

Poblacht



na nOibrithe

Is dóighe linn gur mór iad na daoine móra mar cáimio féin ar ár nglúine. Éirimis!

The Workers' Republic Issue 1

Stormont Austerity Coalition



• FRIENDS TOGETHER: But Exactly Whose Interests Do They Really Serve?

Stormont's hidden scandal: 130,000 now seeking work

The Six County statelet is in the throes of an ever-deepening economic crisis so severe that not one elected representative from any of the five parties involved in the Stormont Executive is prepared to break ranks to admit just how severe that crisis is.

The truth is that the social and economic fabric of the Six-County state is in complete disarray and the Stormont assembly is unable to provide any meaningful or effective solutions.

The previous economic recession of the Thatcher era during the 1980s saw unemployment in the 6 counties reach a peak of 123,500 by October 1986.

In the intervening years, various British governments introduced no less than 13 separate measures to massage and hide the true levels of unemployment.

Those measures are still being used by the Stormont coalition today to hide the true extent of mass unemployment within our communities. They have learned well how to mimic Whitehall's sleight-of-hand tricks.

Stormont's heavily massaged 'official' statistics would attempt to show that the number of unemployed persons is estimated at 71,000.

However, within the official statistics is a startling figure kept hidden by Stormont.

That is the indisputable fact that there are almost another 60,000 men, women and young people who want to work, but who are excluded from the 'official' count.

Today, in the Six Counties, the scandalous reality is that there are an estimated 130,000 people seeking work. Almost one in four young aged 18 to 24 are unemployed.

Recently, over 11,000 people from across the north applied for the 450 full-and part-time jobs due to be created by a large international supermarket chain in Portadown. That is a sign of how critical the demand for employment has become.

One well-known senior economist has described the method used by Stormont for measuring unemployment as 'unreliable' and 'not well regarded in the economics world'.

Similarly, no party in Stormont is prepared to confront the key issue of how much people earn when they are in work.

In the Six Counties, the well-off still retain the largest slice of the financial cake, while the lower paid, when not faced with pay cuts, struggle to survive with paltry pay rises to meet huge increases in household bills.

In 1990, the highest earners in the Six Counties received, on average, at least £300 per week more than the lowest paid workers. In 2007, when Stormont was restored, that gap had risen to £600 per week and still continues to rise.

The unfair wage differential between genders also continues with women's median weekly gross earnings on average 29% below that of men's.

Commenting on these figures, éirigi's general secretary, Breandán Mac Cionnaith, said, "All the Stormont parties are keen to hide the stark reality of these actual unemployment figures and the wages gap – not only for economic reasons but because of the political signals these figures send out – a message that the Six-County state is an impractical and ineffectual economic entity based upon a misguided philosophy that partition can be made to work."

"If the Stormont coalition is incapable of admitting that there are currently around 130,000 people in the Six Counties who want and who need work, how can that coalition ever get to grips with the economic crisis or all the social problems which flow from that?"

He added, "Stormont's economic agenda is designed in Britain and implemented without question or dissent by local politicians. As the British government implements widespread cuts across all public sector services, Stormont dutifully follows suit through 'modernisation agendas', 'service streamlining' and 'investment incentives'."

Mac Cionnaith continued, "The reality for people in the Six Counties will be a massive, negative impact on housing, employment, health and social services, with continued community disintegration and housing shortages, reduced services for the ill and vulnerable, and further financial pay offs to companies through the privatisation of public services with rock-bottom wages. Stormont won't be able to provide any alternative."

Concluding, he said, "The clear and increasingly obvious signal is that a new political, economic and social order is required right across Ireland to bring radical, meaningful and effective improvement to the lives of working class people. Stormont cannot deliver on that and therein lies its most fundamental flaw."

INSIDE – Stormont isn't working for you on: Welfare Reform, Housing, Youth Unemployment, Poverty, Political Policing, Modern Internment, MI5, and more...

We say...



Anyone who studies the pages of this edition of *Poblacht na nOibrithe* (The Workers' Republic) will see all the signs of a deeply sick society. Or, more likely still, they will have already recognised them every day in their own lives.

In the areas of healthcare, housing and employment, in its treatment of children, pensioners and the most vulnerable, the Six County statelet is failing dramatically.

To summarise even the most startling facts:

122,000 children – more than one in five – are living below the poverty line.

Nearly 25% of 18 to 24-year-olds are out of work.

In total, around 130,000 people are unemployed, while 90,000 people are sitting on housing waiting lists.

For those with even the most rudimentary understanding of history, these statistics will come as no surprise. Since its brutal inception, the Six County state has acted as a bulwark against progress on every level – socially, economically, culturally and nationally.

What is different this time, however, is the smokescreen that has been erected to obscure the facts.

For more than a decade now, we've been told we're living in the 'New Northern Ireland', a place where everyone has an equal stake. To sell this lie, the British government has co-opted the constitutional nationalist parties and a sizable group of caste Catholics into a coalition with big house unionism, leaving working class communities with the illusion of a peace dividend and ever-growing dole queues.

Let's be clear: There has been no peace dividend for the working class people of Belfast, Newry, Derry City and anywhere else you choose to name in the Six Counties. Britain's latest strategy to pacify this place has amounted to creating enough stability to allow multinationals to make obscene profits and the middle classes to live comfortably, leaving the rest of us to suffer in silence.

Every indicator of quality of life worth taking into consideration demonstrates that things have got worse in the North over the last decade, not better. Our young people are facing a lifetime of unemployment or low-paid, short-term work, while our pensioners can't heat their homes or even eat adequately.

All this inequality and injustice is sold to us by a pliant bunch of visionless politicians and a grovelling corporate media. And, if like republicans and socialists across Ireland, you refuse to buy what they're selling, the armed enforcers of the PSNI, MI5 and other sinister elements of the occupation will drop the heavy hand.

Our communities are in desperate need of an alternative, and éirigi is in no doubt as to what that alternative should be. The Irish working class has gained exactly nothing from constitutional politics and participation in state structures that were established to serve the interests of the wealthy, not the plebs. What few rights the Irish working class has, it holds as a result of grass roots struggle and militant action.

The time has long passed for the removal of British rule and economic exploitation from this country. A 32-county socialist republic is as viable a solution now as it was when it was fought for in 1916 or hungered for in the H-Blocks in 1981. But the Republic only stands a chance if our communities become centres of resistance to the British government and the parasites who call themselves bankers, landlords and businessmen.

Start today. Join éirigi in making the future a thing to fight for, not to fear.

Dífhostaíocht na nÓg

Cén uair a n-uair? Cén áit a n-áit?

Gan jab, gan teach, gan seirbhísí. Sin an toadhchái gruama atá os comhair mórán daoine óga.

Tá leibhéal sroichte ag dífhostaíocht óige sna Sé Chonadae nach bhfuil feicthe le breis agus 15 bliain. Tá beagnach duine óg amháin as ceathrar in aois 18 go 24 gan obair.

Mar chomparáid, nuair a síníodh Comhaontú Aoine an Chéasta in 1998, ba é 9.6% an ráta dífhostaíochta óige. Bhí an ghlúin seo in ainms dóchas nua a fháil – ach ina áit fuair siad beagán dóchais do thodhcháí bríoch.

Ní éiríonn daoine óga infhostaithe go tobann ag aois 17, 18 nó 19. Is teip de chuid an chórais pholaitiúil agus eacnamúil a chruthaíonn an scéal seo; teip daoine óga a chur le hoideachas agus oiliúint; teip cinntiú go bhfreastalaítear ar a riachtanais shláinte agus leasa; teip deiseanna a chruthú a ligfeadh do dhaoine óga forbairt agus taithí dearfach a bheith acu lena gcomhaoisigh.

