherty—and their Northern class peers—will continue to play the austerity symphony while workers play second fiddle. ★

1 Martin Wall, "More than one million people on hospital waiting lists, say consultants," *Irish Times*, 21 September 2019.
2 *Irish Worker*, 29 August 1915. See also Marx, writing in the Civil War in France: ". . . the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purposes."
3 A full report of the event will be published in the next issue of *Socialist Voice.*

PUBLIC MEETING

Trade unions, feminist economics, and the politics of social reproduction

Saturday 19 October
11 a.m.

Connect offices,
6 Gardiner Row,
Dublin

Dr Connor McCabe
(economist, author
of *Sins of the Father*)

Organised by the
Trade Union Left
Forum

The gift that keeps on giving

PROPERTY

Dan Taraghan

CLERY'S DEPARTMENT store in Dublin closed in June 2015 with the loss of 130 jobs and about 300 operators of franchises. The background is as follows.

Gordon Brothers had bought the store in 2012, when it had bank debt of €20 million. They got a write-down on the debt to €12 million. The company was also restructured into two companies: Propco (the property-owning company) and Opco (the operating company). Natrium bought the companies at 2:30 a.m. on 12 June for €29 million. Gordon Brothers are believed to have made a profit of €6½ million. The operating company was sold to an insolvency specialist, who petitioned the High Court to appoint liquidators. The store was closed by 6 p.m.

At the time *Socialist Voice* pointed out that the real asst was the store itself. By separating Clery's into two entities it was possible to crystallise the losses into the operating company, and that left the property company unencumbered by debt.

Needless to say, neither the workers nor the franchisees were too happy with the situation. Given the iconic status of Clery's, the Government was shocked by the speed and the callous nature of the closure. Clery's had a status as part of the heritage of the country, in the main street of the capital city; and there was a perception that the workers and the franchisees had been treated badly.

The Government was forced to act. It attempted to bring charges against Deirdre Foley of Natrium Consortium and OCS Operations Ltd. This failed, but the Justice for Clery's Workers campaign kept up a demand for justice.

Eventually in 2017 a confidential deal was made through SIPTU, with the workers receiving a "goodwill payment." Before this deal the workers had received the statutory redundancy payments. This has cost the state about €2½ million. There also seems to be a commitment about jobs when the new entity is developed. However, a different company will be involved, so how that will operate is debatable.

A deal was also made with the franchise-owners on the basis that they would not sue. The franchise-owners are companies such as Best Menswear, Ecco, Barbour, and various catering operations. The franchisers were owed

Purpose-built for the rich

STUDENT HOUSING

Michelle Byrne

ON THE NIGHT of the census in 2016 there were 429 homeless students in Ireland, making up over 8 per cent of the total homeless numbers. When the Government's student accommodation strategy was launched in July 2017 there was an excess demand in purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) of over 23,000 beds. This is expected to increase to almost 26,000 this year.

This means we are still 16,000 beds short, even if all PBSA that is projected is successfully completed. The Government has failed to meaningfully provide for these huge gaps, despite knowing of the shortages for years.

Casting an eye through Dublin inner city today, you would be forgiven for thinking that student accommodation is being built everywhere—surely to meet the need? However, there has been a 2 per cent increase in student numbers every year for the past decade, and this is expected to continue for the next decade. The Government has not built enough student accommodation to cover this increase, never mind addressing the shortage that now exists. This in effect is a housing system buckling under the pressure but also, in a very real way for students, becoming a significant barrier in access to education itself.

The context for students and their families is that €12,495 is the estimated cost of living per annum while studying in third level, including fees of €3,000, which are the second-highest fees in Europe—the highest in the EU after Brexit. Grant rates were cut massively in the 2012 budget, and they have not been restored, while accommodation costs have soared.

Much of the new student accommodation is being built as purpose-built student accommodation by Irish and global property investors, but the rents being charged are regularly unaffordable by the average student, with 90 per cent of it costing in excess of €800 per month. It is targeted predominantly at international fee-paying students, who are generally paying much higher fees, and thus attractive for underfunded higher education institutions.

The Government is pursuing an internalisation agenda to bring more international fee-paying students in to

Marx pointed out: "The owner of money who wants to valorize this as interest-bearing capital parts with it to someone else, puts it into circulation, makes it into a commodity as capital."

€1.4 million, of which they were paid €650,000 after the closure from the funds of OCS Operations.

Gordon Brothers agreed to finance the shortfall, pending a High Court case that sought the disqualification of two executives of Gordon Brothers from acting as company directors. The offer from Gordon Brothers to compensate the concession-holders came a few weeks before the High Court hearing was scheduled and nearly four years after the closure of Clery's. The executives of Gordon Brothers claimed that Clery's was bought as a "going concern." Not all the concessionaires have accepted the offer, but most have.

Needless to say, nothing illegal was done by anyone under the rules now obtaining for business transactions like this.

Last year the Clery's building was sold to Press Up Entertainment Group for €63 million—in other words, a gross profit of €34 million on the original purchase. When you factor in the payments to the workers, accountants and lawyers it would still leave a sizeable profit.

