

Interesting times

'May you live in interesting times', was an old Chinese curse.

■ The first two months of the 2020s have certainly been 'interesting': a period of intense political engagement and important developments both in Ireland and the world. In Ireland the general election and its dramatic outcome has been the main story; meanwhile globally we have seen the further escalation of the environmental crisis, the Bernie Sanders surge, the rapid spread of the coronavirus and the very likely onset of another recession as well as numerous specific conflicts ranging from Syria – Russia – Turkey – Greece to murderous anti-Muslim pogroms in India. However, such exciting times create certain difficulties for the production of a journal of socialist analysis such as *Irish Marxist Review*. Not least the fact that anything written on current events is more than likely to be out of date before the issue actually appears. This obviously applies particularly to the lead article on 'The General Election and After'. By the time it sees the light of day Ireland may have a new government or a rehashed version of the old government or even, though this is less likely, be plunged into another election. What is more the task of socialists is not just to speculate as to what may happen but to intervene actively to shape events by campaigning for a left government and mobilizing people on the streets to 'break the FF/FG cycle'.

Despite these problems, and a certain level of post-election exhaustion, we have an issue with plenty of interest to say about the world today. In addition to the post election analysis which is our lead article we have a careful dissection, by Cllr Matt Collins from Belfast of the *New Decade, New Approach* document which formed the basis for the restoration of Stormont.

Alex Day and Marnie Holborow contribute an important article discussing Marxist approaches to the oppression of women, including social reproduction theory, while showing how capitalism is inherently hostile to women's equality and hailing the global rise of women's resistance. The rise of China to the status of the world's largest economy has been one of the most important developments of the 21st century. Like climate change, 'this changes everything' – the balance of global geo-political power, the focus of US economic and foreign policy, the vulnerability of the world economy to catastrophic recession, and the size and shape of the world working class. What happens to and in China matters. In 'The China Syndrome' Peadar O'Grady analyses a number of aspects of this phenomenon including the trade war with America and the spread of the coronavirus.

The notion that the world is overpopulated or is becoming so exists not only in the wider culture but is also an undercurrent in the environmental movement. John Molyneux provides a vigorous re-

4 | buttal of this claim arguing that it is factually false, theoretically misconceived and leads to reactionary political conclusions and policies. This article is complemented by Aislinn Shanahan Daly's critique of eugenics. Eugenics is another reactionary project which is starting to resurface. Daly notes its long unsavoury history from ancient Sparta through to the Nazis and its close relationship to racism. Marxists, beginning with Marx and Engels themselves, have always taken a close interest in scientific developments as a major factor in how humanity understands and shapes our world. Taking Einstein's scientific revolution in the early 20th century as his focus, Mark Walsh offers not only a clear exposition of Einstein's theories for the lay person but also an excellent introduction to the question of scientific method and how science develops.

As I write this editorial we are witnessing, yet again, horrors in the Eastern Mediterranean and at the Greek-Turkish border as Fortress Europe reveals itself in all its grisly reality. As Memet Uludag, himself an ardent defender of refugees' rights, shows, this is an issue that can only intensify with advance of climate change.

In this connection we draw IMR readers attention to the launch of the Global Ecosocialist Network by publishing as an Appendix 'Introducing the Global Ecosocialist Network' which first appeared on the REBEL website.

Finally we have a number of reviews of interesting and significant new books: Sam McBride's *Burned: The Inside Story of the 'Cash-for-Ash' Scandal and Northern Ireland's Secretive New Elite*, reviewed by Brian Kelly; Kim A Wagner's *Amritsar 1919*, reviewed by Eamonn McCann; Donny Gluckstein and Terry Sullivan, *Hegel and Revolution*, reviewed by Stuart Scully; Laura Miles, *Transgender Resistance*, reviewed by Alex Day.

John Molyneux
