

Editorial

The editorial for IMR 14 closed with the following words:

It would be very pleasing if the centenary of the Rising could be accompanied by a ‘rising’ at the ballot box which would see a significant advance for those who still stand for the politics of James Connolly bearing in mind, of course, (as Connolly well knew) that real change will come not through parliament but through the mass movement on the streets and in the workplaces.

In the event this hope was very much fulfilled. First of all the General Election in the South on 26 February saw a major rebuff for the Fine Gael/Labour Government. Labour were close to annihilated, falling from 37 to 7 seats and Fine Gael also lost massively, down from 76 to 50. It is true that after two months of negotiations Fine Gael and Enda Kenny, with the aid of the Independent Alliance and the acquiescence of Fianna Fáil managed, just, to cling to office. But it is about as weak a government as it possible to imagine which has already retreated on various issues, such as the proposed green bin charges, at the first sign of resistance.

At the same time the radical left achieved what is probably its best result in the history of the state. The AAA-PBP alliance led the way with six seats (three for each component) but there were also four for Independents4Change, who are serious lefts, plus three or four others definitely of the left.

Then to add this on 5 May People Before Profit secured an important breakthrough in the Assembly elections in the North with Gerry Carroll topping the poll in West Belfast – Sinn Féin’s heartland – and Eamonn McCann being elected in Foyle (Derry). So the far left now has a significant voice both North and South of the border.

It is this development which frames this issue of *Irish Marxist Review*. We lead with an interview with PBP National Secretary,

Kieran Allen, and PBP North-South Coordinator, Seán Mitchell – both of whom played an important role in the respective election campaigns. They put the electoral advance in its historical context but stress that it is ‘only a start’ and look to the future.

This perspective is complemented by John Molyneux’s article on ‘Towards a Revolutionary Party in Ireland’ which argues that the success at the ballot box which reflects underlying radicalisation in the working class also creates the opportunity and need to build an explicitly revolutionary party. And by Brian O’Boyle’s analysis of the ‘ongoing crisis of global capitalism’. Obviously what happens in Ireland, and everywhere else, over next few years will be massively influenced by what happens to the world economy. Brian argues, on the basis of much evidence, that stormy weather lies ahead; if that proves correct we can be sure that many establishment boats will hit the rocks.

The intellectual tradition in which this Review stands has been distinguished over the years by its scepticism about the prospects for numerous leftist/ statist/ nationalist regimes and leaders in the Global South and elsewhere – Fidel Castro and Cuba, Nelson Mandela and ANC in South Africa, the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and most recently, Chávez in Venezuela, to name but a few. This critical stand has seldom been popular and has often been bitterly denounced as lending comfort to the imperialist enemy. Unfortunately history has so far proved us right. Here, and very topically, Mike Gonzalez examines how the Venezuelan Revolution lost its way.

We also revisit some of the issues that were central to the IMR 14 Special Issue on 1916 and the Irish Revolution. Paul O’Brien looks at James Connolly and the Irish Citizen Army and Robert Ballagh offers a positive response to Kieran Allen’s recent book *1916; Ireland’s Revolutionary Tradition*.

Direct Provision is an ugly stain on the Irish political landscape and United Against Racism is launching a campaign to end it.

Memet Uludag, Convenor of UAR, delivers a savage indictment of this inhumane and racist system.

On the cultural front we publish two pieces that approach iconic figures from slightly unusual angles: Eoghan Conaughten on the role of music in James Joyce's poetry and novels and John Molyneux on Shakespeare's relation to Michelangelo, Rem-

brandt and the birth of capitalism.

Finally Cllr Tina MacVeigh reviews Roddy Slorach's recent book on the politics of disability which she calls 'a tour de force' and Mark Walshe assesses Emmet O'Connor's major new biography of Jim Larkin.

- **John Molyneux**