

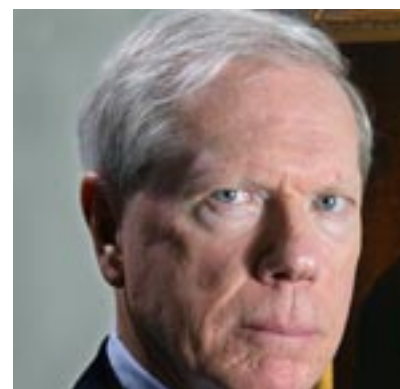
# Socialist Voice

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## Inequality kills

Before covid-19, “normal” was homelessness, a two-tier health service, waiting-lists, precarious work, poverty pay, food banks, no sickness pay, a gig economy, pension-age extensions, lack of workers’ rights, exploitation, bogus self-employment and inequality for the majority of people in Ireland while the parasitic elite profited off this misery. **Jimmy Doran** reports Page 2



“I am convinced that if the entirety of neoliberal economics were erased nothing of value would be lost. Economists, particularly academic economists, are in the way of truth. They live in a make-believe world that they created with assumptions and models that do not bear on reality.”—**Paul Craig Roberts**, “Does the US still have an economy?” (Institute for Political Economy, 10 February 2021).

# SV

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## Inequality kills

**JIMMY DORAN**  
**UNIONS**

“Back to normal” must not mean back to being undervalued, underpaid, and under-appreciated!

“Normal” was a life of pain, austerity, and pay freezes. There can be no going back to what was normal before covid. Covid-19 did not cause the crises in workers’ lives, but it certainly emphasised them. It exposed the greed of the rich, who exploited the pandemic to increase their wealth.

Oxfam’s latest report, entitled “Inequality Kills,” finds that Ireland’s nine billionaires have increased their wealth by 58 per cent, to €49.7 billion, since the beginning of the pandemic. **This is not unique to Ireland: there is a worldwide pandemic of wealth accumulation, Billionaire Variant, which accelerated on the back of the coronavirus and thrives off the festering wounds of poverty, hunger, and inequality.**

Oxfam reports that the world’s ten richest men doubled their wealth, from €610 billion to €1.3 trillion. In that time a new billionaire was created every 26 hours somewhere in the world.

These levels of wealth are obscene. No human being could ever spend such a vast store of wealth in a lifetime, or in a thousand lifetimes—although they try, as they squander the wealth created by the working class of the world, on trips

to space and other such profanities, while the world cries out for vaccines and for an end to poverty.

At the other end of the scale, the report finds that 160 million people were forced into poverty. Inequality is contributing to the death of at least 21,000 people each day, or one person every four seconds.

The income of 99 per cent of humanity is worse since covid-19. Widening economic, gender and racial inequalities, as well as the inequality that exists between countries, are tearing our world apart. As Marx put it, **“accumulation of wealth at one pole is at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole.”**

A 99 per cent windfall tax on the covid-19 wealth gains of the ten richest people could pay to make enough vaccines for the entire world, and fill financing gaps in climate measures, universal health and social protection and efforts to address gender-based violence in more than eighty countries, while still leaving these people \$8 billion better off than they were before the pandemic.

A 1½ per cent wealth tax on Irish millionaires owning more than €4 million could raise €4 billion in tax revenue every year. Instead of this route, our neoliberal crony-capitalist government puts tax on the family home

and wages while the capitalist class, the owners of industry, hoard their wealth in offshore accounts and avail of tax loopholes, tax incentives, and government subsidies. The rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

The Oxfam report goes on to say: “Governments must rewrite the rules within their economies that create such colossal divides, and act to redistribute income, change laws, and redistribute power in decision-making and power in the economy. This includes **rescinding laws that undermine the rights of workers to unionise and to strike, and setting legal standards to protect them.** It includes addressing monopolies and limiting market concentration.”

The report clearly identifies the passing of anti-union legislation as designed purely to tip the balance of power in favour of capital.

Despite this, the trade union movement is still the largest organisation of the working class in Ireland, with close to 800,000 members. Union density is beginning to grow, along with inequality. Trade union membership declined as a direct result of the introduction of anti-worker legislation such as the 1990 Industrial Relations Act, which tipped the balance of power towards employers, leading to restrictions on industrial action, disillusionment, and an exodus of members.

The grass-roots members have not given up, and as a result of pressure from the rank and file it is now ICTU policy to campaign for legislation to

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## We’re not all in this together

**SAJEEV KUMAR**  
**EQUALITY**

THE UN SECRETARY-GENERAL, António Guterres, during the peak of the covid pandemic, said that “we are all in this together.” But, on the contrary, two newspaper articles provide evidence to believe otherwise.

The *Irish Examiner* reported that the wealth of nine Irish billionaires increased by 58 per cent since the beginning of the covid pandemic, based on an Oxfam report. The report also said that the billionaires’ wealth grew to €49.7 billion. If the millionaires owning more than €4 million were taxed a mere 1½ per cent of their wealth it could raise €4 billion; and if billionaires were taxed at the same rate it could

raise €0.7 billion.

There was another article in the *Irish Times* that said there is a debt of €47,000 on every man, woman and child in Ireland. The national debt seems to have increased from €227 billion in the third quarter of last year to €236.3 billion in the third quarter of this year. The reason given is that the increase in debt is due to government spending on wages and pandemic-related expenses. The paper says Ireland has one of the highest debts in the world per capita, which could make it susceptible to severe economic crises in the future.

The questions that arises in people’s mind are:

- What prevents the Government taxing the richest people in Ireland?

- How did so much debt per capita originate?
- Why do the ordinary people of Ireland have to pay the debt they did not cause?

Transnational corporations, especially American ones (€165 billion in 2011), are the main investors in Ireland. These corporations contribute 70 per cent of Irish exports. So in order to sustain these investments, and attract more, Ireland has to become a tax haven and create an environment of low corporate taxes, even though it is finding it hard to find resources for its budget.

If the Government attempts to tax the transnationals, the flight of capital from Ireland will compound the economic issues and create a

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- How did so much debt per capita originate?
- Why do the ordinary people of Ireland have to pay the debt they did?





