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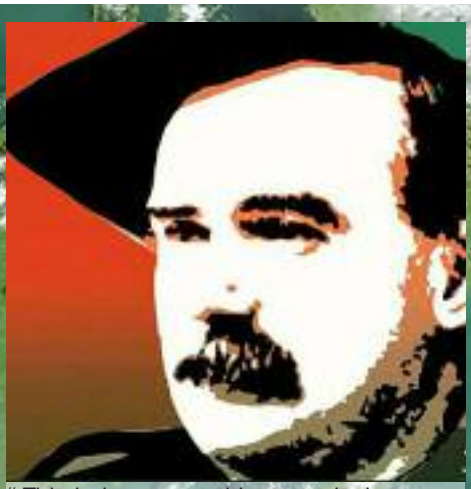

" This being our position, we desire now that Industrial Emancipation and National Freedom are alike in danger, to set before you our views of the present war, and your and our proper attitude towards it. We speak as workers to workers, and as lovers of our common country to all those who ought to love and cherish it."
James Connolly
Appeal to the Irish Working Class (1914)

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THE RECENT formation of Trade Unionists for a New and United Ireland should be considered a positive development, providing an opportunity for a debate among those committed to ending the imperialist domination of our people and on what that new Ireland should be like.

We must reclaim the vision for a new and united Ireland, the vision as laid out in the Proclamation of the Irish Republic (1916) and the Democratic Programme of Dáil Éireann (1919). This is entirely different from the "republic" that was set up by the counter-revolutionaries from 1922.

If this is a genuine initiative to bring forces together, it must be for providing the opportunity for the working class, north and south, to shape the vision for a new Ireland. The debate cannot be allowed to become a narrow nationalist one: Irish unity is not a geographical thing, it is political thing.

James Connolly hit the nail on the head when he wrote that "the cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour." So it is imperative that the labour movement lead the debate.

The trade union movement is the largest working-class organisation in the country, with more than 800,000 members. It is the main weapon of our class. Labour (as distinct from the Labour Party) has waited long enough to assert itself on ending partition and on a future all-Ireland democracy, and on deciding whose interests it must serve.

Irish unity: When, not if

GRAHAM HARRINGTON

IRISH UNITY is now a question of when, not if. The British-EU border debacle illustrates the imperialist domination of the 32 counties. Regardless of how the inter-imperialist rivalry plays out, the needs and interests of the Irish working class will not be the main topic of discussion, whether it be in Brussels, London, or even Dublin. Our country and people will be laid on the dissecting-table, to be toyed with by our imperial masters.

The only democratic solution is the ending of partition to be used as a vehicle towards a truly independent Ireland. A workers' republic will not be parachuted from the sky, nor will it be granted by either the EU or the British state.

Both failed states in this country were a result of a compromise between Irish capitalism and the British ruling class. The counter-revolution of 1922–23 not only ended in partition but also undid the gains of the working class in this period, namely the workers' power that led workers to establish soviets and other radical measures.

The Irish left has yet to fully learn from its mistakes in this period. James Connolly articulated very clearly that the working class had to lead the national liberation struggle, and to set its direction, or else the gains made would be undone. The organised workers' movement is not a passive bystander in the national independence struggle but a necessary part of it.

Partition prevented the development of a national capitalism, and forced the opening up of the southern state to foreign direct investment in the 1960s. The state continued to be subservient to Britain. Even at the height of de Valera's nationalist measures the Irish pound was still at parity with the English pound.

In the north, the neo-colonial statelet has never achieved, and probably never will achieve, any stability, with the former Orange state morphing into a sectarian state that is just as much in thrall to imperialism as ever.

Any attempts to reform these states will only serve the forces of imperialism. They are simply acting as the colonial bulwarks that they were designed to be.

‘If the country is to be united it must be a new united Ireland, formed in the interests of the working class, and not for keeping the privileged elite in power’

These initiatives all start off small; but they have to start somewhere. This one can unite the class and have tens or hundreds of thousands of rank-and-file trade union members sign up to the proposal, forcing the leaders of unions to align themselves with their members instead of their “social partners.”

This debate must be bottom-up. And we must be prepared and ready for the challenge. *“When the aristocracy come forward, the people fall backward; when the people come forward, the aristocracy, fearful of being left behind, insinuate themselves into our ranks and rise into timid leaders or treacherous auxiliaries.”*—Theobald Wolfe Tone, “Manifesto to the Friends of Freedom in Ireland” (1791).

To be successful it will need to open up a national conversation for workers who have never been introduced to class politics or what a new Ireland could look like: the Ireland of Tone and Connolly.

It is an opportune time to clearly outline how the two political entities in this country have failed our people, both politically and economically, since partition. These failed entities have served only the interests of the capitalist class, north and south, and British imperialism.

If the country is to be united it must be a new united Ireland, formed in the interests of the working class, and not for keeping the privileged elite in power. The struggle for a new republic must be centred on a new Democratic Programme for the 21st century, one that brings to the forefront sovereignty, economic independence, economic rights, workers’ rights, human rights, gender rights, the environment, anti-imperialism, and world peace, together with the basic rights to universal health, welfare, housing, and education—a new Ireland for serving the interests of all our people, not those of a tiny elite and corporate interests. The Democratic Programme for the 21st Century adopted by the People’s Dáil, organised by the Peadar O’Donnell Socialist Republican Forum, is a good starting-point.

Any border poll cannot be reduced to be a sectarian head count, with one side outvoting the other, or outbreeding the other. That is not a strategy: it would be a continuation of the failed divide, conquer and domination policies that have kept imperialism in power.

The debate should not be about a nicer, “fairer” Ireland: it must be for a new Ireland that makes workers on the Falls, the Shankill, in Cork, Dublin and Derry the priority of government, not slaves to the markets.

Many of our demands in the past have been divisive: universal suffrage, divorce, abortion rights, reducing the role of the Catholic Church.

This did not stop us fighting for them. A united, economically independent Ireland may be considered divisive by some, even sectarian by others. But in order to advance we need to get to the root of division and not shy away from it. ★

The workers’ movement was saddled with an economistic approach to political struggle, favouring instead a vision of class struggle as simply bosses v. workers. The republican movement fell into the cul-de-sac of militarism, seeing the struggle as purely a military one.

The crucial struggle facing the Irish working class, then as now, is for breaking the chains of imperialism and establishing an independent Irish state. The Irish question is not about managing sectarianism in the Six Counties but about how our class can liberate the country while on the way to liberating itself.

National liberation struggles are not clear-cut, with two forces lining up on either side of each other, one side for imperialism and one side for socialism. If only it were so simple! Building socialism is not a single event that happens overnight but a process. In countries subjugated by imperialism, the best way forward to socialism is in an anti-imperialist struggle. V. I. Lenin wrote that “the socialist revolution is not a single act, it is not one battle on one front but a whole epoch of acute class conflicts, a long series of battles on all fronts, i.e. on all questions of economics and politics, battles that can only end in the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.”

He also wrote that “the socialist revolution may flare up not only through some big strike, street demonstration or hunger riot or a military insurrection or colonial revolt but also as a result of a political crisis such as the Dreyfus case or the Zabern incident, *or in connection with a referendum on the secession of an oppressed nation*.” (My emphasis.)

This is not to suggest that a socialist revolution will happen after a border poll; but it is impossible to reach socialism if we have not even achieved an end to partition. The forces of capitalism, north and south, will set out their class interests in the event of a border poll being called. It is up to the working class to do the same and set out our vision of a united, independent Ireland. We should not wait and allow imperialism to set the terms but take the initiative.

Irish unity is a political and economic demand first and foremost, not a romantic nationalist one, nor a diversion from the work-place struggles.

