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A country of two halves

Wealth is concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. **Jimmy Doran** on Ireland's class divide

A RECENT STUDY by the Think Tank for Action on Social Change (TASC), *The State We Are In: Inequality in Ireland Today,* throws up a lot of interesting facts about life in Ireland.

The survey points out that Ireland's low union density leads to low pay and high rates of poverty and deprivation. Another factor is that the coverage of collective bargaining is very low, at about 30 per cent, whereas Austria, Belgium, Finland, France and Sweden all have a level of 90 per cent or more. Consequently, the standard of living in those countries far exceeds ours.

Low levels of bargaining power lead to high levels of pay inequality, as the bosses at the head of the table look after themselves first and give themselves and their cronies the lion's share.

"Low pay" is categorised as less than 60 per cent of the median gross (pre-tax) wage. Workers in this category are also considered to be at risk of poverty. 24 per cent of all workers in Ireland are on low pay. This puts us at the third-highest level within the European Union; only Romania and Latvia have a greater proportion on low pay. Together with this, labour costs for employers (i.e. wages plus employer's PRSI) are well below average.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF

"Personally, my whole attention was given to defeating the rebels but it never bothered me a bit how many houses were burnt. I think I regarded all civilians as 'Shinners' . . . My own view is that to win a war of this sort, you must be ruthless. Oliver Cromwell, or the Germans, would have settled it in a very short time."
Captain (later General) Bernard Montgomery
(17th Infantry Brigade, Cork), letter to Colonel Arthur Percival, 1923.

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A country of two halves

The state also subsidises low pay through family income and child support, along with jobseeker's allowance, for part-time workers. Despite this, many workers are still unable to afford the rents demanded by the landlord class—so the state subsidises rents in those cases, which costs it close to €1 billion every year. This money goes straight into landlords' pockets.

Enda Kenny certainly lived up to his promise to make Ireland "the best little country in the world to do business in"; for it is a win-win for the owners of capital.

Inequality is driven by the gains of the wealthiest 10 per cent of earners, at the expense of the bottom 40 per cent. Since the end of the Second World War, when capital was forced to compromise with labour in order to rebuild industry and infrastructure, wage inequality fell steadily, right up to the 1980s, when inequality began to increase and union density began to fall. With the introduction of "social partnership" and anti-union legislation in the 1990s, inequality went into overdrive as capitalism truly entered its highest phase, imperialism.

In 1975 the wealthiest 1 per cent shared 6 per cent of total income, while the wealthiest 10 per cent shared 29 per cent. By 2009 this 1 per cent had grabbed 11 per cent of all income and the top 10 per cent had bagged 36 per cent. Well over a third of all earnings were taken by the top 10 per cent; and this inequality continues to rise, despite the global financial crash. Between 1975 and 2009 the take of the top 1 per cent almost doubled, while that of the top 10 per cent increased by 25 per cent.

Nobody is more greedy than the richest elite. The share of the wealthiest 1 per cent is now over 12 per cent, and rising; which all goes to prove that austerity did work for those who designed it.

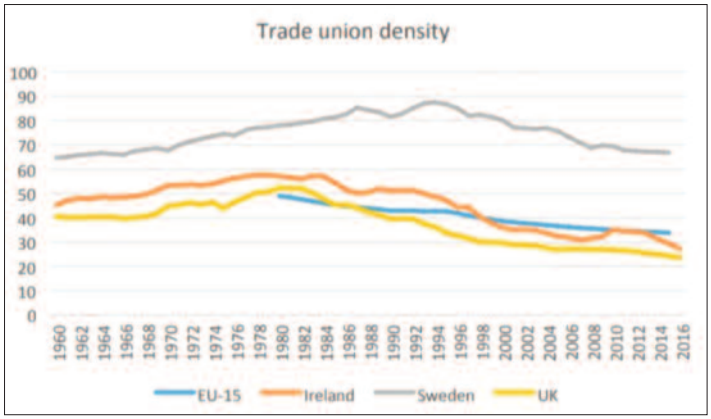
It is also worth noting that all these figures have been collected voluntarily; so we can see that our highest earners are not always willing to admit to the true levels of income. According to the Revenue Commissioners, the top 1 per cent of earners account for 11½ per cent of income; and this excludes income transferred offshore or otherwise shielded from the tax net, which would produce higher inequality still.

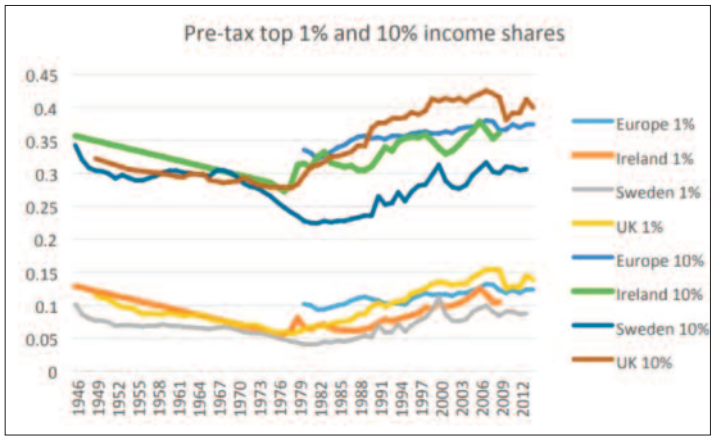
The bottom 10 per cent of earners, on the other hand, only managed to achieve 3½ per cent of total earnings. Even if the bottom 10 per cent were all earning the same amount, this means that they would be earning one-third of average incomes.

60 per cent of all workers in Ireland earn less than the median wage. We live in a very unequal Ireland.

These figures explain a lot when it comes to answering the question, Why do the same parties, representing the same system, get re-elected, time and time again?

Neo-liberalism is a formidable opponent, as it creates a country of two halves: the haves and the have-nots. Half of all workers are doing comparatively well, as they share 90 per cent of the income. The top 10 per cent own 54 per cent of wealth. These are the ones who make the rules. But the wealthiest 1 per cent own the bulk of this and earn more than three times the rest of the top 10 per cent.





	CAE 16	CAE 17	Update 18
Top 10% income share	38.75% ('16)	37.62% ('17)	37.62% ('17)
Top 1% income share	10.95% ('16)	12.05% ('17)	12.05% ('17)
Bottom 90% income share	61.25% ('16)	62.38% ('17)	62.38% ('17)
Gross Gini coefficient	45.4% ('14)	42.8% ('15)	41.9% ('16)
Net Gini coefficient	31.1 ('14)	29.8 ('15)	29.5 ('16)
Top 10% wealth share	53.8% (2013)	53.8% (2013)	53.8% (2013)
Bottom 50% wealth share	4.9% (2013)	4.9% (2013)	4.9% (2013)

It is the top half who continually re-elect the gombeenmen of Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, while the Labour Party props them up. The great majority of those who vote in elections come from this top 50 per cent of society; the poorest 50 per cent vote only in very small numbers, and many are not even registered to vote.

But the share of the top 50 per cent is being squeezed, as many in this group can no longer afford their own homes and other trappings that they once took for granted.

Greed is the foundation-stone of capitalism, and the wealth is becoming concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. The middle 40 per cent are what keeps them in power, and more and more of these are being forced into a cycle of debt and poverty.

It all goes to prove that under capitalism the labour of the many becomes the wealth of the few. Only system change will create a society where everybody shares in what we produce and people can reach their full potential.