The object was to crystallise the debt in one company and the value in the other. The building has the accrued value, and this has now been released. All perfectly legal, of course.

It demonstrates how capitalists can accrue even more capital from a company that is in debt, and to the detriment of the workers who were actually creating the value. In effect, the building itself has become a commodity for sale. The new owner of Clery's will develop it as a hotel, restaurants, offices, and some retail units.

Robbie Hughes of Link Group, which manages non-performing loans for Cerberus Capital Management, NAMA, and other vulture funds, stated in relation to Ireland: "Internally we call [Ireland] the gift that keeps on giving."

Link is an Australian company with a global reach. It has detected an opportunity in Ireland for getting good returns for its clients. The Irish banks have to reduce the non-performing loans on their books to 5 per cent. There are more loans to be sold to reach this target. These loans are mainly buy-to-let loans that became unviable.

Banks such as Ulster Bank and AIB sold their non-performing loans in order to clean up their books in much the same way in which Clery's was divided into an operating company with debt and the property company with no debt. Link Group steps in and manages these distressed loans by packaging them, selling them on, or holding them until they are profitable again. This group has obviously identified a lucrative opportunity in Ireland, as more than 60 per cent of its income is generated here.

Both the Clery's case and Link Group illustrate something Marx identified in volume 3 of *Capital* concerning the metamorphosis of commodities. Profits are made not by manufacturing anything and creating added value. Bank deposit interest is nil, or even minus, so capitalists need other vehicles to grow capital. Marx pointed out: "The owner of money who wants to valorize this as interest-bearing capital parts with it to someone else, puts it into circulation, makes it into a commodity as capital." Now the capitalist buys a property and in effect releases capital to the buyer that has the potential to create surplus value. The commodity that has been bought, whether a building or non-performing loan, will eventually be sold, so it metamorphoses back into money, replacing the original money with a surplus value.

In effect, property transactions by the vulture funds, whether for commercial property or sub-prime mortgages, are a method of getting interest on capital. ★

prop up a struggling education sector. According to the Dublin City Council report, 79 per cent of occupants in PBSA are international students.

Last summer we saw average increases of up to 19 per cent in one development (Galway, affecting NUIG students) and in another development 27 per cent (Dublin, affecting DCU students). At the beginning of this year again there was an increase of 10 per cent in UCC and 20 per cent in another complex in Galway, presumably as they prepared for legislation that students were told they would be getting last year. The story is not getting better for students.

Up until this month students in PBSA did not have the same rights as those who have contracts in other rented accommodation, as they were licensees, with no legislative protection. The new Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Act, which came into effect this summer, closed some of this "legal limbo" for students, but far too late. College-owned student accommodation increased their prices once they got wind of this legislation coming in—which parties promised a year and a half ago—and privately owned PBSA is coming onto the market at €1,200+ per month, something the Government has not even begun looking at a solution for. But with only 19 per cent of PBSA being publicly owned, they don't have much pull against the private developers' builds.

These are labelled "luxury student accommodation blocks," because government parties and others are looking for a group to be scapegoated in this crisis. The demand by students was never for rental apartments in inner-city areas that would push out local communities. Some of these rogue developers moved students into building sites last summer, while charging them €230+ per week for the pleasure. The "Tramshed and Woodworks" chose to rebrand at the start of the year to "Point Campus," to try to give themselves a fresh new look, away from their previous criticisms.

On top of all of this, regulation on PBSA is different from other builds. Section 50 on Guidelines for PBSA states that the build has to remain student-specific only for ten years—this is while they benefit from less regulation in other areas, smaller rooms, no Part 5 social housing requirements, and fast-track planning, ensuring that private developers can make the most bang for their buck, cramming students with extraordinarily high rents while the Government can tick off a few more beds from their strategy, beds that will only remain for students for ten years.

So where do we go next? There are murmurings of direct action, rent strikes, and mass mobilisations. We need to create a movement, and we need to take action, now. ★

Peter Daly Commemoration

Monagear, Co. Wexford 7 September 2019
Address by **Gearóid Ó Machail,**
Peadar O'Donnell Socialist Republican Forum

A chomrádaithe,

I dtús báire, ba mhaith liom buíochas a gabháil le Cumann Pheadair Uí Dhálaigh as an chuireadh labhairt libh anseo i Móin na gCaor, Contae Loch Garman, inniu mar ionadaí d'Fhóram Pheadair Uí Dhónaill agus de Chairde na hÉireann leis na Briogáidí Idirnáisiúnta.

Boy soldier of Na Fianna, anti-Free state guerrilla fighter, hunger-striker, socialist republican, Óglaigh na hÉireann training officer, Republican Congress activist, Connolly Column lieutenant—Peter Daly was the epitome of an internationalist, working-class, patriotic hero.

But Wexford's finest was even more than that. Peter Daly's biography is one of a fearless and a selfless revolutionary whose political analysis, loyalty to his class and living example remain an inspiration and a motivation to us all to continue that great and honourable struggle for human liberation and for an end to the barbaric system of capitalism and its fascistic and imperialistic tendencies.

