

# Socialist Voice



Communist Party of Ireland  
Páirtí Cumannach na hÉireann  
Partisan Patriotic Internationalist

www.commmunistparty.ie

Number 200 October 2021 €1.50

2 **Capitalism and democracy**

4 **Elections**

4 **Pensions**

6 **Indian farmers**

8 **Covid vaccination**

8 **Berlin housing vote**

10 **Health and maternity**

12 **Class privilege**

14 **Culture and language**

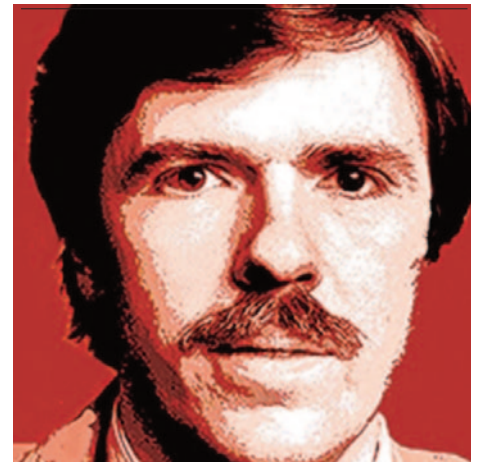
16 **New Cold War**

# TO END LOW PAY IRELAND'S ANTI UNION LAWS MUST GO

IRISH COMMUNISTS SERIOUS ABOUT SOCIALISM



Communist Party of Ireland  
Páirtí Cumannach na hÉireann  
<https://communistparty.ie>



“The job of the media is not to provide as much meaningful information as possible to the people so they can exercise their free judgment; it is to package certain information in a way to guide the people to a preferred conclusion.”

**Robert Parry**, *Consortium News*,  
24 June 2017

# SV

**Socialist Voice**

43 East Essex Street

Dublin D02 XH96

(01) 6708707

<https://socialistvoice.ie>



ISSN 0791-5217



9 770791 521008

Low pay ranges from 4 per cent in Belgium to 24 per cent in the United States. The Republic, at 23 per cent, is the second-worst of the countries in the OECD. **INSIDE** Jimmy Doran on exploitation

## End low pay now!



**JIMMY DORAN**

**L**OW PAY is defined by the OECD as the pay of a full-time worker whose earnings are below two-thirds of a country's median income. The proportion of workers on low pay ranges from 4 per cent in Belgium to 24 per cent in the United States.

The Republic, at 23 per cent, is the second-worst of the countries in the OECD. In the North, 21 per cent of workers are deemed to be on low pay; but this is calculated as a percentage of the median wage in Britain. If it was calculated as a percentage of the median wage in the South, nearly 30 per cent of workers in the North would be deemed to be on low pay.

Half of all workers in the North earn less than £23,043 (€27,000) a year, while in the South a similar fraction earn less than €28,500.

Trade union density is hovering around 27 per cent of all workers. Unions are severely restricted by anti-worker legislation, north and south, namely the Industrial Relations Act (1990) in

the South and in the North the Trade Union Act (2016) along with its 1992 predecessor.

Low pay, falling union density and anti-union legislation are all inextricably linked, as are precarious work, minimum-hour and short-term contracts, the gig economy, and bogus self-employment, all of which have flourished as a result.

If workers are to be able to fight back, the restrictions on them and their unions under present legislation must go. It has broken the collective that was the trade union movement. The outlawing of solidarity action and support strikes for over thirty years has weakened class solidarity and pride in our unions. There was a time when all workers were proud to wear their union badge; today the sight of one on the shop floor is a rarity.

What controlled employers' greed and secured workers their share in the past was union power and union density. Once unions were restricted by legislation, the race to the bottom began, and membership declined.

We in the trade union movement need to ask ourselves why three out of every four workers have not joined a union. Trade unions have mostly been in defensive mode for more than thirty

## Capitalism versus the people

**EUGENE MC CARTAN**

**T**HE HOUSING CRISIS has laid bare the ruthless nature of capitalism, its parasitic and exploitative nature. There is simply no lengths it will not go to to secure its interests, to secure profits and the further accumulation of capital.

But the housing crisis has exposed not only the real nature and the underlying interests of capitalism as a system but the nature of government, whose primary role is that of an instrument for securing the best conditions for the accumulation of wealth for a small minority. All other actions are secondary.

Property speculation is now an important area for profit growth and further capital accumulation through

constant rent increases. There is simply no point in investing if you can't get a return on that investment. It is also the nature of the system that there needs to be constant growth in that investment. It simply cannot remain static.

What has also been exposed is the subservience of the government to these powerful economic interests. This is best reflected in the comments by the Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar, when he said there needs to be a "balance" between the regulation of property rental costs and income for landlords.

"I'm not a landlord myself," he said, "but there are others who rely on rental incomes . . . So we need to balance that too. One person's rent is another person's income. It might be their pension, it might be how they pay their mortgage . . .

*"In a time of rising prices and in a time of rising interest rates, and that hasn't come yet but it will come, if you freeze rents absolutely to zero, that could mean an income cut for another person, a pension cut for another person . . ."*

Earlier, Micheál Martin had said that Fianna Fáil had received advice that a rent freeze would be unconstitutional. Once again, the right of private property interests trumps the rights and interests of working people.

His comments exposed the real parasitic nature of the system, forcing people to feed off each other. The corporate vulture funds are being encouraged to invest in property speculation, and government strategy is to facilitate them. The consequence will be a further concentration of wealth and



Trade unions have mostly been in defensive mode for more than thirty years. This is a direct result of Thatcherite anti-union legislation in the North, the Industrial Relations Act south of the border, and social partnership.

years. This is a direct result of Thatcherite anti-union legislation in the North, the Industrial Relations Act south of the border, and social partnership.

Industrial action is at a record low point throughout the country, and all too often trade unions are not at the forefront of radical campaigning but are largely hidden in committees and lobbying halls. Members need to see their union leading the fight for their rights.

The reality is that low pay, precarious work and long waiting-lists are not confined to one jurisdiction or the other. There are crossovers between where people live and where they work, and both suffer the effects of the system equally. We need an all-Ireland Workers' Rights Act to protect workers and tip the balance of power back towards workers to enable unions and workers to fight to improve the quality of every aspect of our lives.

A pay increase, though welcome, eases the economic burden on workers but does not give them power. A Workers' Rights Act would include:

- ★ the right to union recognition for all workers
- ★ the right to union access for all workers

monopolisation of property ownership. The very process of capital accumulation leads to a growth in monopolisation.

Another example of the cosy relationship between the state and private speculators and developers is the case of the Irish Glass Bottle site, a 37-acre site in Ringsend, one of the last large pieces of development land left in Dublin. Up to 3,800 homes are planned for the site, with reports now emerging of an agreement reached in June between Ronan Group Real Estate, Oaktree Capital Management, Lioncor Developments and the National Asset Management Agency (NAMA). It now appears that the "affordable" houses that are to be built at the Poolbeg site will cost the city council €600,000 each. In other words, it will pay the full commercial price. This was all publicly owned land, owned by NAMA.

As the employers' organisations, government spokespersons and media commentators keep telling working

- ★ the restoration of rights for individual workers
- ★ full collective bargaining rights for all workers
- ★ abolishing the ban on solidarity and secondary picketing
- ★ abolishing the ban on political strikes
- ★ abolishing the ban on sit-ins and occupations

## Late news

**As we go to press, the Dublin Council of Trade Unions has put the following motion forward to the ICTU biennial delegate conference at the end of the month:**

**"Conference recognises that the restrictions on trade union action in the 1990 Industrial Relations Act need to be opposed, and that the Act should be replaced or reformed to restore rights which trade unions had before 1990. Conference mandates the executive to seek an alternative legislative regime which would allow trade union and industrial action for individual workers, for issues that concern workers across society and across**

people that there's no such thing as a free lunch, and that people on welfare etc. should get out and get a real job, it's time the local gombeen landlords got real jobs rather than living on the backs of working people.

