



# UNITY

Printed & Published by the Communist Party of Ireland

For Peace, Independence and Socialism

9.11.19 Vol. 31 No 40 (Print Day Wednesday) WEB page

## Deepening the debate

At a meeting in Belfast last Saturday Communist Party of Ireland members gathered to discuss the challenges and opportunities offered by the period of heightened political debate between now and the general election of December 12.

The dangers of a narrowly focused Brexit election were stressed. This was not just because that is the game plan of Prime Minister Johnson with his 'Just Get it Done - People Versus Parliament' rhetoric.

He wants a working majority in Parliament to ram through his compromise with the European Union to leave him free to speed up Tory policies which, like the EU's own direction of travel, will create more insecurity in employment, education, housing and health for the mass of the people in Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Brexit focus is also fuelling the growing confidence of the right wing Remainers within the Labour Party as they manoeuvre to box in the left in the leadership. As a statement from the Communist Party of Britain (CPB) at the start of this week pointed out:

"After nine years of Tory rule, assisted for the first five by Lib Dem collaborators, the working class and people generally are desperate for an end to austerity, priva-

**By John Pinkerton**

tisation, militarism and imperialist war." "They need what only Labour is proposing in this general election and could deliver in office — policies to promote full employment; public ownership of key industries and utilities; a reinvigorated strategy for regional economic development; a more progressive tax system; and a major redistribution of wealth and power in favour of working people and their families."

"However, an influential faction of the Parliamentary Labour Party has long represented the interests of monopoly capital and British imperialism and will continue to seek ways of frustrating and undermining their own party's bold, radical platform.

These MPs understand that the neo-liberal treaties and rules of the European Union have been designed to limit or block policies for progressive advance."

"An incoming Labour government should seek to negotiate a fresh withdrawal agreement which ensures that EU rules on state aid, public procurement and the right of establishment cannot be used to impede the implementation of Labour's manifesto".

Ironically in Northern Ireland a narrow Brexit focus fuels both the deeply reactionary leave politics of the DUP and the 'New Redmonism' remain

politics of Sinn Fein. The Sinn Fein leadership are peddling the lie that imperialism cloaked in the blue flag of the EU rather than the red white and blue of Britain is somehow more sympathetic to a united, independent and sovereign Ireland.

In the week that at last saw legislation passed to compensate victims of abuse in 22 residential children's institutions run by religious, charitable and state organisations, the question that has to be asked of DUP and Sinn Fein candidates is why that had to be done at Westminster?

Why did the DUP/Sinn Fein power sharing Executive fail those survivors - 30 of whom have died since the inquiry into what they suffered was published in 2017?

Why also did the Executive fail to address the issues of abortion and marriage equality, leaving that too for Westminster?

This week has seen Sinn Fein reach out through election manoeuvring to the SDLP, Alliance and even Independent Unionist Lady Hermon as fellow Remainers but it couldn't work out a way to build alliances inside and outside of the Assembly to develop and implement progressive economic and social policies?

It is awkward questions such as these that need to be asked and answered to deepen political debate over the coming weeks.

**Editorial**

Unity is published each week  
by the Communist Party of  
Ireland.  
PO Box 85, Belfast BT1 1SR.

## *Health system in crisis*

*A REPORT by the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Westminster states that the health system here is at “breaking point” and that services risk deteriorating to the point of collapse.*

*The report made the point that there is a need for a long-term funding strategy to support transformation. MPs on the committee said that medics are struggling to meet the needs of an ageing population without proper financial support.*

*The chair of the committee, Simon Hoare, stated that “the stark reality is that the Northern Ireland health service is falling behind the rest of the UK. He added: “..an approach to funding that simply keeps things ticking over, and an absence of over-arching strategy in key areas, has left services at breaking point and this situation must end as soon as possible.”*

*The report found that key services such as cancer treatment, social care and mental health lacked comprehensive strategies to guide their future direction.*

*He called on the government to set three year budget allocations that would give vital services the “space to breath and look ahead.”*

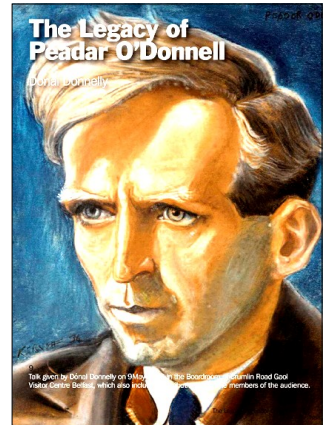
*The committee made the point that successive one year budgets only impeded planning and investment in the north's health and social care service.*