Níor ghoid daoine óga na billiúin punt ón tír. Ní dhearna siad amhantraíocht i dtalamh agus i réadmhaoín.

Ach táthar ag dúil anois go n-íocfaidh daoine óga as géarchéim atá ina toradh ar shaint dhaoine eile agus ar an chóras pholaitiúil agus eacnamúil ina mhaireann muid.

Táthar ag díriú isteach ar daoine óga le híoc as peacaí daoine eile.

Tá siad in áit ina bhfuil an líuntas cothabhála oideachais faoi bhagairt; ag obair ag íosleibhéal phá; forchurtha ar 'scéimeanna traenála' gan chiall ina gcaitheanna gnóthaí neamhsrupallacha leo mar lucht oibre gan phá; gearrtar a sochar tí. Agus an stát ag cur iallach ar dhaoine fásta obair níos faide agus dul ar phinsean níos moille, tchítear do dhaoine óga go gcuireann seo bac orthu post a fháil.

Faigheann na daoine sin a bhfuil an t-ádh orthu freastal ar ollscoil fiacha móra a ghlacfaidh blianta le híoc. Fiú ansin, ní chinntíonn céim ollscoile go bhfaighidh siad post.

Is minic a imíonn na daoine is spreacúla agus is infhostaithe ar an bhád bhán, agus tchítear do dhaoine a fhanann go bhfuil siad rócháilithe do na postanna ar féidir leo fáil. Dhúbláil eismirce ó na Sé Chonadae le blianta beaga anuas. Is daoine in aois 18 go 34 iad timpeall trian a théann chuig ball eile le haghaidh poist.

"Léiríonn tuairisc ó CNÓÉ go bhfágann taithí na dífhostaíochta mórán postchuardaitheoirí óga ag mothú go bhfuil colm nó dochar déanta dóibh."

Is léir gur mian le mórán polaiteoirí áitiúla i Stormont go n-imeoidh gach duine gan post leo chuig áiteanna eile ionann is nach gcuireann siad teip na polaiteoirí céanna i gcuimhne.

Bíonn tionchar nach bhfuil chomh feiceálach ar dhaoine óga gan post.



Tá 'colm tuarastail' cosúil freisin; ciallaíonn sin go saothróidh daoine óga atá dífhostaithe ar feadh tamaillfhada níos lú linn a saol. Éireoidh siad níos dofhostaithe. Ní bheidh na scileanna ná taithí acu le post a fháil agus is cosúla go mbeidh fadhbanna sláinte fadtéarmacha acu.

Léiríonn tuairisc ó Chomhairle Náisiúnta Óige na hÉireann go bhfágann taithí na dífhostaíochta mórán postchuardaitheoirí óga ag mothú go bhfuil colm nó dochar déanta dóibh.

Sa tuairisc, chuir daoine óga síos ar a dtaithe dífhostaíochta mar rud a bhfuil neart drochmhothúchán ag dul leis, mar shampla easpa féimheasa agus meanma, mothúcháin éadóchais, easpa rogha, agus i gcásanna áirithe admháil gur mhothaigh siad dúlagar agus strus.

Cuireadh ganntanas airgeadais chun suntais go minic, rud a chuireann le mothúcháin aonraithe agus taithí an fhrustrachais agus cruaitin.

Do chuid daoine óga cuireann an fhírinne bhrúidiúil seo ar shaol gan obair tús le titim isteach i ndúlagar, imní agus easláinte. Thaipseáin staidéar innéacs óige Macquarie 2010 gur mó an tionchar ar shláinte fhisiceach agus mheabhrach nuair is faide iad gan post. Tá daoine óga dhá oiread níos cosúla féindíobháil a dhéanamh nó taom scaoil a fhulaingt i ndiaidh bhliain dífhostaíochta.

Is ábhar sláinte poiblí é dífhostaíochta óige, ach ciallaíonn giorruithe Stormont sa tseirbhís shláinte nach bhfuil seirbhísí riachtanacha, go háirithe bainte le sláinte mheabhrach, ar fáil nuair is gá. Tá ró-ualach ar na seirbhísí a sholáthraíonn an earnáil dheonach agus phobail agus maireann ar bhúiséal an-íseal.

Ach tá cuid daoine óga ag troid ar ais. Feiceann siad gur theip ar chríochdheighilt, nach n-oibríonn Stormont ar a son, agus nach n-oibríonn an capitealachas d'éinne ach na daoine is saibhre.

Tuigeanann na daoine óga sin gur beag duine a thabharfaidh faoi fheachtasaíocht leis an tsochaí a athrú ar a son mura ndéanann siad féin é.

Heading Towards Minority Rule?



• Stormont

At a time when families, the young, the old, the ill, the low-paid and the unemployed are all facing cut-backs as a result of Stormont's cuts in public expenditure, all parties in the Executive are united in their attempts to face down any form of opposition.

Disagreeing with this Stormont's policies, however, also means incurring the displeasure of Stormont's politicians.

Opposition by many community and voluntary sector organisations to cuts in social welfare benefits have been met with a warning from Stormont finance minister, the DUP's Sammy Wilson.

"We need to ensure that we do not create unnecessary alarm," he said.

It might have escaped the attention of Sammy Wilson and his other colleagues from all parties within the Stormont Executive that genuine fear and alarm about their future already exists within families in every community in each one of the Six Counties.

There is real and genuine concern about the impact all these cut-backs will have.

Alarm also exists within Stormont, but for different reasons.

At the last election, the five parties which make up the Stormont executive polled a total of 608,350 votes out of a possible electorate

of 1,210,009.

That means just over 50.2% of all those eligible to vote actually cast their ballots for those parties.

As disillusionment and despair increases within working class communities at the failure of the Stormont executive to effect real political, social or economic change, the Stormont parties are keenly aware that, before long, they could well become a minority government in the truest sense of the word.

That is why any and all criticism, from whatever quarter, is collectively viewed by all of Stormont's parties as not being beneficial to their political project.

And therein lies the real challenge for Socialist Republicans, for all other progressives and for everyone who wishes to see a better, more fairer, more caring and equal society established in Ireland..

It is the challenge to harness that growing disillusionment, to reverse that sense of impotency among our communities in order to genuinely give them a real sense of empowerment, and to build a real and effective alternative to Britain's neo-colonial Stormont project – a project which, in most people's daily experiences, is fast becoming a failure.

Stormont's Agenda of Inequality: Pandering to the wealthy and penalising the poor

As the Stormont Coalition continues with its campaign to reduce the rate of corporation tax for large businesses and multinational companies, John McCusker, a member of éirigi in West Belfast, contrasts this stance with Stormont's willingness to implement cuts in public welfare benefits which will hit the most vulnerable in society.

Stormont's coalition proposes reducing corporation tax as a 'magic bullet' for economic regeneration. The coalition continuously 'sells' the Six Counties as a 'good place' for global businesses to set up shop on the basis that a well-educated but low-paid workforce exists here.

Stormont's coalition partners have learned nothing about the profit-driven motivation of those multi-national or major companies that would benefit most from a corporation tax reduction.

The Six Counties is littered with examples of huge companies who previously received substantial subsidies, amounting in some individual cases to many tens of millions of pounds, to locate in the north.

Having taken every subsidy, grant and tax-break on offer, they closed up and moved elsewhere where the labour costs were cheaper and state subsidies were higher. Caterpillar is but the most recent example of that approach.

Reducing the corporation tax rate will not stabilise the economy, it will merely exacerbate economic instability for workers and their families.

It will inevitably lead to widespread zero hour contracts, less legal protection for workers and further non-unionising of workplaces.

While Stormont's coalition advocates lessening the tax burden on those best placed to pay more, it steadfastly refuses to fully oppose welfare reform or to resist implementing cuts in education, housing, health, and social services provision.