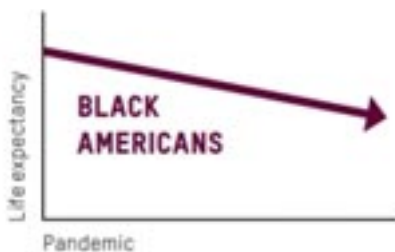
The wealth of the 10 richest men has doubled, while the incomes of 99% of humanity are worse off, because of COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>



252 men have more wealth than all 1 billion women and girls in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, combined.



3.4 million Black Americans would be alive today if their life expectancy was the same as White people's. Before COVID-19, that alarming number was already 2.1 million.<sup>4</sup>



Inequality contributes to the death of at least one person every four seconds.<sup>2</sup>

## COUNT THE SECONDS



Since 1995, the top 1% have captured nearly 20 times more of global wealth than the bottom 50% of humanity.<sup>3</sup>



Twenty of the richest billionaires are estimated, on average, to be emitting as much as 8,000 times more carbon than the billion poorest people.<sup>5</sup>



return all those rights lost by workers as a result of the introduction of the Industrial Relations Act.

This grass-roots pressure must continue to drive the campaign. The return of these rights will give power to workers to take on employers without fear of litigation. It will lead to victories and will build confidence in the working class as change is forced by them while workers regain power. Class-consciousness will grow with every struggle and every gain.

Trade unions are not schools of socialism, but they can be. Until the power of the 1990 act and the “social partnership” paradigm are smashed and abandoned, trade unions will be on the back foot.

A mass movement of our people needs to be built to bring about change and an end to inequality. A reinvigorated, radical trade union movement can be the foundation stone on which to build this movement.

Trade unionism is not a spectator sport. All workers must become active in their unions and play their part to force the legislative changes required, for the reinstatement of workers’ rights lost and to finally tip the balance of power back to workers. This will be the first step in rebuilding the radical trade union movement founded by Connolly and Larkin.

Capitalism will never willingly change. There is no such thing as a nicer, fairer form of capitalism. Change will only happen when it is forced. Radical organised labour unhindered by draconian laws will give workers the power to force this change. There can be no going back to capitalism’s normal.

Trade unions must be radical or they will become redundant.

downward spiral. Therefore it is reluctant to tax the rich corporates.

During the crisis of 2008, when six banks collapsed, they had to be bailed out, with the state providing €70 billion for recapitalisation by borrowing from imperialist institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund, so that the banks could continue supplying money for the Irish economy. The troika of the EU Commission, EU Central Bank and IMF agreed on financial aid with strings attached, in the name of “austerity,” which means cutting government expenditure on welfare and increasing tax, which has a catastrophic effect on the economy and heavy social impact.

The neoliberal agenda proposes fiscal discipline and policy on the budget. In a budget the government decides in which areas it wants the money to be spent (expenditure) and creates sources to meet the expenses

by taxation (income). The difference between expenditure and income is the budget deficit.

Fiscal discipline of the neoliberal policy-makers creates a straitjacket that forces governments to maintain the budget deficit within 3 per cent of GDP. So the Government has two options: either increase income or reduce expenditure. To increase income it has to tax the big corporations, which it is afraid to do, because of the fear of the flight of capital, which would cause an economic catastrophe; so the only other option is to reduce expenditure. This results in reduced spending on the people’s welfare.

The newspaper that said that expenditure on wages during the pandemic was the reason for the increased debt shamelessly camouflaged the real cause of the debt. To put things simply, the insolvency of

**Fiscal discipline of the neoliberal policy-makers creates a straitjacket that forces governments to maintain the budget deficit within 3 per cent of GDP.**

the banks was made a sovereign debt, and this was made people’s debt. The profit made by the speculative trading of banks went into private pockets, while losses caused by bank mismanagement were made public. The CEOs of the banks earned billions while their mismanagement, which caused the banks to collapse, was made into a debt that ordinary people have to pay, in the form of increased taxes and suffering under “austerity.”

Neoliberalism—which even during a pandemic increases the wealth of billionaires and at the same time increases the debt on ordinary people—is inhuman; which means that capitalism has to be abolished: it cannot be reformed.

The pandemic has had different effects on different classes. So “we are not in this together.”



# BLOODY SUNDAY 1972



## Imperialism's response to peaceful demands for democratic reforms

Statement by the Communist Party of Ireland

29 January 2022

**A**NNIVERSARIES are an opportunity to dwell upon and learn from past events and struggles, to identify past successes and failures. Fifty years ago the British state carried out an organised and sanctioned attack on the anti-internment civil rights march in Derry organised by the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, in which the CPI played a central role, helping to establish and build that mass movement of working people.

Bloody Sunday was imperialism's response to peaceful demands for minimum democratic reforms—inevitable given its undemocratic origins. This British assault on a peaceful demonstration resulted in the murder of thirteen people on the day of the march, and another one dying some weeks later from injuries received. This was a deliberate act of state-directed killings in order to break working-class people's resistance.

The march had been called to demand basic civil rights and to oppose internment, which had been imposed in August 1971 by the Unionist regime, in collaboration with the British state. Hundreds of innocent people were arrested without any evidence and detained without charge in prisons as well as on the prison ship *Maidstone* and in a number of British military camps around the Six Counties.

Internment was the repressive response by unionism and the British state to the growing challenge flowing from popular resistance to defend nationalist areas from assault by sectarian forces of the Orange state and from the rising civil rights movement demanding their rights against decades of repression, discrimination, and gerrymandering. The British and Orange state saw the resistance of the people and continued demands for civil rights as a direct challenge to the very existence of the British-imposed political settlement of 1922, which partitioned Ireland.

Repression has always been the default position of unionism since the British established the sectarian entity they call "Northern Ireland," by means of which they have maintained their control through the widespread use of sectarianism, discrimination in employment and housing, the gerrymandering of elections, and the use of the most draconian legislation and one of the worst regimes of repression anywhere in the world.