Capitalism will be its own gravedigger as it forces more and more people into poverty. ★

"The bourgeoisie turns everything into a commodity, hence also the writing of history. It is part of its being, of its condition for existence, to falsify all goods: it falsified the writing of history. And the best-paid historiography is that which is best falsified for the purposes of the bourgeoisie." Frederick Engels, Notes for a History of Ireland (1869–1870).

The Berlin Wall, thirty years later

GRAHAM HARRINGTON

THIS YEAR will be the thirtieth anniversary of the destruction of the Berlin Wall. No doubt this will be accompanied by an ideological onslaught by the capitalist media on the German Democratic Republic, with a few obligatory mentions of the Stasi thrown in.

It will not be necessary to inform the readers of *Socialist Voice* that this fawning over "freedom and democracy" is laughable, given that the same voices have the gall to portray themselves as democrats, despite their support for the neo-Nazis and other fascists in government in Ukraine, Hungary and Poland and their support for the fascist Bolsonaro in Brazil and his counterparts in the Venezuelan opposition.

However, it is worth pointing out some historical facts on the GDR from a working-class viewpoint.

The creation of the GDR was a reaction to the creation of the Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, after the Western-controlled sectors of Berlin introduced a separate currency so as to undermine the economic stability of the Eastern side. Contrary to what is taught in the capitalist education system, the Soviet Union and its allies never wanted a partitioned Germany, instead favouring a unified but neutral state. But in 1952 the Soviet proposals for German reunification were rejected by the West, under its chancellor, Konrad Adenauer. West Germany was later armed and financed by the United States.

The GDR was created in an area that composed only a third of German territory, had little heavy industry, and had suffered immense damage in the war, with a population who were indoctrinated with Nazi propaganda and threats of Jews taking over. Up to 30 per cent of industry in the east was given to the USSR as reparations for the war, which had cost 26 million Soviet lives.

By necessity, the new ruling party of the GDR, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED), was unashamedly a party of veteran anti-fascists, some of whom were Jewish. Otto Grotewohl, the first prime minister of the GDR, had been imprisoned by the Nazis several times. Walter Ulbricht was a former joiner; his successor, Erich Honecker, was a former roofer who had spent ten years in a Nazi prison.

Albert Norden, a member of the Central Committee of the SED, was the son of a rabbi. Herman Axen was from a Jewish family and had survived internment in both Auschwitz and Buchenwald. Hilde Benjamin, the GDR's first woman minister, was also a Jew, who had lost her right to practise law under the Nazis, while her husband was murdered in Mauthausen slave-labour camp.

In sharp contrast to this, the West German state was filled with former Nazis. Hans Globke was a Nazi who not only worked under Adolf Eichmann but jointly wrote the infamous Nuremberg Laws and later became adviser to Adenauer.

The West offered financial incentives to citizens of the East should they move to the West. Of course these incentives, such as housing and interest-free loans, were not offered to all but only to those among the professional classes. This resulted in a "brain drain," which massively affected the GDR. This, along with acts of sabotage and blatant espionage by the likes of the CIA, BND (the West German secret service), and MI6, led the East German state to close its borders. The result was the "anti-fascist protection barrier," erected in 1961.

The wall came down in 1989, and not long afterwards the GDR was annexed by the West.

The Berlin Wall may not be a glamorous historical topic for communists, but we should always approach history in a principled way, and see what we can learn from it. Border walls are seldom a nice thing, but we should always ask, Who benefits? Who benefits from the walls in Palestine? Who benefits from the peace walls in Belfast, keeping our class divided?

And we must also ask, Who benefited from the GDR? Certainly the working class did, as did women. It's not surprising that those in the East continue to say in poll after poll that they regret the fall of their state. They had a universal health service, universal education and public housing, more theatres than any other state on earth, a collective sense of belonging that is alien to anybody in a capitalist society, and equality for women, including child care and access to abortion, that was unashamedly working-class feminism. All this while the GDR kept up its international obligations, providing support for revolutionaries in Mozambique, Angola, and elsewhere.

Considering the hand the GDR leadership was dealt, and its anti-fascist credentials, we should keep an open mind on the more unattractive aspects and always approach things with an open mind. ★

ABOVE: **Berlin 1961** Workers' militia of the Kampfgruppen der Arbeiterklasse (Fighting Groups of the Working Class) protect the construction of the Berlin Wall

Coup crumbles

What is happening in Venezuela is an extremely intense class struggle **Eugene McCartan** reports

THE ILLEGAL sanctions imposed by the United States—Trump's policy, a continuation of Obama's—and the European Union continue to have an impact upon workers, the urban and rural poor and farmers. The Venezuelan oligarchs have used every possible manoeuvre—economic, political, and outright violence—to disrupt the country and the government of Nicolás Maduro.

Since 2017 it is reckoned that the illegally imposed sanctions have cost Venezuela $6 billion, and prevented it from importing $2 billion worth of badly needed medicine.

But so far they have failed to dislodge Maduro; they have failed to undermine the support of the majority of workers, the poor and farmers for the Bolivarian Revolutionary process—people who have benefited from Venezuela's oil wealth, who have for the first time witnessed and experienced real changes in their lives from the beginning of the Bolivarian Revolution initiated by Hugo Chávez.

Millions of houses have been built for the poor and working people, together with mass literacy campaigns, health services for the mass of the people for the first time in Venezuelan history, and the constitutional recognition of black, mixed-race and indigenous people's rights.

This is a long way from the white-

Chronicle of a coup foretold

Seán Edwards

THE ATTEMPTED coup d'état of 23 January in Venezuela is unique in one respect: it was promoted and organised openly and publicly by the government of the United States, supported by its allies and client states in Europe and Latin America.

One hundred years ago the United States declared its right to intervene wherever and whenever it liked in Latin America; but in modern times it never acknowledged its crimes, though they were well known. The Venezuelan coup, however, was openly called for and organised by the US government, which meanwhile enforced crippling economic sanctions.

An insignificant young man, Juan Guaidó, chairperson of the National Assembly (which is itself in contempt of the Supreme Court), was encouraged to declare himself "president of Venezuela." He was tutored by vice president Pence of the United States, who phoned him on 22 January, and he obediently declared himself president the following day, claiming that the election of Nicolás Maduro last May was invalid, and therefore the presidency was vacant.

There followed a campaign of anti-Chavista marches, some of them quite large, accompanied by a few violent incidents in an attempt to create a breakdown of public order, which might be used to justify foreign intervention. The Chavista marches in support of the government were, of course, many times larger, though this was not reported in the corporate media.

The coup attempt did not get much traction among Venezuelans, even among opposition supporters, only the extreme right. The governor of the state of Tachira, Laidy Gómez, for example, was strongly opposed, as was Henrique Capriles, a former presidential candidate.

Left to itself, the effort at regime change would have fizzled out, and Juan Guaidó would have returned to his former obscurity. (81 per cent of Venezuelans had never heard of him before.) But the United States and its allies "recognised" Guaidó as president of Venezuela and organised shipments of "humanitarian aid," which it threatened to forcibly bring in to Venezuela, without the government's agreement. According to them there exists a humanitarian crisis in

"Today the United States is practically sovereign on this continent and its *fiat* is law upon the subjects to which it confines its interposition . . . Its infinite resources combined with its isolated position render it master of the situation and practically invulnerable as against any or all other powers."

