

STARRY PLOUGH



MONTHLY ELECTRONIC MAGAZINE FROM THE IRSP

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FIANNA FAIL IMPLODES AFTER SELLING OFF IRELAND'S SOVEREIGNTY

**RAMPANT CAPITALISM CONTINUES ONSLAUGHT AGAINST
THE WORKING CLASS. GET INVOLVED, FIGHT BACK!**

The IRSP joined the chorus of anger over the recent announcement of an €85 billion "rescue package" for the 26 County economy. The package includes €17 billion from the national pension reserve fund and the IRSP has condemned the plan as a bail-out for banks and bondholders at the behest of the IMF and ECB, rather than a plan for national recovery. Following this announcement the Fianna Fail party has gone into meltdown with many prominent members resigning their ministerial positions. An Taoiseach Brian Cowen cuts an isolated figure as all around abandon the sinking Fianna Fail ship whilst government partners the Green Party pull the plug.

Against this backdrop IRSP spokesperson Ross Gildea said: "This current government has absolutely no mandate to recklessly impose a situation on the Irish people whereby their money will be thrown into the black hole that is the banking system. Also, as a result

of this the country as a whole will be burdened with an incredible level of debt. Throughout the Celtic Tiger years much of our wealth was squandered by our political elites, while an elite sect of bankers, developers and speculators made a killing with the active connivance of the political elite. Working class people did not benefit from this wealth yet are being forced to suffer greatly as a result of severe austerity measures in an attempt to clean up a mess they played no part in creating"

The IRSP representative also questioned the true intent behind the IMF and EU bail-out package: "When we say that this is a bail-out we have to be very clear. It is not a bail-out of the Irish people and the money will not go towards public services or to help those struggling with mortgages. This is a bail-out of banks and bondholders. The IMF have a terrible record in many countries of strangling

FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION & SOCIALISM!

Eagarfhocal

MASSIVE ONSLAUGHT AGAINST THE POOR

The attacks are continuing unabated and unhindered. Not a week goes by without new stories reaching us of job losses, work place closures, cuts to services, school closures, hospitals creaking under the strain etc etc. This is not a phenomenon isolated to a particular section of the country, this is affecting every town, village, community and household. All this is happening as a direct result of greedy practices of the financial elite who have decimated the relative economic stability and completely overturned any small benefits that the working class had been given access to under the so called celtic tiger economy. While the onslaught continues and the gap between rich and poor increases we say that now is the time for the working class to organise and to fight against a divisive and corrupting system. The boom and bust of capitalism must be challenged and replaced with a system that is able to strive economically, remain stable and serve the needs of the people above the interests of big business. We say organise now and fight for a better tomorrow.

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Continued from Page 1 economies through debt and Ireland will be no different. The interest rate bandied about, somewhere near 6%, has been widely regarded by economists as totally unsustainable. The Irish people will be slaves to debt and will have to fork out obscene amounts of money to offset the interest alone. Christian Noyer of the ECB has also totally ruled out the possibility of making investors partially responsible for the debt or letting them take losses 'even if it is legally possible'. So even if it is possible for Ireland to relieve the burden from the Irish people somewhat, the ECB won't let it happen. Their loyalty is with financial institutions and investors, not ordinary people."

He continued: "The IMF care little about our growing issues such as poverty or unemployment, all they care about is ensuring the creditors get paid. This situation really is disastrous for Ireland. We are now facing a shocking scenario whereby state assets will be attacked at the behest of unaccountable financial vultures, our future is being negotiated away behind closed doors by corrupt politicians and these free market fundamentalist bureaucrats. An example of this is the insistence that our pension reserve fund will be used to prop up the banking system. We are being cleaned out to save private interests."

The IRSP is urging all progressive-minded people, community groups, trade unionists, workers, the unemployed and indeed all sections of the working class who will be affected by these measures to mobilise to make their opposition known to our political elites. Join the protests!

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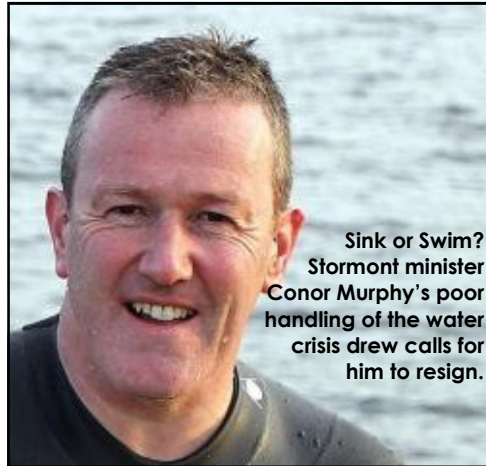
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WATER DISASTER

IRSP Condemn NI Water's handling of Winter Crisis as 60,000 left without water

Irish Republican Socialist Party spokesperson Christopher Donnelly has described the recent chronic water shortages, which have left up to 60,000 homes across the North without a running water supply, as 'totally inexcusable'. Thousands of people have been left without any water for over a week now, with no end in sight.