The best way we can struggle for our vision of an independent Ireland is first of all to build the strength of workers as a force within society, as well as to ensure that a vote for Irish unity is a workers’ victory, that the working class will form the character of the new all-Ireland state. This will not be granted to us or happen spontaneously but must come from struggle.

We must cast aside the neo-Walkerite views that advocate abandoning the national liberation struggle and instead supporting reformist “gas and water” measures that do not challenge the system. Mobilising as many organised workers as we can gather will be the sharpest weapon in our arsenal against imperialism and its native lackeys.

In 1982 the programme of the Communist Party of Ireland stated that “territorial unity is only important in so far as it forms the basis of a genuinely independent, that is, anti-imperialist, Irish state. The character of such a state will only be forged in class struggle.” ★

National reunification **Entering new and uncharted waters**

TOMMY McKEARNEY

AFTER LISTENING to Olivia O'Leary speaking about a united Ireland on "Drivetime" (RTE) last month, a Dublin republican remarked that something significant must be happening when this subject was being aired on the national broadcaster by one of its more cautious commentators.

Curious, I downloaded the podcast. It was indeed interesting, firstly in reflecting a view long held by the Southern establishment about the national question. Blame the Provos for preventing unity, and promote Project Fear by emphasising unionism's determination to use force in the event of any change to the constitutional status quo.

Yet along with this standard fare O'Leary asked a probing question: "Are the tectonic plates already shifting so fast that within a decade we'll hardly recognise the territorial outlines of the states we know today?" In this respect she was articulating a matter of deep concern to the Republic's ruling class: that their status quo may change.

So what are we to make, then, of Jeffrey Donaldson's weekend with Leo Varadkar and his well-heeled colleagues? The widely reported reference to participation in the Commonwealth was warmly applauded by the assembled Blueshirts and, not surprisingly, became the focus of the presentation.

In reality, that particular episode was symbolic rather than significant. The Commonwealth is now essentially a talking shop and wields hardly any international influence. Apart from confirming what we already knew—that the Fine Gael set still retain affection for British institutions—it hardly matters; and anyhow, two senior ministers, Coveney and Donohoe, quickly dismissed the idea.

Of greater significance was the fact that the Republic's governing party invited the DUP's House of Commons chief whip to a conference at which Fine Gael repeated and reinforced the party's right-wing credentials and agenda. Varadkar announced a nebulous five-point plan, including such inane drivel as "putting Ireland at the centre of the world"—all the while pointedly failing to address any of the burning issues, such as homelessness, health, or education. But he was quite explicit when promising generous tax benefits for the wealthy, and clearly indicated his determination to maintain a harsh free-market economy.

Varadkar's insensitive address was complemented by a callous speech from his minister for housing (yes, that's his title), Eoghan Murphy. Murphy reassured his landlord friends that "the problem of homelessness will never be eradicated completely." Thereafter he described a promise made some years ago by the Labour Party to end homelessness as "very irresponsible" (not to mention hypocritical, coming from a party supporting swingeing austerity).

This attitude has to be viewed against the scandalous situation that more than 10,000 people, including more than 3,000 children, are now in emergency accommodation.

Fine Gael's economic policy would certainly have met with the approval of the member for Lagan Valley; but apart from that fairly obvious fact, the question remains, Why was he there?

Notwithstanding the applause for his Commonwealth remarks, Donaldson's party is at odds with the Republic's government and opposition on a raft of important issues, including Brexit. Nor is there any perceptible softening of the DUP's position on partition, or its long-standing antipathy to the 26-County state.

The reality is that Fine Gael finds itself in a dilemma as it frantically tries to cope with two issues that it fears. In the first instance there is the fall-out from Brexit. Secondly, as shown by the O'Leary broadcast, there is the question of partition, which is having an increasing impact on the national conscience.

By very visibly playing the DUP card, Fine Gael is covering several of its own narrow objectives. Presenting the hard-line unionist party to a Southern television audience helps promote Project Fear, emphasising the difficulties rather than the opportunities offered by reunification. Moreover, the DUP is closely allied with the most reactionary wing of the Tory party and, along with Fine Gael, shares its fundamentalist neo-liberal philosophy. In spite of its ostensible hostility to the Republic, it may be viewed as a bridge to like-minded elements in Britain and the North of Ireland after Brexit.

Britain leaving the EU presents the 26-County state with more than a purely economic quandary. In spite of slick media spin and a leadership seemingly oozing confidence, Varadkar's party has no ideas about how to cope with the prospect of losing one of its two principal overseas anchors.

Over the past four decades Government policy has been based on a relationship of dependence with Britain and the rest of the European Union. From the point of view of those governing the Republic, this afforded them a twofold advantage. Staying close to the United Kingdom provided Dublin with an ally when in negotiation with Brussels, while the EU connection prevented an over-dependence on Britain.

It was a cosy situation, which allowed governments the luxury of not having to exercise the responsibilities that go with sovereignty and independence. More importantly, it also facilitated the implementation of economic policies that have exacerbated income inequality while increasing the wealth of the privileged minority.

‘Over the past four decades Government policy has been based on a relationship of dependence with Britain and the rest of the European Union’

Then there is the issue that never really goes away: the national question. While Brexit *per se* will not alter the constitutional position of the two jurisdictions in Ireland, it has raised the issue to a level not experienced in decades. Even during the most recent IRA campaign, when the demand for unity was being made in arms, there was a conviction in the South that this was a position held only by diehard republicans, a group who were routinely demonised and dismissed by the state broadcasting network and the mainstream press.

Now, however, conditions and circumstances have changed. Whether it’s a “hard” or a “soft” Brexit, Britain is leaving the EU. Thanks also to changing demographics, a fractured British body politic, and a dysfunctional Six-County political entity, the demand for a referendum on partition can only grow louder and increasingly difficult to resist.

Taken together, these two factors create a scenario that is causing deep concern within Fine Gael and among its fellow-travellers: that the status quo, with which they are so comfortable, cannot hold indefinitely.

On that final point at least, they are correct. We are entering new and uncharted waters in both jurisdictions. Consequently, Fine Gael is retreating into old but failing certainties; and meanwhile its Fianna Fáil partners are incapable of offering anything better, or different. It hardly needs stating that the DUP offers even less than its Southern counterparts.

Rarely has there been a greater need for clarity of thinking and action from the left. Rarely has the CPI made a more timely appeal than in its recent statement in which it calls for “the unity of all those forces that oppose imperialist domination and calls on them to work together to build the forces necessary to take advantage of the crisis within the British ruling class and a bankrupt Irish establishment to push forward the demand for ending division and partition, to articulate the possibilities of what a new Ireland would hold for the working class of Ireland.”

An important appeal that merits adoption by all serious working-class activists. ★

THIS YEAR’S James Connolly Festival, running from Tuesday 7 May to Sunday 12 May, will build on the great success of previous incarnations. The programme will include contributions on a wide range of topics, continuing the commitment to exploring left-wing politics and ideas through discussion, arts, and culture.

While the final details of this year’s programme are now being completed, those attending can expect events covering a variety of themes, including

- feminism and women’s struggles
- anti-fascism and anti-racism
- political organising in migrant communities
- trade unionism
- anti-imperialism
- housing

And of course there is this year’s James Connolly Memorial Lecture, on the theme “The struggle for equality: Can a capitalist system ever provide true equality?” to be delivered by Prof. Kathleen Lynch on Saturday 11 May at 2:30 p.m. in the New Theatre (43 East Essex Street).

On Saturday night, festival participants are invited to the Underground at Peadar Kearney’s (64 Dame Street) till late for live music by the Deadlians, as well as more to be announced.