Richard Olney (US secretary of state), on the extension of the "Monroe Doctrine" to include the right to determine the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana, 1895.

dominated institutions of the oligarchic descendants of the Spanish conquistadors. These oligarchs still retain considerable economic power, controlling the food supply, agri-corporations, transport, and most television and radio stations and newspapers. They continue to co-ordinate their strategy of political and economic disruption with their American political and military handlers.

The real power broker of the opposition is Leopoldo López, who has been under house arrest since 2017, having been given a fourteen-year prison sentence for inciting violence in 2014. It was his strategy that resulted in the co-ordinated actions to have a little-known opposition politician, Juan Guaidó, declare himself president of the National Assembly, which was quickly followed by his being recognised as "interim president" of Venezuela by the Trump government and a host of right-wing governments in Latin America, as well as the majority of EU member-states.

So far, this internal coup has failed.

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the Irish government, which takes its orders from the EU and the United States, recognised Juan Guaidó as "interim President." Even the fig-leaf that is the EU Parliament voted to support Guaidó.

The strategy being followed inside and around Venezuela has been well tried and tested in Latin America for decades by the United States and the local oligarchs. This strategy is clear: to create artificial shortages of medicines and basic necessities so as to have the maximum impact on the greatest number, particularly workers and the poor, while having little impact upon the rich; to stockpile food, disrupt the transport network, provoke street clashes and assassinations; then appeal to the military to intervene to save the people from chaos and violence.

This strategy has been honed to a fine art and applied throughout Latin America. Over the last decade imperialism has weaponised "human rights" as the central ideological strategy for marginalising and isolating governments that are not compliant. The United States, Britain, Canada and other governments have seized assets of the Venezuelan government valued at billions of dollars. This has prevented the Venezuelan government from importing medicines and food.

The imperial version of "human right" is confined to the sphere of the individual and centred on "political rights": it does not extend to economic justice, housing, food, medical services, women's rights, the rights of national minorities, trade union and workers' rights, or the democratic control and use of natural resources for the benefit of the majority.

What is happening is an extremely intense class struggle within Venezuela waged by the economically powerful elite, who have been unable to wrestle back political institutions from the mass of workers and the poor. The United States has made no bones about wanting to take control of Venezuelan oil as well as gold and other natural resources, thus restricting the capacity of the present and future governments to use them in the interests of the majority.

Over the decades the United States has used various front organisations and NGOs to promote this agenda, such as "Human Rights Watch." Unfortunately, much of the liberal left fall into step with this "human rights" strategy laid down by imperialism: they do the political leg work for imperialism, then try to distance themselves from its violence.

As the liberal left fall into line in this "human rights" strategy they find some minute group that is critical of the government to justify their compliance with the general strategy: supporting every revolution except the actually existing ones. ★

Venezuela. (For the true story see Abby Martin's interview with Alfred de Zayas, the UN rapporteur on human rights in Venezuela, at http://tinyurl.com/y3mjn92j.)

The date set for the intrusion and the contrived excuse for intervention was 23 February. Lorries containing supplies, along with Colombian police and military, as well as followers of Guaidó, gathered on the Colombian side of the bridge connecting the two countries, with Venezuelan police and military on the other side. Two lorries were set on fire as a provocation, so that the Venezuelan authorities could be blamed; but the intended armed conflict between the two states did not materialise.

Yet the threat remains. As Trump and Pence keep saying, "all options are on the table, including military force." However, even America's closest allies could not bring themselves to endorse military force. The Group of Lima, the carefully assembled group of client states, meeting in Bogotá on 25 February, repudiated the use of force. The European Union, not normally averse to militarism, expressed the same view. "The cat would eat fish, but would not wet her feet."

The United States, perhaps a little chastened, has not carried out its threat of invasion; but Pence is talking as belligerently as ever, and new sanctions have been announced.

The coup has failed completely. But the Latin American oligarchies and their imperialist backers in North America and Europe are desperate to restore their hegemony over the continent, and to suppress the Bolivarian Chavista process and eliminate the threat of socialism.

In 2004, when the coup d'état against President Aristide in Haïti had collapsed, the United States, France and Canada intervened directly, kidnapped the president, and brought him to the Central African Republic, a French client state.

A direct intervention is still a possibility, and the illegal economic sanctions and the theft of Venezuelan state property by the United States and Britain continue to cripple the economy and cause great hardship for the people.

Yet the Venezuelan people are not conceding: they are heroically resisting, they are resolved to continue the programme of Hugo Chávez for independence and social progress.

Once again the Irish government has shown a cowardly acquiescence in the imperialist scheme. The Irish people need to repudiate this attitude. Venezuela needs an international campaign of solidarity to stay the hand of the United States, which still regards itself as the rightful ruler of Latin America. ★

Two failed states

A new and very different republic must emerge argues **Tommy McKearney**

Addressing his partners at the Fianna Fáil ard-fheis last month, the leader of the SDLP, Colum Eastwood, drew inspiration from the president of the EU Council, Donald Tusk, and told the audience that "there will be a special place reserved in Hell for those who call for a border poll in Ireland with no plan and idea on how to actually deliver it . . ."

He offered his listeners this pearl of wisdom after saying that a new Ireland will only come by first providing definition and detail of its workings. The delegates roared their approval.

‘... the political entity that is Northern Ireland has failed. Britain no longer views it as a strategic asset’

Maybe we have missed something. Perhaps Colum Eastwood has identified aspects of Fianna Fáil that have eluded the rest of us over the past decades, qualities that might make the party of brown envelopes, dodgy developers, blatant clientelism and endemic “cute-hoorism” suitable advisers on defining a new Ireland.

Can we envisage this pair defining a new republic capable of winning support from the country’s working class, a creation different from the failing state built by Fianna Fáil and its Fine Gael coalition partner? Difficult to imagine Mícheál Martin’s party in that role, most would say.

Eastwood nevertheless is echoing the thinking and wishes of southern Ireland’s ruling class as well as elements within the North’s nationalist bourgeoisie. They are concerned that any fundamental change to the existing constitutional arrangement might challenge their hold on power and privilege. Moreover, by attempting to ensure that change can happen only within the EU, as the SDLP and Fianna Fail leaders are suggesting with their “five demands,”* they are negating any prospect of meaningful change.

The six-county state is a failed political and economic entity. The local Assembly has not sat for more than two years, and few believe that were it to reconvene it would or indeed could make any significant difference. Local political institutions have limited fiscal authority and are dependent on the questionable generosity of the British Parliament, which determines the size of the block grant.

Moreover, and in spite of the often rosy picture painted of a social safety-net available in the North, the welfare state has been eroded, bit by bit, by governments in London. Privatisation is steadily undermining the National Health Service, and the latest effort to reduce welfare benefits has resulted in the disastrous application of universal credit and the infamous bedroom tax.

Whatever temporary measures were introduced to mitigate the worst of these cut-backs in the six counties will very probably end in April 2020.

Against this unpromising backdrop there is also the relentless pressure of changing demographics in an area fixated on sectarian head-counting. By any reasonable analysis, Northern Ireland is a zombie state.

If we have learnt anything over the past century it is that difficulties in the North cannot be resolved either internally or by intervention from London.

Partition, let’s not forget, has not only failed the North but, by dividing Ireland’s working class, has impeded any real prospect of positive development on both sides of the border. There is now a political imperative to recognise this fact and work towards ending partition rather than endeavouring to prolong it.