The main cause of the shortage has been identified as burst pipes caused by the recent thaw, something that is reflective of a serious lack of investment in water infrastructure. Public sector slashing and the scandal that has plagued the government-owned NI Water have undoubtedly also played a role.



Mindful of the Assembly elections in May, Stormont politicians have been quick off the mark in their condemnation of both NI Water and their colleagues in the Assembly. Sinn Féin's Martin McGuinness has placed the blame vaguely at the door of NI Water, while the SDLP's Conall McDevitt stated that: 'the buck stops with the Sinn Féin Minister for Regional Development,' (Conor Murphy).

IRSP activist Christopher Donnelly said: "The problems behind this crisis go far beyond the technical aspects of water supply maintenance. Recently there have been calls for NI Water to reduce their budget by around 40%, in line with the public austerity measures being imposed by the Tory/Lib Dem coalition. Such cuts should not even be on the table, there has in fact been a serious lack of investment in water infrastructure in the North and the result of that is the crisis we are now seeing"

He continued: "The inability of NI Water to respond to any routine technical difficulties has been exacerbated by recent redundancies and further scandal that has dogged the company. What is clear here is that the austerity agenda of the Stormont Assembly, carried out in response to the crisis in capitalism both domestically and internationally, has led to the most basic services like running water being denied to thousands of families."

"In this day and age it is absolutely incredible to see a situation whereby tens of thousands of people have to do without a water supply. The most vulnerable in our society, who have already struggled during a very cold winter, now have this to deal with this. The lack of water is certainly going to affect the elderly, disabled and sick the most. It is totally inexcusable. While the establishment parties engage in meaningless bickering, at the end of the day, through their puppet-parliament they will be enforcing the will of Westminster which will ensure no proper investment in public sector infrastructure is forthcoming. Stormont is simply failing ordinary people and this crisis is further evidence of that."

Seminar on Trade Unionism

Major Unions will give talk followed by Q & A

Talbot Hotel, Wexford

2nd February 2011 @ 7.30pm.



Hosted by the Irish Republican Socialist Party

For details contact Rory on 086 2380980 or email: wexford@irsp.ie

IRELAND NEEDS A REVOLUTIONARY OPPOSITION

WE ASK "CAN THE UNITED LEFT ALLIANCE FILL THAT ROLE?"

This paper, released on 21st January, explains the IRSP's position on the ULA and points out the pitfalls of entering electoralism if a solid revolutionary programme is not in place.

capable of offering leadership and mobilising as many people as possible towards our goals. Unity and co-operation amongst the left has consistently been a facet of IRSP policy.

IRSP Position On United Left Alliance
21 January 2011

In the context of an onslaught on working class people involving a consensus for cuts among the establishment parties in a failing attempt to deal with capitalism's latest collapse, a health service in crisis, continued unemployment and mass emigration particularly among young people, elements of the Irish left came together to form the 'United Left Alliance'. The Irish Republican Socialist Party wishes to now put on record its position on the ULA.

A core tenet of IRSP policy since our foundation, in the pursuit of our objective of a 32 County Democratic Socialist Republic, has been the formation of a Broad Front to combat the malign influences of imperialism and capitalism in Ireland as effectively as possible. The creation of such a front would in effect see the development of a unified struggle against all the baneful manifestations of capitalism and would begin the process of creating a mass revolutionary party (consistent calls for such a party have been made from some quarters of the Irish left, these are calls we would like to echo)



Two questions arise for the IRSP out of the formation of the ULA, the ideological question and the tactical question. Ideologically speaking, while the IRSP is not in full agreement with the programme of the ULA, we view it as also containing ideas of substantial merit. However, a major failing is that the programme itself, while mentioning several components of a socialist system, fails to explicitly state that it is the programme of an organisation which seeks to establish a revolutionary socialist state in Ireland. One can only speculate as to the reason for this, most probably fears about alienation of the mass of working people and potential constituent members, but this is something we

fundamentally disagree with. There must be no ambiguity among socialists about what we stand for and this point leads us on to the tactical question which will be developed below. Also notable by its absence is any mention of the national aspect to the revolutionary socialist struggle in this country. It is the duty of Irish socialists to combat the undemocratic imposition of cutbacks in the North, challenge the overt sectarianism which has been entrenched in the very structures of the Northern state and work towards the ending of partition.