The community and voluntary sectors, the vital threads running through many communities, are being stretched to breaking point.

The British Tory government's so-called 'welfare reforms' are already starting to be implemented.

Here again, Stormont's ineptitude is laid bare. Worse still, the record of both the SDLP and Sinn Féin has been shown as two-faced, despite those parties' claims to be the erstwhile defenders of the less well-off and the working poor.

"The community and voluntary sectors, the vital threads running through many communities, are being stretched to breaking point..."

At the beginning of 2012, the Stormont parties, including SDLP and Sinn Féin representatives, on the social development committee all agreed in favour of the Jobseeker's Allowance (Work Experience) (Amendment) (NI) 2012 and recommended that it be confirmed by the Six County Assembly. This amendment gave the green light to 'workfare' programmes.

Following opposition from trade unions and community and voluntary sector organisations, Sinn Féin and the SDLP then voted during the summer against the recommendation they had previously endorsed.

They only did so after realising the extent of public opposition. Their late conversion did not prevent the workfare measure being passed.



• Slash Stormont, Not Services

Had they been sincere about opposing the introduction of workfare measures, the two nationalist parties could have forced the issue by having all their MLAs sign a 'petition of concern' thus preventing those measures being passed without cross-community consensus. That they chose not to exercise that veto is something each party has still to publicly explain.

Such duplicity is again at play in relation to the Welfare Reform Bill. The DUP minister with responsibility for social welfare benefits announced in October that he will seek to delay implementation of some of the proposed measures for six months. He is merely engaging in political posturing.

The sole purpose of this legislation is simply to reduce the amount of monies paid out in benefits, irrespective of need or disability.

The effect will be further hardship for all those who already experience hardship and disadvantage as a result of ill-health, disability, and unemployment.

However, any hopes held by those who will be most affected by welfare reform that the Stormont coalition will simply refuse to agree or accept such dramatic changes to social welfare structures and benefits are extremely slim, if not completely extinguished.

In that respect, the contents of a confidential internal memo, compiled following a recent SF leadership meeting, makes very depressing reading.

That document shows that Sinn Féin agreed that its ministers within the Stormont executive would consent to pass the Bill to the Assembly for consideration and amendment there.

The document states Sinn Féin has held discussions on 'mitigating the worst aspects of Welfare Reform' and will propose 'mitigating measures which might alleviate the harsher aspects of the outworking of this agenda'.

An interesting use of words - 'mitigating the worst aspects', 'might alleviate the harsher aspects'.

In reality, Sinn Féin and the SDLP are only concerned about taking the rough edges off,

softening, but not stopping, the hammer-blow about to hit tens of thousands of people across the Six Counties. So much for opposing austerity.

Neither party will adopt a principled position to totally oppose the British Tory-designed Welfare Reform Bill, prevent the Bill or completely 'kill' the Bill. These parties prefer to maintain their political project at Stormont and they are certainly not prepared to provoke a crisis in the Assembly over this issue. They would rather see thousands of families plunged into crisis instead.

So, they will merely propose some cosmetic amendments.

Not unlike the SDLP's sister party in the Twenty-Six Counties, the Labour Party, which Sinn Féin in particular constantly berates.

Contrast this with the united joint campaign by SF, SDLP and their unionist partners in the Stormont coalition to reduce corporation tax for large companies who already earn hundreds of millions in profits annually from their operations in the Six Counties.

An equality agenda? Most definitely not. Instead, Stormont's inequality agenda will see legislative change to enrich the already wealthy, and another law to penalise the poor, the disabled, the ill and the unemployed.

"Had they been sincere about opposing the introduction of workfare measures, the two nationalist parties could have forced the issue by having all their MLAs sign a 'petition of concern'..."

DID YOU KNOW?

Besides introducing Universal Credit and related measures, the new Welfare Reform Bill will make other major changes to the benefits system. It will:

- introduce Personal Independence Payments to replace the current Disability Living Allowance
- restrict Housing Benefit entitlement for all social housing tenants whose accommodation is larger than they need
- up-rate Local Housing Allowance rates by the Consumer Price Index
- amend the forthcoming statutory child maintenance scheme
- limit the payment of contributory Employment and Support Allowance to a 12-month period, and
- cap the total amount of benefit that can be claimed.

In contrast, here are just a few examples of the profits which were declared last year by a few of those companies in the Six Counties who will benefit from a reduction in corporation tax.

AES and Premier Power: £95.6million;
Bombardier Aerospace: £57.4m;
BE Aerospace: £43.3m;
Viridian: £38.4m;
Moy Park: £27.8m;
Dunnes Stores: £26.3m;
SHS Group: £24.2m;
Terex: £23.3m;
Almac: £18.6m;
Seagate Technologies: £11.7m;
Norbrook Laboratories: £17.6m.

That doesn't take into account all those firms who trade here but who declare their profits in Britain or elsewhere.

They really need another tax-break at your expense, don't they?

**THE GREAT ONLY APPEAR GREAT
BECAUSE WE ARE ON OUR KNEES.
LET US RISE!**

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Political Policing Still A Reality

In November 2001, with great fanfare, the British government re-branded the long discredited Royal Ulster Constabulary with a new name, the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

With that re-branding, the British government promised 'a new beginning' for policing in the Six Counties. Constitutional nationalist parties soon bought into that myth.

Over a decade later, it is now abundantly clear that, instead of delivering a 'new beginning', the PSNI has simply continued with the same failed anti-working class and pro-British state agenda followed by the RUC and Royal Irish Constabulary before them.

The lie of 'community-based' policing has been exposed by the reality of increased use of draconian legislation, harassment and brutality.

Like many other false promises, delivery of an unarmed, civilianized police service remains unfulfilled.

Instead, a Six County police force has been created that is better armed, better equipped and which that has access to more repressive legislation that ever existed since partition.

For several years, constitutional nationalist parties in the Six Counties have peddled the lie that they achieved the following:

- No role for MI5 in 'civic policing'
- No PSNI personnel under MI5 control
- No secondment of PSNI personnel to MI5
- Annual oversight and reporting mechanisms on MI5's role
- A clear firewall established between the PSNI and MI5

So let's examine the reality.

No role for MI5 in 'civic policing'? MI5 does not have powers of arrest; does not have powers to question people; does not have powers to search or seize property. MI5 is fully dependent upon the PSNI to do all this for them. MI5 has overall primacy for Britain's "national security" interests. As such every British police force, whether in London, Birmingham or the Six Counties is subservient to MI5 and is obliged to carry out those operations, arrests, searches and interrogations dictated at the behest of MI5.

No PSNI personnel under MI5 control? No secondment of PSNI personnel to MI5? In 2007, constitutional nationalists put great emphasis on a statement made by the then British prime minister, Tony Blair.

DID YOU KNOW?
1 out of every 2 PSNI officers was in the RUC.

Blair stated that only PSNI personnel attached to PSNI Headquarters Staff would act in a "in a liaison capacity" with MI5. That was seized upon by constitutional nationalists to hide the reality that there are, in fact, many sections of the PSNI which fall under that overarching description of "Headquarters Staff".

However, PSNI Headquarters comprises not merely the Knock Road HQ in Belfast but includes multiple locations across the Six Counties and also includes the following departments:

- Command
- Crime Operations (including the PSNI intelligence unit C3)
- Finance & Support
- Human Resources
- Operations Support, including the Tactical Support Groups (TSGs)

The Crime Operations Department (and its specialist sections) was formed when Special Branch and the Criminal Investigation Department were amalgamated within the PSNI.

1,200 PSNI personnel could be acting in 'liaison capacity' with MI5.

It still remains unclear how many former Special Branch officers are located throughout the various specialist branches of the PSNI's Crime Operations department or even what percentage of total personnel they constitute. Given that those former RUC Special Branch officers would have many years of service and 'intelligence experience', it is likely that they continue to occupy pivotal positions.

