

## Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of Irish Marxist Review, a new journal of socialist ideas published in association with the Socialist Workers Party. Our principle aim is to provide serious socialist and Marxist analysis of political, economic and social developments in Ireland and internationally. We will also be interested in working class and socialist history, in Marxist theory and in matters of culture.

Intellectually this journal will stand in what can be called the International Socialist tradition, characterised by broad, but not uncritical, adherence to the 'classical' Marxism of Marx and Engels, Lenin, Luxemburg, Trotsky and Gramsci combined with an emphasis on socialism from below and working class self-emancipation pioneered by Tony Cliff. However we will also be very open to contributions from other perspectives on the left and to serious critical debate.

This issue appears as the most severe crisis of world capitalism since the Great Depression of the 1930s enters its fourth year with no sign of resolution and with Ireland among its most serious casualties. The crisis is global and so too is resistance. 2011 began with the extraordinary events of the Tunisian and Egyptian Revolutions culminating in the fall of Mubarak on 11 February; it continued with uprisings in Libya, Bahrain, Yemen and Syria. As we know the struggle has not developed smoothly: in Bahrain the revolution was crushed by the Saudis (with clear western complicity) and NATO intervention in Libya, hijacking the revolution, was a negative turning point; in Yemen there has been some advance but no decisive breakthrough and in Syria there is horrendous repression occurring as I write but the outcome is not yet clear. Meanwhile the struggle for full democracy, workers rights and social justice continues in Egypt. In May the spirit of Tahrir Square crossed the Mediterranean to Spain and the Indignados, and then in the autumn arrived in the USA with Occupy Wall St which in turn spread across the country and to some extent round the world. At the same time in Greece both the crisis and the struggle were escalating steadily in a heady combination of strikes and street fighting. Even in Ireland, which lagged behind in 2011, there are now serious signs (workers' occupations at Vita Cortex and La Senza, the Household Tax Campaign, DEIS schools etc ) of mounting resistance, and big struggles keep breaking out in other parts of the world such as Russia, China, Kazakhstan and India. To put this in some perspective it is worth pointing out that on 28 February something approaching 100 million Indian workers went on strike in what is probably the largest one-day strike in world history. This is many times more workers out on strike in one country than existed on the face of the earth when Marx wrote the Communist Manifesto and issued his historic call 'Workers of the World , Unite!'. If the numerous local strikes, riots and struggles rumbling in China were to coalesce into a national movement both the Egyptian Revolution and the Indian strike would be dwarfed in scale. But, of course, these stirring prospects must be counterbalanced by an awareness of the serious rise of the far right and neo-Nazis in a number of countries, including, most dangerously the hideous Jobbik Party in Hungary. The dominant trend over the last year has been leftwards but this is not set in stone.

In this situation anyone who tries to view events from an exclusively Irish standpoint will undoubtedly fail. Nevertheless we are in Ireland and it our responsibility as socialists and internationalists to focus on the struggle here. This combination of international perspective and national focus is not easy to achieve but we shall try.

In this issue we lead with a fascinating study by Anne Alexander of a hugely under reported and under emphasised aspect of the ongoing revolution in the Egypt, the development of embryonic forms of workers' democracy in the struggle against survivals of the Mubarak regime and the rule of the army in Egypt.

This is followed by a review from John Molyneux of the Marxist tradition and its application today to an issue of considerable importance on the Irish left: the role of trade unions and the trade union bureaucracy.

One important aspect of the attack on working people embodied in the Irish government's austerity programme is a major assault on the rights of working class women. This is analysed by Deirdre Cronin. Another particular feature of austerity is the peculiar dual role of Sinn Fein, opposing it in the South while imposing it in the North. Sean McVeigh provides a trenchant critique of Sinn Fein in government.

Moving back to the international picture, Andy Durgan and Joel Sans, comrades from the Spanish state, provide an update on the M-15 Indignados movement which, though no longer in the headlines, continues in various forms. Something that threatens us all no matter what country we are in is the problem of climate change. Owen McCormack shows a) that climate change has developed qualitatively over the last year or

so, b) that it is deeply bound up with the development and crisis of capitalism, and c) that it makes the need for socialism more urgent than ever.

Finally we present three poems by Connor Kelly, the talented young poet/musician from Derry, which among other things take us back to the Egyptian Revolution.