The government's strategy of linking rents to inflation has now come unstuck as inflation has reached a ten-year record, thanks to a number of factors, including an interruption in global supply and the increased cost of commodities around the globe, in particular oil and gas commodities. Both corporate and private landlords will benefit and be able to increase rents substantially.

Meanwhile workers' wages remain static, or further eroded by increased gas and electricity prices, increasing food prices, and spiralling rents. This is not just an Irish problem but stems from a set of policies—neoliberalism—adopted forty years ago. This strategy was presented as the solution to the underlying problem of the declining rate

★ decisions on notice period for industrial action and the running of ballots being left to trade unions.

Any action taken in a dispute, provided it is not illegal in itself, must be free from criminal and civil liability.

Trade unions must be radical or they will become redundant!

**employers, and for effective solidarity to workers in dispute."**

**Until unions go back to basics and are seen to be in the forefront of workers' struggle, membership will continue to decline. Let's hope the delegates at the ICTU conference see the writing on the wall and pass this very important Dublin Trades Council motion, or twenty years from now children will be asking, "Daddy, what's a trade union?"**

**And those children will all be on poverty wages, living from hand to mouth and struggling to survive.**

**It is in the interests of all workers and the trade union movement that the DCTU motion gets the overwhelming support of delegates. The concern of one is the concern of all. ★**

of profit. It required opening up new avenues for capital speculation—privatisation—driving down workers' wages globally, intensifying the exploitation of both labour and natural resources, and securing cheap food from the destruction of local food production in the developing countries to supply the northern metropolitan markets.

The Irish housing crisis is part of the same process within the system itself.

The only democratic solution is

- ★ the building of public housing at affordable rents,
- ★ establishing a state-led building company,
- ★ banning the sale of the existing housing stock,
- ★ banning the sale of public lands,
- ★ banning economic evictions,
- ★ enshrining the right to public housing in the Constitution, and
- ★ a Bill of Rights for tenants.★



## Electoral participation Tactic or sell-out?



**BARRY MURRAY**

**T**HE EARLIEST recorded form of government is said to have been that of the Sumerians in fourth-century Mesopotamia (Iraq). This development led, in the fifth century in Athens, to the long journey of what we euphemistically refer to as democracy. From that time until the present day it has gone through many iterations, and it continues to evolve. Many tens of millions have died in its name.

Ireland has had its own unique battles with governments and democracy. From the twelfth to the nineteenth century, what passed for democracy and government was totally beholden to the colonialism of a London parliament. There was no universal franchise, and every form of gerrymander, to ensure that the powerful and wealthy controlled the majority in Ireland. Violence, death, poverty and insurrection was a constant theme.

There was certainly no such thing as “one man, one vote” in that time or indeed right up to the 1970s,

highlighted as one of the central demands in the North by the civil rights campaign. After 1918, in the still not partitioned Ireland, universal suffrage was in operation. However, it was not until 1973 that all those over eighteen could vote in the South.

None of this has made government any more democratic or a bastion of the working class—on the contrary.

In the partitioned six north-eastern counties, under British and unionist rule since the 1920s, government and democracy took a serious backward turn. Discrimination, gerrymandering, state violence and the use of “property ownership and their values” were used to allow more than one vote per person, designed to exclude or to rig voting to ensure a Protestant majority, at all times, even where numerically there could be none.

So-called parliamentary democracy, in the North in particular, has left a foul taste in the mouths of the people, of political activists, especially republicans and progressives, to the present day.

So where are we when it comes to using elections and parliaments to further the aims of radical revolutionary struggle? Are we with it or against it? This, of course, is a worldwide issue and a part of human evolution since we stood up. It is also an area that Connolly, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Gramsci, Trotsky and many others have expounded upon.

Enormous tracts have been written on this point, but we can only deal with a tiny fraction of it here. We will also have to focus on Ireland and the struggle for a 32-county socialist republic as the starting-point. To use or even talk about participating in electoralism or parliamentarianism has caused all kinds of rows, splits, boycotts and abstentions. And yet, we cannot ignore the fact that governments, of sorts, operate in the North and South of Ireland.

**But more importantly,** that’s where the majority of the population identify where power resides and where they get some things granted to them, even if it is only the crumbs. Even those who oppose and know that neither government is anything close to a “democracy of the people” but are certainly the “committees of the rich and



“Yes, friends, governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class.”  
James Connolly

“James Connolly was under no illusions about what was necessary. He viewed politics as “war by other means.”

---

powerful” are dependent upon its hand-outs, in some shape or form. Both governments also have the power of force to impose their will, along with all the strands of soft power, laws and coercion, which cannot be underestimated.

The common refrain is that “once you get into bed with the government you are finished,” you become “part of the system,” or, as Ruairí Ó Brádaigh once famously said, “When you lie with the dogs you get up with fleas.” Lenin referred to this as “opportunism.” And, to our horror, this has largely been the case in Ireland over the centuries.

The opposite refrain is that “you need to be in there to change the system,” or “if you’re not in you can’t win.”

For this writer, neither of these absolute positions does justice to the tactical use of electoral or parliamentary politics. What’s more, I do not believe that individuals, small groups or even massive groups will get into parliament and suddenly overturn the capitalist system. That’s equally simplistic and is not the basis for a radical revolutionary strategy to usurp the power of those who exploit us.

James Connolly was under no illusions about what was necessary. He viewed politics as “war by other means.” He was clear too about the state and what it represented. “The political institutions of today are simply the coercive forces of capitalist society, they have grown up out of and are based upon territorial divisions of power in the hands of the ruling class in past ages, and were carried over into capitalist society to suit the needs of the capitalist class when that class overthrew the dominion of its predecessors.”

Connolly viewed elections to such parliaments from the viewpoint of radical revolutionary democracy. Nor was he averse to armed action, as we know. He was clear too that

*the democracy of Parliament is in short the democracy of Capitalism. Capitalism gives to the worker the right to choose his master, but insists that the fact of Master-ship shall remain unquestioned; Parliamentary Democracy gives to the worker the right to a voice in the selection of his rulers but insists that he shall bend as a subject to be*

*ruled. The fundamental feature of both in their relation to the worker is that they imply his continued subjection to a ruling class once his choice of the personnel of the rulers is made. (Parliamentary democracy, 1900)*

Connolly set up the Irish Socialist Republican Party to contest council elections and stated that “our candidate will, therefore, take his stand unflinchingly upon the basic principles of Socialism, and the fact of his stand thereon will be the pledge of his fidelity to the interests of the working class.”

Marx too supported the notion of parliamentary intervention by revolutionaries. He wrote: “Implacable opposition to the state does not always rule out orientation towards elections . . .” based on “flexible tactics and firm principles . . .”—not “rigid tactics and flexible principles.”

He went on to reiterate that the working class “need to prepare for power.” This would make sense, as the working class generally are excluded from and know little about how the machinations of power actually work on and in their lives, daily. The trick, of course, is not only to be able to take power but, most of all, to ensure that power is retained in the face of the sure-to-arrive counter-revolutions.

Engels and Marx were forthright in saying that “elections and parliament . . . used . . . alongside illegal means . . . for the purpose of building support and raising Socialist consciousness among the working class” were necessary, but that “electoral victories were subordinate to independent working class political action.”

Engels on elections said that “it accurately informed us of our own strength and that of the opposing . . . parties . . . a means second to none of getting in touch with the mass of the people where they still stand aloof from us . . .” He also warned against opportunism (reformism) and in particular “honest opportunism,” or short-termism, as the most dangerous of all.

Gramsci had this to say about revolutionaries entering parliaments: “Not for a democratic illusion, not for a reformist tenderness: to create the conditions for the triumph of the proletariat, to ensure the right outcome

of the revolutionary effort which is directed towards installing the proletarian dictatorship incarnate in the system of councils, inside and outside Parliament.”