Of course this should come about without violence. However, being open and frank about existing reality should not threaten a peaceful outcome.

Yet while hiding behind a screen of bogus reasonableness and a supposed reluctance to risk violence, the southern establishment and its allies are in effect putting at risk the prospect of a peaceful transformation. Refusing to have the issues discussed, and adding conditions such as increasing the threshold for ending partition, they are discouraging hard-line unionists in the DUP and elsewhere from facing the realities of a changing Northern Ireland, and indeed a very different Britain.

Ignoring the constitutional status of the Six Counties within the United Kingdom will not mollify DUP hardliners. Their objective is to create the deepest division possible between Northern Ireland and the Republic. This is a strategy arising out of desperation on the part of an insecure party fearing abandonment by London as their fiefdom is being steadily eroded.

Undoubtedly no effort should be spared to engage with all sections of the unionist community; but it is counter-productive to weigh every proposal and each initiative against the hope of winning agreement from a truculent and unreasonable section of society.

It is time to face reality, examine the situation as dispassionately as possible, and draw conclusions in the light of available evidence. For reasons outlined above, the political entity that is Northern Ireland has failed. Britain no longer views it as a strategic asset. Changing demographics mean that within the next few decades unionism will lose its majority in the region. The question for the left then becomes one of how to deal with changing circumstances not only in the North but also throughout the country.

It is crucial that a positive and progressive narrative emerges not only to challenge DUP obscurantism but also to prevent the right-wing axis in the South dictating the future make-up of society in Ireland. Nor can this be a narrative of airy platitudes. It is important to initiate a detailed and informative discourse that has the potential to reassure working people north and south and thereafter win their support.

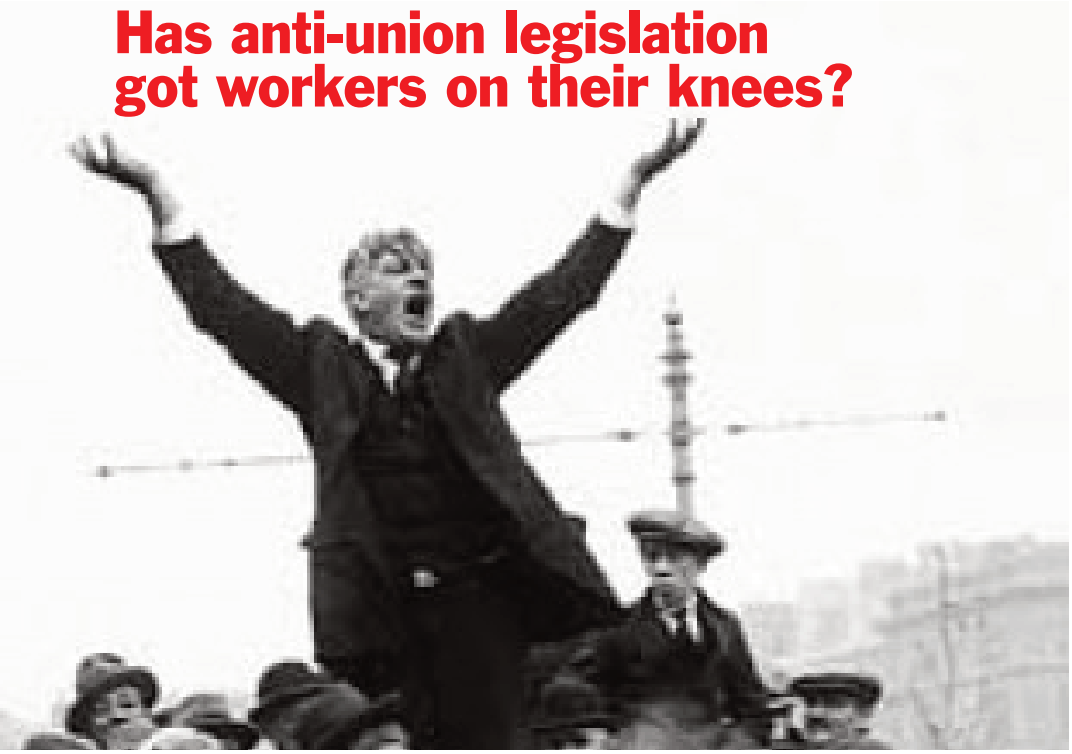
It is essential to emphasise that a new and very different republic must emerge from the two failed states that now exist in Ireland—a republic that addresses the housing crisis through a programme of state-financed public housing; a republic that creates a national health service for all its citizens by abolishing private health facilities; a republic that protects the young and the elderly, and all between, through guaranteeing the social wage. In other words, a workers’ state.

To do so it is necessary to recognise the conditions required for bringing a workers’ republic into being, and the obstacles in its path. A workers’ republic cannot exist within the neo-liberal European Union, regardless of whether there is a hard or a soft border. Nor will it come about if discussion is confined to simply speaking of a united Ireland. Campaigning for an end to partition and supporting the call for Irish unity are perfectly legitimate objectives for the Irish left. It goes without saying, however, that any such campaign must make it clear that these objectives are neither an end in themselves nor a substitute for the struggle to build a workers’ republic.

Whatever about Colum Eastwood’s place in Hell for border pollsters, a different type of hell will be inevitable if the future is left in the hands of his Irish allies and their right-wing EU mentors. The only good alternative is a workers’ republic; so let’s get the discussion started and a strategy for its implementation identified.

*“Newly-partnered Fianna Fáil and SDLP release joint statement on Brexit,” *Irish Examiner,* 21 February 2019. ★

Has anti-union legislation got workers on their knees?



The **Trade Union Left Forum** is holding a public meeting and discussion workshop on anti-union legislation and how it affects the Irish working class, north and south. The purpose of the forum is to encourage and initiate serious examination and debate on the major questions facing the labour movement today from a left and class viewpoint.

The meeting will be held in the head office of Connect (6 Gardiner Row, Dublin), staring at noon on Saturday 23 March.

Two speakers will address the meeting. Dave Gibney of Mandate will discuss anti-union legislation in the South, and Mel Corry of Trademark, Belfast, will deal with legislation in the North. The meeting will then be opened up for a discussion in which activists will share their experiences on the legislation, on how to get around it from day to day, and how we can bring pressure on legislators to have it abolished.

Anti-union legislation in both jurisdictions can be and should be overturned. Dáil Éireann has the power to do so, as has the Executive in Stormont.

This is a very important meeting, as workers' share of income is continuing to fall. This decline began at the end of the 1970s and went into free fall under "social partnership" and the neo-liberal agenda of the 1980s.

It's no coincidence that at the same time union density began to decline, to the point where a little over 30 per cent of workers are now union members. If workers are to regain lost ground, anti-union legislation must be abolished. Workers must have control over what they and their trade unions decide and over when, where and what action to take.

It is essential for workers to understand anti-union legislation and to learn ways of operating within its limitations until such time as it is abolished.

This meeting is an important initiative on the part of the TULF. It will be followed in a number of weeks by a meeting dealing with anti-union legislation from the EU and how it disempowers workers in Ireland.

Workers' rights, pay and conditions are under continuous attack in the gig economy, with bogus self-employment, short-term temporary contracts and precarious work now the norm. It's time the trade union movement and organised labour went on the offensive to win back lost ground and fight new battles.

All activists and union members are encouraged to attend. ★

It's no co

EUGENE McCARTAN

THERE HAS been a growth in resistance by workers and demands for increased wages, for better terms and conditions, and for union recognition. Pay and conditions for nurses have deteriorated with the continuing "austerity," and during February nurses and midwives were the latest group of workers to organise and strike to demand their rights.