Wexford has produced many fine sons and daughters of freedom down the ages. From the United men's republic of Wexford in '98 to the heroic resistance of Wexford republicans in the struggle against the Free State forces, this county has often been the pinnacle of the spirit of resistance and rebellion in Ireland.

Peter Daly's republican lineage and class-consciousness brought him at an early age into conflict with British imperialism and native capitalism. That struggle shaped his short, poignant but eventful life.

Imprisoned by the counter-revolutionary forces of the Free State, his experiences at the hands of native gaimbíní brought him to a sharper realisation of the class forces at play, not merely in Ireland and Britain but also on the wider international stage.

A Liverpudlian by birth, a Wexfordian by heritage and upbringing, and a socialist republican through life experience, Peter Daly had been forced, like so many of his native countrymen and women, to take the boat to Fishguard in search of a means of survival. Comrade Daly knew the harsh adversity of living rough and hard labour, a navvy soldier who used a spell in the British army to arm his revolutionary comrades in the Republican Army back home.

When he returned to Ireland in the hungry thirties Peter took up the position of training officer of

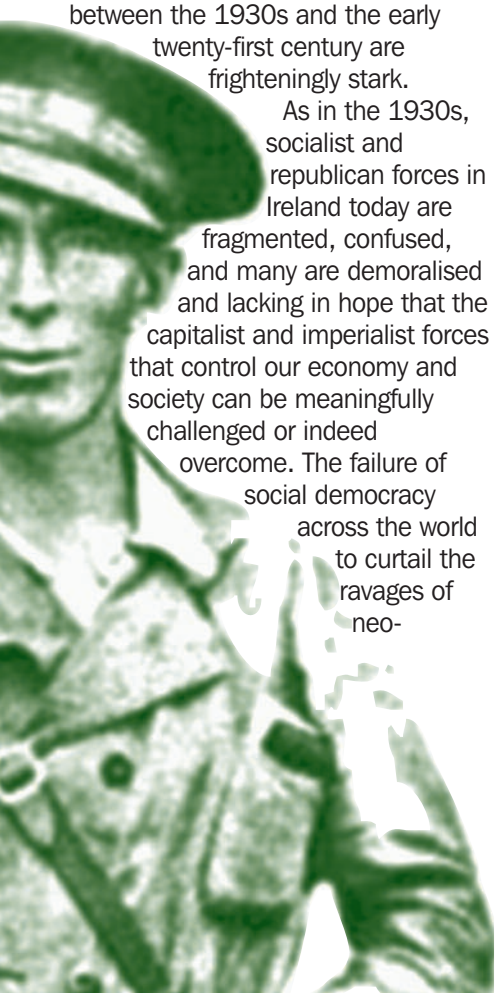
In Ireland nationalism has been directed towards anti-colonialism, but during the last presidential election we saw a glimpse of the potential of right-wing clarion calls to mobilise reaction and fear.

the Wexford Brigade of the IRA. In 1934 he joined the fledgling Republican Congress.

Peter longed to bring Ireland's republicans, socialists, workers and small farmers together in their common interest, regardless of religious creed. As we know, the Republican Congress made some significant inroads and organised Protestant workers in Belfast. Peter's activities in the Congress were proof positive of his non-sectarian republicanism. With a pedigree such as this it is no surprise to hear that Peter Daly was one of the first to volunteer for the International Brigade which went to Spain to fight for the cause of the Republic in the Civil War.

At the time of his death Peter Daly was the commander of the 15th International Brigade's British Battalion, an anti-imperialist force that a year later, on the Ebro front, would hold a Wolfe Tone commemoration to coincide with Bodenstown Sunday.

I refer specifically to the Republican Congress in order to illustrate that the main political forces at play during Peter Daly's lifetime were little different from what they are now. Indeed the similarities between the 1930s and the early twenty-first century are frighteningly stark.



As in the 1930s, socialist and republican forces in Ireland today are fragmented, confused, and many are demoralised and lacking in hope that the capitalist and imperialist forces that control our economy and society can be meaningfully challenged or indeed overcome. The failure of social democracy across the world to curtail the ravages of neo-liberalism and global monopoly capitalism have driven many workers into the clutches of right-wing ideologues and inevitably led to the rise of fascism across the world.

However, despite our current weakness, let us serve notice that the cowardly scum of fascism may skulk around and attack Jim Gralton's monument in Effrinagh or Charlie Donnelly's or Kit Conway's monument in Jarama, but dare they show their faces and they will be met by the full force of anti-fascist and socialist republican resistance.

On the other side of the Atlantic the rise of the white supremacist and neo-liberal nationalist Donald Trump has inspired the resurrection of the extreme right across the Americas—most worryingly in Brazil, where his protégé Bolsonaro poses a huge threat not only to workers and indigenous tribes in his own country but also to the global environment and to the sustainability of the entire earth's finite resources.

Traditionally in Ireland nationalism has been directed towards anti-colonialism, but during the last presidential election we saw a glimpse of the potential of right-wing clarion calls to mobilise reaction and fear. There have been attempts to create a far-right party (Identity Ireland, Pegida, and the National Party), but none of them got off the ground. For that we must give huge credit to our friends and comrades in Anti-Fascist Action and to the socialist republican movement.