Lenin used the term “critical support” to justify supporting pro-system parties in a parliament. He framed the support in the context of being “the rope [that] supports a hanged man.” It was tactical, and not strategic, and to expose reformism, at the very least. Once electoral intervention becomes a strategy, then that means being a full participant in and acceptance that capitalist parliamentary system is the goal. Electoralism can only ever be a tactic in the armoury of the revolutionary struggle—“a platform for our principles,” as Marx said.

Crucially, on compromises, Lenin had this to say: “It would be absurd to formulate a recipe or general rule (No compromises !!) to suit all cases. One must use one’s own brains and be able to find one’s bearings in each particular instance.” The concrete analysis, I suspect.

Civil society and political society link people and parliaments whether we want it to or not. It would appear that there are no simple answers for whether the use of elections as a tactic is right or wrong in every case. Sometimes it clearly is not. But the understanding of political economy and historical materialism, including the dialectics of all of this, has to be central to the process of any concrete analyses. Decisions on using elections (or not) tactically to advance, where possible, the battle for socialism in Ireland, based on the dictum of “no compromises” or the failures of former comrades who “took the soup,” would not be a sound basis for decision-making of such a magnitude.

Today Connolly might rework his enduring statement to say that we have “to build a socialist society supported and directed by committees of the people to govern their own affairs, that of the working class.” Otherwise tactical involvement in elections or parliaments would be futile and delusional.

This is the only method by which true freedom, sovereignty and independence can be achieved.★



## Stop neoliberalism! Stop 67!

JIMMY DORAN

**A** PENSION propaganda war has broken out, with selective leaks from the soon-to-be published report of the Pension Commission.

The first leak suggested that the increase in pension age to 67 and 68 would be

delayed by seven years. This was followed by a suggestion in the submission of the Department of Finance that the pension age should be linked to life expectancy; this would bring the state retirement age to 72 for the generation of workers entering the work force today.

The department's submission suggests that pension costs will rise significantly as the population ages. It states that at present there are about four people of working age to support each person aged sixty-five and over; however, that number is expected to fall to just over two workers per retired person by 2050, as people live longer and birth rates drop. It appears we are living too long, and not having enough children.

This is more propaganda.

The drop in birth rates is irrelevant, as it ignores the number of people who come to Ireland to work: almost half a million in the last ten years.

The number of people working in the South of Ireland today is more than 2.3 million; in the 1980s there were fewer than 1 million people working.

The population in the South has grown to just over 5 million today. Life expectancy has increased by ten years over the last forty years, with no effect



SAJEEV KUMAR

**T**HREE HUNDRED days have passed and 601 lives have been martyred in the farmers' struggle in India. The struggle continues, and so does government apathy.

Three laws were forced in an undemocratic way on the farmers, without discussion or consultation with trade unions or debate in the parliament: (1) the Farm Produce Trade and Commerce Act, (2) the Farmers' Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Act, and (3) the Essential Commodities Act.

In lay terms, these laws place the farmers at the mercy of the corporations. The logic seems to be that "the farmers will sow, the corporations will reap."

The laws provide no guarantee of the minimum support price to farmers, who cannot avail of legal remedy by approaching the courts in case of disputes. On top of that, the Electricity



## Indian farmers and imperialism

To raise the retirement age to sixty-eight would be the largest cut ever in the social safety net. It is the equivalent of a cut of €39,000 per worker, i.e. state pension = €13,000 p.a. × 3 years.

on the ability of the state to pay the pension at sixty-five; in fact, despite stagnation and slow growth since the austerity years, the pension in real terms has been improving gradually over the same forty-year period. This exposes the lie of the pensions “time bomb.”

The difference today is ideological. The government is unwilling to continue to pay the pension at sixty-five. They want more for less. It has nothing to do with ability: it is neoliberal ideology.

There is no mention, of course, of the pension reserve fund of more than €25 billion that was raided to bail out the banks and pay off private banking debt after the 2008 crash. Plenty of money for the business class; Ireland’s elderly must take second place.

The average proportion of the population in the EU over the age of sixty-five is 19 per cent. Italy has the oldest population, with 22 per cent of citizens over sixty-five. Ireland, with 13 per cent, has in fact the lowest proportion of the population over sixty-five.

To raise the retirement age to sixty-eight would be the largest cut ever in the social safety net. It is the equivalent of a cut of €39,000 per worker, i.e. state pension = €13,000 p.a. × 3 years.

Bill that has been passed also cuts the subsidy for electricity, which will increase the cost of production.

The whole idea is to make farming an unprofitable profession, then evict them and hand over the land to corporate farming, which is similar to the enclosure movement that took place in England in the eighteenth century.

Why does an elected government harm its own people, who voted them to power? What is the theoretical base for these political moves by the government?

The answer to these questions lies in 21st-century imperialism. Utsa Patnaik and Prabhat Patnaik describe the features of imperialism in their book *A Theory of Imperialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2017). Geographically, essential commodities cannot all be produced in developed countries, which are mostly in the temperate regions. So, firstly, the supply for the increasing demand for tropical produce has to be maintained without

If you work until you are 68 and live to today’s average life expectancy of 83, this cut is equivalent to a cut in pension of 20 per cent, i.e. €2,600 p.a. for 15 years = €39,000; higher if you die earlier. This is more cutback by the state to the social wage of the citizen—all part of the neoliberal agenda of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael. And it seems they don’t want to stop at sixty-eight, with talk now of seventy-two.

The government’s propaganda war has been relentless, and promoted by their puppets in the media, who repeat the mantra that in twenty years’ time there will be far fewer people working than there are now, and more people in retirement.

That’s all it is: propaganda. This is manufacturing consent and lowering workers’ expectations and aspirations. The trade union movement must not fall for the propaganda. There is no reason for the retirement age to increase past sixty-five; what does need to increase is the rate. At present it is about half of what is deemed the living wage.

A living wage is defined as the minimum income necessary for a single adult worker in full-time employment, with no dependants, to meet their basic needs and to afford a minimum acceptable standard of living, at present deemed to be €12.30 per hour.

price inflation.

Secondly, there should be a control on land mass in tropical regions (which is limited) of developing countries, such as India, to supply those essential commodities without any hindrance.

Thirdly, the income of people in the poorer countries should be deflated so as to reduce local demand to keep the prices under control and freely available for the global north. This can be seen in history, as when United Fruit Company exported to the United States by exploiting the people of Guatemala; and when the president, Jacobo Árbenz, made land reforms by expropriating excess unused land (200,000 acres) he was exiled in a CIA conspiracy in 1954.

This move by the Indian government is the expropriation of land from the poor farmer and its transfer to the big corporations so that they can produce what is profitable, rather than what is essential for the local population. This is a threat to food security. India is already

What sort of society denies an “acceptable standard of living” to any citizen, not least those who have worked all their lives, and paid a contribution every week from their pay packet, in the belief that they would get a pension at sixty-five, which is in fact deferred pay.

With private rented accommodation (according to the 2016 census) the main form of tenure in our cities and towns, and rents taking up as much as 70 per cent of some people’s income, this is the real pensions time bomb. The recent measly pension increase does nothing to alleviate this. The change to private rented accommodation is also inextricably linked to neoliberalism.

**The only ticking time bomb in Ireland today is the insatiable greed of the capitalist system, which has gone into overdrive over the last thirty years, causing the crisis in health and housing, low wages, precarious work, and a race to the bottom in workers’ rights, not to mention the climate emergency.**

It’s time to join up the dots. We can rule in the interest of humanity and the planet or serve capitalism, which will be the end of us all.

There is no “pensions time bomb.” There is a capitalist time bomb, and it is ticking.★

94th (out of 107 countries) in the world hunger index, while a quarter of the world’s hungry people live in India. Malnutrition could also become a threat if these laws are implemented.

The neoliberal policies that were implemented in the 1990s caused immeasurable trouble and have pushed 300,000 farmers to suicide.