Unionists and their street gangs regularly encouraged and carried out pogroms against nationalist working-class communities. The Protestant working class had largely been co-opted by imperialism through the use of political unionism and material advantages in work, housing, and other



social, cultural and political aspects of Northern society.

The activities of the Parachute Regiment in Derry on 30 January 1972 followed the state-organised killing of at least nine people in Ballymurphy in Belfast between 9 and 11 August 1971, all part of Britain's military strategy of "low-intensity conflict," a strategy for quelling and subduing local working-class resistance to its political, economic and military strategies of control.

The British state and military applied their "low-intensity conflict" strategy from experience gained in fighting against anti-colonial forces in Kenya, Malaya, Oman, Cyprus and other countries where British colonial occupation had been challenged.





Bloody Sunday proved to the world that the state founded on imperialist-inspired sectarian division cannot be reformed—just as imperialism itself cannot be reformed.

Under intense political pressure, both here in Ireland and globally, the British state carried out two inquiries into what happened on Bloody Sunday, 1972. Firstly they set up the Widgery Tribunal, which was a complete whitewash of the role of the British army on the day. Following public pressure, the Saville Inquiry was established.

Anti-imperialists should not be deceived or misled by these inquiries: British law and British justice have

nothing to offer by way of solution to the social and political ills of imperialism.

The British-imposed political settlement of 1922 was designed to uphold the interests of imperialism in Ireland, north and south. It divided the democratic forces and the working class; it entrenched unionist hegemony in the North; it provided a state in the South in which nationalist capitalists and big business could advance their class interests; and it secured both parts of a divided Ireland for imperialism. It offered nothing to the working class, anti-imperialists, or democrats.

The present political structures, operating in the form of the Belfast Assembly and Executive, are only further entrenching sectarianism and have little to offer.

We need to move beyond the failed institutions that bolster partition, division, and sectarianism, which allow the pretence that Britain is a neutral observer, a non-partisan participant in finding a lasting solution, when in fact the continued British involvement in Ireland lies at the heart of the problem. It prevents the achievement of the national democratic demand for the establishment of an independent, sovereign all-Ireland state.

Unfortunately Bloody Sunday was but one of a long list of acts of violence

**The present political structures, operating in the form of the Belfast Assembly and Executive, are only further entrenching sectarianism and have little to offer**

and repression carried out by British imperialism against the people of Ireland, which will continue to take place so long as it remains an active political and military occupation force.

It was also the moment when the Southern ruling class and its political servants took fright at the mobilisation of Southern anti-imperialists, democrats and workers in solidarity with nationalists in the North. Thereafter the full weight of the propaganda and ideological apparatus of the Southern state was employed to discredit anyone who challenged or questioned events and struggles unfolding in the North, instead promoting and encouraging “voices of moderation,” such as the SDLP and the anti-republican “peace groups.” Instead of pursuing the formal national objective of ending partition, the Southern establishment increasingly bolstered British rule in the North, thereby protecting their own class interests in the South.

It is up to the people of Ireland to decide their future, not imperialism, whether British, US, or EU.

The best way to remember the victims of imperialism is to struggle to end imperialist control and domination, to take up the challenge and struggle bequeathed to us by James Connolly, to struggle for and build a Workers’ Republic, from Derry to Kerry.



# The Irish establishment are collaborators in NATO military strategies

Statement of the Communist Party of Ireland  
26 January 2022



**T**HE CONTINUING psychological warfare for shaping and manipulating the people regarding Ukraine and a potential Russian invasion continues to heighten public anxiety, thereby facilitating NATO in building up its military forces inside Ukraine and in other states bordering Russia as part of its “enhanced forward presence.”

The Irish media, taking their lead from a craven and subservient political and military establishment, regurgitate unquestioningly all press statements and “informed” opinion from various western intelligence agencies and their closet agents.

There is a furore over the Russian naval exercises to take place 250 km off the Irish coast, which are being depicted as an infringement of Irish neutrality, while NATO naval exercises, held most recently in 2020 and 2021, have been carried out much closer to the Irish coast. Those exercises went unquestioned and unchallenged and were not seen as a violation of the neutrality that the Irish state claims to follow, nor as a threat to the security of

the Irish people.

It was this false flag of supposed neutrality that secured the Irish state a seat on the UN Security Council.

The Irish state and its political and military establishment have no qualms about allowing the US and NATO military to use Shannon Airport as they wage wars and the attempted overthrow of governments in the Middle East and beyond, resulting in the deaths of millions of people. The Irish establishment must be held responsible, through its collaboration with US and NATO war strategies and military actions, for mass graves of women, men and children throughout the Middle East.

It is clear that it is not the actions of Russia that are threatening world peace, with the potential huge loss of life and environmental destruction if war is allowed to happen, but rather the aggressive military build-up by NATO as well as the military strategy of the EU under its PESCO strategy. The actions of the NATO alliance are to undermine the Minsk Peace Agreement of 2015, which called for the removal of all foreign

forces and mercenaries from Ukraine.

Western imperialism, and that of the United States in particular, is in terminal economic decline. The only strategy that it has is to manufacture threats or possible threats and to promote wars, both large and small, to further heighten global military tension and to encourage local and regional conflicts to shore up its increasing economic and political weakness.

Democratic opinion needs to step up its actions in defence of peace and against NATO and the involvement of the Irish state in NATO actions and military strategies.

Irish military personnel should be withdrawn from NATO headquarters. Shannon Airport should be closed to all US and NATO military flights. The Irish military should be withdrawn from all collaboration with French colonial adventures in Africa.

The military neutrality of this state must be enshrined in the Constitution, a neutrality that prevents the use of any part of Ireland, including its territorial waters and air space, being used by US, EU or NATO forces.

**The Irish state and its political and military establishment have no qualms about allowing the US and NATO military to use Shannon Airport as they wage wars and the attempted overthrow of governments in the Middle East and beyond, resulting in the deaths of millions of people**



# NATO eastward expansion causes crisis

JIMMY CORCORAN

COLD WAR

THE CONTINUED EASTWARD expansion of NATO is increasing tensions between Russia and the Western imperialist bloc. It has also caused concern to the *Sunday Business Post*, a newspaper that vies with the *Irish Times* to be the main proponent of Atlanticism in the Irish media.