On Wednesday 8 May there will also be an exclusive screening of Dennis Skinner: Nature of the Beast (2017), directed by Daniel Draper, a documentary about the life of the socialist, trade unionist and Labour MP Dennis Skinner, at the New Theatre, followed by a Q&A with the cinematographer Allan Melia.

The festival will close on Sunday 12 May with the commemoration and wreath-laying for James Connolly at Arbour Hill, followed by music and drinks in the Cobblestone pub, Smithfield.

The full programme of events of this year’s James Connolly Festival will be announced in the coming days, and will also be available at www.jamesconnollyfestival.com ★

James Connolly Commemoration, 2019

Sunday 12 May, 3 p.m.
Arbour Hill Cemetery, Dublin
Oration by Frankie Quinn (1916 Societies)

INTERNATIONAL WORKING WOMEN'S DAY

▲ **Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim President of the Women's International Democratic Federation**

Speech by Ghaba Abdalkeem from Sudan

Good evening, everybody.
My thanks to the Communist Party of Ireland for inviting me to speak today. First of all let me send my greetings to all the communist parties, workers' parties and the democratic organisations for their support and solidarity for the people of Sudan in their ongoing revolution against the dictatorial regime of the criminal Omer Albashir.

As we are now celebrating Women's Day, my appreciation goes for every woman fighting against oppression. Greetings to every woman who sacrificed her life, for every woman that has been displaced, for every woman that has been imprisoned and tortured. A special greeting to the Irish women for their struggle and fighting for their rights throughout history and are still struggling, as rights are taken and they are not given.

Let me seize this opportunity to shed some light on Sudanese women, as you may not know much about them. These brave women remain dedicated to women's rights. They know prison, torture, enforced disappearance, and rape.

Women in Sudan are the first in Africa and the Arab world who fought for their rights to freedom, education, the vote, election, equal pay for equal work, and many other rights.

I would like to talk about one of these women who spent all her life fighting for the rights of women not only in Sudan but all over the world. Her name is Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim (pictured left) . She was elected in 1956 as a member of the first Sudanese parliament after independence and as the first woman in Africa and the Arab world who got that privilege.

Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim became in 1991 the president of the Women's International Democratic Federation. In 1993 she received the United Nations Award for Outstanding Achievements in the Field of Human Rights.

During her struggle Fatima was imprisoned many times, tortured, suffered forced disappearance, and even her husband was executed for being a member of the Sudanese Communist Party's Central Committee.

Following in the footsteps of Fatima Ahmed Ibrahim and many other women, Sudanese women remain dedicated and keep fighting the terrorist regime of Omer Albashir, who put in place laws and legislation targeting women in order to restrict their role to the house, using religion as a means of oppression.

I am standing in front of you today as I have been one of the victims of physical, psychological and sexual abuse, and I have been even the subject of an attempted murder. Unfortunately, there are many women that have been

UNITY

Standing shoulder to shoulder

The Communist Party of Ireland held a number of successful events to celebrate International Working Women's Day this year. The two main events took place in Belfast and Dublin.

The Dublin event, organised by the CPI Women's Group, was held under the heading "The lives and struggles of working women." It took the form of a screening of the acclaimed Spanish film *La Voz Dormida,* followed by a panel discussion on "The rise of fascism and racism, and how to build a community response." The panel comprised Mags Glennon (Anti-Fascist Action), Maureen Sheilds (Friends of the International Brigades), Helena Keane (community activist against racism), and Ghaba Abdalkeem from Sudan.

This debate is an essential one at this time as we witness the growth of the hard right and racist forces in the advanced capitalist world. Workers are struggling to understand what is happening to themselves, their families and communities as the crisis of the capitalist system continues to wreak havoc on us all. Communities are stripped of services, with low wages and precarious employment becoming commonplace.

While much of the left talk *at* the working class, this event concentrated on talking *to* the class, through respected activists from the communities we need to reach.

killed, raped or bombarded by military aircraft in Darfur, Nuba mountain, and the Blue Nile.

All these acts, which represent crimes against humanity and genocide, happened before the entire world. The regime of Sudan uses many different means to oppress women and all Sudanese people, who are uprising now against the regime. In this revolution, women are representing the driving force.

It is now almost thirty years since Albashir seized power in a coup d'état from a democratically elected government and established an oppressive theocratic regime. During these thirty years, war has been spread all over the country, and the country has been divided into two countries, and the danger of more division still exists. Sudanese people have been deprived more and more and been denied basic political rights.

Because of the current regime, the country is also suffering from brain drain, and an absence of development plans. Sudan has come under the control of international capitalism. Since taking power, the regime has applied public, social and economic policies in order to serve the interests of international imperialism and capitalism.

Now the Sudanese women have been leading the revolution in the streets for almost three months. Now about 60 people have been killed, including three women, as a result of the use of live ammunition, and hundreds also being injured, many of them in critical condition. More than 2,000 are in prison, including more than 300 women being subject to different sorts of torture and abuses.

Therefore, we urge Irish people, Irish women and all friendly societies to support the Sudanese woman in her struggle against the regime in Sudan, which has failed its human rights obligations.

The theme of International Women's Day for this year is "Think equal, build smart innovation for change." This focuses on innovative ways in which we can advance gender equality and the empowerment of women, particularly in the areas of social protection systems, access to public services, and sustainable infrastructure.

The achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for African countries will require transformative shifts, integrated approaches, and new solutions, particularly when it comes to advancing gender equality and the empowerment of African women and girls.

There have been recent developments in the struggle in Sudan: the release of women detainees after the implementation of a hunger strike by women inside and outside prisons and the solidarity shown with them in and outside Sudan on International Women's Day. There is growing understanding internationally about the violations that are being practised on women in Sudan. On Women's Day, Sudanese women are either inside the prisons or outside taking steps to escalate our struggle against the criminal regime.

For thirty years we have been deprived, thirty years of resistance, which is ever evolving. On International Women's Day we are in prisons and detention centres, on demonstrations, and many forms of rejection and resistance. For the rights of women, the women of Sudan have paid dearly.

Finally, my message to all the women of Ireland and the women of the entire world is to continue our struggle to achieve real citizenship. By the degree of equality we can measure the progress and the development of nations.

Discrimination and violence against women represent social problems that undermine all the efforts of progression and development.

"Every day we read about a new story, new idea, new project, new change that was led somewhere by a woman, inspiring and opening for us new ways that motivate us to continue our journey and help us to develop ourselves and the people around us day after day."

Please do not forget the women in Sudan and the people of Sudan, because they need your help. Let's come together and work for the values of solidarity and support among our nations.

Long live the struggle of women everywhere! Thank you. ★

The issues of racism and fascism need deeper discussion and debate within the working-class movement and the left, and we should not allow the liberal left and liberal establishment to define or dominate the debate.