Left forces are in the forefront of these struggles against neoliberal policies, which includes the fight against privatisation. That is the reason that Communist Party offices and members are attacked and statues of leaders of the left are desecrated by the lumpen elements in the ruling Indian People’s Party (BJP).

An all-India strike was called for on 27 September by the farmers’ confederation (Samyuktha Kissan Morcha) for the repeal of these draconian laws. The Communist Party of Ireland extended its solidarity for the success of the all-India strike.★





## Covid vaccination A more radical solution needed

**RAYMOND Ó DUBHGHAILL**

**O**VER THE PAST Year the powers that be have succeeded in reducing any and all political debate about the government's response to the covid-19 pandemic to the single issue of vaccines. In doing so they have pitted workers against one another, in their time-honoured tactic, and distracted attention from the real, structural issues that have determined the events of the past eighteen months

It is vital that we put radical, positive solutions back on the table and avoid falling into the trap of curtain-twitching paranoia and infighting set for us by the bourgeois class.

There are many on the left who have lost the ability to think clearly, if they ever possessed it. The lack of a grounding analysis, born out of theory, practice, and historical study, has left many self-described leftists flailing in the breeze, their convictions easily swayed and prone to manipulation by those in power.

For example, note how the uptake of vaccination in what are euphemistically deemed “marginalised cohorts”—i.e. working-class communities, Travellers, refugees and asylum-seekers, undocumented migrants, etc.—is lower, even dramatically lower in some cases, than in the middle or upper-class strata of society.<sup>1</sup> And yet there are those “on the left” who welcome vaccine mandates and the restriction of civil liberties based on vaccination status, despite the fact that these will disproportionately affect those who are already exploited and excluded from society.<sup>2</sup>

To this end, two scientific facts need to be emphasised. Being vaccinated against covid-19

(1) does not stop you catching the virus, and

(2) does not stop you transmitting the virus to others.<sup>3</sup>

The current infection figures for the virus—far in excess of those of this time last year—are a testament to this. And yet, rather than a comprehensive system of testing people for the virus to

admit entry into bars, clubs, restaurants, etc., the powers that be have instead chosen to exclude, based on vaccination status—a dangerous decision, ensuring that the virus continues to spread through society at a high rate but, more importantly, providing a strong impetus to coerce people to get vaccinated.

All of which is most agreeable to Pfizer/Biontech, which appears to have been ordained as the producers of the one acceptable vaccine, as it prepares to report profits of \$33.5 billion in 2021,<sup>4</sup> while of course being indemnified by national governments against any legal proceedings that might arise from negative side-effects of their product.<sup>5</sup>

To be clear, vaccination against preventable illness, including covid-19, is unequivocally something that should be encouraged. However, it is not a panacea, and dividing society along vaccinated v. unvaccinated lines is a mendacious tactic that serves only to turn people against one another while doing nothing to slow the pandemic.

## German voters demand ousting of institutional landlords

**DAVID HARTERY**

Voters in Berlin have voted to expropriate large institutional landlords in a non-binding referendum that shows the fury Berliners have with rising rents and falling conditions.

As part of the “Deutsche Wohnen & Co. enteignen” campaign, which targeted Deutsche Wohnen, a company listed on the stock exchange, and other international investment firms that own

more than three thousand apartments in the city, Berliners have given a clear signal that the housing “market” is not functioning.

However, the situation is more complicated than it seems. Firstly, the only political party that explicitly supported the measure, Die Linke, had its share of the vote fall. The Social-Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green Party now have the numbers to form a coalition without their junior partner, and



For want of a material understanding of the world around them, the covid-19 pandemic has led many on the left to align themselves in practical terms with the capitalist class and their representatives in political power.

Those in power are more than happy to set up an “enemy under the bed” for us to lose sleep over while distracting us from their own malicious deeds.

Anyone familiar with “vax v. anti-vax” discourse over the past ten years, before covid, will be aware of how insidious this propaganda effort has been, with the death of unvaccinated children used as a punchline for those keen to differentiate themselves from the unwashed “anti-vaxer” cohort of society. Bizarre phrases such as “ratlicker” or the more mainstream “pandemic of the unvaccinated”—in spite of the fact that both vaccinated and unvaccinated people are contracting and spreading the virus—have gained popularity in the discourse on covid-19 vaccines. It has become a so-called “wedge issue,” part of the culture wars so beloved of reactionaries for their ability to pit the working class against itself while distracting attention from those in power and ultimately accomplishing nothing.

For want of a material understanding of the world around them, the covid-19 pandemic has led many on the left to align themselves in practical terms with the capitalist class and their representatives in political power. Rather than concentrating on increasing hospital bed-spaces and staff numbers, investment in the health service, building and modifying social infrastructure to prevent the spread of the virus, the production of generic vaccines, and, crucially, making access to a free, quality health service a universal right—in other words, measures that might have a transformative impact on this pandemic and, sad though it may be to say it, the next pandemic—many leftists have instead fallen into the trap of arguing for an exaggerated version of the existing failed, short-termist government policy, i.e. “let the vaccines take care of it!”

the SPD’s mayoral candidate, Franziska Giffey, is outspoken in her opposition to the expropriation measure.

A similar referendum to ban housing development on the former airport Templehofer Feld, now a large public park, has been continually pushed back against, with the latest plan to build thousands of luxury flats on the south end of the field getting widespread support from the political elite.

Regrettably, in many instances over the past eighteen months it has been leftists, even self-described anarchists, cheering the loudest for restrictions of personal freedoms, closed borders, and mandatory vaccination. The reality of border policies in western states—in so many words, an open door for our EU-aligned and US-aligned allies, no matter how many covid cases, while poorer countries need not apply—shows that these measures have nothing to do with the spread of the virus and everything to do with geopolitical solidarity among white, imperialist states.<sup>6</sup>

Much of this is based on a knee-jerk misunderstanding of all criticism of government policy as it pertains to covid-19 as the stuff of “far-right anti-vaxers,” in part because the left, such as it is, has for all practical purposes entirely vacated that space.

Pfizer/Biontech have been contracted to produce 1.8 billion doses of their vaccine for the EU up to 2023, on top of the 600 million already ordered this year so far, at a cost of €19.50 per shot.<sup>7</sup> Where is the clamour for unrestricting the vaccine so that generic versions can be produced? The privatisation of life-saving vaccines should be regarded in any sane society as a crime against humanity, one that, among other things, prolongs the life-span of the pandemic.

And yet in 2021 to even question the business practices of these corporate entities, whose actions have left developing countries almost entirely deprived of vaccines while wealthy countries reach 80 and 90 per cent of their populations, or to call into question whether we need these companies at all, is considered “anti-vax” agitation. The vaccine has become an identity issue, a cultural issue, shutting down discussion and debate at precisely the moment when radical intervention is

So, despite the strong vote for the expropriation measure (59 per cent), the battle to make the vote a reality is only beginning, and it will require concerted pressure from the campaign alliance to make sure it is implemented.

However, the real question is a supply issue. Democratising part of the existing market is a step, but it is only a foundational step to prepare the ground for a wider class struggle. There needs

most needed for the health of the planet.

As communists, we need to emphasise unequivocally that workers, vaccinated or unvaccinated, are not enemies but comrades. We stand united against the common enemy, the ruling class and their political clerks, who have used the pandemic as a means of enriching themselves amidst death, poverty, unemployment, homelessness and grief for the global working class. Now they are telling us to fit the bill for the pandemic, to continue in the perverse capitalist system that has caused so much fear and suffering, while enjoying the spoils of their thievery.