In line with the adage “never let a crisis go to waste,” within its pages Dan O’Brien and Lucinda Creighton clamour for increased militarisation of the EU and full NATO membership. Just as Redmond urged Irishmen to die for the British Empire in 1914, they call for a future in which Irish soldiers “defend” the new empire, the European Union.

Fifty years ago, during the EEC membership referendum, the Irish political and media establishment promised that membership would not mean military entanglement. They lied then, and they lie still!

Dan O’Brien raised the old canard that the Republic got a “free ride” through the Cold War by refusing to join NATO. He wants it to now fully integrate in NATO.<sup>1</sup>

It’s worth looking at some of the foundation members of NATO with whom O’Brien wishes we had joined in the defence of “freedom.”

First of all the United States, born out of mass annihilation of the native peoples

of North America and home of the Monroe Doctrine, which claimed all the Americas as a sphere of influence (today it believes its sphere of influence includes the entire planet); Canada, another country built on the bones of its native peoples; Britain—need I say more? Belgium: just mention the Congo; France, at that time up to its neck in Vietnamese blood as it sought to hold on to its empire.

They were joined in the 1950s by West Germany, whose army was then still staffed by Nazis. NATO was created by imperialism as a weapon for rolling back socialism in the People’s Democracies and the USSR, to resist revolution at home, and to combat anti-colonialism in their empires. NATO has not changed and is still involved in wars of aggression.

During the Cold War it was not the Warsaw Pact that planted bombs in Dublin and Monaghan. It was not Soviet paras who murdered Irish civilians in Derry and Belfast. Nor was it a Soviet missile that blew an Aer Lingus flight from Cork out of the sky in 1968. During and after the Cold War the only military threat to Ireland, north and south, came from Britain.

Lucinda Creighton was if anything even more extreme than O’Brien.<sup>2</sup> She completely ignored the existence of Irish neutrality and lauded the British for their gung-ho approach to Russia. She called for increased co-operation between the European Union, Britain and the United States against Russia. She demands an

EU army to enforce “European values” globally.

Unfortunately it’s not just the BP and the IT that peddle NATO propaganda: all sections of the Irish media and political establishment follow the same line. Simon Coveney, instead of using the Republic’s seat on the Security Council to call for measures to reduce tension in the region, acts as a mouthpiece for NATO. He condemned the head of the Defence Forces for meeting the Russian ambassador, ostensibly because of Ukraine, yet saw nothing wrong with participating in a briefing by the US secretary of state, Blinken, on the same issue. He is very concerned about Russian naval exercises in international waters but does not object to the use of Shannon Airport by the US military.

A mark of a sovereign state is its ability to chart its own foreign policy. EU membership has led the Irish state to a position where it is unable and unwilling to determine its own foreign policy. Support for the expansion of NATO and the threat of warfare stemming from that expansion is not in the interests of the Irish working class, irrespective of how much the mouthpieces of the ruling class tell us it is our “duty” to send our sons and daughters to die for imperialism.

- 1 *Sunday Business Post*, 9 January 2022, p. 21.
- 2 *Sunday Business Post*, 23 January 2022.

**Fifty years ago, during the EEC membership referendum, the Irish political and media establishment promised that membership would not mean military entanglement. They lied then, and they lie still!**

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## Getting at the social root of crime and violence

**LAURA DUGGAN**

Prison abolitionism is often viewed as a utopian idea, but when we examine the root causes of crime, and the victims of the legal system, it's clear that if abolitionism is utopianism we are living in a dystopia.

When a particularly heinous crime is committed it is the typical reaction of our society to treat it as an aberration, the result of the individual flaws, weakness or illness of the perpetrator. This is often manifested in the idea that the person or persons are mentally ill, that there could be no logic to their actions, and that they, as people, can be written off as “not like us” and locked away for good.

This distancing of the perpetrator from the rest of society by virtue of mental ill-health or “defect” is particularly common with men who enact violence against women. When we accept this narrative we reinforce the idea that these crimes are reflective of flaws in a person rather than flaws of the system of patriarchal capitalism. To revert to blaming crime on false outliers such as the mentally unwell is to scapegoat and other a population already marginalised in our society. It muddies the waters when we are trying to get to the root of the cause of crime and engage in prevention. This is doubly true when discussing violent crime.

The over-representation of

mentally unwell people in the Irish prison population is matched by the rate at which people with intellectual disabilities are incarcerated. The commonality between these two groups is not a greater rate of innate likelihood to engage in crime but a higher likelihood of social isolation leading to criminal behaviour.<sup>1</sup> This rate of incarceration is more reflective of how these population groups are punished at a higher rate than other populations. Poorer familial or social networks, prior victimisation, lack of access to social supports and education, as well as substance-dependence issues, all increase the likelihood of a person falling through the gaps and relying on crime in order to survive.

**DÓNALL Ó BRIAIN**  
**LANGUAGE**

WE HAVE become accustomed in recent years to manipulative language, such as the absurd euphemisms intended to inflate the prestige of really quite ordinary people and things but especially to disguise more unpleasant ones, such as “law enforcement” (police) and “correctional facility” (prison).

Some of this kind of thing has crept into Ireland lately, such as “revenue compliance officer”—i.e. ticket inspector! Previously laughed at, they are now applied everywhere, and seemingly with a straight face.

But one stands out, not merely for its stupidity but for its offensiveness. And yet almost everyone seems to have swallowed it, without a murmur.

“Hospitality” is an honourable word for an honourable practice, long

In defence of hospitality





The principal cause of crime, however, is poverty. Incarceration cannot be a preventive in these cases, as it is not a deterrent, and it is merely used as a weapon against the most marginalised groups in our society. It is another way the capitalist state uses the legal system in punishing the “undesirable”: the poor, the unwell, the working class.

These findings are particularly startling in regard to women, with the number of women being imprisoned in the last decade dramatically increasing. These women experience a higher rate of serious mental illness and drug addiction than incarcerated men. It is both stark and heart-breaking to see that most women who have ended up in the prison system are women who have already been victimised—physically, sexually, emotionally or financially—throughout their lives.