*Hoare also stated that whilst decisions on the services here should be taken by the Stormont executive delay is no longer an option. He added that “should Stormont not form this year, they (the government) must take action in the interim otherwise vital services will only deteriorate further.”*

*However the fact is Stormont has not met for three years and will certainly not form this year and nobody can predict when it will form. It would not be far off the mark to suggest that the two main parties, the DUP and Sinn Fein, are not that interested in Stormont.*

*Both will contest the general election on the constitutional issue which will be of no help to those who are suffering under the present system.*

**Wednesday 20th November, 6.30pm-9.30pm.** CPI Launch of the booklet, *The Legacy of Peadar O’Donnell*, by Dónal Donnelly. Guest speakers: Dónal Donnelly, Dympna McGlade and Tommy McKearney. Venue: John Hewitt, Donegall Street, Belfast.



**Saturday November 30th,  
5pm Annual Reclaim the  
Night March Gather Buoy  
Park, Belfast**

\*\*\*\*\*

**Belfast Central  
Branch Meeting  
Wednesday  
November 13th  
5.30pm  
CPI Premises**

\*\*\*\*\*

## MEDIA REVIEW

# Defending who ?

AT the end of last month newspapers published a photograph of a five-year-old homeless child eating his dinner from a sheet of cardboard in a Dublin street. He was referred to only as "Sam."

This prompted *Irish News* columnist Patrick Murphy to write that during the height of the "Brexit pantomime" the previous week, Leo Varadkar said that he had defended Ireland's interests.

But as Murphy adds despite the "suffering and humiliation" of Sam and despite the state's 4,000 homeless children (an increase of 350 per cent since 2014) and 6,000 homeless adults Varadkar's popularity jumped 15 points a few days later.

Murphy then asks, "So what is happening in Irish society?"

The answer as far as he is concerned is that Fine Gael's anti-British (or certainly anti-Boris) nationalism is being used to distract from the ills of society and thereby distort normal politics and as he points out, "using nationalism as a political smokescreen is evident in the history of many states."

He goes on to write that for the first time since the Civil War, northern nationalism now supports Fine Gael.

He adds "those who call themselves civic nationalists here do not appear to have written to Leo about homeless hungry children."

He goes on to state that while nationalists rightly criticise Boris Johnson for exploiting English nationalism, perhaps it might be time to look at where Irish nationalism is taking us.

He argues that there is ample evidence that on both islands national-

ism is being used to conceal a common conservative ideology which aims to reduce the role of the state in society.

Without state intervention children like Sam finish up on the street.

He goes on to quote Simon Coveney who said he was "angry" at Sam's plight but that "nobody has a moral superiority on this issue."

Murphy's response to that comment was that he had no idea what that means.

Coveney also said that the government was "working towards" giving children a safe tenancy, or home of their home.

Murphy's response was, "sadly he was wrong."

He then quotes the Economic and Social Research Institute which said that the Fine Gael budget, announced recently, will adversely affect the worst off and increase child-poverty-at-risk rates.

Social Justice Ireland says it betrayed the vulnerable, including the working poor.

He then refers to a protest which took place outside the Dail where people were told that the only obstacle to social and affordable home building is Fine Gael's ideology.

That same ideology, Murphy writes, led Varadkar to oppose an EU ruling that his government is entitled to 13 billion euro in tax from the Apple corporation, equivalent to £11 billion in sterling.

You could build a lot of social housing with that.

But as he says Varadkar's ideology does not allow direct government provision of council housing.

Instead it out-sources to private developers, who do so at a significant profit, which means that fewer houses are being built for the same government expenditure.

As he states that is little different

from Boris Johnson's ideology, "there are Tories in Ireland too, you know," he adds, and it is also reflected in the type of society Stormont left us with here.

He refers to the SDLP's Nichola Mallon who stated in the *Irish News* that Stormont's bedroom tax will hit some 43,000 social housing tenants here in five month's time.

She asked what politicians intend to do about this economic crisis.