A more radical solution is needed. Their finances, properties, land and assets should be seized and put at the disposal of the people as we find solutions together to the destruction wreaked these past eighteen months.★

## Notes

- 1 “Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy among ethnic minority groups” (editorial), *British Medical Journal*, February 2021 ([tinyurl.com/b3w3cvkx](https://www.bmj.com/lookup/doi/10.1136/bmj.n3163)).
- 2 Branko Marcetic, “We need a nationwide vaccine mandate,” *Jacobin* August 2021 ([tinyurl.com/3d5rrmcz](https://www.jacobinmag.com/2021/08/vaccine-mandate/)).
- 3 Health Service Executive, “Immunity” ([tinyurl.com/uxxat6ju](https://www.hse.ie/eng/health/immunity/)).
- 4 Julia Kollewe, “Covid-19 vaccines: The contracts, prices and profits,” *Guardian* (London), 11 August 2021 ([tinyurl.com/38k8hs](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/11/covid-19-vaccines-contracts-prices-profits)).
- 5 Sarah Fulham-McQuillan, “Who pays if you suffer side-effects from Covid-19 vaccine?” *Irish Times*, 19 April 2021 ([tinyurl.com/ycnuxe3c](https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/2021/04/19/covid-19-vaccine-side-effects/)).
- 6 Matiagai Sirleaf, “Entry denied: Covid-19, race, migration, and global health,” *Frontiers in Human Dynamics*, 15 December 2020 ([tinyurl.com/6yat7sdf](https://www.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fhdy.2020.564771)).
- 7 Julia Kollewe, “Covid-19 vaccines: The contracts, prices and profits,” *Guardian* (London), 11 August 2021 ([tinyurl.com/3t7rudfc](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/11/covid-19-vaccines-contracts-prices-profits)).

to be a significant acceleration in building to ensure that the supply of public housing meets need. And while the victory on this single issue shows that there is an appetite in Berlin for confrontation with international investment, the balance of forces is not yet there for a fully class-conscious opposition to the real problem: the capitalist system.★

## One all-Ireland public health service

**JIMMY DORAN**

**P**ROFESSOR Geraldine McCarthy, chairperson of the board of the South and South-West Hospital Group, has become the third senior health figure to resign, following the departure of two other senior officials from the government's Sláintecare reform scheme. The three lay the blame on the government's continuing failure to implement reforms in the health service.

Sláintecare is just another smokescreen created by the government to give the illusion that they are serious about solving the health crisis. They are not. Sláintecare has already given up the ideal of universality, with instead an emphasis on expanded eligibility, and with no clear plan for the future of

health provision outside the market.

Meanwhile Denis O'Brien continues to reap the benefits of the crisis and is expanding his Beacon Private Hospital. With 46 per cent of citizens now turning to private health insurance, the health crisis is a bonanza for insurance companies.

North of the border, the once-mighty National Health Service is on its knees, the worst-performing region of this service. It is impossible to get figures for private health insurance in the North, but 10½ per cent of people in Britain have private health insurance. They are abandoning the NHS in droves while it continues to be underfunded, privatised and dismantled by successive British governments.

The service in the North, though free at the point of entry, is worse than south

of the border, with longer waiting-lists and waiting-times per capita. For example, for a simple cataract removal you wait four years in the North and three years in the South, though you can have it done privately in a matter of weeks in either jurisdiction, and often in a public hospital.

Covid-19 didn't cause the crisis in the health service: it exposed it. Despite the valiant efforts by our underpaid and overworked health workers, north and south, neither health service was capable of dealing with the pandemic. Large sections of both systems were shut down to cope with covid-19.

Before the pandemic, both health systems were already at breaking point, with the longest hospital waiting lists in Europe. In Ireland there are more than a million people on hospital waiting-lists:

## Campaign for better maternity care

**- MARCH FOR -  
MATERNITY**

JOIN THE MARCH FOR MATERNITY TO END THE RESTRICTIONS  
ON PARTNERS ATTENDING MATERNITY SERVICES

OCTOBER 6TH 2021 • AT 1PM • DUBLIN CITY CENTRE

Organised by the Uplift  
#BetterMaternityCare Campaign

#MARCHFORMATERNITY

**LAURA DUGGAN**

**O**N THE 6th of October, at 1 p.m., the #BetterMaternityCare Campaign will be assembling outside Leinster House with the aim of ending the restrictions on birth partners' access in maternity hospitals.

While this campaign and associated groups, such as AIMS, have been raising awareness about the impact of covid-19 restrictions on maternity care since the beginning of the pandemic, it has been the showing of the latest season of the RTE documentary series *The Rotunda* that really brought the discussion into the mainstream.

At a time when there were strict restrictions in maternity wards around the country, an RTE documentary crew was granted access to the Rotunda Hospital in Dublin. The broadcasting of this documentary resulted in an outpouring of ire as women took to Twitter to share their stories of isolation in pregnancy. While many would have agreed with the restrictions at the time, their sacrifices, and indeed those of their families, have since been made a mockery of, with one rule applying to patients and another to film crews.

The filming of *The Rotunda* is not the real problem, but it shouldn't be the

A hundred years after partition we have two dysfunctional health services, unfitted for the needs of the people of Ireland. The pandemic demonstrated that disease knows no borders, be they physical or economic.

327,000 for the NHS and slightly less per capita, at 830,000, for the HSE.

The only equality in the health systems is equality of health deprivation, with the two systems having similar numbers of people on waiting-lists. More than one in every six people, north and south, are on a hospital waiting-list.

A hundred years after partition we have two dysfunctional health services, unfitted for the needs of the people of Ireland. The pandemic demonstrated that disease knows no borders, be they physical or economic. The lunacy of two health strategies in Ireland, with its two health services, has resulted in the death rate from covid-19 in the North being twice that in the South, with hundreds of unnecessary deaths.

The introduction of vaccination in the North was at first very efficient and much faster, but then it stalled. This threatens to undo all the good work in the South thanks to the slow-down in vaccination, and north of the border to

low take-up rates among some sections of the population. Two health strategies for a place the size of Ireland is chaotic and not good enough. It is literally killing us.

Instead of two contradictory strategies we could have had one all-Ireland zero-covid strategy, similar to that of New Zealand, which would have saved thousands of lives, north and south, and stopped hundreds of thousands of people from being infected in the first place. This is the real potential of an all-Ireland public health service.

Partition has done nothing to advance health services. Covid-19 does not recognise the border, and neither should the health service; but neoliberal governments recognise the potential for private business interests.

In the North, in the five years before the pandemic 22,000 people died while waiting for a hospital appointment. Waiting-lists are a hundred times longer

in the North than those in England.

In the South the two-tier health system goes from one crisis to another, with the national scandal of people on trolleys in A&E departments waiting for admission. Many are seriously ill or even dying, forced to spend the last few hours of their life on a trolley in a public corridor, with no privacy, stripped of their dignity in their final moments of life in the middle of the chaos that is our A&E departments.

Added to this, both health services are faced with the huge backlog of care caused by covid-19.

We need one all-Ireland fully funded, publicly owned and managed health service, free at the point of entry, from the cradle to the grave, from creche to care home—not the cobbling together of two failed systems.

If health was something money could buy, only the rich would live, and the poor would die.★

focal point of this discussion. Providing compassionate care to patients is always the goal of any member of the staff in a hospital, but the financial incentive behind the filming of *The Rotunda* cannot be overlooked. The Rotunda Hospital is publicly subsidised, and as a result has been underfunded through the austerity years. It has a current equipment need that exceeds €1 million. The list of requirements includes such equipment as blood-pressure monitors, infusion pumps, colposcopy couches, and a training mannequin for obstetrics, gynaecology, and midwifery.

Even now, as pubs, restaurants, public transport and sports venues all reopen to the public with few if any restrictions, pregnant people, predominantly women, continue to be left to attend hospital visits, blood tests, most ultrasound tests and the majority of labour alone. The birth partners who would normally accompany them are left waiting in car parks.

For many of the pregnant people affected by these restrictions, these appointments will be a routine, if lonely, affair. For the appointments where difficult or even devastating news is given, women are left to handle it alone, and then pass on this news themselves to their partners and families. They are

also expected to labour alone, with birth partners invited in only during the last stages of labour. This can mean hours in a maternity ward with no support or familiar face to bring comfort.