Mental ill-health is much more likely to indicate a person’s higher risk of violent victimisation by others. It is important to note that this increase in mentally unwell or substance-dependent women incarcerated has not been linked to any increase in the number of women engaging in violent crimes. Simply put, mental ill-health or dependence are not the causes of violence. A far higher proportion of serious and violent crimes of all kinds can be accounted for by the gender, age and marital status of the perpetrator, with single young male people presenting the highest offending rate, regardless of their mental health.<sup>2</sup>

The men who commit violent crime—and they are men—are not an aberration of the system: they are built by it. We must ask ourselves why this is so, and how we stop it.

The majority of crimes that people are incarcerated for are non-violent crimes of deprivation and dependence: theft, public-order and drug-related offences.<sup>3</sup> If the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour is the goal, accessible

**The principal cause of crime, however, is poverty. Incarceration cannot be a preventive in these cases, as it is not a deterrent, and it is merely used as a weapon against the most marginalised groups in our society**

mental health services and supports will reduce a small percentage of the most violent crimes. A far greater number of people would be served, and a greater level and range of criminal behaviour reduced, if drug and alcohol treatment services were more readily available.

A larger and more startling proportion of criminal behaviour could be further reduced if such social issues as poverty, deprivation and homelessness were tackled effectively through the provision of housing, access to education, and the development of inclusive community. This has been shown in British Columbia, Canada, to have reduced arrests by 75 per cent over a ten-year period and proved effective even when people have been engaged in long-term and habitual criminal behaviour.<sup>4</sup>

However, these measures are not enough to reduce the most violent and heinous of crimes, in particular men’s violence against women. The majority of these men are not mentally unwell or outliers by any stretch of the imagination: in many cases they are the husbands, boy-friends, fathers and friends of the women they hurt.

To seek lengthy periods of incarceration for individuals found guilty of these types of crime is reasonable, but it is not a panacea for the problem of male violence. Longer sentences for violence against women mean nothing when they do not stop the violence or murder or rape from happening in the first place. Allowing women to arm themselves does not eradicate the danger they face: it only places more responsibility on them for keeping themselves safe.

To really change this we need to change our social fabric, one where concepts of masculinity are entirely reframed and reformed. This is by far the most difficult prevention measure to enact, often because of a refusal to accept the

necessity of it. We need to build up forms of manhood that do not hinge upon notions of physical power or prowess, domination, ego, individualism, emotional simplicity, and perverted notions of “respect.”

These changes must happen on a cultural and society-wide basis; but men must also challenge their own internalised ideals of masculinity, challenge other men to “be better,” and challenge all forms of violence. It is not enough to not be the person who beats another when accepting the putting of a woman “in her place” in other forms. Men must lead other men by example, making and taking no excuses. Dangerous, violent men do not wear a badge to denote their threat level: they are cloaked in social acceptance and often wear masks of love.

Until we start honestly getting at the social root of crime and violence, discussions on criminality and incarceration are at best pointless, at worst dehumanising and demonising, while letting the actual dangers walk free and unfettered among us.

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- 2 Heather Stuart, “Violence and mental illness: An overview,” *World Psychiatry*, June 2003, p. 121.
- 3 Central Statistics Office, Recorded Crime, Q3 2021, 21 December 2021 ([tinyurl.com/bd357bww/](https://www.cso.ie/en/media/cso/images/pressrel/2021/20211221-crime-q3-2021.pdf), retrieved 5 January 2022).
- 4 Alison MacPhail and Simon Verdun-Jones, “Mental illness and the criminal justice system” (paper presented to Re-Inventing Criminal Justice: Fifth National Symposium, Montréal, January 2013).

regarded as a particular characteristic of Irish people and one of which they are (or at least were) inordinately proud. Within an amazingly short time this honourable term has been stolen and applied to publicans, hotel-keepers, and others who “fumble in a greasy till.” It has been swallowed wholesale by politicians, the compliant media (of course), and even by trade unions.

One of the objects of the poisonous

ideology of Reaganism and Thatcherism was to destroy social cohesion and replace it with the view that all human relations are commercial transactions. Everything has a price, nothing is to be done for neighbours because they are neighbours, everything is to be bought and sold.

Hospitality means offering refreshment, accommodation or assistance to your friends and also to strangers, especially any who are in

difficulty. It’s unthinkable that the recipient of your hospitality should offer payment, or that you would accept it.

Publicans are publicans. Hotel-owners are hotel-owners. The tourist trade is the tourist trade. None of them are engaged in offering hospitality but in making money.

The manipulation of language is part of the psychological warfare waged by capitalism against society. But it can be resisted.



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# Constitution

**IRISH COMMUNISTS SERIOUS ABOUT SOCIALISM**



Communist Party of Ireland  
Páirtí Cumannach na hÉireann  
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## The far right in Ireland Should we be concerned?



**BARRY MURRAY**  
**REACTION**

“More right-wing than Genghis Khan” is an expression often used to describe how far to the right someone is. Whatever about the accuracy of this statement, communists, socialist republicans and the left generally have a particular antipathy to right-wing ideology, and for a myriad of reasons.

The first response is to “beat them off the streets” wherever they appear; and it seems they are and will be appearing more regularly. A more considered response, though, might be tactically more appropriate.

Today this rise of the right wing and even of fascist tendencies appears to be driven mainly by the reality of the covid-19 pandemic and more generally by the presence of migrants. The financing and assistance received from American groups such as Q-Anon cannot be dismissed either. But of course that’s far from the full story.

Ireland has its own history of right-wing groups. In the 1930s we had O’Duffy’s Blueshirts, inextricably linked to Francoist fascists and the atrocities of the Spanish Civil War. They were promoted, praised and blessed by the Catholic Church—not an insignificant point then or today.

## No citizen of Ireland should live in fear



**CLOVER CARROLL**  
**FEMICIDE**

THE MURDER of Aisling Murphy on 12 January on a walking trail known as Fiona’s Way (in memory of the missing woman Fiona Pender) was the most recent case of femicide in Ireland. Women can’t feel safe while walking in the dark, have to watch their drinks in bars, and now can’t feel safe jogging at 4 p.m.