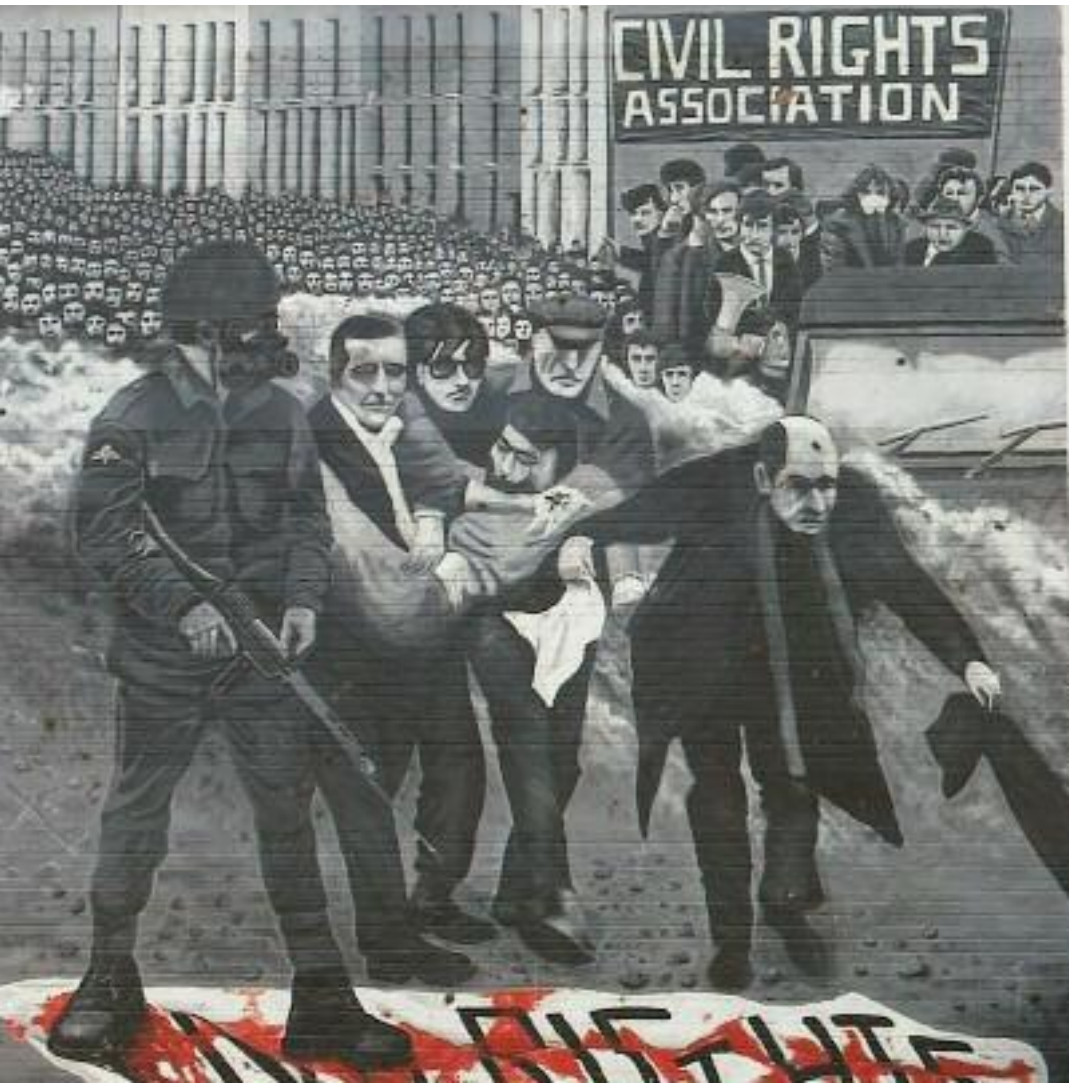
In Belfast the celebration of Women's Day is far more developed, with a programme of celebration spread over nearly two weeks. The CPI held a public meeting on the theme "Welfare, not warfare," addressed by Thea Valentina Gardinellin of Italy and Clare Daly TD. Thea Valentina spoke about her home, Vicenza, which has seven US bases and an EU-NATO base. Clare Daly, who had just returned from a visit to Venezuela, spoke about how Irish neutrality has ceased to exist, with US military planes using Shannon Airport, and about the duplicity of the EU regarding Venezuela.

As well as organising this important political event, the Belfast Branch of the CPI produced a special supplement to mark International Working Women's Day (see left), and there was a CPI presence on the Belfast Women's Day march.

Events in Dublin were more muted in comparison with previous years, partly as a result of the victory of the Repeal the 8th campaign and the winning of abortion services in the Republic—a struggle yet to be won for women in the Six Counties.

What has been an important feature over recent years has been the solidarity between women's groups and campaigns north and south, each benefiting from closer co-operation and solidarity. This makes a clear point that only the women of Ireland can solve problems and secure advances for the women of Ireland—not external bodies. It is the actions of these women that have effected real change.

The National Executive Committee of the CPI offers its congratulations to all those organisations and individual women who continue to build International Working Women's Day around the country and internationally. To all those who struggle for radical change in the real, lived conditions of working women, we offer our solidarity. ★



Political statement

Communist Party of Ireland National Executive Committee

16 March 2019

AT ITS REGULAR meeting on 16 March 2019 the National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland discussed the current situation in relation to the continuing debate about Brexit and also the decision of the Public Prosecution Service in regard to the prosecution of members of the British military in connection with the events of Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972 and the murder by the British state military of fourteen innocent Irish citizens taking part in an anti-internment march.

In the decision of the Prosecution Service that only one out of sixteen British soldiers will face prosecution for their involvement in the events of that

Challenging anti-union legislation

ON SATURDAY 23 March the Trade Union Left Forum held its first event of 2019. Under the heading "Let Us Arise: Has Anti-Union Legislation Got Workers On Their Knees?" the workshop at the Connect hall in Gardiner Street, Dublin, attracted workers from throughout the trade union movement, reflecting the small but growing awareness of the anti-worker nature of trade union legislation and the need to begin combating it at every level.

The discussion was opened by two guest speakers, who presented well-received talks on the history and reality of anti-union legislation on both sides of the border. Mel Corry of the anti-sectarian and trade union education group Trademark in Belfast described the impact of anti-union laws in the north of Ireland since the Thatcher era and the capacity for resistance resulting from the devolution of labour law to Stormont.

The second speaker, Dave Gibney, communications officer of Mandate, covered the present situation in the Republic and the legislative battles on the labour front, in particular those of the banded-hours legislation and right to access.

Following the talks the participants engaged in a lively discussion on the effect of the Industrial Relations Act (1990) and equivalent laws in the North. The individualisation and judicialisation of industrial disputes within the concept of "social partnership," coupled with declining union density and union militancy, were identified as major problems confronting the union movement and the working class today.

‘The Communist Party of Ireland continues to assert its long-held position that the only lasting solution is to end partition and to end the domination of both British and EU imperialism’

day, the British state has concurred in the assertion that the bodies of fourteen civilians are insufficient evidence for prosecuting all those involved. The only soldier who may face charges will have the full financial and legal support of the British state.

The only prosecutions considered were those of individual soldiers, never of their commanding officers, nor of the politicians responsible. While an individual soldier may be sacrificed, the real decision-makers—the British state, politicians, and military command—will remain untouched and untouchable.

It is against this background that working people need to understand the comments made on 6 March in the British parliament by the Secretary of State, Karen Bradley,* not as the comments of an ill-informed or ignorant British Tory politician but rather as a very clear political message of support to the British military establishment: that their service in protecting the interests of imperialism will go unchallenged.

The campaign of the families of the victims in both the Derry and the Ballymurphy mass murders to expose the lies and cover-ups must be applauded, and acceptance that their family members, friends and neighbours were murdered as part of a deliberately organised and directed policy by the British state. Their persistent and unwavering campaign, which has gone on for forty-seven years and continues today, must be supported.

Brexit

The crisis within the ruling class deepens. The continuing struggle within the British establishment and state regarding Brexit and the extent of the relationship or separation between Britain and the European Union continue to expose the deep fissures within the British ruling class and within British social democracy.

This crisis within the European Union has also exposed the subservient relationship of the Irish ruling class towards the EU. The Irish establishment are being increasingly exposed as vassals of the EU, and have allowed the Irish national democratic question to be used as a foil by all sides, both pro and anti-Brexit forces within Britain, and by the EU.

Neither side in this struggle cares for the working class of Ireland: they are simply using the imposed British border in Ireland as a means to an end, to secure their own interests.