While many workers in both public and private hospitals are experiencing low pay and poor working conditions, bosses are raking it in. Those in the wealthiest twenty companies earned on average 33 times more than their employees, and secured pay increases twice as large.

‘We’ve looked after your families for years, now you must look after ours.”

untry for workers

The highest-paid twenty bosses saw their pay increase by 5¼ per cent, to €35.8 million, while the wages of their workers rose by only 2½ per cent. Research shows that in the top twenty-six companies the average pay for the top job was €2.3 million, an increase of 6 per cent over the same list compiled last year.

The highest-paid chief executive among the ISEQ 20 group continued to be Albert Manifold of the building materials giant CRH, with a total package of €8.7 million in 2017, of which “basic pay” was €1.4 million. Second on the list for that year was the €5.3 million for the CEO of the DCC group, followed by the €4 million and €3.6 million for the top executives in Tullow Oil and Paddy Power, respectively.

When bonuses are taken into account, the combined total pay of the companies researched is €58.8 million, an increase of 6 per cent over the total for 2016 of €55 million. The gap between the highest and the lowest total pay was in CRH, at €8.7 million, and Aminex, at €355,000.

In a recent report the ICTU stated that the average pay for Irish workers in 2017 was €37,646—which means it would take the average worker 230 years to earn the annual salary of the boss of CRH. It would take a worker in the Kerry Group 214 years to earn what its CEO earns in one year, while for a worker in DCC it would take 141 years.

Here are further details of two of the top twenty companies:

Cairn Homes is a house-building company, founded in 2014. It has seven directors, who between them are also directors of 111 other companies. Income: €40.9 million (2016). Gross profit: €7.1 million. Number of employees: 38.

Glanbia PLC, a global food and ingredients conglomerate with operations in thirty-two countries, began as a group of co-operatives that were converted into private companies in the 1960s. It dominates the market for cheese, milk (Avonmore), and speciality non-dairy ingredients. Operating profit: €213.6 million (2016). Employees: 6,200.

There are other giant firms whose shares are not publicly traded and are not obliged to report details of senior managers’ pay.

On top of salary, the wealthiest bosses and many senior employees of big companies have a range of benefits, including discretionary bonuses, typically in the range 5–15 per cent, private health insurance, pensions, life insurance, and additional holidays.

A growing proportion of companies are offering more performance incentives, such as share schemes and increased commission on sales. This means more pressure on employees to work harder and longer and to meet higher targets, thereby intensifying exploitation.

Research also shows that salary increases will continue to be at the level of approximately 5 per cent in finance, HR, sales, marketing, engineering, IT, and legal and accountancy firms, with certain jobs in science earning salary increases of up to 15 per cent.

More than half the world’s largest global fund services, banking and aviation leasing companies have their head office in Ireland.

While a significant number of workers in both the public and the private sector have come under huge pressure and are experiencing deteriorating working conditions, the employers are making big salaries and big profits.

Research also shows that where workers are organised, pay and conditions are better. Those not in a trade union need to join one. As never before, workers need to organise. ★

Americans want out of disarmament treaty

NIALL FARRELL

LAST MONTH the United States withdrew from the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces [INF] Treaty, which was concluded with the Soviet Union in 1987.

That treaty was the first nuclear disarmament agreement ever to be concluded between the two countries, albeit to the disadvantage of the Soviet Union. It led to the disarmament of all ground-based missiles and cruise missiles with a flight range between 500 and 5,500 km.

The treaty was uneven. The USSR scrapped 1,754 launch ramps and dismantled 3,000 nuclear warheads, the United States 817 and 890, respectively. France and Britain kept their nuclear weapons; and the United States kept its "Star Wars" programme.

The INF Treaty prohibits the testing, production or installation of ground-based missiles on land, whether nuclear or conventional, anywhere in the world. Sea-based and air-based medium-range weapons are permitted under the treaty. Even tests with medium-range weapons are permitted on land if they are launched from permanently installed launch pads and then not stationed on land.

The implementation of the treaty and its verification were regarded as a model for subsequent disarmament treaties. In 2001, both sides agreed to discontinue controls.

Without presenting any hard evidence, the United States claims that Russia has not adhered to the treaty since 2008. On 30 November 2018 the director of the CIA, Dan Coats, accused the Russians of having launched a missile from a fixed launch pad that had flown more than 500 km, and that later it launched the same missile from a moving launch pad, which remained below the 500 km mark. Neither flight would breach the INF Treaty.

However, Coats stated that by comparing the two flights the Russian side could draw conclusions about the development of a cruise missile capable of flying more than 500 km and being launched from mobile launch pads. That would be a breach of the treaty. The United States has not presented any evidence.

The Russian side says that the cruise missile's range is 480 km, the United States contends that it's 2,600 km. Russia invited the United States and NATO to make an on-the-spot inspection, which they rejected. The United States claims that Russia stationed a hundred of these missiles in four battalions and demands that they be scrapped. But how can Russia scrap something it does not possess?

In reality, the United States is seeking a way out of the INF Treaty, so that it would have a free hand to deploy land-based missiles and cruise missiles capable of carrying either nuclear or conventional warheads. The latter could also destroy very precisely bunkered and other targets.

Since 2006 US governments have been pursuing the technological goal of "prompt global strike"—being able to attack anywhere in the world within an hour. The aim is to create blackmail on a global scale. This inevitably increases the risks. Its 625 military bases outside the United States, in 53 countries, mainly on the Eurasian landmass within reach of Russia and China, could be used as sites for new medium-range weapons. This would allow it to set up medium-range weapon systems near the Chinese border and also along the Russian border.

In Europe the United States can station conventionally equipped medium-range weapons in the new NATO states. The NATO-Russia treaty of 1997 forbids the stationing of nuclear weapons in those countries; but nuclear medium-range systems could, of course, be re-established in western Germany.

It is clear that the closer to the Russian border American missiles are stationed, the shorter the warning time and thus the possibility of a catastrophic accident. In addition, Trump wants to build a missile defence throughout the globe and including space.

The People's Republic of China is in his sights. China has a large number of medium-range missiles to keep at bay the US war fleet on its doorstep. Trump wants China to dismantle this arsenal. If it doesn't do this voluntarily, then the United States will arm itself massively in the region.

The INF Treaty prevents him from doing so. Without the treaty he can target other countries too that are pursuing a course that is independent of the United States: North Korea, Cuba, Iran, and Venezuela. ★

"Of what use . . . can the re-establishment of any form of Irish state be if it does not embody the emancipation of womanhood?"

Pioneers of women's emancipation

JENNY FARRELL

Priscilla Metscher, *Pioneers of Women's Emancipation in Ireland* (Connolly Books, Dublin, 2018)

THIS FASCINATING study stands out as a commentary on Irish fighters for women's emancipation, written from a Marxist viewpoint. The author, Priscilla Metscher, examines in turn the ideas and activities of Mary Ann McCracken, Anna Doyle Wheeler, William Thompson, and James Connolly.

The emancipative ideas of **Mary Ann McCracken** (1770–1866) concerning the lot of women in her day is revealed in the correspondence with her brother Henry Joy McCracken, a founder-member of the Society of United Irishmen, while he was imprisoned in Kilmainham Gaol, Dublin. The goal of the United Irishmen was a separation from England and the setting up of a republic on the French model. Women were sworn in to the society, and some actively participated in the '98 Rising.