Following the murder many women have spoken out against violence against women by men, which has resulted in a trending hashtag “not all men.” People also took to blaming immigration for this violent attack.

Aisling Murphy was not murdered because of high immigration levels or immigration existing but because a man believed he was superior to a woman. The problem is not immigration but patriarchy.

The 20th of January was the anniversary of the murder of Urantsetseg Tserendorj, who was murdered on her way home from work. She was murdered during the lockdown of the pandemic, when many people had to work from home; however, she had to continue working as a cleaner through the lockdown.

And it's probably fair to say that since then there has been a latent right-wing tendency in Ireland. This has manifested itself periodically through rabid nationalism, racism, anti-Traveller, anti-LGBTQ+, opposition to the gay marriage referendum, and opposition to abortion. Their ideology is based on a romantic nationalism, wrapped in virulent Catholic notions of an idealistic Ireland. In other parts of the world Christianity seems to be its bedfellow, especially in America.

Today we have a new generation of right-wing groups, most of which have come to prominence through the covid-19 pandemic. In the 26 Counties the National Party, Irish Freedom Party, Síol na hÉireann and Anti-Corruption Ireland are the main far-right groups; in the North, Britain First has made forays into local issues and is supported locally by loyalist groups.

Their stock in trade is transforming lies into their propagandist reality. They spread wild and wonderful conspiracy theories, to cause confusion, to hide the reality of inequality and exploitation, and to turn engineered anxiety into fake loss, especially where anger and anxiety already exist in society.

They manipulate "common sense" to the exclusion of "good sense," to appeal to the ordinary person in the street. But never mention the

"elephant in the room," neoliberal capitalism, or the clear need to confront it and to build a proper people's democracy.

From the experience of this writer, once these points are proffered in any debate with the right a deafening silence, or diversionary tactics, descend on that debate.

Ultimately, though, many ordinary people, especially the poor and working poor, are fooled into thinking that there is some truth in what they are saying. Their propaganda is particularly attractive and beguiling when they feign anti-government or anti-establishment language. People naturally love to blame governments and power for their ills, so it's an easy sell.

Of course governments and power fuel these notions by their own ineptitude but more importantly through their need to preserve the capitalist system at all costs. In the case of covid, the pharmaceutical industry, the fly-by-night PPE suppliers and many more who have blatantly exploited the pandemic for profit only feed into the deliberately simplistic "ramblings of the right." It can be difficult to explain the reality to the wider population without risking in some ways sounding like the right.

And though they are prolific on various social media, their actual

## **Today we have a new generation of right-wing groups, most of which have come to prominence through the covid-19 pandemic**

influence in Ireland is negligible. However, that always has the possibility of changing. And power would promote them when and if it suited their agenda.

The reality, however, is that none of the existing right-wing groups in Ireland have made any impression in the electoral arena, though they have in Europe and, to a lesser extent, in Britain.

Europe, North America and even Britain have a very different story to tell with regard to right-wing politics and even the murderous atrocities of fascism. Europe surely has witnessed the worst excesses of the tyranny of the far right and fascism; indeed that too has had an influence on the tactical politics of the left in Europe.

Workers and their class suffer the most from right-wing scare-mongering. They don't appreciate that they will never get the democracy they desire through their support of right-wing groups, instead more inequality, exploitation, and authoritarianism. Power does and will use the far right to subjugate and divide the working class; it will also use it to place itself in the role of saviour from the apparent excesses of the right. They will resort to the three-card trick of "stick with us and we will save you."

That is, of course, as long as you are not working-class, poor, gay, a migrant, a Traveller, or, worse still, a communist.

Working-class women should feel safe walking home from their job.

It isn't all men, but it is enough men for women to be afraid of their partners. During the covid-19 pandemic reported cases of domestic violence rose by 40 per cent. Between 2019 and 2020 more than three thousand calls about domestic abuse were marked as cancelled. This lack of action to respond to women being abused in their own home shows the lack of empathy from the state for mainly working-class women.

But it's not just the men who are attacking women: the state is also to blame for this. Two men getting out on bail for €200 after beating a teenage girl is a clear sign of the state not caring about victims. Josepha Madigan TD (Fine Gael) said, "The Gardaí are doing the best they can"; but are three thousand unanswered domestic violence reports enough?

Gardaí have also been involved in systematic patriarchal abuse. Just five years ago Dara Quigley took her own life when a video of her circulated on the internet. The origins of this video were from a Garda Whatsapp group chat. It was recorded when a guard rewound CCTV footage and recorded it—a clear disregard for Dara, who was

having a psychotic episode. This guard was dismissed from the force but was never charged with any crime.

Two years ago an on-line messaging app called Discord was used to share thousands of intimate images of Irish women and girls. With the evidence provided as screenshots as well as folders shared on line, it was clear that laws were broken; however, the Garda commissioner simply said that there was no evidence of a crime being committed.

Ireland has a history of violence against women. One only has to look at the Magdalene laundries and how long they were allowed to operate to see how the Irish state has perpetuated violence against women. These places of imprisonment for young single mothers and the daughters of those mothers were run for profit by the Catholic Church, while the girls who were forced to work were unpaid. The official figure for the number of women affected by these institutions is 10,000; however, the report of the interdepartmental committee says this is probably an underestimate. The conditions in those institutions were much like a prison, including such dehumanising practices as being assigned numbers.

## **Ireland has a history of violence against women. One only has to look at the Magdalene laundries and how long they were allowed to operate to see how the Irish state has perpetuated violence against women**

We know what the issues are, but what are the solutions? The solutions are not panic buttons, more guards, or women avoiding times of the day or parts of neighbourhoods, towns, or cities. The issue is not what women do but what men and the state do. Women who are trapped at home with an abuser need state-paid time off to go through any legal requirements to get out of partnerships such as these. For those in these situations with children the state needs to make available state-funded child-care facilities that working mothers can avail of.