*Your birth partner should be allowed a daily visit of at least 30 minutes while you are in hospital. But this will depend on the hospital and if it is safe to do so.—From the HSE web site*

Birth partners are often the partners of the person giving birth, a future parent of the child being born, but can also be a family member, friend, or birth doula. They are not visitors but essential support. According to the World Health Organisation, labour companionship is an essential component of providing respectful maternity care. It is part of the WHO's recommendations on intrapartum care for positive childbirth experience and included as one of the WHO standards for improving the quality of maternal and newborn care in health facilities.

51 studies from 22 countries have revealed that labour companions play a number of roles in supporting women. They provide informational support about the process of childbirth and bridge communication gaps between clinical staff and women. They help women feel in control and build their confidence through praise and reassurance. Their

continuous physical presence allows for practical and emotional support and non-pharmacological pain relief, such as massage and meditation.

Companions, importantly, act as advocates for the women. They speak up in support of their preferences when these women can't. Women are often at their most vulnerable during childbirth, and historically in Ireland their contribution during the birthing process was often ignored and their consent assumed rather than sought for procedures they were not informed about.

The role of advocate is even more important for women from ethnic or other minority backgrounds, as these women are statistically more likely to have their pain ignored and health concerns brushed aside and to die as a result of childbirth.

This article is meant as no slight to the staff of maternity wards, who are overburdened and underpaid for the important work they do. These issues are a result of a misogynistic capitalist society that pits public health and the care of patients against cost and convenience. Such an attitude can only lead to a diseased health service; and the only treatment is a fully funded free health service, where the health and well-being of patients need be the only priority.★





## Ending the privileges of the elite

**TOMMY MCKEARNEY**

**K**ATHERINE ZAPPONE'S rejection, respectful or otherwise, of an invitation to appear before an Oireachtas committee investigating her irregular appointment was symptomatic of a wider phenomenon. It was an example of a sense of entitlement shared by all those in the well-to-do strata of this, our class-bound, class-divided society.

This is a self-serving conviction that the well-to-do are entitled to and indeed worthy of the privileges they enjoy. Moreover—and this is important—there

are no lengths to which they will not go in order to protect the system that guarantees their position.

The practical manifestation of this in present-day Ireland is evidenced, north and south, within two principal, albeit overlapping and complementary, currents. In the first instance, there are those operating almost exclusively within the domestic economy—private landlords, property speculators, major retailers, large construction companies, and private medical services, to name but a few.

There is then the other sector, dominated by foreign capital, with,

among other things, the enormous energy-consuming data centres, tax-favoured digital businesses, rapacious extractors of natural resources, and of course hedge funds, such as the Canadian-controlled residential property landlord IRES REIT, Ireland's largest private landlord.<sup>1</sup>

As a consequence, we have a section of society, or in reality a class, that sees itself as deserving to benefit—by their rack-renting of workers, through access to expensive private health, or by reaping dividends from privatised industries or the exploitation of natural resources by transnational corporations. It goes without saying that this comfortable life-style is gained at the expense of the working class.

We are witnessing here, quite simply, the working out of the class struggle in Ireland. Nor is this observation about the nature of our society unnoticed in wider circles. Professor Daire Keogh, president of DCU, recently warned in a press interview that the shortage and exorbitant cost of students' rental accommodation would create a "class divide," benefiting the children of wealthier families.

This is an intolerable situation and one that must be changed. However, change for the better won't come easily. Only last month we had the unedifying spectacle of the Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar, aggressively promoting and defending ratification of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada.<sup>2</sup> If ratified, the treaty would allow, for example (as

## Women workers and the trade union movement

**THERESE MOLONEY**

**T**HE TRADE UNION movement is an integral part of Irish society and as such reflects how society sees women workers. It affects how the historical role of women as primary caregivers in the home can muddy the waters when it comes to equal pay, gender equality, and smashing the glass ceiling in the work-place.

It is true to say that historically in Ireland, as elsewhere, it was accepted by trade unions and the employers that a women's role in society was to care for her husband and family, and that while

she was at work she would not earn the same as her male counterparts, as she was not viewed as the primary provider.

Many professions were closed to women, because they did not show women in a "ladylike" fashion, with this status being accepted by men and women, from the working class and employers alike. When you read books or listen to songs of the struggle of the working class it is as if women have been written out of history, with constant reference to "the working man" and his struggle for dignity and a fair day's pay for a fair day's work. The role of women in these stories is reflective of the

confined role women were to play in the family, discussing how these struggles of the working man have secondary effects to the woman with women playing their role as an appendage to their man.

Many historical female trade union figures, such as Mother Jones, Rosa Luxemburg, and Rosie Hackett, are relatively unknown compared with their male counterparts, for example Joe Hill, James Connolly, or Lech Wałęsa, and even after their death much less is known about them. Society accepted that there was a gender gap, and so women are coming from a place of disadvantage in the struggle for equality.

To prevent Ireland's working class enduring still further disadvantage and pain it will be necessary to end the privileges accruing to one section of society under capitalism, to end the inequalities arising from their sense of entitlement.

Varadkar himself admitted to Paul Murphy TD), the above-mentioned Canadian company that owns IRES REIT to sue the 26-County state in a special investor court should the Dáil introduce rent control.

This gives rise to a couple of pertinent questions. In the first place, this trade agreement is not merely a Fine Gael initiative, because it also has the support of the three coalition parties, including Eamonn Ryan's Green Tories. Moreover, there is the fact that CETA is being equally promoted by the European Union, raising the question of who supports Ireland's continuing membership of that neoliberal entity, and why.

Nor should we overlook the North in this examination. The Dalradian Gold company is planning to extract precious ore from the Sperrin Mountains in Co. Tyrone, against the determined opposition of the local population. Not only would such mining ravage an area of outstanding natural beauty and poison the local environment for centuries to come but profits arising would fill the coffers of Dalradian's New York hedge fund, Orion Resource Partners. Worryingly and ominously, not one of the main parties in the Stormont Executive has actively campaigned to have this rip-off halted.

As in the Republic, the reasoning underlying the Executive's position is a mixture of cynical self-interest and centrist social-democratic economics. Either option simply reinforces the hegemony of the privileged ruling class.

To change the balance of power away

It is also sadly true to say that some of, though not all, our male trade unionists have the same bias as any other male in society, and so the struggle of female workers must start from within the trade union movement. There can be an unconscious bias by male comrades towards their female comrades; and here is where we start to educate. We cannot right the wrongs of history and move forward without changing the mindset; and, like any effective change, we start by educating from within.

It's simply not good enough for us to say, "Here is a women's committee, now go and sort out what your issues are." If a male-dominated society created these problems, then it is incumbent on males

from this greedy coterie and in favour of the working class requires the active involvement of all sections of the class and especially its organised elements, those in community organisations and the trade union movement.

Two articles in the September issue of *Socialist Voice* are of particular relevance in relation to this matter. These are Barry Murray's article advocating the concept of a people's participatory democracy, and Nicola Lawlor's very informative overview of the condition of Ireland's trade union movement today. The two writers give an honest and realistic assessment of the present situation in both fields. At the same time they are also hearteningly positive about the potential for advances in either area.

It would appear, to this writer at least, that the best results would be obtained through agreed co-operation or combination of both strategies. We have witnessed in the recent past the effectiveness of the campaign against water tax when organised labour and grass-roots organisations combined, to powerful effect. Surely there is a lesson in this that needs teasing out and building upon. If this much can be achieved for a single-issue campaign, why not a similar policy for a system-changing initiative?

Moreover, there is now an urgency for implementing these proposals. There is growing evidence that the global economy is about to undergo significant destabilisation, something that is bound to inflict further pain on the working class. The potential crisis is partly due to

covid, partly to a realignment of global economic influences, but even more so to the inherent instability of capitalism. Early indications of this are emerging, with rapid increases in energy costs, talk of inflation, and fear of a trade war with China.

