

# Editorial:

## A System in Decay

The main theme of this issue is the general crisis of a capitalist system in deep decay, which is increasingly threatening all life on the planet on multiple fronts. In our lead article, 'Capitalism in decay- dimensions of the crisis' John Molyneux offers an overview of the main elements of the crisis – economic, health, geo-political and ecological – and explores how they intersect and reinforce each other. He warns of the serious political dangers deriving from this interaction but argues it also offers major opportunities for socialists if they move to take them. Other articles which relate to this theme are Eddie Conlon's timely analysis of the cost of living crisis in Ireland and the fightback against it, Camilla Fitzsimons' analysis of the continuing importance of the issue of reproductive rights in the light of the US Supreme Court's reactionary ruling on *Roe v Wade*, and Maurice Coakley's examination of some of the wider implications of the Ukraine War.

One symptom of this general crisis is political turmoil in which the 'mainstream' centre which has dominated European and North American politics since the Second World War comes under pressure from multiple directions. A particular instance of this has been the meltdown of the British Tory Government which has unfolded before our eyes as this journal has passed through its final stages of preparation. The omnishambles that were the final weeks of Boris have turned, with the speed of light, into the public take down of Liz Truss who, after only 44 days in office, has

become the shortest-serving Prime Minister in British history.

Socialists would be less than human if they didn't take pleasure in the disintegration of the nasty reactionary piece of work that is Truss but there are a couple of serious points that need to be made.

The first is that what got Truss into such trouble was simply that she tried to pursue an economic policy that the bulk of the capitalist class didn't want and thought was stupid because it involved massive unsupported state borrowing and a certain very limited amount of handouts (to use their language), to ordinary people. Truss, as the media put it, 'upset the markets' i.e. but the markets are not some neutral disembodied force. Upsetting the markets simply means upsetting the investors and speculators. For the new and none too bright Tory PM this was a sharp lesson in what should be understood by any would-be Tory leader, namely that what you say to the Tory rank-and-file and, indeed, the public, should bear no relation to what you actually do. The 'markets' i.e. the capitalist class are your real boss and they are well able to discipline you if you go walkabout. From this it follows that whoever succeeds Truss will need, as they keep repeating, to 'reassure the markets' and that will involve pursuing an economic policy that is even tougher on working people than the one Truss was touting. In other words it was fun while it lasted but there will be serious fighting to be done.

The second is that what is good for the goose is good for the gander. What was done by 'the markets' and the IMF to Truss will be done with even greater ferocity to any Labour leader who steps out of line and attempts even modest redistribution of wealth and even mild social

reform. Of course there is very little chance of any of that from Keir Starmer whose ‘strategy’ is to sit there saying and promising nothing other than singing the National Anthem and pledging to restore stability while waiting for power to fall into his lap. But it should be a salutary lesson to left reformists, either inside the British Labour or elsewhere on the political spectrum who harbour the illusion that a left or reformist government would be allowed to implement its programme without fierce resistance.

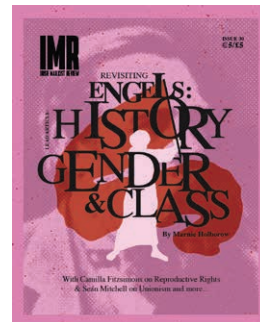
Also symptomatic of capitalism’s organic malaise and instability is the meteoric rise of Georgia Meloni and the Brothers of Italy. Meloni became Italy’s new prime minister on 22 October on the basis of a 26% vote for the Brothers in the recent general election, which made them the largest party in a far right coalition with Salvini’s Lega and Berlusconi’s Forza Italia. The Brothers and Meloni herself have their political roots in Italy’s fascist tradition going back to the MSI (Italian Social Movement) after the war and she is the most far right prime minister in Europe since the Second World War. This doesn’t mean Meloni is about to install a fascist dictatorship in Italy; at present she lacks the forces to do that, but it will mean a government that is extremely hostile to refugees, migrants and LGBTQ people and workers’ rights. It is also a major boost and encouragement to the far right across Europe and round the world. Above all it serves as a warning about the need for a strong socialist alternative able to articulate and focus working class anger from the left.

Irish Marxist Review has a strong tradition of publishing socialist and Marxist analyses of Irish history and in this issue we have two major pieces: Fearghal Mac Bhloscaidh

contributes a devastating analysis and critique of Arthur Griffiths, the so-called ‘father of the Free State’, and Kieran McNulty an important study of ‘Labour, the civil war and executions in Kerry.’ We will return to the other aspects of the Irish Civil War in future issues. Two other very topical articles are Dave O’Farrell’s excellent critique of the appalling record, including on environmental issues, of the Green Party and Damian Gallagher’s piece on this autumn’s World Cup in the stunningly inappropriate location of Qatar which situates this within a wider critique of sport under capitalism. Finally we have, as usual, a number of reviews of interesting and relevant books.

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