The current weakness of the organised left in Ireland is a matter of serious concern in the context of the co-ordinated rise of the far right across Europe and the rest of the world. We are not immune from the far right. Where such parties have emerged it has tended to be quite sudden; often all it takes is a charismatic leader who succeeds in making xenophobic attitudes sound acceptable. Latent hostility among some segments of the Irish population towards immigrants and minorities may find ready expression in a new party in the future, particularly if unemployment, life insecurity, poverty and homelessness continue to rise.

Irish voters are no more tolerant than their counterparts on the Continent. In the most recent European Values Survey, 62 per cent of Irish respondents felt that there were too many immigrants living in Ireland, compared with an average of 52 per cent in other western European countries. Shocking when you consider that for centuries Ireland was a nation of emigrants; so we should have more wit than to complain about immigrants following in our ancestors' footsteps. When the Irish went to Britain and Australia and America many were refugees fleeing hunger and poverty. They faced discrimination and suspicion and were viewed as a threat to the host cultures and societies.

But we shouldn't expect that an Irish New Fascist party would look exactly the same as those abroad. Ireland has a different history and culture, so any new party will reflect this. It's unlikely to be as brash and "in your face" as the Americans, and it would be far more religious than the Western Europeans. It would probably focus on Irish issues and use traditional Irish images to "make Ireland Irish again."

The main pillars of Irish society—politicians, priests, Guards, banks—have been discredited by scandals, which would make it easier for a new party to throw out the whole system. Any party campaigning against politicians and bankers would easily find support.

Ireland even has its own version of Donald Trump, in the form of Michael O'Leary. O'Leary does have some of the same appeal as Trump. They both think of themselves as straight-talking successful businessmen who can cut through the crap. They are both known for wild accusations and colourful insults. (O'Leary called RTE a "rat-infested North Korean union shop" at a Fine Gael conference.) The thought of a flamboyant businessman running for election against the establishment shouldn't be dismissed as unlikely. Seán Gallagher nearly became President on the basis of his business career and not being a politician.

But here in Ireland we know what works against the far right. Peter Daly knew what the answer was to the Blueshirts in his own lifetime.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

The time is now for a joint programme of action, for shared platforms of resistance, and for new creative initiatives.

Peter Daly Commemoration

We saw what worked a few years back when the fascists and Nazis attempted to mobilise on the streets of Dublin. Direct action by socialist republicans and anti-fascists swiftly removed the immediate threat of a Pegida rally, and the Nazis were grateful that day for the protection of An Garda Síochána. Such honourable anti-fascist resistance followed the noble example of Frank Ryan, Peter Daly, Bob Doyle and their comrades in the Republican Congress and in the International Brigades.

In Belfast recently, where Britain First attempted to mobilise disaffected working-class unionists on the city's streets, mass counter-protests led by republicans, socialists and trade unionists demoralised the far right by proving that they are pathetic pariahs who can't risk showing up in public. "Fascist scum off our streets" was a delightful chant to hear echoing around the once-unionist bastion of Belfast City Hall.

So what's to be done, comrades? What's to be done to honour the memory of legends like Peter Daly from Loch Garman?

A hundred years ago our revolutionary predecessors and the democratically elected representatives of the people came together as An Chéad Dáil in the Mansion House to establish a free and independent Irish republic. Republicans, communists, trade unionists, socialists, elected representatives and community activists recently gathered at Liberty Hall at the behest of the Peadar O'Donnell Socialist Republican Forum to commemorate the centenary of the First Dáil and the Democratic Programme.

As we often remind people at our FIBI commemorative events throughout the year, the destiny of our country now lies in the hands of this generation of Irishwomen and Irishmen. It falls to us, the Irish people, to forge a renewed vision of Irish democracy, sovereignty and independence in the world today. Many of the same challenges that confronted Peter Daly's revolutionary generation still abide with us today.

We struggle to meet the needs of all of our people, and the two partitioned jurisdictions remain marred by inequalities in power, wealth, income, and opportunity. Poverty subsists amidst plenty, even as we fail to provide some of our citizens with the basic elements of a dignified existence: housing, health care, education, and support for those with particular needs—basic, fundamental needs and rights in any republic worthy of the name.

The duty to welcome and shelter those fleeing war, persecution and famine, so often relied upon by Irish men and women throughout the ages, is now being openly disdained, even discarded, by elements in the European Union. Fortress Europe has turned the Mediterranean and Aegean Seas into a watery mass grave for thousands fleeing imperialist wars and poverty.

The current crisis of global capitalism is unprecedented. We have entered into a period of great upheavals and uncertainties, of momentous changes, fraught with dangers—if also opportunities. We truly face a crisis of humanity. The stakes have never been higher: our very survival is at risk. In this century our planet and our people face new dangers undreamed of by our revolutionary forebears; the potentially catastrophic effects of climate change present us with stark challenges—challenges that cannot wait to be addressed.

So the time is over for left sectarianism; the game is up for social democracy and reformism; the time is over for social partnership and failed cross-class collaboration; the time is over for republican factionalism and for micro-entities engaged in directionless vanity missions.