The Tactical Support Groups within the PSNI Operations Support department are comprised of at least 500 personnel.

The PSNI's overall manpower currently stands at around 7,600 full- and part-time personnel. At any one time, up to 1,200 of those personnel are attached to PSNI Headquarters staff and, could be acting in a 'liaison capacity' directly with MI5.

Annual oversight and reporting mechanisms on MI5's role? Here again, oversight and reporting mechanisms concerning MI5 have been shown to be completely meaningless and worthless.

The appointment of a British peer, Lord Carlile, a supporter both of non-jury courts and the prolonged detention without trial of suspects, to a role in annually reviewing MI5 in the North, was bizarrely hailed as "progress" by constitutional nationalists at Stormont.

This was probably due to the fact, based on Tony Blair's statement of 10th January 2007, that Carlile's annual review of MI5 in the Six Counties is supposed to take place in consultation with the First and deputy First Ministers at Stormont - thereby directly implicating the north's largest constitutional nationalist party into providing a fig-leaf for MI5's activities in the Six Counties.

Announcing that he had received Carlile's third and most recent annual report, Britain's Six County minister, Owen Paterson, stated in December 2011 that "there are no difficulties of any significance in the inter-operability between the PSNI and the Security Service... This is a sound working partnership."

Paterson refused to make the report public due to "its sensitive nature".

He reinforced the sensitive, secretive and potentially controversial nature of its contents by declining to place a copy in the Library within the Westminster Parliament, thus preventing his fellow British MPs from examining or questioning its contents.

DID YOU KNOW?
The PSNI has carried out 191,268 stop & search operations since 2007, when it received the support of all parties in the Stormont regime. That's around 100 stop & searches every single day.

A clear firewall established between the PSNI and MI5? It is obvious from all of the foregoing that no "clear firewall" was ever established between these two forces.

Instead, constitutional nationalist parties created a smokescreen of propaganda to mislead their community into believing that those parties had achieved major progress on end the era of political policing which has existed for as long as the Six County state itself. That was a deceit.

That a permanent and malign MI5 presence exists in the North is undeniable.

The multi-million pound base that MI5 has built at Palace Barracks serves as an inescapable physical testament to that fact. But no mention is ever made of how many ex-RUC personnel are employed there.

Across the Six Counties, many people are being targeted by MI5 for no apparent reason. These include trade unionists, lawyers, political activists, community workers, and ordinary people.



Spokesperson for éirígí in the Newry and Mourne area, Stephen Murney, has publicly highlighted several incidents in that area where both the PSNI and MI5 were clearly working hand in glove.

Murney said, "There are those within the political establishments in both jurisdictions on this island who have invested much time, energy and propaganda in creating the myth of a new, reformed Six Counties.

"They have thrown their full support behind the PSNI, while turning a blind eye to that force's continuing and increased collusion with MI5 and covert British military units such as the Special Reconnaissance Regiment (SRR).

"The two main constitutional nationalist parties in the Six Counties, in particular, heralded the so-called devolution of policing and justice powers to the Stormont administration as the dawn of a new era.

"It's time they admitted the failure of that project.

Concluding, Stephen said, "Political policing remains just as much a reality today in the Six Counties as it was ten, twenty, thirty and forty years ago.

"No amount of Stormont spin can change that."



• MI5's £20 million Palace Barracks headquarters in Hollywood opened in 2007

The Mechanisms of Unaccountability

The two constitutional nationalist parties at Stormont put great store by the three 'accountability mechanisms' which they promised would ensure a new beginning in Six County policing.

However, just like those promises, the three accountability mechanisms have also been proven to break easily.

The Policing Board is the overarching body which supposedly holds the PSNI to account. Under its tenure, the PSNI still continues to deploy and use plastic bullets - a practice which constitutional nationalists said they would end - yet another broken promise!

In reality, the PSNI has danced rings around the Policing Board on many occasions.

When the Chief Constable decided to deploy undercover British military units of the Special Reconnaissance Regiment, he did not report that fact to the Policing Board. Instead, the Policing Board only found this out from the BBC.

When former members of the RUC were re-hired by the PSNI, the Policing Board were again to find this out via the media.

And after that original disclosure, it was another two years before the Policing Board discovered the full extent of that re-hiring - over 1,000 ex-RUC men back on the payroll - a deliberate move to sidestep the much publicized 50/50 recruitment.

Hundreds of those ex-RUC men could well have been involved in the

re-investigation of murder cases in which the RUC Special Branch and their agents were directly involved in. Little wonder there have been so few findings in relation to collusion.

The Police Ombudsman's Office has proven to be equally adept at dancing to the PSNI's tune. Covering-up and re-writing reports into murders in which members of British state forces were implicated became the norm.

Additionally, like the old complaints mechanism before it, the Ombudsman's office dismisses the vast majority of complaints made against the PSNI by members of the public.

The third so-called accountability mechanism is the District Policing Partnerships (now

called Police and Community Safety Partnerships). Many of their meetings, when open to the public, are often poorly attended by the public. Perhaps, the reason for that is that most people know that these PCSPs serve no meaningful purpose.

Indeed, any member of the public who would seek to quiz the PSNI on their stop and search practices, harassment, etc. at these meetings will quickly find that such things come under the broad, all-embracing remit of 'national security' and therefore cannot be answered.

Those then are the three legs of the accountability mechanisms which have delivered so little.

Like a chair with three legs, they have proven to be easily toppled.

Housing is a Right

In the past decade, waiting lists for social housing have increased as have levels of homelessness. House prices soared only to crash headlong as a recession, caused by the greed of banks, developers and property speculators, struck.

Against this backdrop, social housing provision becomes crucial in realising the right to adequate housing.

As the experience in many of our communities shows, Stormont's programme for new social housing build has failed to keep pace with the increase in need. There has been a systemic failure by Stormont in the fulfilling of a person's and a family's right to housing.

Under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the Stormont Executive is legally bound to use its resources to maximum effect in ensuring the right to adequate housing.

Stormont continuously fails to meet that legal obligation.

Little wonder that over 34,776 households are on the housing waiting lists in 2012.

20,302 of those are considered to be in housing stress, including 9,021 households deemed to be statutorily homeless.

These figures do not give a full picture as the term "households" does not indicate if those are single persons, couples or families. It is conceivable that anywhere between 50,000 and 90,000 people could actually be on housing waiting lists.

Take the example of North Belfast where over 2,400 households are on the housing waiting list. Despite making up approximately 45% of the north Belfast population, Catholic families comprise almost three quarters of those in housing stress on the waiting list.

In 2008 the Northern Ireland Housing Executive projected that by 2012, 95% of the need for new build social housing in the area would be among the Catholic community.

Recent plans to provide housing on the Girdwood site on the basis of a sectarian carve-up chose to ignore these realities, along with the equality obligations applying to public bodies, Stormont departments and political representatives.

Before the recession, the lack of affordable housing created major problems in many communities. The recession made this worse. Further cuts in public spending and to welfare benefits will affect those who are already vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Stormont politicians can at least take comfort

vulnerable and disadvantaged.

Stormont politicians can at least take comfort from the fact that their policies are paying massive dividends for some.

Under Stormont, the private sector rental market has grown dramatically with private landlords and property speculators raking in scores of millions of pounds each month.

In our cities, towns and rural areas, property speculators and private landlords are buying up land and houses by out-bidding working class families and first-time buyers, thus effectively excluding them from the housing market.

In 2001, there were approximately 44,000 privately rented houses across the Six Counties. In the space of just over a decade, this figure has increased spectacularly to over 125,000 such properties.