To prevent Ireland's working class enduring still further disadvantage and pain it will be necessary to end the privileges accruing to one section of society under capitalism, to end the inequalities arising from their sense of entitlement. This can only be done by bringing the means of production, distribution and exchange under the control of working people in a workers' republic.

Hence the need to organise for such an outcome; and, as is so often the case, we can draw upon the great James Connolly for inspiration and insight.

*With Labour properly organised upon the Industrial and political field, each extension of the principle of public ownership brings us nearer to the reconquest of Ireland by its people; it means the gradual resumption of the common ownership of all Ireland by all the Irish—the realisation of Freedom.—James Connolly, The Re-Conquest of Ireland, 1915. ★*

- 1 IRES REIT returns to profit in first half of the year," RTE News (<https://bit.ly/3oOqILL>).
- 2 See Daniel McConnell, "Leo Varadkar: CETA trade deal 'should have been ratified ages ago'," *Irish Examiner*, 22 September 2021 (<https://bit.ly/3nY4Z6V>).

in society to take ownership and work with female comrades to right these wrongs. With this in mind, how exactly do we address these issues?

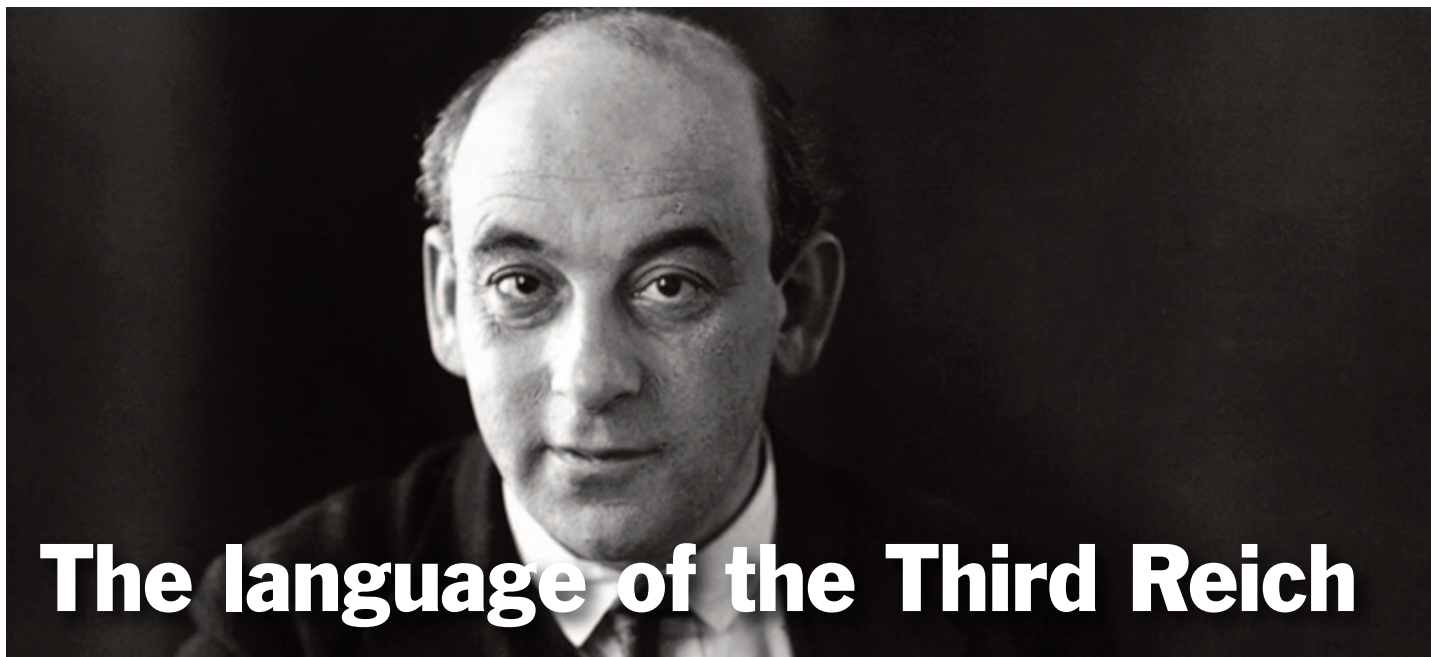
We need to recognise that gender equality, equal pay and smashing the glass ceiling are not just phrases or buzzwords, and we need to think of constructive ways to address these issues. We need female and male trade unionists working together to advance issues, especially after covid-19, when there is a real danger that the practice of working from home will see the woman becoming the primary care-giver and the traditional role of the male as the provider becomes the norm.

Prospective employers need to

recognise any unconscious bias they may have when hiring staff for their work-place. During the process of interviewing, it is not all right to ask a single woman how she will apply herself to the role while having young children to take care of, especially if the question will not be asked of her male counterparts. Unconscious biases such as these have good intention but only contribute to a constricting narrative for female workers.

The trade union movement needs, as always, to lead the field in addressing these and other issues and show by example how to right the wrongs that we as a working-class society have inherited. ★





## The language of the Third Reich

JENNY FARRELL

VICTOR KLEMPERER is remembered for his seminal study of the language of the Nazis. Born the son of a rabbi on 9 October 1881 in Gorzów Wielkopolski, Poland (then called Landsberg an der Warthe in German), Klemperer grew up in Berlin, where he was baptised as a Protestant. In the First World War he volunteered for the front.

With the rise of German fascism he was declared a Jew. He lost his professorship and his home, had no access to radio, newspapers, or libraries, and could not publish or go to the cinema or theatre.

After the war Klemperer supported socialism as an anti-fascist new beginning. Having fled Germany after the Dresden bombing of 13/14 February 1945, he returned to Soviet-occupied Dresden after the war and was reinstated as professor. He joined the Communist Party, “because he wanted to finish with the Nazis for political reasons.”

Klemperer kept a diary, and after the war he published *LTI: Language of the Third Reich* (available in English). A keenly observant middle-class scholar, Klemperer grasped how the fascists’ language expresses their inhumanity. In the anecdotally written *LTI*, Klemperer

deals with the central terms of this Newspeak: “*Mein Kampf* . . . fixed the essential features of its language. Following the Party’s ‘takeover’ in 1933 the language of a group [took] hold of all realms of public and private life.”

Klemperer never identified as Jewish, even after twelve years of fascist persecution. However, fascist racism towards Jews occupies a central place. He draws attention to what was new: “embedding the hatred of the Jews in the idea of race . . . Displacing the difference between Jews and non-Jews into the blood makes any compensation impossible, perpetuates the division and legitimises it as willed by God.”



## African-American

MICK HEALY

*Summer of Soul (or, When the Revolution Could Not Be Televised)* is a documentary film directed by Ahmir “Questlove” Thompson about the legendary Harlem Cultural Festival in 1969. It had its premiere on 28 January 2021 at the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah.

More than forty thousand people attended the festival in 1969 in Marcus Garvey Park in New York, with security provided by members of the Black



As in Nazi language, today's neo-Nazis semantically recast everyday terms: "homeland" and "culture" are given racist undertones. It is only a small step to racial violence.

---

Concern about postulating Jews as a separate people and its implications appear in a diary entry for 8 January 1939: "It seems complete madness to me, if specifically Jewish states are now to be set up in Rhodesia or somewhere. That would be letting the Nazis throw us back thousands of years . . . The solution of the Jewish question can only be found in the deliverance from those who have invented it."

In *LTI*, Klemperer reflects on one aspect of fascist conspiracy theory: "The adjective 'judisch [Jewish]' . . . [binds] together all adversaries into a single enemy: the Jewish-Marxist Weltanschauung, the Jewish-Bolshevist philistinism, the Jewish-Capitalist system of exploitation, the keen Jewish-English, Jewish-American interest in seeing Germany destroyed."