The time is now for united fronts, democratic activism, street agitation, and mass struggle. The time is now for a joint programme of action, for shared platforms of resistance, and for new creative initiatives. What happens if we don't? Then prepare, comrades, for a rearguard action against the forces of reaction and fascism.

In Peter Daly's time the hopes of class-conscious Irish workers rested in the Republican Congress. As so often before, and since, this well-intentioned left unity initiative faltered amidst division and rancour.

This legacy of division poses many difficult questions for socialist republicans—questions that the Peadar O'Donnell Socialist Republican Forum is seeking to address. As a nation we need to learn the lessons of the past century of large-scale poverty, mass emigration, division, and sectarianism. We need to consolidate the struggle for better working conditions, for the right of our children to progressive, secular education, for a fully resourced public health service and welfare state, and for the provision of universal public housing. We need to rededicate ourselves to ending sectarianism and partition on our island. We need to bring the resources of the progressive sections of the Irish trade union movement to the aid of communities and workers in struggle.

The PODSRF has drafted a new Democratic Programme for the 21st Century that we hope will form the platform and basis for discussion and development by regional dálaí across the country in the coming weeks and months, starting in Coalisland, Tír Eoghain—the birthplace of the civil rights movement and the heart of recent resistance to British imperialism. We hope that all genuine progressives across the island will engage with this initiative and build the requisite broad left platform that will be essential to threaten the forces of reaction and the cheerleaders of capital.

The Forum recognises that we have made gradual advances during the last century, thanks in no small part to working people being independently organised and to pressure from republicans, communists, and socialists. However, if we are to realise the vision of comrades like Peter Daly of Móin na gCaor, the interests of working people must be at the heart of all political, economic, social and cultural decision-making. We restate that the cause of Ireland and the cause of labour are inseparable. However, while Ireland is locked in to the present-day institutions of international imperialism, including the neo-liberal European Union, there is little possibility of advancing our democratic and social demands.

Bígí linn inár streachailt, a chomrádaithe! La lucha continúa! No pasarán, compañeros! Beidh an lá linn! ★

Class enemies

INDUSTRY

Jimmy Doran

TWO BASTIONS of unionist domination of employment in the North, Harland and Wolff and Wrightbus, are threatened with closure.

The demise of the shipyard is a direct result of the geopolitical struggle to control the price of oil, in which the present owners, Dolphin Drilling, have been heavily exposed.

Workers around Ireland have being crying out for the unions to get out of defensive mode and, instead of going cap in hand to employers for redundancy payments, to go on the offensive and fight to protect the workers and their jobs. This is exactly what has happened, as the workers in Harland and Wolff, rather than the usual exercise of trying to negotiate the best redundancy deal, have occupied the shipyard and are demanding that it be nationalised and for the jobs to be saved.

The workers have received support and solidarity from the whole community in this fight, despite the bigoted history of work in the shipyard, with the common class enemy being exposed and challenged by all workers.

This change in tactics may be due in part to Brexit, because if the British state does choose to respect the referendum result and leave the EU it would be free to nationalise the shipyard, something that is not possible as an EU member. Already, leaving the EU is opening up options for workers.

The situation in Wrightbus is quite different. This company has been in existence for more than seventy years and for most of that time has been a very profitable business. It continues to have orders and contracts on its books. The problem seems to be at least partly due to links between the owners of Wrightbus and evangelical Christianity that have surfaced and have now come into question.

The owners have donated millions of pounds to Christian causes over the years. They even went as far as having a 2,500-seat church built in the grounds of the factory. The company's most recent accounts show that it donated £4.15 million to Christian and charitable causes in the same year that it posted a loss of £1.17 million.

The workers in Wrightbus should be emboldened by those in Harland and Wolff and attempt to force the state to step in and take this business also into public ownership. This would make a welcome change in direction for workers and their unions. It has great potential to raise class-consciousness among these workers, as they would be doing battle against the forces of capital, the common enemy of all workers, no matter what their race or creed.

If Wrightbus were nationalised the profits could be used to benefit the workers and society as a whole, rather than financing the owners' religious whims and the belief that, in the words of Joe Hill, "you'll get pie in the sky when you die."

A battle like this has the potential for sections of the working class to realise that their enemy is not their Protestant or Catholic neighbour or workmate. That is a manufactured division created by colonial rule to keep the workers in their place while protecting the owners of capital.

No matter what happens to the bus company, the Wright family will continue to live a life of luxury while the workers who created all that wealth through their hard labour will end up on the dole. And no amount of praying will change that. ★

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2 Forty years of the Nicarag

Telesur

SANDINISTAS

Graham Harrington

AFTER THE victory of the right wing in the elections of 1990, the Sandinistas began a period of what they called "governing from below." The new neo-liberal government increased the already massive foreign debt, cut wages, privatised industries, and slashed funds for health and education. In 2003 the former president Arnoldo Alemán was convicted of corruption, and he is now ranked among the most corrupt politicians in the world—which gives a snapshot of the type of people who took over from the Sandinista Front of National Liberation (FSLN).