This latest crisis must not be met with a strategy based around electoral gains, such a strategy is akin to inviting failure to our doorstep. The biggest flaw with the ULA is that such a coalition is aimed at winning elections, not building the working class mass fightback or pointing the way towards workers' power. This is one of the most fundamental issues that divides revolutionary socialists from reformist social democrats. It is the capacity of the working class for action that is most vital in changing society, not winning votes.

The IRSP's position on electoralism is clear. We do not believe there is a parliamentary road to socialism and thus any electoral intervention must not be characterised by a refusal to put right-wing parties in power or the demand for what can realistically be judged as a more progressive policy platform than a conservative administration, but by the clear pursuit of revolutionary aims. Central to our revolutionary aims is the building of working class power, which will not be built by uniting a couple of sects espousing reformist rhetoric and reformist demands. The current system of political administration in Ireland, a reflection of our economic system, is fundamentally undemocratic and cannot possibly cater for the needs of the Irish people. Any electoral success must be used to spread revolutionary socialist ideas and to expose the stark limitations of the current system. Most especially this must be channeled towards mobilising working people to the streets, not demobilising them, or putting them under the influence of trade union bureaucrat mis-leaders. As Ta Power said, "There is no easy way to the Socialist Republic, no shortcuts", and yet some far left parties have a foolish history of ditching much of their core political principles for short-term electoral gains.

During the crisis, all efforts must be made to correctly identify and articulate the true causes of the economic collapse, namely, the inherent contradictions at the heart of the capitalist system. Populism around individuals and popular media scapegoats may be useful in garnering some minor electoral support, but does little to properly educate or radicalise working people. Concentrating on the symptoms of Ireland's economic forms rather than widening the confines of political discourse in Ireland and directly outlining the inherent flaws in capitalism and that we see socialism as the solution, is a road to nowhere. Leading on from the ideological decision to neglect to mention socialism in their programme, the strategy of the ULA will naturally also mirror this tepidness.

We recognise this is a minimum programme and each constituent member may pursue their own strategy, but that calls into question the whole premise of the ULA. Should socialists sign up to something that in practice would be reformist and firmly in the realms of social democracy? The answer should be an unequivocal 'no'. This returns us to the issue of how this alliance is being built: not by the broader layers of working masses, but by two main sects out to enlarge their vote.

Having said this, if the intention behind this formation is to simply begin negotiations and set in place the foundations for what would be a mass revolutionary party which is unambiguous about



The ULA on the march, is it the beginning of a revolutionary movement or will it flounder like many similar initiatives?

it's socialist revolutionary credentials, then it must be wholeheartedly welcomed. Integral to this must be broad-based talks that include all organisations of the revolutionary left, including those who recognise the importance of the national question.

The position of the IRSP at this juncture is that while the formation of the ULA is progressive in our view, with many outstanding local activists involved, the IRSP's revolutionary outlook in relation to the subject of electoralism and the struggle for Irish sovereignty do not run parallel to the views of the ULA. In a personal capacity members of the IRSP may aid ULA campaigns in their locality but we hope at some point in the near future to take part in the building of a mass revolutionary party that unashamedly stands in the tradition of James Connolly and socialist republicanism and which will work towards the ending of exploitation, capitalism and imperialist occupation. The interests of individual sects must be put aside in the interests of working people and to this end we envisage the establishment of a mass revolutionary organisation as the only vehicle through which our goals can be achieved.

MAY LOCAL ELECTIONS - GET REGISTERED!

IRSP spokesperson in Derry, Martin McMonagle, has called on members and supporters of the IRSP to ensure that they are registered to vote in time for the local elections which are scheduled for 5th May 2011.

Speaking to a meeting of the IRSP in Derry Mr McMonagle stated that whether or not the party stands in the forthcoming election we will be attempting to influence it's results. He said; "It is vitally important for our party to begin excerpting it's influence in support of working class communities. For too long we have seen the established parties, Sinn Fein and the SDLP, vying for the votes of working class people whilst at the same time offering nothing in terms of real social change for our communities.

"We in the IRSP will partake in the coming elections. We will be deciding though whether we support current independent candidates or whether we put forward candidates ourselves, but whatever happens we will be making a real effort to influence the outcome and make sure that working class people and their needs take centre stage.