Those in positions of power, such as the Garda commissioner, need to hold those who are under their authority accountable; and those above the commissioner need to ensure that this is being done. A socialist state that puts the emphasis on the needs of the workers and on the safety of working women is the only solution to the violence women face in this country. No citizen of Ireland should live in fear, and no woman should worry if a stranger she passes by on the way to or from work will be a threat.





## When artists take the side of the people

JENNY FARRELL

THE TITLE of Robert Ballagh's painting *The Thirtieth of January* makes clear its connection to Goya's *The Third of May*. But of course the visual language is also compelling.

While in Goya's picture the outline of Madrid sets the location of the executions in 1808, in Ballagh's it is the skyline of Derry, its walls, St Columb's Cathedral, and the Presbyterian church, and indeed with Walker's Monument still in place. Where there is a hillside behind the Spanish victims on the left of Goya's picture, in Ballagh's the eye moves upwards from the Bogside to working-class terraces.

In both paintings the focus is on the victims, the people against whom and on whose territory the atrocity is being committed. We see their faces, while the soldiers in both cases are faceless. Goya chooses the moment of execution; Ballagh shows us a scene directly after the shooting has begun. He shows us two victims, one dying, the other dead. We are faced with distressed people running, a press image that went around the world.

The priest, Father Edward Daly, holds up a white, blood-stained handkerchief, trying to shield this group carrying the first victim of the massacre, the mortally wounded Jackie Duddy, out of range. The people are clearly recognisable. They also hold white bloody

handkerchiefs, underlining a peaceful protest crushed in blood. In Goya's painting too a monk by the side of the rebel offers support, along with others.

A priest, Father Hugh Mullan, was among the dead at the Ballymurphy Massacre. There are many layers of associations.

Centred in the foreground is another victim, covered in white bloodstained cloth, echoing the handkerchiefs. The stark white, associated with peace, innocence, and martyrdom, reminds viewers of the brilliant white shirt of the man about to be shot in Goya's painting. He is flanked on the right by a group of faceless soldiers, their weapons at the hip, indicating an indiscriminate aim. Another soldier on the left in a kneeling position closer to the body suggests "Soldier F," who knelt to shoot dead Barney McGuigan as he waved a white handkerchief high above his head, trying to go to the aid of the dying Patrick Doherty.

"Soldier F" was responsible for a number of the cold-blooded killings, and the only one to be charged with murder—only to be cleared later. Perhaps because of this identity, we see his face in part.

Ballagh makes it clear that the marchers are unarmed. They are holding up placards; the two on the ground read *Civil rights now* and *End internment*. A Civil Rights banner occupies the upper centre of the picture, like a title.

When artists take the side of the people against oppression they resonate and are understood around the world, because the condition of the victims of wars for profit, power and control is global.





The painting makes reference not only to Goya but also to Picasso's *Guernica*, itself a picture about foreign invaders murdering a native population and also inspired by Goya. Like Picasso, Ballagh decided on a monochrome painting.

The covered dead man's hand in the centre foreground still holds the broken end of the *End internment* placard, in much the same way that the slain man in Picasso's painting grasps the broken sword. Picasso's and Ballagh's black-and-white executions evoke newspaper images; in Ballagh's case most of the film from the event, and press photographs, were in black and white. The only colour is the blood-red splashes on white in his painting. The smoke behind the silhouetted demonstrators in the background suggests the use of tear gas, seen in so many photographs of police attacks on demonstrators.

In the left corner, under the kneeling soldier's heel, we see a sheet of official paper with the massacre's military code name, "Operation Forecast," dated January 30, 1972. Written on it are the words of Major-General Robert Ford: "I am coming to the conclusion that the minimum force necessary to achieve a restoration of law and order is to shoot selected ringleaders amongst the Derry Young Hooligans." Ballagh leaves no doubt but that the killings were ordered at the highest level. In this respect too the painting goes further than any inquiry has ever done.

Art history and political history are connected. Art doesn't exist outside time, and there is a tradition in art that does not shrink away from taking sides. This does not diminish the artist; think of Míkis Theodorákis and Pablo Neruda; and of course Goya's *The Third of May* is one such work that has echoed through time. This painting inspired Picasso's *Guernica* (1937) and the *Massacre in Korea* (1951); it has also been an enduring influence on Robert Ballagh's work.

The power of this work, through Ballagh's interpretation, was picked up by a community art group in Derry, which recently asked his permission to reproduce his *The Third of May after Goya* on a wall in Glenfada Park, one of the murder sites on Bloody Sunday. They did this because they could see the direct connection between the terror and the anger of their own experience and that depicted in *The Third of May*. In both pictures the viewer is a direct witness to the events and compelled to feel involved. Beside it, until recently, the group had displayed their copy of Picasso's *Guernica*.

When artists take the side of the people against oppression they resonate and are understood around the world, because the condition of the victims of wars for profit, power and control is global. Bloody Sunday is a part of the world history of colonialism and occupation and of people's resistance, and Robert Ballagh's painting says just this, and demonstrates the necessity of art.



## Haiku and tankas Gabriel Rosenstock

**An Croí Ró-Naofa san India** A bilingual tanka (5-7-5-7-7 syllables), in response to a mural in Chennai. The tanka is the oldest form of verse still being cultivated today, stretching back 1,300 years to its beginnings in Japan.

an Croí Ró-Naofa  
ar lasadh i ngach cistin  
fadó in Éirinn  
ar bhallaí san India  
is cosc ar mhún poiblí é

look, the Sacred Heart  
that shone in Irish kitchens  
now no longer glows  
it found its way to India  
protecting walls from urine



**Saving the World** Gabriel presents a bilingual haiku in response to the work of the internationally acclaimed Belgian photographer Alain Schroeder (b. 1955).

save this  
save that  
yes, yes . . . and the orangutan too

sábháil seo  
sábháil siúd  
sea, sea . . . is an t-órang útan leis

**The Reader of Bourgeois Newspapers** This a a tanka in Irish and English in 5-7-5-7-7 syllables. The inspiration for Gabriel's tanka comes from the Dada artist John Heartfield who created this piece in 1930, declaring, "Whoever reads bourgeois newspapers becomes blind and deaf!" Heartfield was a German artist famous for his photomontages in the communist magazine *AIZ*.

tá náire orm  
ag léamh nuachtán buirgéseach!  
maith dhom é, led' thoil  
ní léifidh mé arís iad  
thruaillíos croí is aigne

I am so ashamed  
reading bourgeois newspapers!  
please, please forgive me  
I'll never read one again  
my heart and mind are sullied



Gabriel Rosenstock believes that cultural and linguistic diversity should go hand in hand with maintaining biodiversity.