Private landlords and speculators are now charging, on average, £436 per month for one bedroom properties, £517 for two bedrooms, and £578 for three bedrooms in the Belfast area.

Many of those being forced into the private landlord sector are young single people and young couples who cannot access homes within the social housing sector due to the high demand and the ever-decreasing number of social housing units available.

"Under Stormont, the private sector rental market has grown dramatically with private landlords and property speculators raking in scores of millions of pounds each month."

In the Newry and Mourne area, the Housing Executive has been operating a pilot scheme where applicants for social housing are now referred to private landlords.

That scheme is to be rolled out across the Six Counties. This is despite the fact that there is little effective regulation of the private sector. A recent NIHE report, which included a survey of tenants of private landlords, showed that there were clear issues to be addressed and found that:

- 73% of those tenants surveyed did not receive a rent book which landlords are legally required to provide

- 38% of the tenants did not have a written tenancy agreement

- 30% of tenants had neither a rent book nor a written tenancy agreement

From the Land League in the 1880s, to the Civil Rights Movement of the late 1960s, through to the present day, housing rights have been a cornerstone of struggle for generations. A house is not simply a building, it is a home. As Pádraic Mac Coitir explains, access to adequate housing is a basic human right. But evidence shows that, under Stormont, many people in the Six Counties still do not enjoy this right.



• CIVIL RIGHTS: 40 years on, housing remains a major issue

Overall sixty per cent of respondents were in receipt of Housing Benefit. Of these, the majority (68%) had to pay a shortfall between the Housing Benefit they received and the total rent payable.

The average amount that tenants had to pay for a shortfall was £20 per week, with many having to pay £30 or £40 per week and higher.

Single tenants under the age of 35 on low incomes or in receipt of welfare benefits are already being subjected to Stormont's cuts. They face reductions in the amount of housing benefit they are entitled to.

Many face reductions of £45 per week in their housing benefit, creating a situation where they will simply be unable to pay their rent and, as a consequence, will be forced into homelessness.

There are thousands of working households on low incomes and families on benefits at the moment who are just about making ends meet. Around 30% of households in the Six Counties have a total income of less than three hundred pounds per week.

By having cuts made to their housing benefits or completely losing their housing benefit as a result of these changes, they'll be pushed further into hardship.

Inevitably, private sector tenants will lose their homes.

This should be particularly worrying to everyone as dependence upon the private rented sector is being advocated as Stormont's solution to housing need.

Many couples with young children who

bought family homes before the property crash now find themselves unable to keep up with their mortgage repayments.

DID YOU KNOW?

Of the four main parties at Stormont – DUP, Sinn Féin, SDLP and UUP – at least 1 in 5 of their MLAs are landlords.

Against this backdrop, the spectre of forcible evictions may again return to our communities as a direct result of Stormont's policies.

Such a scenario is not that far-fetched.

Figures suggest someone in the Six Counties is 13 times more likely to face eviction for falling behind in repayments than someone in the 26 Counties.

As éirí party activists have already shown in the Twenty-Six Counties, we will organize resistance and prevent the eviction from their homes of working class families whose only 'crime' is lack of wealth.

The 1919 Democratic Programme of the First Dáil asserted that the duty of the Republic, and all who would claim to be Republican, is to make provision for the physical wellbeing of the people, ensuring that no one shall suffer from lack of shelter, and to legislate for the continuous improvement of the living conditions of working class people.

That's why éirí insists on putting the need of public interest before the greed of private profit.

Poverty Still on the Increase

In this article, éirí member and community activist Máire Drumm shows that over 122,000 children in the Six Counties are living in poverty.

The Stormont coalition's own figures show that 122,000 children live in poverty while a report commissioned by the Save the Children charity revealed that one third of those, 40,000 children, live in severe poverty. Another report published this year by the Campaign to End Child Poverty found that over 1 in 5 children live below the poverty line – the point at which families struggle to pay for basic necessities such as food, heating and clothing.

That figure rises to over 2 in 5 in West Belfast (where 46 per cent of children live in poverty) and North Belfast (41 per cent), with Derry

close behind at 36 per cent.

The report also reveals that there are now more children in households without work, and in households where only some of the adults have jobs.

Families are being forced to choose between feeding themselves or heating their homes, and it's a situation that's more common than many people are willing to admit.

In West Belfast, the figures for child poverty given in the report are appallingly high – 64 per cent in Whiterock, 63 per cent in Falls, 56 per cent in Clonard and 53 per cent in the Upper Springfield.

The risk of poverty is also high among pensioners with 21 per cent of pensioners living in poverty, a rise on previous figures for the Six Counties.

Pensioners living here are more likely to be

completely reliant on state benefits for their income. 40 per cent of single pensioners and 25 per cent of couples have no income other than the state pension and pension credits.

"Families are being forced to choose between feeding themselves or heating their homes, and it's a situation that's more common than many people are willing to admit."

This already intolerable situation will only worsen as our communities feel the bite of the joint Tory-Stormont cuts agenda.

People in work are having their wages frozen or reduced and people in receipt of benefits are finding those slashed.

Add to this the fact that more people are finding that their income cannot keep up with

inflation and it's clear that many families are struggling to afford even the basics.

The millionaires' cabinet in Westminster will not have to face these circumstances, neither will the Stormont politicians who are just getting by on their £43,000-a-year 'poverty' pay.

The most vulnerable are suffering the most from the regressive economic policies designed by the Tories and implemented by Stormont.

This sorry state of affairs will continue only as long as people allow it.

Workers are facing further attacks on pay and conditions, and those people on benefits and tax credits will see all of these schemes cut as the British government and its Stormont administration continue with their austerity economics.

Now is the time to say 'No more' so we don't condemn yet another generation of children to a poverty-ridden existence.

+ Know Your Rights

Given the wide range of legislation available to the PSNI and conscious of the increasing activities of MI5, éirígi has worked with a group of solicitors to produce basic information guides to inform people of their rights. Belfast-based solicitor Padraigin Drinan says, "These guides are a necessity for many people. After all these years of repressive legislation, it's remarkable how few people are actually aware of what their rights are. The decision to make this information available is a very welcome and timely step."

The PSNI

When stopped by the PSNI, many people unknowingly waive a number of their basic rights. Due to the vast range of repressive laws available to the PSNI, a great number of people are simply unaware as to what those rights are.

The following provisions can be invoked to Stop, Search and Question individuals:

PACE

Objective of Search: offensive weapons, going equipped, stolen property, firearms, etc. **Must have 'reasonable suspicion' and any search must be in relation to suspected object(s).**

Firearms Act

'Reasonable Suspicion' that the person stopped is in possession of such articles.

Road Traffic Act

Must be stopped while in vehicle or on cycle by an 'officer' in full uniform. Another provision is then invoked to carry out search.

Terrorism Act

Section 43: 'Reasonable Suspicion' that the person is a 'terrorist'.

Note: You are **NOT** obliged to provide your name, address, D.O.B. or account for your movements under the above section.

Justice & Security Act

Section 21:

(a) Stop as 'long as necessary' to question identity and/or movements.

(b) Questions regarding knowledge of a recent 'terrorist' incident i.e. Bomb/Shooting. (Can only be questioned by British Armed Forces.)

(c) Stop vehicle following a recent 'terrorist' incident.

Section 24: Search for ammunition, wireless apparatus and transmitters in a public place ('reasonable suspicion' not required) or private place ('reasonable suspicion' is required).

Note: The PSNI can rely on 'intelligence' as the sole basis for their 'reasonable suspicion'! When stopped, searched and/or questioned:

* Remain calm and speak clearly.

* **Do not stop voluntarily**, the PSNI must order you to stop through invoking legislation.

* Always ask **why** and under **what** legislation you are being stopped/searched/questioned under.

* Get the 'Lead Officer's' name, identification number and station.