The Sandinistas fought back, led strikes by workers, established Neighbourhood Councils of Citizens' Power, and managed to build a people's resistance to the capitalist measures that had seen Nicaraguans become impoverished, with electricity black-outs being common, all to service the debt the government had created.

While the FSLN had suffered some defeat when most of its middle-class parliamentary deputies left the party and created the Sandinista Renovation Movement (MRS), it managed to use its period out of power to rebuild its links with the poor.* After mass protests in 2005, the FSLN returned to power in 2007, beginning what they see as the second phase of the revolution.

Mercosur and climate hypocrisy

CLIMATE

David Hartery

FOLLOWING THE Bolsonaro regime's fascist assault on the Amazon, Macron and his loyal mimic Varadkar had to look like they were being tough on the Brazilian strongman. The mechanism they chose to use to show their new-found environmental conscience was to threaten to withhold the Mercosur trade deal unless it included provisions to safeguard what's left of the rainforest.

This is an empty gesture, as it does nothing to strike at the root cause of the environmental malaise.

The first issue is that capitalism requires constant growth from finite resources. Capitalism is plagued by the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, requiring ever more corrosive exploitation of both natural resources and labour. As capitalism falls further into crisis, this is necessarily accompanied by a complementary intensification of environmental

After mass protests in 2005, the FSLN returned to power in 2007, beginning what they see as the second phase of the revolution.

guan Revolution

Taking advantage of the new relationship with Venezuela—Nicaragua signed up to the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of our Americas (ALBA) on Ortega's first day as president—the FSLN had a reliable source of cheap energy as well as a new source of funds for social schemes while repaying the debt of the previous regime.

In the field of education they launched a new literacy campaign and abolished all fees. Their Zero Usury scheme provided micro-credit to small traders. Zero Hunger distributes farm goods to rural families, in order to make farms more self-sufficient. Both these policies are aimed more particularly at women.

The crime rate is now the lowest in Central America. The Councils of Citizens' Power have been transformed from opposition vehicles into a method of direct democracy, much like the Cuban Committees for the Defence of the Revolution.

These policies brought more support for the FSLN among the poor, who benefited from them, but alienated the business classes, with which Ortega was forced to compromise in order to get into power. A major part of the FSLN's strategy was a massive canal to be created across Lake Nicaragua, with Chinese help. This would have a great impact on the balance of forces in Latin America, countering the control by the United States over the Panamá Canal. While fitting in with the desire for an independent Nicaragua in a more multi-polar order in the region, such a capital investment project would allow the state to build up its industry, reduce its foreign debt, and allow Nicaraguans who work abroad to return home. Of course this also makes it a problem for the empire to the north.

In 2018 the International Monetary Fund demanded that Nicaragua change its social welfare law. While the IMF expected the government to comply, it did so by ensuring that the main losers were business interests, rather than the poor. This led to protests (pictured left) by middle-class students, backed by the right-wing media, which quickly developed into a copy of the Venezuelan opposition's tactics. The protesters attacked and murdered police and Sandinista militants, attacked government buildings, and blamed the Ortega government.

After the protests died down and the barricades the opposition had erected were cleared, police and citizens discovered home-made rockets, petrol bombs, and other weapons. This, of course, did not stop the private media in Nicaragua, or the Western media, giving glowing reports about the opposition being liberal humanitarians.

The most important result from the failure of the attempted coup—besides the fact that it rallied the people even more strongly around the FSLN—is that it has broken the tactical alliance Ortega made with sections of the capitalist class. Nicaragua is mostly reliant on its "informal" sector—small farmers, family businesses, etc.; and, notwithstanding the economic damage caused by the coup attempt and the US sanctions, the state is forced to rely on its popular base.

The FSLN continues with its policies, with its new public housing programme, named after Bismarck Martínez, a Sandinista veteran who was tortured and killed during the attempted coup in 2018. It is among the world's top ten countries for women's representation in parliament.

The new phase of the revolution has managed to go beyond the first phase in an important way and to sever completely the link with the oligarchy. This is not what happens in a revolution that is moderating itself. While it may be tempting to say that Nicaragua should just nationalise everything, as Cuba did, it should be remembered that Cuba did so while having the backing of the Soviet Union. Much like Venezuela, what Nicaragua needs today is not dogmatic condescension or liberal ignorance but the support and solidarity—along with comradely criticism—of the working class, in Ireland and elsewhere. ★

*In 1996 allegations of sexual abuse were made against Daniel Ortega by his stepdaughter. While this is not the focus of this article, it needs to be mentioned, for ethical reasons.

destruction—see America's return to the forefront of oil extraction through fracking, Germany's battles over coal mining, and now the Amazon's slash-and-burn.

Imperialism is a key function in this system. The European Union exists to make trade deals: that is its explicit function. Within the common market, capital is allowed free rein, but outside, the collective might of the European developed economies are trained on the less developed, to intensify their super-exploitation and ensure that the Western holders of capital battle the relative loss of profitability in their home markets with the goldmines (sometimes literally) in the Global South.

