



Comrades,

***Working people desire a society free from misery,
exploitation and oppression***

As we leave 2022, we witness a world of exploitation, inequality and injustice, environmental degradation and imperialist war. Our own state is unable to provide secure affordable housing for its people, timely access to appropriate healthcare or support for children with additional educational needs. We have some 595,000 people living in poverty and 63,000 children living in consistent poverty. Over 3000 children are homeless. In 2022, housing was officially classified as “severely unaffordable” by the State’s Parliamentary Budget Office. House prices rose 77% between 2012 and 2020.

We have witnessed the blatant inequality in our education system that sees top fee-paying schools dominating the most sought-after courses in key universities. Participation in third level education is determined by class. Students in Ireland continue to pay the highest fees in the EU. Rural Ireland is confronted with serious problems in job creation and service provision for an ageing population.

In Northern Ireland we have families that cannot afford to heat their homes, children going hungry, queues at foodbanks, part-time, precarious employment and a culture of zero hours contracts. We have working people depending on benefits to top up their wages, thousands of workers on picket lines in defence of jobs, services, pay and conditions, and we have large companies and corporations posting obscene levels of profits and making huge pay-outs to their shareholders.

The destruction of the national health service, the assault on social security, the increasing privatisation of the public sector, the development of the Private Finance Initiative, public expenditure cuts, the abandonment of the elderly and the homeless, the attack on labour and employment rights, the assault on pay and conditions and the reliance on a model of low pay, jobs without specified working hours, jobs without pay and jobs without rights and employment characterise this failed system.

Yet the dominant political parties in Northern Ireland respond by sustaining and developing existing divisions, promoting culture and identity wars, relying on their nationalist (British and Irish) narratives and all the while supporting the very social and economic system that lies at the heart of all our problems.

The cost-of-living crisis escalates with spiralling prices and energy costs. Working class women are subjected to a disproportionate amount of hardship as a result of the crisis. The cumulative effect of inflation, pay gaps, gendered roles and workplace barriers means that women are additionally disadvantaged on a number of levels. Childcare remains a major obstacle for women returning to, and remaining in, work. 2022 was also the worst year in a decade for violence against women.

The environmental crisis continues to deepen. Across the island the bourgeois and social democratic parties promote the agenda of so-called “green growth”. The false assumption is that capitalism is capable of an eco-friendly transformation to net zero emissions in which, on the basis of the profit motive and the market, capitalism will bring about sustainability with the help of targeted government intervention and improved institutions.

We face many problems and these problems are not random or inadvertent. They are systemic. They result from the capitalist system in which we live.

In 2022 Israel has intensified its brutality against the Palestinian people. Gaza has remained under blockade and another intensive assault, lasting over 3 days in August, killed 50 Palestinians and left 450 displaced from their homes.

In the West Bank, in addition to attacks by the Israeli military, the UN has documented over 800 attacks by Israeli settlers resulting in Palestinian casualties or damage to homes. In recent days the Israeli state deported the lawyer and human rights defender, Salah Hammouri to France. Our Party continues to oppose the Israeli dispossession and disempowerment of the Palestinian people, the murder of journalists, the detention and murder of Palestinian youth and the denial of basic legal rights of movement and political self-determination.

We have opposed the brutality of the Iranian government in its savage repression of the people of Iran including the arrest, torture, prosecution, imprisonment and execution of workers, women, youth and students. We welcome the defeat of Bolsonaro in Brazil. We will continue to raise

our voice against religious sectarianism, reaction and obscurantism in Afghanistan and elsewhere in the world.

We condemn the increasing activity of the right in Ireland, the scapegoating of migrants and racist intolerance. We also denounce the growth of fascism and anti-communism which sees the attacks on communist and workers' parties, their buildings, media, symbols and monuments, for example in Poland, Latvia, Austria, Germany, Serbia and Ukraine.

Our Party will maintain its long tradition of support for those peoples facing imperialist exploitation and oppression, including our solidarity with the struggle of the Saharawi people for the exercise of their legitimate rights.

We stand with peoples struggling against foreign occupation, blockades, sanctions, and imperialist aggression and we condemn imperialist interference in Latin America and the Caribbean. Our Party will continue to participate in solidarity actions with socialist Cuba and the Cuban people for the immediate and unconditional lifting of the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the U.S.

On the issue of climate change, only a planned, socialist economy free from the distortions of the market, and which prioritises the needs of people and eco-systems, can lead to real environmental sustainability.

At this time our Party also celebrates the 100th anniversary of the creation of the Soviet Union with the proclamation of the USSR on 30 December 1922.

Under Soviet power life expectancy and literacy levels were increased, the living conditions and material well-being of the people were improved and the health and education of citizens was secured. The Soviet state created the basis for material and social advancement, for the transfer of power to the working people, the creators of wealth, and provided the workers with the opportunity, through their labour and struggle, to build the social, political, economic and cultural conditions which offered the prospect of a free and fulfilled life.

The continuing imperialist war in Ukraine occurs within the context of the dissolution of the USSR whereupon capitalism re-emerged in Russia and the US, the EU and NATO sought to enlarge their influence to the East and to the borders of Russia. The peoples of Ukraine and Russia lived together in peace in the past and fought together against fascism. Now, Ukraine and its inhabitants are being destroyed. The working class of Ukraine and Russia are paying the price for the competition between

imperialist blocs. In a spirit of socialist internationalism, the Workers Party has called for an end to this war and supports the efforts of our comrades in Russia and Ukraine combatting reactionary nationalism and oligarchic governments with the weapons of class politics and internationalism.

Our Party is deeply concerned by the ongoing attempts to undermine Irish neutrality; the expansion of the NATO war machine, the increasing militarisation of the EU and US imperialist provocation, aggression and intervention.

Today, across the world, working people desire a society free from misery, exploitation and oppression – a society where the means of production is owned by the workers and the wealth of society is the common property of society as a whole; where the exploitation of labour is ended; where the devastation of the environment is reversed; where poverty and hunger are abolished; where the principles of equality, solidarity and emancipation are enshrined. We share that ambition. The Workers Party remains committed to the centrality of the class struggle. We will not be diverted from our course by the chimera of bourgeois nationalism, opportunism or social democracy. We will stand unashamedly upon our political ideology and with our class.

In 2023 we commit to building a strong resistance against the assaults of the capitalist class and an increased determination to advance the cause of socialism. We take strength from the strong and determined workers' response to the current crisis.

Our socialist principles, our internationalism and our vision for the future, will guide and determine all of our positions in our daily struggles.

We look to the future with confidence!

Cllr Ted Tynan
President
Workers Party