The CPI continues to assert its long-held position that the only lasting solution is to end partition and to end the domination of both British and EU imperialism. What is becoming clearer is that many business and farming interests, particularly from a unionist political background, as well as business interests throughout the whole country, now see the all-Ireland economy as being in their own material interests.

The CPI reasserts its view that it is opposed to any border across our country, or the use of divisions among our people, as a blocking mechanism, and that any boundary between the British state and the European Union should be at the borders of Britain itself.

The CPI calls for the unity of all those forces that oppose imperialist domination and calls on them to work together to build the forces necessary to take advantage of the crisis within the British ruling class and a bankrupt Irish establishment to push forward the demand for ending division and partition, to articulate the possibilities of what a new Ireland would hold for the working class of Ireland. ★

*She stated that the killings by the police and the British military “were not crimes. They were people acting under orders and under instruction and fulfilling their duty in a dignified and appropriate way.”

It was clear from those attending that there is a growing understanding among activists of the importance of not just challenging these laws but of working towards repealing them. Connect and Mandate have already passed motions proposed by their members committing them to repealing the 1990 act, while activist groups such as Communities Against Low Pay have also mobilised to challenge the legislation in practice, seeking to circumvent the numerous restrictions on secondary picketing, union access, and much more.

For too long we have been passive in the face of the fact that the structure of social partnership and trade union relations in both parts of the country serve only to tie up workers with legal control and restrictions, so as to stymie any attempt at effective industrial action and mobilisation. The net effect has been to leave the great mass of workers convinced that they are powerless and to lead them to become disillusioned with the trade union movement.

As a result of this passiveness, both the right and the ultra-left have sought to blame unions for this situation, rather than acknowledging the barriers to industrial action. It is time for trade union members and activists to begin dismantling the very architecture of industrial relations in Ireland, beginning with the keystone of social partnership in the Republic, namely the 1990 act. Unless we begin to rewrite the rules we will find ourselves perpetually on the losing side.

Never has this been more evident than with the unilateral withdrawal of the employers from social partnership and the rise of union-busting strategies, such as Tesco’s infamous Project Black. As we stare into the abyss of the next recession, it is clear that these attacks will only intensify, and that the union movement and the working class need to relearn how to defend themselves and to undo the chains of anti-union legislation.

To this end the Trade Union Left Forum will continue this discussion, with more talks and activities planned for this year. The next one, to be held in early May, will cover the pernicious effect of EU legislation on industrial struggle. All those who wish to engage in the fight to rebuild our unions as organisations of the working class are invited to attend. ★

■ You can contact the Trade Union Left Forum (tuleft@gmail.com) or Communities Against Low Pay (communitiesagainstlowpay@gmail.com) by e-mail or through social media.

THE CAPITALIST ILLUSION AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION

Eoghan O'Neill asks what happens to labour when the ratio of jobs being created is dwarfed by the number of people entering the labour force

THE FUTURISTS look to an existence where automation and artificial intelligence—as opposed to just machines and robots—in a multitude of disciplines, such as complex medical diagnosis and autonomous truck-driving, replace human labour to such an extent that labour will not be in a position to reproduce itself, in the sense that the wage system of payment for work done will not suffice.

Their answer to this reality is to maintain that there will have to be a form of universal basic income to compensate those who would no longer have access to a sustainable wage level.

The large tech companies and their CEOs are pushing this agenda of a universal basic income to get ahead of any form of discontent with the automation process that is now taking place, and gaining pace, in work-places all over the globe. This filters through wider society and has stimulated debates on the merits of a UBI. (This topic has been dealt with a number of times in *Socialist Voice,* and so it is not to be the focus of this article.)

The implementation of a UBI within the existing system, just like the existing wage system, will be a construct of the capitalist class; and if that is the case we can only deduce that it will be instituted in the interests of the capitalist class.

Once again, forces on the left, when debating the merits of a UBI within existing society, are fully immersed in the capitalist agenda, and their conclusions and recommendations of a UBI can only be made within capitalist parameters; that is to say, no matter what rate of income is paid, the source will still stem from the exploitation of one class by another.

Where we have to differ in our understanding on current debates is on how we frame the automation of labour processes, and what its implications are for those of us who want to propose an alternative to capitalism and its internal contradictions.

Let us do a thought experiment to help us better understand the implications of automation for the working class. In a competitive market of a simple commodity—a pair of jeans, for example—taking as a start a fixed production process, where all producers have the same level of technology, and labour is intensive within the process, companies compete for the customers in the market.

An intensive struggle for market share ensues, and, aside from gaining brand loyalty, companies at this point can do one of two things to increase their market share.

Option 1: Intensify the exploitation of the workers: make them work longer hours, or reduce wages, benefits, and overtime, or move production to where wages are much lower. Option 2: Invest in technology and machines to increase the productivity of the worker. This competition drives companies towards monopoly and oligopoly markets, because there are greater profits to be made when there are only a few competitors, where companies become price-makers instead of price-takers, the barriers to entry erected are very high for new competitors, and collusion on pricing is easier to implement, overtly or covertly. The final goal of it all, of course, is to increase the share of profit going to the owners of the companies.

So, returning to our company producing jeans, those that have chosen either or both options above will have taken the lead in the market, and those that were too late to the party get left behind, unable to stay in operation because of the lower market prices of each unit and higher costs of production relative to their competitors. They close down, and those workers who were employed are made redundant.

Now, if we expand this process to a multitude of industries and services, the scenario begins to reflect the modern global capitalist system and the tectonic shifts taking place within it.

In general terms (and for simplification purposes), the labour-intensive industries have moved to the Global South, and the capital-intensive industries (machines, robots, automation, AI) have remained within the Global North. The services (tertiary) sector has become the dominant sector in the "northern" countries, while the production and manufacturing (primary

‘Like every innovation in capitalist economies, profit is the motivating factor’

and secondary) sectors are dominant in the “southern” economies.

In the capitalist system, the price of the product is related to the cost of the raw materials, the cost of other commodities that maintain and develop the production and distribution process, the cost of labour, extra costs (taxes, tariffs etc.), and the amount of profit that can be extracted from the sale of the goods or service.

We stated in previous articles that profit is a capitalist construct. It is derived solely from the ownership structures that exist from, the private ownership of the means of production, and from its ability to exploit labour and pay a form of wages that is not equivalent to the amount of work done.

The more labour-intensive an industry is the more profit can be extracted, because each individual worker is the source of surplus value—profit: adding more value to an item than what they are paid in wages. So when this is aggregated for an entire company, industry, or country, profit is highest in labour-intensive industries or areas, and the rate of profit declines in capital-intensive industries or areas.

The capitalist system drives, and is reliant on, the extraction of surplus value from labour in order for it to expand and accumulate even more surplus value. It is a spiral effect: the larger the spiral circles the less competitive the market and the more monopolies dominate economic activity.

The sad truth for those living in the Global South is that those manufacturing companies (usually indigenous to the region but contracted by large transnational companies of the Global North) that are competing with other manufacturers in the region will inevitably intensify and implement the innovations available, thus increasing the ranks of the unemployed—the reserve army of labour. With an abundant supply of labour it will be much easier to drive the already subsistence wage levels down even further. There is no catching up in the Global South with economies of the Global North—on the contrary, it is the economies of the Global North that will be brought down to the levels of the Global South.

The reality for those living in the Global North is that, with the majority of manufacturing industries being outsourced to the Global South (option 1), companies that remain must intensify technological innovations. We see this in the banking sector, the retail sector, the high-tech sector, the pharmaceutical sector, the public-service sector, the agricultural and food sector; just about every industry is subject to technological innovations in order to increase productivity.

This in itself is not a bad thing; but herein lies the capitalist illusion: that the working class without work will become better off and their interests will be looked after by private industry by means of a universal basic income.