Though Klemperer himself was critical of communism until the end of the war, he did have communist friends and describes the fate of communists in the hands of the fascists. "The garden of a Communist in Heidenau is dug up, there is supposed to be a machine-gun in it. He denies it . . . he is beaten to death" (15 May 1933).

An interesting observation is that Hitler and his supporters presented the "Führer" as the new saviour: "The *LTI* was a language of faith because its objective was fanaticism . . . [although] national Socialism fought against Christianity in general and the Catholic

Church in particular . . . the first Christmas after the usurpation of Austria . . . [celebrates] the 'resurrection of the Greater German Reich' and accordingly the rebirth of the light . . . the sun and the swastika, leaving the Jew Jesus entirely out of it."

War is similarly cloaked in Christian terminology. War "became known as a 'crusade,' a 'holy war,' a 'holy people's war'."

Occasionally Klemperer concentrates too much on the person of Hitler as a "madman." One finds little about the larger connection with the social system, capital and the economy.

Klemperer gives examples of the renaming of thousands of localities. Parallels with the anti-communist renaming of places after the annexation of East Germany are striking. In East German subculture the GDR names of certain streets, squares and towns continue to be used in protest: Dimitroffstraße, Leninplatz, Karl-Marx-Stadt.

Klemperer's observations on "Europe" also resonate with contemporary readers: "the ideas of the occident that are to be defended against the forces of Asia . . . For Europe is now no longer simply fenced off from Russia—whilst also laying claim to large areas of its land as part of Hitler's continent by right—but is also at loggerheads with Great Britain."

This links to the right-wing extremist

language of contemporary Germany, their slogans about "Fortress Europe" as a bastion against the "Great Replacement." Björn Höcke, an AFD politician, has referred to "the so-called immigration policy, which is nothing other than a multicultural revolution decreed from above . . . the abolition of the German people." Höcke's hints at a conspiracy theory have roots in the Jewish conspiracy mentioned above. Such "race-mixing," it is implied, would destroy the "civilisation" and "identity" of the natives. Conspiracy theories create fear, and present a chilling image of the enemy.

As in Nazi language, today's neo-Nazis semantically recast everyday terms: "homeland" and "culture" are given racist undertones. It is only a small step to racial violence.

In linguistics, framing is a technique whereby two different things are associated. Where refugees are compared to natural disasters, such as a "tsunami," or "flood," this portrays refugees as undesirable disasters, ultimately life-threatening. Another example is the framing of refugees with "security." It is ultimately about "us" against "them."

Some of the linguistic strategies mentioned here, such as framing, are adopted by the establishment media. Klemperer pointed out how quickly this language and, therefore, thinking spreads in society.★

## can culture, music, and Black Pride

**Panthers. There was an amazing line-up of black artists, such as Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, BB King, and Nina Simone, who sang:**

**You give me second-class houses**

**And second-class schools.**

**Do you think that all coloured folks**

**Are just second-class fools?**

**Mr Backlash, I'm gonna leave you with the backlash blues.**

**The civil rights campaigner Jesse Jackson addressed the audience about the death of his**

**friend Martin Luther King Jr, one year after his assassination, which led to the worst rioting in Harlem's history. Mavis Staple of the Staple Singers and Mahalia Jackson sang Martin Luther King's favourite hymn, "Take My Hand, Lord," a performance that makes the hairs on your neck stand up.**

**The film of the festival was placed in a basement, where it sat unpublished for more than fifty years, because the film studios were not interested in distributing a recording that promoted African-American**

**culture and music. They were only too happy to distribute the film of the 1969 Woodstock rock festival, which offered no threat to the status quo and which was screened in cinemas all over America and beyond.**

**Most of the rock bands that performed at Woodstock sound tired and dated now compared with the soul music from the Harlem Cultural Festival, which sounds vibrant and relevant today.★**



# No new Cold War!

EUGENE MC CARTAN

**A** LOT OF decent people believed that when Donald Trump was voted out of office and replaced by Joe Biden things would change for the better in the United States. The left-liberals, Sanders and others, even believed that Biden would lean to the left and that there would be a fundamental break with Trump's domestic and foreign policies.

After nine months in office, nothing has fundamentally changed—nor will it. The Democratic Party has refined the art of signalling left and turning right.

Being in office does not mean being in power. Real political power lies with those who have economic power; in the United States this means the military-industrial complex, in alliance with the corporate media, which exercise political control through the institutions of the state, such as the military.

The recent "AUKUS" agreement between the United States, Britain and Australia (a client state of the United States), which would mean Australia getting its hands on nuclear-powered submarines, armed potentially with nuclear weapons, is a case in point. Australia had previously agreed to buy submarines from France; that contract was torn up, and the Australians have now agreed to buy nuclear submarines from the United States.

This is a further proliferation of nuclear arms, reflecting the growing danger to world peace posed by the United States and its allies. It is also a stepping up of the expanding military strategy of surrounding China militarily and using economic sanctions and economic restrictions to prevent China pushing aside America's global economic

dominance, to prevent the emergence of a multi-polar world.

After yet another defeat, this time in Afghanistan—despite spending \$300 million a day on the Afghan war alone, while the mass of American citizens go without medical care, with poor education, mass homelessness, and chronic low pay and poor working conditions—Biden has increased the country's military budget to \$715 billion, the largest in American history.

At the same time working people experience ever-declining living standards, collapsing infrastructure, and a poor or non-existent health service. Biden has agreed to spend only \$3½ trillion dollars over ten years in his infrastructure plan. This would result in spending twice as much on the military as on the people's needs—a clear indication of the priorities of the Biden government and of the American state.

And not alone has there been a stepping up of Cold War rhetoric and political action in regard to the economic sanctions but there is clear evidence of a growing militarisation of the South China Sea, linked to the ideological campaign against China, designed to create the necessary fear as part of the conditions for a further military build-up and military aggression against China.

The Biden government has followed its predecessor's strategy in relation to the "Quadrilateral Security Dialogue" (QUAD), an alliance of the United States, Japan, Australia, and India, which had been dormant for nearly a decade. Trump reactivated it in 2017 as an "Asian NATO," with the specific role of increasing military pressure on China. On 24 September Biden convened a summit of this alliance and has stated

that he wants to make QUAD the "core dynamic" of its Asia policy.

The AUKUS pact is the latest move in this deepening of the US strategy for a new Cold War. It is a pact designed to deepen diplomatic, security and military co-operation in the Indo-Pacific region, including co-operation on cyber-warfare, underwater capabilities, and long-range strike capabilities. AUKUS also includes a plan to set up an Australian nuclear-powered submarine fleet, with long-range capabilities.

The United States has built a dense network of naval and air force bases and has intensified its military build-up in the island chains along the Western Pacific. It has secured the co-operation of mutual interests and support from its closest allies, including Japan and Australia, for them to strengthen their naval and air forces and missile systems.

The United States has renamed its Pacific Command the Indo-Pacific Command. It has absolutely nothing to do with peace in the region: it is simply for encircling China with an iron fist. This military build-up is not alone a danger to world peace but is a significant contributor to greenhouse gases and thus to the growing environmental crisis that humanity faces.

The Irish government has climbed on this new Cold War bandwagon, stating at the UN General Assembly that we need to protect "free speech" and oppose the rise of totalitarian states (without naming China). The Irish government is fully committed to the EU's military strategy of "Permanent Structured Co-operation" (PESCO).

Irish neutrality is now but a figment of their imagination. This state is firmly wedded to and involved in this new Cold War, despite the fact that most of our people would like to see neutrality enshrined in the Constitution of Ireland.

China's strategy in regard to the international situation and the role of the United Nations was best summed up by its foreign minister, Wang Yi, when he stated that China would uphold multilateralism to safeguard world peace and stability and that "the UN-centred international system and basic norms in international relations based on the purposes and principles of the UN Charter are the pillars of multilateralism."★

US Navy picture shows the disputed submarine that figures in the AUSUK dispute