Mary Ann McCracken is just one example of how mainstream historiography has neglected women's contribution in shaping the outlook of their society. It is through her that we can see that feminist ideas were gaining ground in Ireland in the late eighteenth century.

Next Priscilla Metscher turns to two outstanding figures among the early socialists of the first decades of the nineteenth century, **Anna Doyle Wheeler** (1785–1848) and **William**

Thompson (1775–1833). Both came from the Irish ascendancy and also had connections with leading socialists in Britain and France. Their ideas on the emancipation of women are expressed in their jointly written *Appeal of One Half the Human Race, Women, Against the Pretensions of the Other Half, Men, to Retain Them in Political and Thence in Civil and Domestic Slavery*, first published in 1825. This publication went further than the writings of the English feminist Mary Wollstonecraft by creating a set of concepts regarding the mutual oppression of the sexes under social inequality. While Wollstonecraft had commented on the degradation endured by women, Wheeler makes practical proposals concerning the equal rights of all citizens.

The Irish socialist James Connolly took a firm stand on the question of equal rights for women. He saw it as one of the prerequisites of a future socialist society in Ireland: "Of what use . . . can the re-establishment of any form of Irish state be if it does not embody the emancipation of womanhood?" Where necessary Connolly took direct action. When the Belfast textile manufacturers began to speed up production, Connolly, at the request of the women workers, began to organise them in a textile branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

Within the socialist movement in Ireland and Britain, Connolly stands out as one of the few socialist leaders of the time who insisted that the economic and political emancipation of women must be an integral part of any socialist programme. As Francis Sheehy Skeffington, editor of the suffragist newspaper *Irish Citizen*, stated: "Mr. **James Connolly** . . . is the soundest and most thorough-going feminist among all the Irish labour men."

This study outlines the thinking and actions of each individual considered in it. Implementing their beliefs put them in the forefront of the political movements of their times. Priscilla Metscher considers these pioneers within their times, showing what they achieved, or where their thinking fell short.

In this sense they were both ahead of their times and of their times. In a recognition that these pioneers too exist in history, it becomes clear that their insight would be brought forward and built on. ★

This book is published by Connolly Books and is available at €7 from www.connollybooks.org.

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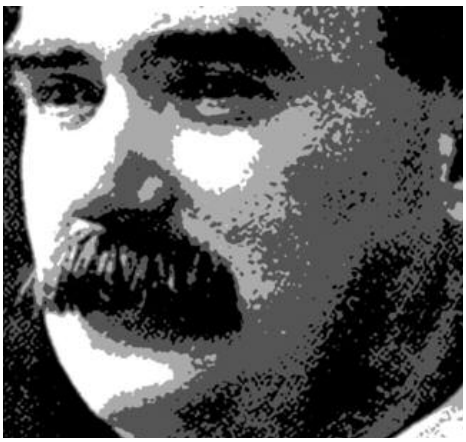

2 The capitalist illusion and the independent state

EOGHAN O'NEILL

Part 1 of this article was published in February.

ALL THE WEALTH created by labour in the production process is appropriated by capital, only appearing in its money form in the exchange process, with a portion of the proceeds then being redistributed back to labour through the wage system. Workers, individually or collectively, through their unions, will try to bargain with the capitalist for a pay rate, which varies from job to job and country to country and is dependent on a number of factors.

The point here is that the same exploitative process is in operation: it's only the rate of exploitation that varies.

In Ireland and other western countries the working class has risen from super-exploitation in the work-place, but that doesn't mean it has been eradicated: it has only moved, along with the labour-intensive industries, to countries of the global south.

All too often, class is categorised and defined in monetary terms or cultural terms: wage levels, people's customs, accents, traditions, place of residence, etc.; but this definition will never reveal the class system that exists but will only create prejudices.

Without doubt those on very high wages and senior managements are easily seduced by the capitalists, so they become apologists for them; they aspire to join them, and so cannot be relied upon as allies when we are trying to unite the working class.

Being conscious of this reality, we still do not serve our interests by thinking of class in these terms, as this only creates divisions within the working class. In fact understanding class as a social or cultural category is one of our big weaknesses and one of the reasons why reformism becomes prevalent in so many left-wing and social-democratic movements: because these forces underestimate the dynamics behind class power.

In antagonistic modes of production there must exist legal and political relations, dictated by the state authority to protect the interests and privileges of private-ownership structures. When citizens begin to question aspects of the system and to agitate on different issues that strike at those ownership structures—as for example in recent years over water and housing—the class nature of the state exposes itself in how it reacts to such agitation.

This is the true essence of the state: creating the bodies and institutions that protect and allow the ruling class to maintain power to suit their interests. The capitalist ruling class can only rule so long as private ownership is at the core of state law and policy; hence the importance of deconstructing Lenin's conclusion that all forms of capitalist democracies become the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie (the owners of capital), because they dictate the laws that are enshrined in the constitutions and treaties of istates by the power they exert on the structures and institutions within society.

The state, therefore, though complex in its web of interconnectedness, is simple in its objective. Quite clearly, not all bodies of the state are run for and by the ruling class, but "the state machine is bound by a thousand threads to the bourgeoisie." Working-class, left-wing and labour bodies that operate within the limits set by the state apparatus, such as the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, campaigning bodies (such as Right2Water, housing coalitions) or political parties (Sinn Féin, Socialist Party, People Before Profit) put forward demands that are totally within the limits of the system. They get drawn into debates over taxes—government revenue and expenditure, cost-rental versus social housing, or the minimum wage, for example—that do nothing to expose the class nature of the state but are constantly dragged into the swamp of bourgeois politics, accepting the rules of the game.

The dominant class—the ruling class—when it suits, uses these forces as a way to maintain the illusion of impartiality, so they are tolerated, even exalted, sometimes even subsidised, if they can be used to sow confusion within the working class.

When these bodies don't dissent fundamentally from the ruling ideology, they conform to a greater or lesser degree to that ideology.

This is the strength of the system; but it also reveals a weakness, a chink in the armour. It is the inconvenience of national democracy that curtails the most ruthless capitalist exploitation in the west. Only because states have had to make concessions to working-class forces do we have the type of welfare policies and support in western countries that are now under attack.

Even so, these concessions were made at a time when the socialist bloc was an economic and ideological threat to capitalism. Since that threat was internally dismantled by gangster officials, politicians, and western-backed anti-communist forces, the imperialist powers have moved to dismantle the welfare systems of the western capitalist countries, while at the same time they have intensified the super-exploitation of the global south.

The last line of defence to protect the working class is the national democratic structures, however limited they are in their capitalist form.

It is no wonder, then, that in Europe, as a way to override national democracy, a supranational body, the European Union, was established. The drive towards making the EU a superstate or a United States of Europe, with all the hallmarks of a state, as described above,

‘The last line of defence to protect the working class is the national democratic structures, however limited they are in their capitalist form’

is primarily for consolidating European Imperialist power in order for European imperialism to compete against other Imperialist blocs.

What separates the EU from other imperialist powers is that, by way of the unelected European Commission, it alone is allowed to draft EU laws and directives, and so has been able to create legal, political and ideological institutions and structures that not only have privatisation enshrined at their core but have made it illegal for any EU member-state to democratically choose an alternative socio-economic system.