Like every innovation in capitalist economies, profit is the motivating factor. This is what is driving automation and the development of artificial intelligence. Capitalists are investing heavily in these areas so that they can be implemented in others, in order to increase their productivity, to drive down prices, to subsume competitors, to increase market share, ultimately to drive up profits—a legal imperative in capitalist economies.

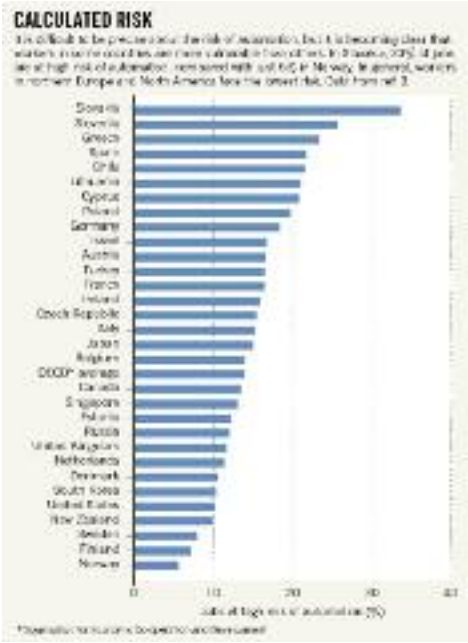
It is no coincidence that the implementation of these innovations is happening in the Global North, because the profit margins of companies operating there are much tighter than for those directing the operations of the Global South, extracting superprofits from the workers of that region.

This innovation is a double-edged weapon for labour, because innovation not only replaces human labour but also increases the reserve army of labour, driving wages and benefits down. However—and glaringly, for those who can see—the internal contradictions of capitalism will ensure another collapse of the capitalist system, resulting in misery for the working class once again.

How, with capitalists implementing options 1 and 2, will there be enough effective demand for the products to enable these companies to begin producing using automated systems? If this demand is not met there is overproduction, leading to job losses, leading to loss in tax revenue, leading to cuts, and so on.

Their answer is to create a universal basic income. But who will finance a UBI that will be high enough to allow every family to receive an income that will guarantee a decent standard of living? (And who decides the definition of a decent standard of living?) If tax revenue dwindles because of the decrease in job creation, the effects can be catastrophic for a country. We witnessed this at first hand with the results of a collapse of only one part of our economy (the building industry) and the knock-on effects this had on the whole economy.

If capitalism today cannot meet the needs of the majority of people on the planet, and in this country, where we have very low unemployment levels, then a UBI stinks of a red herring. The richest people and companies in the world are tax-avoiders. They are plundering our natural environment at a rate that may make it virtually impossible to ever undo the damage they have done in the relatively brief time in which they have operated. They exploit both our natural environment and human labour for their



own benefit, and all decisions they make are made in their own interests.

We must not be mistaken: the capitalist agenda is privatisation, and implementing and popularising a UBI in this context is a tactic, an illusion, to undermine the need for public funds for our common needs, to open up our

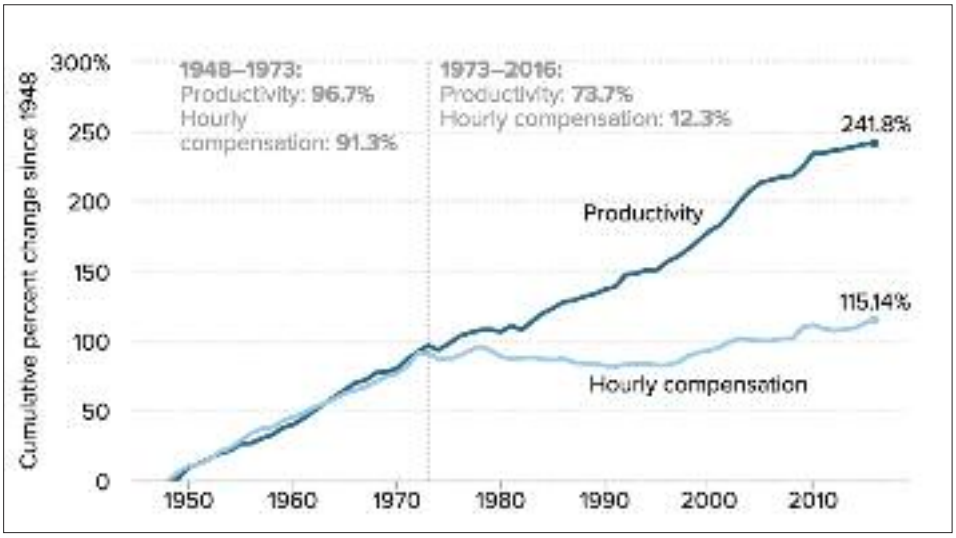
services to privatisation, i.e. the extraction of profit.

Whether we are discussing a UBI, automation, or AI, the real debate that has to be won should not be on the merits of each of these—whether it would have a positive or negative effect on citizens—because the change is coming: the debate needs to be centred on who owns, who controls, and ultimately who makes the decisions.

This, like other economic debates, needs to be steered away from the particular issue of debate and placed firmly within its class character: the ownership of the means of production.

Once again the capitalists create an illusion (UBI) that has leftists hook-line-and-sinkered into debating on capitalist terms, accepting the rationale of the private ownership of the means of production, leaving space only for debating the quantity of crumbs that are left to be distributed among larger and larger numbers of people. Can we trust them with such far-reaching implications for the value of our labour power? If they are in the process of replacing labour with automation and AIM (the number of jobs in OECD countries said to be at high risk within the next ten years is estimated at between 9 and 47 per cent), will they share their wealth to create a sustainable UBI?

We only have to go back to forecasts of the introduction of computers into the work-place, when there were great promises of the work load being halved, a four-day working week, shorter working day, extended days off, and more leisure time. While the productivity of labour has soared, pay rates have remained fairly stagnant, as can be seen from the graph. Though the reasons and the interpretation of this graph may vary, it is a clear and disturbing indication of the devaluation of labour power.



Source: Economic Policy Institute (figures for the United States)

St Patrick and the heritage of Christianity

DAN TARAGHAN

THE SUNDAY TIMES in its editorial of 17 March declared that "St Patrick's Day is fast becoming the springtime equivalent of Halloween: a low-key Irish holy day that has been exported, processed, repackaged, repurposed and flogged back to us by the Americans."

There is little doubt that this is true. What was once a day for small parades and the wearing of shamrock has now become totally commercialised. Ministers fly to all parts of the globe, and especially to America, to promote Irish business.

The parades themselves have degenerated into a feast of greenery and professional parade organisers, especially in Dublin. RTE does not even try to hide the commercial aspect and trumpets the fact that St Patrick's Day gives access to the American president and other political leaders for Irish business. St Patrick has become lost in this fog of green.

In view of the diminution of St Patrick, it is appropriate that Roy Flechner, a lecturer in mediaeval history at UCD, has produced an excellent book, *Saint Patrick Retold: The Legend and History of Ireland's Patron Saint*. Flechner dissects the mythology surrounding Patrick on the grounds of his own writings and other evidence from Roman writers.

In brief, Patrick was from a Romano-British family. He grew up at a time when the Romans were withdrawing from Britain. It is highly likely, according to Flechner, that he fled to Ireland, and that the story of being kidnapped by Irish pirates and held in slavery may have been invented to illustrate his struggle in becoming a committed Christian. When Patrick returned the second time Flechner reckons that he had a source of wealth that enabled him to give gifts. It is even possible that he brought slaves and used these as gifts.