So, then, we have a system that is intensifying its exploitation of the natural world, and one that requires this intensification to continue to function. The Brazilian farmers who are immiserated by this system, and the Brazilian right-wing goons who profit from their position as the facilitators of this pillaging, are required by circumstance to continue in ever more destructive exploitation in order to survive.

And we are to believe that a legislative or trade-based solution can be found? That the economic pot of gold that is the massive EU beef market would see farmers simply refuse to clear more virgin forest?

Such an idea is absurd, on the face of it. Adding some kind of environmental sop to the Mercosur deal will do nothing to battle the climate crisis. What is needed is an entire upturning of the global order—and an end to the EU. ★

Rembrandt's times and his art

Jenny Farrell

REMBRANDT Harmenszoon van Rijn was one of the greatest Enlightenment painters. He died 350 years ago this month at the age of sixty-three.

In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Flemish cloth trade had developed into the strongest competitor of Florentine cloth-makers and traders, giving rise to a growing Dutch bourgeoisie. Early capitalism developed quickly in Flanders and Brabant, with their trading centre of Antwerp, while the provinces in the French-speaking area remained agricultural and dominions of the nobility.

The conflict between bourgeoisie and aristocracy became an expression of national interests, reflected in the struggle against Spanish domination. The bourgeoisie was the leading force in the national liberation struggle of the Dutch people.

Only the northern provinces of the Netherlands succeeded in freeing themselves from Spanish rule, in 1648, giving power to the bourgeoisie. Awakened national pride and love of the homeland as well as pride in bourgeois prosperity were all expressed in painting. Dutch artists painted everyday life and ordinary people at work. They raised genre painting to the level of great art, and for the first time in history ordinary people were painted in all their diversity. Dutch art was the first to develop secular genre painting.

Cheerful aspects of life dominated the arts. The peasant world was also included, though mainly for amusement. Soldiers and beggars completed the range of subjects. The only painter who expressed a warm humanity for beggars was Rembrandt. His genius was unrecognised in patrician Holland, yet only Holland could produce such an artist. Only the Republic that had a plebeian history linked to the struggle for independence could be his historical ground.

The young Rembrandt's paintings are full of joyful energy, as his **Self-portrait with Saskia** (*above*) shows. Towards the end of the 1620s his art had grown—in warm, gold-tinted coloration and in its ability to dramatise space through light-dark contrasts.

The Night Watch (*above right*) was a new departure. Group portraits had become a special achievement of Dutch art, expressing proud community spirit. People wanted to see the members of a guild or a corporation represented together. The civic militia, organised in militia guilds, played an important role in the wars of independence, making such paintings artistic expressions of the bourgeois revolution. Rembrandt broke with the traditional style of a fairly stiff group portrait by subjecting all participants to dynamic action and with a dominant light-dark contrast.

Instead of an impressive company of admirable officers and disciplined men, Rembrandt paints a rather disordered assembly. Each guard seems to be looking and pulling in a different direction, doing his own thing, impervious to the others. Lance and flag point in opposite directions. In the midst of it, a diminutive golden

Rembrandt's incorruptible artistic honesty, shaped by the democratic spirit of republican Holland, inevitably came into conflict with the ruling class.

figure with the features of Rembrandt's recently deceased wife, Saskia, holds the company's emblems.

Rembrandt subverts what had been a heroic genre. There is liveliness, sound, and motion, with a man loading his musket, the commander giving orders, a drummer drumming, a flag swung, a barking dog, and the boy carrying a powder horn dashing off to collect more powder for the three musketeers—all adding to the commotion.

Two areas of bright gold on either side of the captain focus the eye on him, as do the diagonal lines of the flag, rifle, and lance, all pointing towards the same figure. Nevertheless the captain and his lieutenant in the centre foreground do not impose order.

This animated, energetic movement was so new that it must have perplexed both guild and viewers. It is so powerfully forward-moving that the viewer feels a need to get out of the way. It is a revolutionary painting.

Later Rembrandt developed a lyrical intimacy that infuses family scenes with a humanity that constitutes his timeless significance. The moving painting of **Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph** *(left)* uncovers depths of the human psyche and finds its greatness in love and forgiveness. Colour and light interweave to make the innermost glow. Rembrandt focuses on the gentleness and warmth of Jacob's blessing, not showing the disagreement between Joseph and Jacob regarding this blessing.

Also, the inclusion in this scene of the children's mother, Asenath, is a deliberate departure from the Bible and reflects the growing status of women in seventeenth-century Holland as well as the importance of love in marriage. Asenath is shown to be involved and an important figure in the family setting. Her presence illustrates Rembrandt's realism and the ingredient of doubt that he brings to his art. The painting's colours underline the warmth and tenderness of the scene; the perspective in which it is painted heightens the sense of the viewer surreptitiously witnessing a momentous family moment.

In the course of Rembrandt's lifetime the bourgeoisie had aligned their standard of living with that of the nobility. They became mainly interested in the outwardly beautiful and representative. Rembrandt's incorruptible artistic honesty, shaped by the democratic spirit of republican Holland, inevitably came into conflict with the ruling class. From the middle of his life his work was no longer valued.