Democracy has been bypassed; accountability has become non-existent; and all power resides at the centre in an unelected body, which is beholden only to lobbyists acting on behalf of the capitalist class.

If the gravity of this democratic deficit is ignored by progressive forces, in the not-too-distant future the worst capitalist exploitation will once again encroach on the working peoples of Europe as well as accelerating elsewhere around the globe.

If those progressive people working within the trade union movement fail to distinguish the wood from the trees, if they focus only on their own sectional demands rather than politically educating their members on the capitalist wage system, then, rather than having a seat at the table, trade unions will become redundant, both for their members and for the ruling class.

If local communities and campaign groups fail to join the dots between the financial crisis, austerity measures, the housing crisis, the environmental crisis, and their cause—the capitalist system——we leave ourselves and future generations vulnerable to absolute catastrophe and destruction, both at the individual and the social level.

If parties of the left and their members choose to ignore the class nature of the state, of the EU and all capitalist centres of power, those forces that profess to be on the side of the working class will in fact mislead the working class, and an unconscious class will wake up to find itself even more powerless!

Our weakness is the ability of the ruling class to divide us on ideological grounds. It is our lack of class-consciousness and of clarity of understanding of our class society that is preyed upon. We see the ranks within our class being easily cajoled; careerism buys many off; reformism and political opportunism are rampant; while electoral politics runs roughshod over strategic campaigning on transformative demands, bringing those on the left foolishly into the fold of the establishment’s physical space and its narrative of budgets, taxes, and abiding by EU rules.

Seldom if ever will you hear Eoin Ó Broin (Sinn Féin) or Richard Boyd Barrett (People Before Profit, i.e. Socialist Workers’ Party) or others on the left in the public eye, when debating such issues as wealth, inequality, austerity, or housing, clearly and properly link and explain class, the state, and imperialism—the holy trinity in developing class-consciousness—in their analysis. For all their good intentions, they either do not fully understand or do not want to fully understand the class nature of the state and the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie.

If Sinn Féin or the Socialist Workers’ Party were a real imminent threat to the ruling class they would not be tolerated; the full power and influence of the Irish state and the EU would come down upon them, as has happened elsewhere when they seemed to threaten the capitalist class—SYRIZA in Greece being a classic example.

They may become a threat to the established political parties in government; but real power resides with those who own the means of production and the state that protects their privileged position.

These are signs of the ideological deficit on the left in Ireland and elsewhere and of a class that is diffuse, caught up between old republican politics, social democracy, socialist ideals, social justice, and ignorance.

If we are to build a movement and unify around a transformative programme that promotes the interests of the working class while also exposing the class nature of society and the weaknesses within the class enemy, we must strive to rid ourselves of our own fallibilities in whatever manifestations they take.

It is incumbent on members of all left parties, trade unions, community organisations, progressive movements and individuals who have an understanding of the class nature of society to influence and educate others on the capitalist illusions that permeate society.

The class enemy is more powerful than ever before, and has more wealth and resources at its disposal than at any other time in history; but it is not omnipotent. The imperialist centres feed off other countries, with their tentacles wrapped round each one, sucking the life blood from within, with its array of treaties, trade deals, conditional loans, and military power.

It is, in fact, the sovereignty of independent states that is the key to breaking the power of imperialist rule. It will not do to merely publicise and acknowledge the reality of class struggle: we have to make clear to the rank and file that what we want, as a class, is to overthrow the capitalist system.

No elected government, no matter how progressive its programme, can deliver this, and no compromises or capitulation can be tolerated if we are to rid the world, piece by piece, country by country, of this parasitic, exploitative, destructive and barbaric system.

But for this to happen we, the working class of all nations and nationalities, have to be guided by the principle that the class struggle extends to the recognition of the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, i.e. a state of and for the working class, where the means of production are held in common ownership by all citizens and are directed and protected by a state apparatus that is “tied by a thousand threads” to the working class.

This recognition, as Lenin pointed out, “is what constitutes the most profound distinction between the Marxist and the ordinary petty (as well as big) bourgeois.” Thus begins the socialist revolution, the conscious dismantling and destruction of the old state apparatus and its replacement by constructing new institutions, new democratic structures, new treaties, new trade agreements, that are in the interests of the working class, who long for equality, peace, and prosperity. ★

Language is never neutral

LAURA DUGGAN

ARRIVAL, a recent and popular sci-fi film based on the Ted Chiang novella *Story of Your Life,* and China Miéville's perennially popular *Embassytown* both build on a long tradition of fiction challenging and examining the power of language.

These are especially interesting because of their focus on the interaction of language and thought. In Arrival, learning the Heptapods' written language gives the learner an expanded view of time, allowing people to "remember" the future. T*he Hosts of Embassytown* are bound to honesty and sincerity, so when the concept of lying is introduced into their language it fractures reality for those who listen.

The reasons these stories hold such appeal is the subject matter. Since language is how we share our own internal consciousness with others, it is hard not to be fascinated with the power this has in the shaping of other people's consciousness.

"Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical, real consciousness that exists for other men as well, and only therefore does it also exist for me; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men."—Marx.

According to Marx, Lenin, and several Soviet psychologists, language's main purpose is that of communication. While it has other functions, it is the primary means by which to exchange information and develop ideas.

However, language cannot simply be reduced to the words used to describe or name an object: it must also encompass the schema, the pattern of thought, which categorises that information and explains its relationship with the world. These schema are the unconscious messaging encoded within language; they convey the word and the concept of the word.

In recent years terms like "fireman" have been replaced by the more neutral "firefighter," after some feminist and womanist scholars challenged English linguistics with the notion that many English words in common use reinforce patriarchal norms. "Man"—no matter what the development of the word—is now very clearly understood and accepted to mean a person of the male gender. A woman who puts her name forward for the position of "fireman" would not go too far wrong in thinking that there is a cultural and historical bias against her vying for the position. Sara Mills shows in her book *Feminist Stylistics* that men and women apply for jobs in more equal proportions when gender-neutral language is used in describing the job.

But there are limitations. By taking an approach that deals with word usage alone, often we are merely changing the word and not the world that created it. Mills did not show if increased job application led to a greater employment of women in these typically male roles. Search on line for "firefighter" and most images that pop up will be of men. For "nurse," an accepted gender-neutral word, most images are of women.

The accepted norms of these words are gendered, even if they do not explicitly end with an –ess or –man. Simply put, the concepts of nurse and firefighter have remained largely unchanged. A word only ever truly changes its meaning when the concept changes, that is when society, culture or the world's understanding of it changes.

By adjusting the language we use, it is possible to change or influence people's understanding of the concepts in question. A common and simple psychological experiment is to ask the same question, slightly reworded, of a group and judge how responses can be predicted and influenced, given the language used. This is known as psychological priming. An extreme example is when participants were

asked if they were given a potion that could ensure either that 50 per cent of the population would live for ever or that would leave 50 per cent of the population to die, respondents were more likely to use the potion if associated with the action phrased in a positive light, even though the two actions were equal in outcome.

This twisting of language to describe "choices" is a common tactic used in human resource management and advertising. (Manipulation by advertising was the subject of an article in the November issue of *Socialist Voice*.) In HRM this manipulation creates an environment where managers can pressure workers into agreeing to their own oppression and to create a false sense of solidarity with the employers over that of one with others workers. A whole sub-industry of psychologists and corporate consultants has blossomed to further develop these strategies.