Patrick did not bring Christianity to Ireland. There were other Christians before him, such as Declan. Nor is there any evidence that he was ever consecrated a bishop. He mainly operated around Ulster and Leinster, and his subsequent prominence probably had

‘Only with a system of public ownership of the means of production can the true benefits and merits of automation, AIM or UBI be fully employed for the benefit of the majority of people’

The value of labour power, for the capitalist, is wholly dependent on human labour for the creation of goods and services within the production and distribution process. If the capitalists can use machines, computers or robots to increase productivity without a proportional increase in wages, as has been the case since the 1970s, the widespread introduction of automation and AIM (automation for information management) into production processes will further erode the capitalist’s dependence on labour power, and so the gap between productivity and pay displayed here will only widen.

Furthermore, if surplus value is extracted from the exploitation of labour power, a question remains for the capitalist: how will we be able to retain profit margins when the source of profit—i.e. labour power—is being replaced by automation and AIM? Will this force companies to lobby for a wholesale lowering of wages? How will this then influence the effective demand for goods and services and therefore the real economy? Is the long-term agenda to create artificial organisms so that the reproduction process of automated labour is able to take place, leaving labour power redundant to various degrees?

The English anthropologist and geographer David Harvey writes: “The consequences of an intensification of capitalist competition in the market (including the search for relative surplus value through technological changes) produce deteriorating conditions of social reproduction for the working classes (or significant segments thereof) if no compensating forces or public policies are put in place to counteract such effects.”

Nothing in the history of capitalism points towards this ever happening voluntarily within the capitalist system—if anything, this process will ensure a permanent reserve army of labour, so that wage rates and UBI rates remain depressed on a global scale within the coming decades.

It is not a way forward to a bright new future that capitalism is trying to forge but a way back to a miserable existence for the mass of the people while a small elite bask in the bounty of leisure off the backs of labour.

“The robots are coming!” people say—but it’s not the robots we should fear, dismantle or destroy but the class who own the robots, who are developing automation and AIM, who are in total control of the livelihood of billions of people on the planet.

Only with a system of public ownership of the means of production can the true benefits and merits of automation, AIM or UBI be fully employed for the benefit of the majority of people. It is the class nature of society that we must change; but to do this we have to provide some road map of a way forward; and a token line about socialism at the end of this article will not suffice.

The concluding part in this series on the Capitalist Illusion will delve more deeply into the socialist alternative, and how it is up to all class-conscious people to bring us on the journey towards a revolutionary transformation. ★

more to do with the O’Neills trying to establish their claim to the high-kingship of Ireland.

It is not known exactly what type of belief system existed before Christianity, or how the latter was able to take hold. Patrick does not mention druids, or whether there was an organised religious group before Christianity. Julius Caesar, in his *Commentaries on the Gallic War*, said the druids studied for more than seven years and memorised everything. Nothing was written.

This was the great gift that Christianity brought: writing. The Christian scribes recorded the Irish myths and sagas, and the earliest Irish histories, and also went to Continental Europe to introduce learning and Christianity.

Engels regarded the early Christians as being like communists. The same could be said for the Irish missionaries, who risked life and limb to spread Christianity and learning throughout Europe.

Before Patrick, Declan and the other Christians began spreading the new religion it is obvious that the priest caste that preceded them had developed a sophisticated belief system. It is likely that the sun was a major part of the religion. They managed to work out accurately when the various solstices took place. All the major feast days took place at the time of significant events in the solar calendar. The fact that St Patrick’s Day is the 17th of March is probably connected to this.

For an agricultural society, being able to predict the beginning of winter, summer or even mid-winter was fundamental for survival. If a priest caste kept this knowledge secret, or surrounded it with mumbo-jumbo that only they knew, it gave them power. This was especially so if all knowledge was memorised.

Christianity, by merging feast days with local custom and tradition, would have democratised knowledge of the weather system. By merging and adopting local practices it did not set itself in direct opposition but at the same time undermined the local priest caste of druids. Furthermore, through the introduction of writing and recording things, knowledge could be transmitted rather than be the preserve of the few.

A final significant event in Patrick’s case was his attack on Coroticus. The latter was a Scottish Christian king who had killed and enslaved Christians. Patrick denounced and excommunicated him. The fact that he was able to do this without being dealt the same fate suggests that he had a certain status in what was a very class-conscious society. Patrick said that although Coroticus and his men regarded themselves as Christians, they were nothing more than pagans. In fact in the afterlife the slaves would sit with Christ in judgement on them.

This was a revolutionary message at the time to a king. Patrick was telling him he had to behave as a Christian and not just call himself one. The slaves were as good as a king, if not better.

Our present-day politicians are little different from Coroticus as they abase themselves before their capitalist god. ★

BOOKS with Jenny Farrell

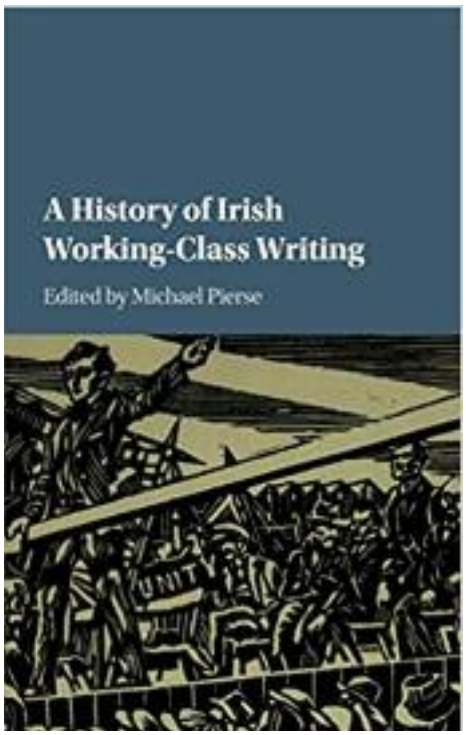
A history of working-class writing

Michael Pierse (ed.), *A History of Irish Working-Class Writing* (Cambridge University Press, 2018).

THIS IS A BOOK to be welcomed. It is the first study of such scope, attempting, as it does, to present and analyse the entire body of Irish working-class literature.

It begins with the first writings of rural workers in the eighteenth century and brings the reader right up to the present day. Twenty-two chapters examine various aspects of this seriously under-researched field of literature. The book attempts to give as comprehensive an overview as possible.

There is always a degree of reservation when working-class literature comes under the scrutiny of largely middle-class academics. How familiar are these academics with the working-class experience? How much



of this experience will be grasped? How high-handed will they be in commenting on the literary production of the working class?

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there was an industrial proletariat in Ireland. However, in a predominantly agricultural economy such as Ireland's the rural proletariat must also be included among working-class writers, as well as small farmers. The latter are what might be termed a peripheral group of the rural proletariat. Equally, there is an ever-increasing group of people living in precarious employment, and the unemployed.

Working-class authors must be read not merely in terms of their origins but also of how central this experience is to their writing, how aware they are of the inhuman and war-hungry system that exploits them, how their characters envisage their own emancipation and a better, more humane and peace-loving world.

One of the most striking omissions in the book is any recognition of working-class writing in Irish. There is no separate chapter on this, nor is there any serious inclusion of writers in Irish. We mention some of these here to indicate the seriousness of this exclusion.