Rembrandt anticipated a democratic culture that was yet to come. He was the first to place modern knowledge, understanding and therefore doubt at the centre of his art. This places him in the ranks of the great Enlightenment artists and thinkers, and thereby connects him with the ideas of the French Revolution.

All but forgotten in old age, Rembrandt van Rijn died alone and in poverty on 4 October 1669.

Self-portrait (1630) Albertina Museum, Vienna
Self-portrait with Saskia (1635)
The Night Watch (1642) Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam
Jacob Blessing the Sons of Joseph (1656) Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Kassel

END NOTES

Unsustainable

NATIONAL DEBT

Eugene McCartan

When the latest phase of the global crisis of capitalism manifested itself through the financial markets in 2007–09, the "Celtic Tiger" collapsed. The Irish establishment, under direct pressure from the European Union, took responsibility for 42 per cent of the total of European banking debt.

We bailed out German, French and British banks and other global finance houses. The "national debt" was then used as a pretext for a massive assault on Irish workers' wages, terms, and conditions.

We have also witnessed a growth in precarious employment and in zero-hour contracts and a massive transfer of wealth from workers upwards to the ruling elite and outwards to global financial institutions. The rich got richer, and continue to do so.

The latest figures from the Department of Finance show that the national debt now stands at more than €206 billion—that's €42,500 for every single individual in the country. (The average industrial wage is between €35,000 and €40,000 per year.)

The level of state debt makes Ireland one of the most indebted countries in the OECD. It is estimated that it has paid in the region of €7 or 8 billion per year just to service this debt. Until last year's budget surplus the Irish state was borrowing money from global finance houses to pay the interest; in other words, we were borrowing money to pay the same institutions that hold the national debt. So they are making it on the double.

Each time the state borrows from these international finance houses adds to the growing national debt. Ireland is more at risk than other countries, because 90 per cent of our borrowing comes from foreign capital. This is a strategy to make Irish workers pay more and more to these global vultures, piling up the national debt at the expense of spending on health, housing, education, and culture.

Ireland is now one of the most exposed countries in the world and most vulnerable to external risks. The establishment sold the present generation and future generations of Irish workers into debt slavery, in order to pay off a debt that does not belong to us. These debts are the responsibility of the Irish banks, property speculators, builders, and developers—the Irish capitalist class. They got away scot-free while we pay the price in cuts in health, education, and wages.

The CPI calls, as it did from the beginning, for the repudiation of this debt imposed upon our people.

Just say no

SELF-SERVICE

Dónall Ó Briain

Supermarkets are steadily installing more and more self-service check-outs (and even boasting about it), at the same time getting rid of workers, or at least not replacing those who leave. In some branches an assistant is given the job of collaring shoppers in the queue for the check-out and persuading them to use the self-service facility.

Shoppers should politely decline, insist on being served, and explain that they are in fact defending the same assistants' jobs.

Thanks, capitalism!

Thanks, capitalism. You started off all right and all, but I'm afraid you have to leave! You've eaten, binned or hidden all the food, you've drunk all the drink or poured it down the sink, you've blocked all the toilets and used up all the paper. You've left the taps running, and the fires are raging! You've insulted, harassed, thrown stones and pretty much did what you liked with all the guests, without their consent. You've taken all the gifts that we all brought to share and buried them in the back garden.

Oh, yes, and that was a supporting pillar you decided to bulldoze with your drunken mate, the landlord. Well done!

It's now time that you both were forcibly removed by all of us here, as you will not leave voluntarily.

Yours sincerely, The People

PAGES FROM HISTORY

The party of law and order

"Mussolini—incomparably the greatest of living statesmen . . ."
Desmond Fitzgerald TD,
Irish Independent, 8 July 1927

On the Wearing of Uniform Bill (intended to ban the paramilitary uniform of the Blueshirts, passed in March 1934 but defeated in the Seanad): **". . . the Blackshirts were victorious in Italy and . . . the Hitler Shirts were victorious in Germany, as, assuredly, in spite of this bill and in spite of the Public Safety Act, the Blueshirts will be victorious in the Irish Free State."**
John A. Costello TD (later taoiseach), Dáil Éireann, 28 February 1934

On the Spanish Anti-Fascist War: " I wish we had a Hitler here."
Patrick Belton TD
(founder and leader of the Irish Christian Front), Dáil Éireann, 25 July 1935

On the Italian invasion of Ethiopia: "As an Irishman and as a Catholic . . . I will not agree to the application of sanctions against Italy, who is going out to civilise and to Christianise a pagan race. I sincerely hope that the Italian race, and Mussolini, the great leader of the Italian people and defender of our faith in Italy, will be successful in this war."
William Rice Kent TD,
Dáil Éireann, 6 November 1935

"Signor Mussolini is the Abraham Lincoln of Africa."
Osmond Esmonde TD,
Dáil Éireann, 6 November 1935

"When our organisation's work is complete we will make Ireland a very hot spot for any communist to live in. If it is necessary to be a fascist to defend Christianity, then I am a fascist, and so are my colleagues."
Patrick Belton TD, 12 October 1936