Murphy's answer was that they will distract from social injustice by promoting their own versions of nationalism through flag-waving.

He then turns his attention to the Catholic Church which, he says, might have been expected to comment on Sam's plight, but the Bishop of Waterford devoted his energy instead to banning yoga from Catholic primary schools in his diocese.

Murphy says that research suggests yoga can help to prevent depression and anxiety, an important factor in Ireland, where an estimated 20 per cent of people suffer from a mental disorder.

Apparently the Bishop said yoga was "not of Christian origin," which Murphy said was hardly surprising since it pre-dates Christianity by about 3,000 years.

He also tells us that hurling was played here about 2,000 years before St Patrick arrived so the Bishop might like to ban that.

He concludes by asking, so whose interests is Varadkar defending in Ireland?

His final word is to quote the 1916 Proclamation which pledged to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole Irish nation, cherishing all its children equally.

"Whatever Leo was defending last week it certainly wasn't that."

## Taking a Look at Life.....by Raymond O'Connell

### The NHS Dismantled”

“Last Sunday’s *Observer* reported the Tories alarm at the focus on the NHS and how this might influence voters, particularly if a crisis arose during the election campaign. This follows the Channel 4 *Dispatches* programme which detailed secret talks between US and British officials around the issue of Drug Pricing which if it comes to fruition in a trade deal will add some £22 billion to the NHS bill. However, while all this is alarming it is not even half the story of what has been happening – not what may or will happen. The *London Review of Books* may seem an unlikely place to detail “The Americanisation of the NHS” but that is precisely what John Furse does. It has been planned and delivered since the 1980s. He deals in particular with the NHS in England.

Nicholas Ridley, one of Thatcher’s henchmen said in a 1977 report: “...denationalisation should not be attempted by frontal attack but by stealth. We should first pass legislation to destroy the public sector monopolies. We might also need to take power to sell assets. Secondly, we should-fragment the industries as far as possible and set up the units as separate profit centres”.

The first major step was the creation of the internal market in 1990. Since 2017 Integrated Care Systems “have been taking over the purchasing and provision on NHS services”.

In the US they are called Accountable Care Organisations, pioneered by US Health Insurance provider Kaiser Permanente. In 2016 Jeremy Hunt admitted they were a model for his NHS reforms.

The 2012 Health and Social Care Act enabled Hospital Trusts to raise 40% of their budgets from Private patients and other sources.

The Clinical Commissioning Groups that were established controlled more than 60% of the NHS budget and could commission services from the private sector. ‘Expert advice’ to these new bodies was provided by KPMG and PWC amongst others. PFIs originally worth £11.4 billion “have lumbered the NHS with more than £80 billion of debt”.

Simon Stevens, head of NHS England, **formerly head of United Health “led the corporate opposition to the introduction of Obama-care”**. His Sustainability and Transformation Plans have cut hospital beds to the extent the “UK’s bed-to-patient ratio is now one of the lowest in any developed country”. NHS hospitals “now lease space on their own premises to private companies”. The UK’s largest GP network is owned by the US Company Centene.

In 2010 NHS management and admin costs were 14% of budget – twice that of 1990. Privatisation is estimated to be costing some £9billion a year.

Furse concludes his article thus: “The fragmentation of a once fully integrated service into competing and commercially driven units is well advanced without proper public scrutiny, knowledge, consent or appropriate parliamentary legislation...the Ridley report’s proposals are being hurried to fulfilment”.



**Sebastian  
Patrick Stroie (2002–2019)**

THE Communist Party of Ireland offers its condolences to the family of Sebastian Patrick Stroie, a militant in the Connolly Youth Movement who died tragically on 21 October.

We extend our sympathy to his parents, Claudia and Adrian, to his sister, Veronica, and to his extended family in Romania, and our solidarity to all his comrades and friends in the CYM.

Seby was a kind, generous and warm-hearted young man.

He was involved in many struggles in his short but packed young life.

He was active in the housing struggle, taking part in a number of housing occupations in Dublin.

He was also active in the climate strikes, concerned, like others of his generation, with the destruction of the global climate.

He had a keen and enquiring mind and was always eager to learn.

We know that the nature of his passing has had a deep impact upon his family and all his comrades in both the CYM and the CPI.

His contribution was extremely important, and his memory will live long in all our hearts.

He will be greatly missed by all.