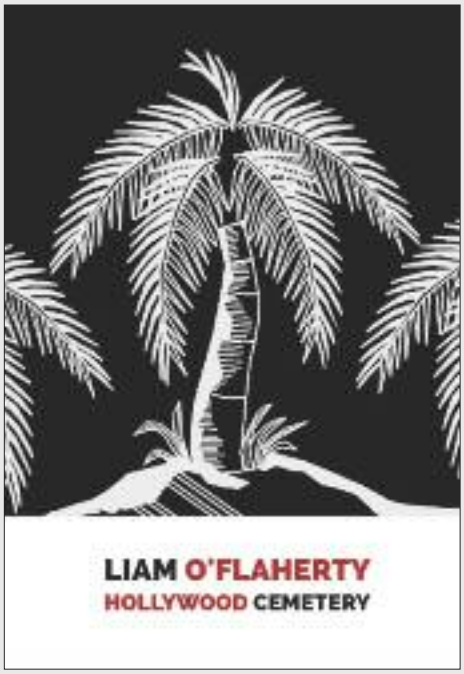
Mícheál Óg Ó Longáin (1766–1837), cowherder and labourer, later teacher and scribe, joined with the United Irishmen in their anti-colonial struggle. Neither is there any

Hollywood cemetery

Liam O'Flaherty, *Hollywood Cemetery: A Vision of the World* to Come (Nuascéalta, 2019).

THE VETERAN film-maker Bob Quinn will launch this new edition of Liam O'Flaherty's novel *Hollywood Cemetery*, long out of print, at 6 p.m. on Wednesday 10 April at Galway City Library.

Published in London in 1935 but never reissued until now, *Hollywood Cemetery* is one of five novels by O'Flaherty banned by the Irish state under the Censorship of Publications Act (1929). It departs from his more familiar settings of the rural West of Ireland or Dublin's slums. It is O'Flaherty's fictionalised satirical account of his encounter with an



industry that embodies the American Way of Life and exposes the core of Hollywood film-making.

Based on his observations during the filming of his novel *The Informer,* he exposes how Hollywood operates, the allure of incredible salaries, and the resulting prostitution of its employees for money. O'Flaherty appears to a certain degree in the character of Brian Carey. This modern Irish author is part of a beauty-spotting operation in Ireland along with an American film crew, to seek out a glamour girl suitable for the filming of his story "The Emigrant." This achieved, the idea of a realist film about poverty in Ireland is speedily relinquished in favour of Hollywood illusion. *Hollywood Cemetery* is both hilarious and frightening.

Here it is a struggle to hold on to one's own identity and integrity. Power, and money, swallow everything, without regard for human life. Apart from the narrator, only the Communist Party newspaper *Proletarian Power*

discussion of the twentieth-century literary giants Pádraic Ó Conaire, Máirtín Ó Cadhain, Dónall Mac Amhlaigh, or Máirtín Ó Direáin.

In the early chapters there is also a sense of insularity. Although the popularity of the radical Scottish poet Robert Burns among the working class in eighteenth and nineteenth-century Ireland is mentioned, there is no exploration of why that might have been so.

Indeed the epochal upheaval of the American and French Revolutions, their unprecedented and hope-inspiring effect on the working class of all Europe with their promise of equality, comradeship, and liberty, are not part of the picture. Yet these events, along with the anti-colonial revolution in Haïti, were enormously significant in the development of the United Irishmen, who had mass support in Ireland and in the later years increasingly attracted working-class members.

Without such a historical context the writings of the working class lose the meaning they had at the time and for the authors.

Occasionally, the tone of an author towards the writer discussed comes across as patronising. *The Ragged-Trousered Philanthropists* by the Dublin-born Robert Tressell (Robert Noonan) is the first important working-class novel in English literature. This novel is discussed at different points in the study. In Michael Pierse's own chapter he generalises to a degree that devalues the differentiated image of the working class presented by Tressell.

In chapters on working-class writers from the North of Ireland there are glaring exclusions of just such authors. The chapter entitled "Poetry and the working class in Northern Ireland" concentrates on Heaney, Mahon, and Longley. There is no reference to Ciarán Carson, bilingual son of a postal worker and highly regarded writer and translator of poetry in Irish and English. Neither are Danny Morrison, the poet Ciarán Carson's novelist brother Brendan Carson, Sam McAughtry, or Ian Cochrane. Nor, strikingly, are the novels of Anna Burns, winner of the Man Booker Prize, mentioned, even in passing.

However, despite these significant shortcomings, *A History of Irish Working-Class Writing* is a very good starting-point for anybody who wishes to find out something about this important tradition. It highlights the importance of Seán O'Casey and Brendan Behan. It has collected many names and writings of working-class Irish writers in Ireland, Britain, the United States, Australia, and New Zealand. For this reason alone it is a significant resource.

This book proves that an independent archive of working-class writings must be set up to collect documents and manuscripts deemed unworthy of publication by commercial publishers. Only in this way will important records of working-class lives, such as their autobiographies, be collected as the statement of what the lives of so many were and are like.

This is an academic publication. Priced at £80, it is, ironically, beyond the means of the working class. Everybody with an interest in working–class writings as the voices of the marginalised and silenced should make sure their local library owns a copy for their readers. ★

reveals this: "Hollywood is a cemetery where the remains of present-day bourgeois intellectuals are buried, after being fattened like the sacrificial victims in ancient Mexico on enormous salaries, only to have their hearts plucked out and eaten by the Moguls of modern mammon."

This is what O'Flaherty must have experienced with the filming of his own novel by his distant cousin John Ford. Instead of staying true to his original, set in the slums of Dublin, Hollywood's celluloid manifestations of his two central female characters mock their originals. Instead of making a film based on the Dublin working-class experience, Ford and his script-writer Dudley Nichols, along with the entire machinery, cleansed the novel of its deeper political texture to make a film that presents stereotypes as seen by those who have no interest in the inhabitants of tenements beyond their monetary value.

While in Hollywood, O'Flaherty began thinking about his historical novel *Famine*. This is the first major artistic grappling in Ireland with the nation's nineteenth-century colonial holocaust. O'Flaherty presents a differentiated panorama of the starving peasantry, the famine-profiteering gombeenmen, clergy with and without a spine, and deeply inhuman British colonialists.

O'Flaherty hoped that Ford would make *Famine* into a film after it appeared in 1937. Had Ford taken on this material, and resolutely portrayed this liquidation of a large part of the Irish nation, along with its resistance, it could have made a significant contribution to a cultural acknowledgement of colonialism in all its inhumanity. This did not happen; and *Hollywood Cemetery* is a partial answer as to why not.

Fightback—the assertion of humanity even when confronted with great adversity—is always a theme in O'Flaherty's work. Significantly, the two Irish characters in *Hollywood Cemetery* rebel. The novel also features women whose intelligence flies in the face of the gender role assigned to them by Hollywood. A gender-fluid character is another aspect of the novel in which O'Flaherty seems to anticipate our own times and is surely far ahead of his own.

O'Flaherty had begun the book while still in the United States and finished it in France during the summer of 1935. His first draft was returned to him by his London publisher, Gollancz, as too outspoken. Following its revision, it was finally published on 18 November 1935.

Nuascéalta's republication of *Hollywood Cemetery,* more than eighty years later, is a major cultural event. It is available from Amazon and on line. ★

SOLIDARITY

28 May 2019 is Anti-NATO Day

US anti-war activists arrested at Shannon

▲ **The American anti-war movement, with Veterans for Peace in the lead, are taking up the issue of US military use of Shannon Airport as a transit hub for American wars in the Middle East and provocative NATO war "games" in eastern Europe.**

This is one of the many positive outcomes of the international conference on closing all US and NATO military bases held at Liberty Hall, Dublin, last November.

Two American peace activists were arrested on St Patrick's Day for taking part in a protest inside Shannon Airport. Ken Mayers (82) and Tarak Kauf (77) of Veterans for Peace protested on the tarmac at Shannon Airport against the presence of the US war machine at this Irish civilian airport and its use as a US military hub.

The response of the Irish state was to refuse them bail, and to imprison them in Limerick Prison.

Their passports, as was expected, have been confiscated, and they have been told they must stay in Ireland for the trial.

They appeared in the High Court on Thursday 28 March. Their next hearing will be on Wednesday 3 April.

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