Language, as a result, can be used as a method of control and eradication. Ideas and concepts that are considered threatening or "immoral" can be challenged, and to some degree defeated, by force, but it is only through legalistic measures and the imposition of a dominant language that these challenging concepts can be quietly, and often successfully, erased from the mainstream narrative.

The legacy of imperialism, which has left scars all over the world, as well as in Ireland, continues within the now dominant languages. In the United States the government controls the definition of "tribe," and sets the standard that Native American tribes must meet in order to be officially recognised as such. Tribal lands are held in trust by the same governmental body. If the tribe no longer meets the definition as set down, that same body stands to gain the land, and all through entirely legal methods.

Although language is not class-derived, the ruling and capitalist classes have greater ranges of language and claim greater authority on usage and meaning. Their authority is typically upheld through academia, media, and other institutions. The left may understand what it means when it uses such terms as Irish border, Spanish Civil War, democracy, or Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but these phrases unintentionally propagate hegemonic capitalist ideas and change the perception of these events and thus the concepts themselves.

We must say what we mean, and be clear about it: a British-imposed border in Ireland, an anti-fascist war, working-class power, an illegal, apartheid-occupation. Trade unions, activists, communities, political groups and parties must challenge hegemony in all its forms; and language can be no exception.

There are no pure forms of any word: they exist within and are shaped and moulded by the culture and society in which they develop. As Paulo Freire said, "language is never neutral." Like that of a "pure thought," the notion of a "pure word," devoid of any influence by history or of the material world, is the play place of those without any foundation in material reality.

A concrete example of how language shapes how we think about the world is the study "Native Language Promotes Access to Visual Consciousness" (2018) by Martin Maier and Rasha Abdel Rahman, which confirmed that, while colours may be the same around the world, the language in which they are described has an impact on how they are perceived. For the Greeks of Homer's classics, the colour blue didn't exist as a word. Arguably, until Egyptian blue dye was imported "blue" didn't exist as a concept though the sky was little different from today.

This is not to wander towards an Orwellian approach to language or a Newspeak-esque dystopia but rather an acknowledgement that language for the left needs to be of paramount importance. Terms that can seem at first intimidating or archaic give voice to a world view that there is little opportunity to encounter or understand otherwise. We must refute arguments promoting the oversimplification of our terminology for the sake of easy sound bites, memes, or simple solutions. We cannot give in to the misguided belief that we can somehow use and control the terms of our oppressor while they tighten their chains around our bodies and our minds. ★

Who's being gulled?

DÓNALL Ó BRIAIN

MANY REGIONS on the outskirts of Dublin have been plagued in recent years by an invasion of aggressive gulls, which soil houses and clothes-lines and scatter refuse, as well as killing smaller birds.

Most people, it seems, have either not speculated about the cause of this new plague or else have put forward various explanations, most of them wide of the mark.

Gulls eat fish, and, more particularly, herrings. And almost all the herrings in the Irish Sea are gone. (That's why there are none in the shops. Just ask in your local fish shop.) If there are no fish, the gulls move inland in search of food.

How did this happen? Because the state gave away Ireland's fishery waters to twenty-seven other countries, several of which employ gigantic factory ships—ludicrously called "trawlers"—that suck up everything in the sea, until there is nothing left. And the Irish state has signed binding treaties to allow them.

Irish fishermen are given a very low quota, and can only fish for herrings for a few weeks each year. The bulk are taken by foreign trawlers and exported to the Continent, principally to Portugal, where they are processed—and, to add insult to injury, some of it is then exported back to Ireland. And so a low-cost and traditional staple of Irish households is no longer available.

According to Dr Karen Devine of DCU, fish with a commercial value of €201 billion were taken from Irish waters between 1975 and 2010—that's a natural resource worth €201,000,000,000,000 over thirty-five years. The Irish fishing industry was allowed €17 billion of this (8½ per cent); the remaining €184 billion went to our EU "partners."

Where are the investigative journalists, fearless pursuers of truth? Could it be that they know the truth and realise it would not please their employers? ★

Israeli Apartheid Week, 2019

23 February to 6 March

Israeli Apartheid Week is an international series of events that seeks to raise awareness about Israel's apartheid regime and to build support for the growing boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement and to help in grass-roots organising for effective solidarity with the Palestinian liberation struggle.

Saturday 23 February
INFORMATION STALLS
Navan Shopping Centre 11 am to 1 pm
Dublin: GPO, O'Connell Street 1– 4 pm
Cork: Daunt Square 1–2:30 pm
Derry: City centre 2–3 pm
Wexford: The Bull Ring 2–4 pm

Tuesday 26 February
PUBLIC MEETING: WAR CRIMES INVESTIGATIONS
Speaker: Lt-Col. Desmond Travers (retd)
Naas Town Hall, Co. Kildare 8 pm

Thursday 28 February
BOOK LAUNCH: *Cracks in the Wall: Beyond Apartheid in Palestine/Israel* by Ben White
Dublin Academy Plaza Hotel (Findlater Place) 7pm
INFORMATION STALL
Galway: Shop Street, 1:45–2:45 pm

Saturday 2 March
INFORMATION STALL
Dublin: Henry Street 1 pm

Sunday 3 March
PALESTINE FILM FESTIVAL
The Wanted 18 (2014) and *Jeremy Hardy v. the Israeli Army* (2003)
Pearse Centre (27 Pearse Street) 2 pm

Wednesday 6 March
PALESTINIANS SPEAK:
Living under Israeli apartheid and siege
Limerick Pery's Hotel (Glentworth Street) 8 pm

LETTER

The Life and Times of James Connolly

On Monday 11 March at 3 p.m. in the Luke Wadding Library in Waterford Institute of Technology, Prof. Anthony Coughlan will relaunch the classic biography of *The Life and Times of James Connolly* by C. Desmond Greaves.

Prof. Coughlan is editor of the newly republished Connolly biography and is Greaves's literary executor. He wrote the introduction to the new edition. The original edition was first published in 1961. His talk is entitled: "James Connolly and his Relevance Today."

Greaves's biography of Connolly is still the definitive account of his life, his work, and the evolution of his political thought. It was the last biography to be written by someone who could consult people who knew Connolly in his lifetime and had the co-operation of the Connolly family. Greaves established that Connolly had been born in Edinburgh, when it was generally thought he was from Co. Monaghan. Greaves also established that Connolly served in the British army as a young man.

Anthony Coughlan is associate professor emeritus in social policy at Trinity College, Dublin. He was involved in the 1960s civil rights movement and was an observer at the first civil rights marches in Northern Ireland. He took part in the Coalisland–Dungannon and Derry civil rights marches, which brought the situation of anti-Catholic discrimination under the old Stormont regime to world attention for the first time.

C. Desmond Greaves was one of the world's leading labour historians. He was the author of *Liam Mellows and the Irish Revolution, Seán O'Casey: Politics and Art, Wolfe Tone and the Irish Nation,* and *History of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union: The Formative Years,* as well as books of verse.

Prof. Coughlan has opposed EU integration on democratic and internationalist grounds. He was involved in successive EU referendums over the years. He was also involved in the Crotty, McKenna and Coughlan cases before the Supreme Court on fair referendum procedures. He has acted and written widely on the euro currency and EU matters. He has added the word "Irexit" to the English language.

The lecture will be in the Luke Wadding Library. It will be about thirty minutes in length and will be followed by a general discussion and Q&A session. Admission is free of charge and is open to all.

Dan Taraghan
Waterford

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