* Provide your Name, Address and D.O.B.

* Demand a 'Search Record', or how to obtain one if refused at time of search.

* You are **not obliged to assist them**, such as pulling out pockets, if they insist on searching there then let them do it – this is not being obstructive.

If stopped under Section 21 of the Justice & Security Act, you are **legally obliged** to account for your movements. The legislation is vague as to how this is done and one example could be to state that you are "coming from home and going to the shop". However, how you decide to answer this question could lead to further questions being asked by the PSNI.

* **Do not provide** the PSNI with any information other than that which you are legally obliged to provide.

* You are **entitled** to have a family member notified of your detention.

* Regardless of what provision the PSNI have stopped you under, you are **entitled to seek legal advice** at any stage.

* **If you feel vulnerable**, you should explain that you do not understand why you have been stopped and **require immediate advice from your solicitor**. The PSNI **do not** have to suspend the stop/search/questioning while you do this.

Record all details while they are fresh in your mind and **log all incidents of harassment** with a solicitor.



• Stop & Search under way in Newry

MI5

An increasing trend has emerged across the Six Counties where MI5 agents have engaged in numerous attempts to recruit various individuals to 'work' for them. Incidents have been reported to éirígi in recent months which show that among those being targeted are community workers, trade union activists and ordinary members of the public. The circumstances in which these approaches by MI5 have been made vary from case to case.

It is vital for everyone to know what rights they have in such circumstances.

So what are your rights as far as MI5 are concerned? What should you do, for example, if you are walking down the road and MI5 operatives approach you?

Essentially, you have a choice to make.

One choice is that you can agree to speak to, co-operate with or work for MI5. If you co-operate, MI5 will basically use and abuse you until your usefulness to them has run out.

The second, and correct, choice is that you simply refuse to speak to, co-operate with or work for MI5 at all.

This is the only sensible option, one which all right-thinking people will choose to exercise in such circumstances.

There is no legal obligation on any one to work for MI5 as their agent or spy. **There is absolutely no duty placed upon you by any law to co-operate with or answer any questions put to you by MI5 operatives.**

It is very important for people to be aware of these basic legal facts.

MI5 operatives **do not** have the power to arrest or detain you. All that MI5 operatives can do is approach you and ask if you want to work for them. They may offer incentives such as money or even say they can help you get a job.

There are well-known cases relating to people who previously worked for MI5. In return

they were promised payments and favours – until they were exposed, isolated and left to fend for themselves.

MI5 basically exists to gather information on people: people who may be your neighbours, friends or even family members. **You may probably wonder why you are being targeted. You are not alone.**

Lots of people are being targeted for no apparent reason – trade unionists, lawyers, political activists, community workers, ordinary people, all of whom are not involved in any 'unlawful' activities. An 'intelligence file' can be opened on any individual and MI5 operatives then assigned to them for no other reason than simply because of where they happen to live.

If approached by MI5 operatives, take a note of their 'names' and contact telephone number. Inform your solicitor immediately and let your solicitor write to MI5 stating that you do not wish to work for MI5 so, at the very least, there is a record kept by an independent person.

It is important that every person approached by MI5 contacts a solicitor. You could also ask your solicitor to publicise your case.

There have been circumstances where some people assumed it would be better that they just spoke to MI5 despite having no obligation to do so and without the presence of their solicitor. Some people have made the false assumption that MI5 would go away due to this cooperation.

This is never the case.

Once anyone opens the door to co-operating outside of their legal rights, evidence shows that MI5 are prone to increase the pressure and further infringe upon that person's legal rights.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

Do not be misled by MI5 operatives who state that they need you to assist them.

Do not talk to them regarding any matter.

Do make sure that you obtain the MI5 operatives' names and telephone number.

Do state to the MI5 operatives that you need to seek legal advice.

Do state to the MI5 operatives that your solicitor will contact them.

Do not discuss any matters with them, **walk away immediately** once you have taken the MI5 operatives names and phone number.

Do not discuss matters regarding your movements or those of anyone else.

Always remember – there is no obligation under law for you to answer any questions that MI5 operatives put to you.

Make a note of the time and place where MI5 contacted you.

Make a note of anything the MI5 operatives said to you.

Seek legal advice as early as possible.

Having sought legal advice, let the solicitor act on your behalf.

BRITAIN OUT



OF IRELAND!

Internment by another means

Marian Price is effectively interned and could spend the rest of her life in a British prison without a trial, sentence, or release date.

Twice she has been arrested and brought before a non-jury Diplock court. Twice a judge has ordered her released on bail. Each time, a British minister overruled the judge and ordered her back to prison.

Since her re-internment in May 2011 as a result of "secret evidence" that neither she nor her lawyers have been allowed access to, Marian Price's health has steadily worsened.

In June 2012 this resulted in her being moved from Maghaberry prison to a hospital in Belfast as a result of ongoing health issues. She is now seriously ill.

Marian Price's case has drawn worldwide condemnation, with calls for her release coming from across the globe.

Martin Corey was arrested at his Lurgan home on Friday April 16th 2010, and brought to Maghaberry prison on the instruction of a British minister, without any charges being brought against him. He, too, is effectively interned.

Martin Corey has now remained in custody for two and a half years without charge. He is also held on the basis of "secret evidence" which neither he nor his legal team have been permitted to see or challenge. In July this year, a court ordered his release, but this was immediately over-ruled at the behest of the British.

Experience shows that when internment was used in the Six Counties on many previous occasions, a great number of innocent people found themselves locked up in prison for no reason.

There is no reason to suggest that the victims of present day internment are any different.

As for the so-called "secret evidence" which the British allege they have – why is it so secret that Britain will not even let it be heard or challenged in court? Could the real reason be that there simply is no such evidence at all in either Marian's or Martin's case?

Maghaberry

For the past 18 months, republican prisoners in Maghaberry gaol have been on a protest.

Their demand is for an end to the vile, degrading and abusive practice of strip-searching.

In 2010, the prisoners entered into a mediation process to try and resolve the situation. That process was led by two senior trade unionists.

In August of that year, a **written agreement was reached between the prisoners and the Prison authorities.** Central to that agreement was to be the introduction of modern technology which would effectively render strip-searching completely unnecessary.

When the authorities reneged on their side of the agreement, the prisoners re-commenced their protest.

Two years later, there is still no indication that the prison authorities are prepared to install technology-based body scanners at Maghaberry. Why?

Such scanners are present in airports around the world. Their effectiveness has been tried, tested and proven.

Conditions under which the prisoners are held continue to deteriorate as the loyalist dominated Prison Officers Association appear to retain the power to veto any form of progress which would bring about an end to strip-searching.

Youth unemployment: When is their time? Where is their place?

No jobs, no homes, no services. That is the bleak future that many young people are facing into.

Youth unemployment in the Six Counties has reached levels not seen for more than a decade and a half. Almost one in four (22.3%) of young people aged 18 to 24 are without work.

By way of comparison, when the Good Friday Agreement was signed in 1998, the rate of youth unemployment was 9.6%. This generation was supposed to be the generation to be given new hope – instead they have been given little prospects of a meaningful future.

Young people simply do not become unemployable at the age of 17, 18 or 19. It is a failure of the political and economic system that creates that situation; failure to effectively engage young people in learning and training; failure to ensure their health and welfare needs are met; failure to create opportunities to allow young people to develop themselves and have positive experiences with their peers.

Young people did not rob the country of billions of pounds. They did not speculate in land and property.

But young people are now being expected to pay for a crisis caused by the greed of others and the political and economic system we live under.

It is young people who are being targeted to pay for the sins of others.