His latest book, *Mullah Nasrudin Is Alive and Well* (New York: Cross-Cultural Communications, 2022), is a collection of satirical tales.

His page at **Culture Matters**:  
[tinyurl.com/2p93253n](https://tinyurl.com/2p93253n).



## Time to redefine citizenship

TOMMY MCKEARNEY

THE RECENT RTE series “Crimes and Confessions” raises a number of important issues. The programmes dealt with three miscarriages of justice, suggesting that the wider context for these events lay in the fall-out from the Northern conflict then taking place.

This self-serving explanation may please some but is actually dangerously misleading. What happened with these cases was not an aberration or an isolated departure from an otherwise faultless system of policing: if anything, they were a microcosm of how Ireland has been governed for centuries, a process underpinned by coercion rather than anything approaching consent.

Notwithstanding a dubious and deceptive constitutional arrangement, Ireland was for long a British colony, and treated as such, with a military presence maintained here to subdue and occupy rather than protect or defend and a heavily armed paramilitary police force primarily tasked with preventing insurrection instead of upholding civic order, both overseen by a judicial system blind to anything bar the interests of the Crown.

That much is history. A question we must ask ourselves is whether the underlying principles of governance have changed since the British army vacated Beggarsbush in 1922. The answer is revealing, if only to allow us ascertain whether Ireland is governed through a sovereign people or by less accountable agencies. Are we empowered as free citizens or still treated as subjects by those with ultimate power?

Little research is needed to discover that coercive legislation, with all its support agencies of policing and judicial structures, has been in place in both jurisdictions over the past hundred years. The Special Powers Act, subsequently replaced by the equally draconian Emergency Provisions Act, has been operational in the Six Counties since partition.

South of the border the measures were, if anything, even more draconian. The Free State was virtually established by a military dictatorship, and so-called emergency legislation has been a feature of the 26 Counties in every decade since.

One of the most obvious manifestations of this phenomenon is the absence of the right to trial by a jury of one’s peers. Amazingly, a right identified during the thirteenth century in the Magna Carta and long since deemed a keystone of democracy has never had universal application in Ireland. The fact is that non-jury trials are designed to secure convictions sought by the state and not, as is usually claimed, to protect jurors.

There are many ways to safeguard jurors but only one way to ensure that they don’t return the “wrong” verdict: the answer is simply not to have a jury and to leave conviction in the hands of a compliant judiciary.

The reality is stark. The ruling class do not trust the people and therefore maintain a system that allows them to overrule and override the popular will whenever it is felt to be in their interests to do so.

Apologists for this system of governance tend to repeat the same chorus. Draconian legislation and its support mechanisms, they say, are used only to deal with exceptional circumstances and do not affect the vast majority of the population. Not only is this a disingenuous argument but it is also quite simply wrong.

In the first place, there has to be something fundamentally flawed with the two regimes that have needed undemocratic “emergency” legislation for the entire century of their existence. In the second instance, the heavy-handed application of the law is not confined to containing militant republicans. The Dublin government’s Industrial Relations Act (1990) and the extensive bank of Thatcherite anti-union legislation applicable in the North are designed to repress and contain the working class, in effect a majority of the population. In the words of the master James Connolly, “governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class.”

As stated above, the practice of defying the will of a majority, by either the use or the threat of coercion, has a long history in Ireland. The creation of two states bears witness to that fact. Nor has this practice ended in the modern era, though it has sometimes been applied more subtly than in the past.

Take the crucial national question. The Southern Irish bourgeoisie are as determined to retain partition as any Northern unionist. So, faced with the reality that a rapidly changing electorate in the North will put the border issue firmly on the agenda, they are

**The Southern Irish bourgeoisie are as determined to retain partition as any Northern unionist. So, faced with the reality that a rapidly changing electorate in the North will put the border issue firmly on the agenda, they are endeavouring to generate fear**

endeavouring to generate fear. They are constructing a frightening scenario in which altering the constitutional status quo will lead to endless violence throughout the country. This is done in order to dissuade people from taking the necessary and logical steps that could ensure that change happens as peacefully as possible.

Under such circumstances, and in the light of our history, it is almost inevitable that some or even many will see the answer to this problem as one of meeting force with force. With so many volatile components throughout the country, including housing and inadequate health services as well as partition, that is an ever-present risk.

However, rather than allowing ourselves to become fatalistic about the future, it is necessary to consider an alternative strategy. It is time to launch a campaign to redefine citizenship, away from a people passively accepting their lot to one where working people are in charge of the management of their republic.

To make this more than a fine but almost unattainable aspiration it is important to have a programme that is accessible and easy to understand yet sufficiently comprehensive to bring about its goal. The Communist Party of Ireland has recently published just such a programme in its leaflet “It’s time for a new, democratic Ireland!”\* This document includes a list of twelve specific demands as part of a transformative strategy. The twelve points range across vital issues from housing for all, a universal health system and workers’ rights to the national question.

If these demands were to be embedded as inalienable rights in a new constitution we would indeed be close to Connolly’s vision, where the Irish Republic would become “a word to conjure with—a rallying point for the disaffected, a haven for the oppressed, a point of departure for the socialist, enthusiastic in the cause of human freedom.”

Such a state would be genuinely attractive to all sections of Ireland’s working class, north and south, a state in which we could finally put an end to coercion and leave all the Heavy Gangs and their superiors where they belong: in the dustbin of history.

\*“It’s time for a new, democratic Ireland” (<https://bit.ly/3ly9agQ>). See also Peadar O’Donnell Socialist Republican Forum, “A Democratic Programme for a New Century” (<https://bit.ly/3KHMbSr>).