He went on, "To this end we encourage all our members and supporters, and all those interested in furthering the needs of Derry's working class to prepare for May. We need as many people as possible to register and to weigh in behind whatever the IRSP intends doing. Registration forms are available at our office here in Lenamore and we will assist in any way possible in making sure that as many people as possible are registered and have the correct forms of identification. We know that a lot of people have given up on electoral politics as viable candidates were not always available on the ballot paper and because of this an apathy has existed that has suited the established parties. We intend to be part of a real opposition force that will put the needs of our class to the forefront but we need the full and active participation of as many people as possible to make this a reality.

IRSP NEW YEAR MESSAGE TO MEMBERS AND SUPPORTERS

The Irish Republican Socialist Party wishes to take this opportunity to send comradely greetings to all our members and supporters as we move into 2011. We particularly would like to extend solidarity to republican socialist prisoners who currently languish in jail for their political beliefs. Throughout our history republican socialist prisoners and ex-prisoners have played an integral role in the advancement of the politics of working class liberation, something that we are all reminded of in the fact that 2011 will see the 30th anniversary of the deaths of the 10 hunger-strikers in 1981. The IRSP also wishes to extend solidarity to all political prisoners internationally who have sacrificed their liberty in the fight against oppression.

This New Year marks the two-year anniversary of the massacre in Gaza, when Israeli forces committed war crimes against a civilian population. And even though two years have passed since then, many Palestinians are still struggling to rebuild their homes and are doing without even basic necessities. This year, when humanitarian workers attempted to break the blockade that ensures Gazans are without basic supplies and medicines, which is described by Amnesty International as a flagrant violation of international law, Israel again committed a bloody massacre. The IRSP extends our most heartfelt solidarity to the Palestinian people for their steadfastness and courage and we salute the effort and sacrifices of those activists who do so much to raise awareness and aid the Palestinians, often at great personal risk. We condemn the Israeli apartheid regime and their American allies, without whom Israel would not be able to commit much of their crimes.

The IRSP extends revolutionary greetings to all those engaged in the struggle for national liberation and socialism. As capitalism and imperialism exert their baneful influence on an international level, so must we organise in a spirit of solidarity and internationalism to combat them. Currently, imperialism and social injustice are

being challenged in struggles right across the globe, from Ireland to Mexico, from Greece to the Philippines, from Venezuela to India and elsewhere. The revolutionary struggle for socialism is alive and well and in this context, we can look forward to the year 2011 with great pride and hope. Pride in overcoming the obstacles we have faced so far and hope in the limitless possibilities for working people in the future when they once and for all wrestle what is rightfully theirs from the forces of exploitation.

2010 has been a landmark year in the history of the Irish Republican Socialist Movement. In February, the volunteers of the Irish National Liberation Army made the courageous decision to disarm and assert the primacy of politics. The logic behind this decision was clear. The current prevailing political conditions demand that the struggle for socialism is developed on another terrain. More important than small liberation armies, more potent than simple militarism and more powerful than guns, are our republican socialist politics and the revolutionary potential of the Irish working class. Never should Irish working class people be relegated to the sidelines of their own struggle for emancipation. The socialist soldiers of the INLA must be commended for their mature decision which was made in the interests of working class people and no-one else. They will not be found wanting as our struggle continues.

The INLA's decision does not represent a change in the politics of the IRSM, but rather an adaption to the conditions we find ourselves in. It remains clear that there is no parliamentary road to socialism, nor is there a guerrilla road to socialism. The building of socialism requires the active participation of the masses. The challenge we now face as revolutionary socialists is to win the hearts and minds of our class and to bring them to our side in the fight for a 32 County Socialist Republic. Never in the history of our movement has successfully meeting that challenge been more important.

The past year has seen the economy in the 26 counties stumble from crisis to crisis. The 'light-touch' regulation that is the ethos of capitalist economics has ensured the Southern economy has come crashing down around the ears of politicians, bankers, speculators and developers. But of course, the problem always was much deeper than a couple of millionaires that

it suits the media to scapegoat. Let it be said clearly, the problems we have seen in Ireland represent the irreconcilable contradictions that lie at the very heart of the capitalist system. This latest period of crisis has resulted in extremely severe austerity measures being imposed on working class people. While private financial institutions receive billions of our money and bondholders remain protected, the blind, disabled and most vulnerable are left facing savage cuts. The capitalists will do anything, no matter how shameless, to prop up their failing system. The socialist argument is clear. We need a planned economy to avoid the bust and boom lunacy inherent in capitalism. The economy must be built in a sustainable fashion, democratically and in the interests of working people, not financial vultures.