They find themselves in a situation where educational maintenance allowances are under threat; working for minimum pay levels; forced on to meaningless “training schemes” where they are treated by unscrupulous firms as

unpaid labour; their housing benefits being cut. As the state coerces older people to work longer and retire later, young people are finding that this, too, is preventing them working. Those fortunate enough to make it to university find themselves with huge debts which will take years to pay off. Even then, they find that a university degree will not guarantee employment.

The more energetic and employable often emigrate, while those who stay often find themselves overqualified for the jobs they can get. Emigration from the Six Counties has doubled in recent years. Almost one third of those forced to go elsewhere for work were people aged 18 and 34.

Many local politicians at Stormont also no doubt wish that all those without jobs would simply fly off to other places so they would no longer be a reminder of those same politicians’ failures.

There are also other less visible effects upon the young unemployed.

‘Wage scarring’ is also likely; that means young people who are unemployed for a long time will earn less throughout their whole lives. They will become even less employable. They won’t have the skills or experience to get work and they will be more likely to have long-term health problems.

A National Youth Council of Ireland report shows that the experience of unemployment has left many of the young jobseekers feeling ‘scarred’ and ‘damaged’.

In the report, young people have described their experience of unemployment as one which is accompanied by a number of negative feelings such as low self esteem and low morale,

feelings of hopelessness, despair and lack of choice, and in some cases admissions of instances of depression and stress. Financial shortage was highlighted frequently, and which can contribute to the young jobseekers sense of isolation and their experience of frustration and hardship.

For some young people the brutal reality of life without a job is the start of a spiral into depression, anxiety and ill health. The 2010 Macquarie youth index study showed that the longer they don’t have a job, the more damaging the impact on their mental and physical health. Young people are twice as likely to self-harm or suffer panic attacks after a year of unemployment.

“A NYCI report shows that the experience of unemployment has left many of the young jobseekers feeling ‘scarred’ and ‘damaged’.”

Youth employment is also a public health issue, but Stormont’s cut-backs in the health service means that much needed services, particularly those relating to mental health, are not available when required. Services provided by the community and voluntary sector are over-burdened and exist on shoe-string budgets.

But some young people are fighting back.

They can see that partition has failed, that Stormont doesn’t work for them, and that capitalism doesn’t work for anyone but the richest.

Those young people realise that if they don’t agitate and campaign for real change to society, few others will do it for them.

That has always been the case. It most certainly is the case again today.

Universal Credit – A universal disaster

Many organisations in the community and voluntary sector have raised their concerns about the introduction next April of Universal Credit, the British Tory-led welfare reform project.

Concern is not so much that many claimants will be unable to fill out a Universal Credit claim online – a new requirement – the issue is whether those applying for help will have an income they can sustainably use. The new Credit system will also pay benefits monthly, in arrears, rather than at fortnightly intervals, at present.

That there will be fundamental problems with the new payment and whether it is achievable at all, there is no doubt.

The new benefit aims to sweep together means-tested benefits and tax credits into one “universal” benefit. Those benefits include: income-based jobseeker’s allowance, income related employment and support allowance, income support, Disability Living Allowance, and housing benefit. The aim of universal credit is to reduce the number of people on benefits and cut British expenditure.

The welfare benefit changes by the British Tories and Stormont are part of a cuts agenda that targets the poor and most vulnerable in society who are already paying for the greed of the bankers, bondholders and developers.

Cameron’s government, the most right-wing of all post-war British governments, has embarked upon an all-out assault on the less well-off in society.

The Stormont Coalition mimics each of that British government’s policies. The education maintenance allowance for young students is to be cut, day centres under threat of closure, turmoil in the health service, cuts to support for the frail and old, and perhaps the most cruel cut of all: two thirds of disabled children set to lose their Disability Living Allowance when Universal Credit is introduced.

As well as opposition in principle to Universal Credit, many anti-poverty organisations believe the programme is practically unachievable.

The project has already been delayed owing to IT problems. Last year a leaked report highlighted concerns from the IT industry itself that the timescales involved were unrealistic (the new payment is due to be fully delivered by 2017). Rumour has it that problems are continuing to mount up and that the whole project is in danger of being overwhelmed.

The Welfare Benefits system is there to help the most vulnerable in our society especially when the economy is weak and many people are dependent on government financial.

By replacing the current benefits system with Universal Credit, the Brit Tory Government and its Stormont puppet are intent on forcing people off benefits, even those who are seriously ill, and into low paid jobs. And all this at a time of massive unemployment.

Additionally, the stricter rules and regulations governing the new benefit will make entitlement much more difficult for new claimants.

Now is the time to organize within communities against this.



• éirígi on the march against austerity

Health Service Under Attack

Up to 4,000 jobs in the health service will be lost by 2015 as a result of the Stormont coalition’s budget cuts.

Rates of heart disease, respiratory illness and mental illness are high throughout the Six Counties. The links between poverty and ill health are well-documented and established. The impact of these cuts are already being felt across each of the five health and social care trusts. **The number of people waiting for more than 12 hours in Accident and Emergency departments here has jumped by a massive 750% in the past five years.**

Figures show that, in the last year, the five health trusts failed to meet their own waiting list targets. Performances were particularly poor in Antrim and Belfast. There were a total of 10,213 breaches of the 12-hour target which states patients must be seen within that 12-hour period, compared to 7,386 in 2010/11.

As Stormont’s cuts take hold, the number of hospital beds available continues to decline. A recent Royal College of Nursing survey highlighted the growing practice of hospital patients being treated on trolleys in casualty corridors. This has already led to the highly publicised deaths of two patients on trolleys.

According to other recent figures, many consultants’ posts within hospitals remain vacant. At present, there are at least 20 unfilled consultants’ posts in the Royal Victoria Hospital, 12 in Craigavon Area Hospital, 10 at the Ulster Hospital, 10 at the Altnagelvin Hospital in Derry, 3 at Erne Hospital in Enniskillen and 7 at Daisy Hill Hospital in Newry.

In the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, leaked documents show that approximately 160 jobs will be affected across the Trust’s area by the end of the current financial year. The proposals include the loss of around 160 frontline posts, including those of 100 nurses and closing 35 hospital beds across the Southern Trust.

Domiciliary care services throughout the Six Counties, whereby a range of personal care and support services is delivered to individuals in their own homes, are also being negatively impacted upon by Stormont cut-backs. Many home-care workers report that they are being forced to cut-back on the amount of statutory required time they are supposed to spend attending to the needs of their elderly and infirm clients.

Stormont is also proposing to cut training grants to Student nurses. They study in universities, but spend half their time working in hospitals. They get an annual bursary of £7,000. Stormont wants to reduce that by almost £900 and remove an additional £150 grant for books and uniforms. Organisations representing student nurses have said the cuts would be disastrous and will deter many people from entering nursing.

Meanwhile, the privatisation of sections of the health service still continues with HCL being one of the latest private companies to get a contract for back-office services from the Department of Health. HCL Technologies is a global company with over 88,000 employees across 26 countries. **For people in the Six Counties, however, the clear message is that Stormont most definitely isn’t good for your health.**

Frithdhúnadh Mór 1913



• DOMHNACH NA FOLA

• ARM CATHARtha ÉIREANN

Ní raibh aon dúshraith mhór tionsclaíochta ag Baile Átha Cliath in 1913 agus obair ócáideach a bhíodh ann de ghnáth, le tuarastail sclábhaíochta agus easpa eagraíochta ceardchumainn. Bhí trian de dhaonra na cathrach ina gcónaí i bplodtíthe na lárchathrach. Chuaigh an plodú, brocamas agus sláintíocht easpach le drochbheathú agus mar thoradh bhí ceann de na rátaí báis naonán is airde san Eoraip ag Baile Átha Cliath. *Bhí éadaingne fostaíochta agus streachailt laethúil le marachtaíl ina samplaí den chóras shóisialta.*

Le teacht Shéamus Uí Lorcáin mar eagraí do Cheardchumann Náisiúnta na nDugairí, d'éirigh na hoibrithe taobh-uisce amach arís, ar dtús i mBéal Feirste in 1907 agus ní ba mhoille i bpoirt Éireannach eile.

