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**RTÉ NEEDS REFORM WAY BEYOND THE SCANDAL OF PAYMENTS TO TUBRIDY**

*By Dave Smyth*

The recent scandal involving RTÉ and payments to Ryan Tubridy actually highlights another of the many aspects of neoliberalism that is costing us all, but rewarding only a tiny minority among the rich.

Independent production companies are wheeling out their spokespeople to "warn" that people boycotting the TV licence is going to damage them. How, you might wonder?

Up until the early 1990s, RTÉ produced everything in-house.

But, like so many other public sector entities, under the stewardship of either Fianna Fail or Fine Gael they fired their own people, or let them retire without replacing them and outsourced loads of production, performance and technical aspects to the private sector.

The result? As usual, more and more public money has been required and demanded to fund RTÉ as they are now another channel for taxpayers' money to find its way into profits for the private sector. Greed becomes the driving force and the outsourcing costs multiples of what it would cost to self-produce programmes with staff instead of contractors.

Another feature of RTÉ is the workers beyond the household names, the people who actually keep the whole show on the air and online. Many of these people are the true workhorses of the organisation but are not very well paid and often overworked, underappreciated, stressed and always at the beck and call of the so-called talent who earn the headline big bucks!

The current government doesn't want to reform or restructure RTÉ in anything other than a headline grabbing way that will allow them to brush the whole scenario under the carpet and move along. You see, nepotism is also a huge feature among the senior figures in the organisation and many of them have family ties to various FF and FG people. So, the priority for government is to make this scandal go away, not to tackle the systemic problems and provide a genuine public service broadcaster!

It's the very same with housing and healthcare, money is thrown into the pockets of developers, builders and landlords in the case of housing, and into the coffers of consultants, agencies and private sector nursing care, home-help and ambulance services with the healthcare system. All of this results in no positive, realistic or realisable outcomes for working-class families.

Instead, it has resulted in an ever-growing housing waiting list, a massive rise in homelessness, immense waiting lists for all elements of public healthcare and extensive wasting of public money in order to line the

pockets of opportunistic private sector companies, who typically pay workers diabolically with poor working conditions and often zero-hours contracts with no job security, pension entitlements or holidays etc.

The story of RTÉ and their payments to so called talent is only one small part of the reality when it comes to how this organisation is run and funded.

Capitalism and the particularly cruel version of it known as neoliberalism – which is about privatising and outsourcing everything and reducing, underfunding or abolishing public services – has run the state broadcaster down, used public money to fund profits rather than properly deliver public service broadcasting and create an elitist agenda which often denies the voices of the working class access to the airwaves and delivers a tightly controlled state propaganda driven output across its television, radio and on-line services.

We need a proper state broadcaster, run by the people for the people just like we need a public construction company to properly tackle housing and a public healthcare system that spends public money where it is needed rather than where it is squandered for profit!

Neoliberalism is societally destructive and only serves the rich.

We need, and must fight for, Socialism and an Ireland of equals.

**The RED Network (incorporating Rebel Telly) are a network of radical socialists within the political party People Before Profit, a 32-county people power movement on the island of Ireland.**

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