2010 will no-doubt be remembered as the year our sovereignty was further eroded with the arrival of the International Monetary Fund to Ireland. Only a couple of years ago Bertie Ahern was lecturing others about Ireland's economic success story, and the proponents of capitalism were pointing to Ireland as an example of how to get it right. How wrong they were. With these illusions now firmly shattered, it will not be Bertie Ahern or any bank directors with their extremely lavish pensions, who will be suffering. It will be, and is, ordinary families and communities suffering the consequences of this bust and boom system. With the IMF now involved, judging by their record elsewhere, the future does look bleak. The fightback has to begin and we have seen encouraging signs on that front. The upcoming general election will no doubt take the eyes of the working class away from the real problem temporarily, but it is our role to offer leadership and to ensure people know exactly where the blame should be placed for our economic woes, that is, with the capitalist system itself.

In the occupied 6 counties we now face a disastrous situation whereby Westminster, through it's puppet-parliament in Stormont, will be implementing savage cuts against working class people. The so-called 'Peace Process' has turned out to be little more than a political process through which working class people have suffered a major defeat and sectarian politics rules the day. The 6 county governmental system is an affront to democracy or even any semblance of progression. The parties that make up

the Stormont administration, despite frequent displays of tokenism and rhetoric, will be fully implementing the cuts imposed by the Tory Party in London. Stormont represents a sectarian stalemate and the only result of it will be increasing numbers of people facing destitution. This situation cannot be let continue, it must be challenged and the IRSP intend to do just that.

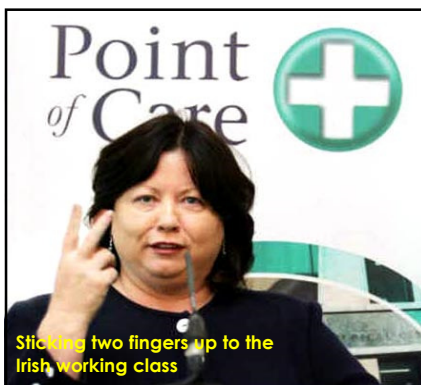
It is undeniable that what we face now is an open class struggle. We must fightback against the ruling class in the Dáil, Stormont, Westminster and in our workplaces. Working class people are looking for leadership and they will not find it in reformist trade unionists, gombeen politicians or social democratic opportunists. It is the role of socialists to organise, educate and radicalise people and although a tough struggle lies ahead we must face it with great determination and conviction. It is the capacity of the working class for action, especially its most advanced layers, which are the most fundamental elements of a successful struggle against capitalism. Tactics are secondary considerations; let us together develop the appropriate tactics for our specific historical conditions. The fight against capitalism and imperialist occupation, whether it be in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine or Ireland, continues.

Onwards to victory!

NO RECESSION FOR THOSE AT THE TOP

The Irish Republican Socialist Party has reacted angrily to news that ministers who recently resigned from the Fianna Fáil/Green government are set to be paid extremely lavish lump sums and pensions for their 'service' to the Irish people. Dermot Ahern, Batt O'Keefe, Mary Harney, Tony Killeen and Noel Dempsey have all resigned from their ministerial posts and are set to pick up extraordinary financial packages.

IRSP spokesperson Ross Gildea said: "It is a complete contradiction and reflective of a rotten political system that these



Sticking two fingers up to the Irish working class

people, who have played an integral role in the destruction of the economy, are being rewarded with such exorbitant amounts of money while at the same time cutting pensions like that of the blind"

"Mary Harney for example will retire with a package worth more than €300,000 and will receive a pension of over €120,000 every year for the rest of her life. That is more than three times the average undustrial wage every year. It simply cannot be justified. Politicians have treated the Irish people with absolute contempt and these payments just show how out of touch these people are with the situation on the ground for ordinary people"

IRSP OPPOSE STUDENT FEES

Members of the Irish Republican Socialist Party were among the fifty students who took part in a protest at Queen's University in Belfast. The protest was organised to highlight issues around proposed higher fees and to show the inequality within universities.

Spokesperson for the IRSP, Chris Donnelly, who was part of the protest said, "We had no hesitation in taking part in the protest today at Queens. We believe we were absolutely



right in highlighting the fact that whilst fees will rise to £9,000 per year the Chancellor of Queens has a £10,000 wine allowance. This is absolutely disgusting and further highlights the inequality of the present system.

He commented further, "We have a system in Queens in which the chancellor has special privileges, has that allowance for wine and wider than that with the proposed job losses we have absolutely no transparency in regards how the university is run financially.

We are demanding real democratic change within this university. We are calling on more students to stand with us in our struggle to have these proposed fees scrapped. A united front can force the tory government to back down on these fees.