Cuireadh an Lorcánach ar fionraí mar gheall ar easaontas leis an cheardchumann Bhriotanach agus in 1909 seoladh ceardchumann nua i mBÁC d'oibrithe neamhoilte – Ceardchumann Oibrithe Iompair agus Ilsaothair na hÉireann [ITGWU]. Ón tús, mhaígh an ceardchumann nua clár oibre corraíola polaitíochta agus tionsclaíochta leis an sochaí a athrú chun leasa lucht oibre na hÉireann.

Faoi cheannas William Martin Murphy, úinéir an Irish Independent agus stiúrthóir Chomhlacht Thrambhealaí Átha Cliath, chuaigh breis agus 400 fostóirí le Cónaidhm Fostóirí Átha Cliath chun cearta comhargála agus ballraíochta ceardchumainn a dhiúltú don chosmhuintir. Bhí cuspóir acu an ITGWU a bhriseadh mar aon leis an teachtaireacht ráite go glinn ag an Lorcánach agus an Chonghaileach.

Tháinig uair na cinniúna mí Lúnasa 1913, nuair a d'eisigh Murphy fógra deiridh chuig oibrithe san Irish Independent – roghnaigh idir an ceardchumann agus a bpoist. Bhí na hoibrithe dílis dá gceardchumann agus briseadh iad óna bpoist, agus mar thoradh bhí gníomh dlúthpháirtíochta ann agus mhéadaigh an t-aighneas ar fud na cathrach.

Ansin d'eisigh na fostóirí an 'cháipéis' mhíchlúiteach, ag frithdhúnadh oibrí ar bith nár shínigh geall ag séanadh an ITGWU. Faoi Mheán Fómhair, bhí breis agus 20,000 oibrí dúnta amach.

De Domhnaigh 31 Lúnasa, d'ionsaigh na póilíní slua a chruinnigh chun éisteach le Séamus Ó Lorcáin i Sráid Saicbhil. Chuir na húdaráis cosc ar an chruinniú. Gortaíodh na scórtha daoine sa ruathar agus maraíodh triúr oibrí – James Nolan, James Byrne agus Alice Brady.

Thosaigh na hoibrithe dá geosaint féin trí bhunú Arm Cathartha na hÉireann.

Dhruid Séamus Ó Conghaile port Átha Cliath go daingean agus d'ullmhaigh an dá thaobh do streachailt fhada ar fud an gheimhridh, leis na basanna ag brath ar ghorta agus na hoibrithe ag brath ar an bhunteachtaireacht 'gach do chách agus cách do gach'.

In aghaidh na gcorrlach éagothrom thosaigh an Frithdhúnadh ag mionú in Eanáir 1914 nuair a d'fhill Ceardchumann Oibrithe Foirgneamh – mar aon le mórán eile – gan an cháipéis ghránna a shíniú.

D'fhulaing cuid go deireadh ach i mí Bealtaine thit an flúthbheartaíocht. Cé nach raibh an neart acu le bua a bhaint amach, chinnigh siad maireachtáil ceardchumainn éifeachrach. Ach le maidhm, bbailigh an ITGWU neart taobhaithe agus, níos suntasaí, chuir siad an bhunchloch gur chonchluídigh an Conghaileach:

"From the effects of this drawn battle both sides are still bearing heavy scars. How deep those scars are, none will ever reveal. But the working class has lost none of its aggressiveness, none of its confidence, none of the hope in the ultimate triumph. No traitor amongst the ranks of that class has permanently gained, even materially, by his or her treachery. The flag of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union still flies proudly in the van of the Irish working class, and that working class still marches proudly and defiantly at the head of the gathering hosts who stand for a regenerated nation, resting upon a people industrially free."

Join éirígí

For Yourself

You have already felt the impact of the right-wing policies of the British government and their Stormont puppets: attacks on public services, reduced wages, unemployment, emigration and new taxes. And there is plenty more to come. If you want a better future for yourself, you'll have to stand shoulder to shoulder with your fellow citizens and fight for it.

For Your Family

The health service, education system, pensions and every family-orientated benefit and public service are now in the firing-line of the Stormont coalition.

For Your Community

Community and voluntary groups, youth projects, have all had their funding cut in recent years. These cutbacks, aimed at the very fabric of the community, are having an impact that will be felt for decades to come if they aren't reversed now.

For Your Country

Many people across Ireland realise that the policies implemented by Leinster House and Stormont are not designed to protect the interests of you, your family or your community. From Dublin to Belfast and Kerry to Derry, ordinary people need to stand together to build a new and more equal society.

Building Across Ireland

éirígí understands that working people right across Ireland are facing the same problems and that they need to work together to build a radical, socialist all-Ireland movement to solve those problems. éirígí is organising in many parts of the country, with new members and supporters regularly joining us.



**BRIS AN NASC LEIS
AN CHAIPITLEACHAS**



**BREAK THE CONNECTION
WITH CAPITALISM**

How to join éirígí

Membership of éirígí is open to anyone, over the age of 16, who supports the principles of Irish socialist republicanism. In addition to working on political campaigns members are encouraged to increase their own political development through debate and discussion. If you are interested in joining éirígí or have any questions about membership e-mail eirigimembership@gmail.com or phone 079 3595 0601.

Clann éirígí is our national and international supporters' organisation. Whether you live in Ireland or overseas, membership of Clann éirígí is a great way to give practical support to éirígí, whilst also keeping yourself updated on the party and the wider struggle for Irish freedom.

Membership of Clann éirígí is open to those who are:

- Over sixteen years of age
- Resident anywhere in the world, including Ireland
- Supportive of the principles and objectives of éirígí as contained within *Bunreacht éirígí*
- Accepting of the terms and conditions of membership of Clann éirígí.

If you are interested in joining Clann éirígí, e-mail eirigimembership@gmail.com or phone 079 3595 0601.

Food Banks Return of the Soup Kitchen

One sign of just how hard the economic recession is starting to impact upon many ordinary families can be gauged by the establishment of food-banks.

Food banks are nothing new in the Six Counties as some churches, charities such as SVDP and others, and community organisations across the north have been operating food distribution schemes for several years now.

There has been an increase in people seeking assistance from these services as growing numbers have become unable to feed themselves or their families as a result of rising living costs, shrinking incomes and welfare benefit cuts.

It is a real problem, but one that is largely hidden and unseen.

These food/fuel distribution schemes do not receive direct state funding, but, at present, even the health service in the 6 Counties is promoting the establishment of food-banks.

Giving food to those who are hungry is a simple response that everyone supports. It is an act of human solidarity.

But food banks and food/fuel distribution schemes can never solve the problem of poverty that causes hunger in the first place.

Such projects cannot hold the state accountable to the obligation of ensuring that all have a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being.

Look around you at Sainsbury's, Tesco's, Asda, Dunnes and others.

These companies are making obscene amounts of profit every year on basic necessities such as food. Moy Park is owned by Marfrig, one of the world's largest and richest food processing companies.

Tackling poverty and inequality means wrestling with radical ideas about the causes of, and real solutions to, those same issues.

It means asking far-reaching questions about the type of society we live in – questions that go to the heart of the capitalist system and to the private ownership of food and food production, and the politics of the food industry.

These are questions which Stormont politicians do not wish to hear.

Tackling poverty and inequality also means exploring alternative economic and political structures.

It is time to begin that political conversation.

Failing to do so merely lets the state off the hook from its obligation to ensure that all have the means to live.

Title: Poblacht na nOibrithe, No. 1

Organisation: Éirígí

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