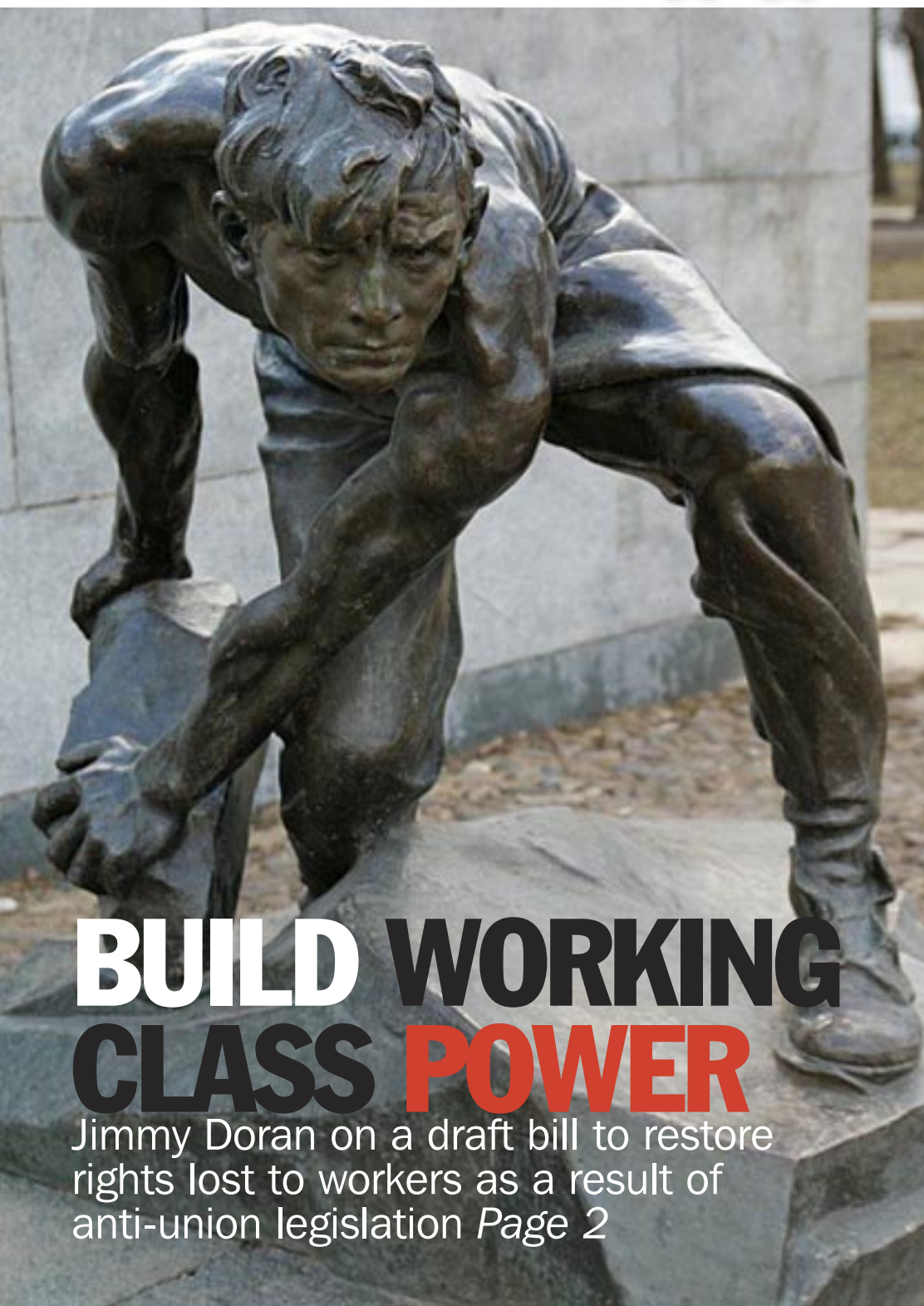


Socialist Voice

Communist Party of Ireland
Páirtí Cumannach na hÉireann
Partisan Patriotic Internationalist
www.communistparty.ie
Number 207 May 2022 €1.50

2	Profits, lies and war
4	Capitalism and housing
6	Bad News
6	Failing EU
8	Evolution or revolution
10	Marlene Dietrich
12	The future of Latin America
14	Ideology and Cuba
16	James Connolly conversations



“We will lead the white races of the world in a final crusade . . . against Semite-led untermenschen [inferior races].”—**Andriy Biletskyi**, founder of the fascist Azov Battalion (now part of the Ukrainian armed forces)

SV
Socialist Voice



ISSN 0791-5217



9 770791 521008

BUILD WORKING CLASS POWER

Jimmy Doran on a draft bill to restore rights lost to workers as a result of anti-union legislation Page 2



Profits, lies, and the fog of war

RAYMOND Ó DUBHGHAILL
UKRAINE

As the conflict in Ukraine drags on into its fourth month, it has never been more important for us to champion the cause of cease-fire, peace, and diplomacy. Unfortunately, voices aiming to do so are ever more marginalised in Western media and political discourse, adding another shameful chapter to the history of so-called “civilised” Europe.

Instead the drums of war are

beaten with increasing vigour in the West, with armchair generals from San Francisco to Stockholm happy to let Ukrainians fight and die in the service of their convictions and beliefs.

In order to sell this doctrine of all-out war to the Western public, politicians and their lackeys in the media have been required to enact a series of deceptions, which they have been somewhat successful in doing. We will examine three of the biggest lies in the service of war to emerge from this conflict.

Lie no. 1: The conflict began in February 2022

The standard explanation given in the Western media for the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 tends to be a vague, xenophobic hodgepodge of clichés involving one if not more of—

- The conflict is the quixotic aim of President Vladimir Putin, who is suffering from some form of psychological and physical impairment that compels him to act aggressively towards his neighbours

BUILD WORKING-CLASS POWER



The Cobblestone is the weapon of proletariat
bronze sculpture by Ivan Shadr, USSR, 1927.

JIMMY DORAN
CLASS STRUGGLE

THE TRADE UNION Left Forum announced on May Day that it is completing a draft bill to restore rights lost to workers as a result of anti-union legislation dating from the 1940s.

The TULF has been campaigning against the Industrial Relations Act (1990) and also anti-worker legislation in the North for the last four years, with some successes, as a number of unions, along with the next generation of workers in the Union of Students in Ireland, have called for it to be abolished. Others have called for it to be reformed.

This battle against anti-worker legislation was brought to a new level when a motion sponsored by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions was unanimously supported at the recent biennial delegate conference of the ICTU. The motion called for legislation to be introduced to restore all rights lost to workers as a result of the introduction of the 1990 act.

The TULF has campaigned since then to put pressure on trade unions and the ICTU by calling for a Workers' Rights Act. Numerous calls were made for the ICTU to start the process and set up a committee and employ the expertise needed to identify and draft the necessary legislation.

Some unions in the interim have already passed motions of support at their congresses calling for the ICTU to act on the DCTU motion and to instruct the ICTU Executive “to seek an alternative legislative regime which would allow trade union and industrial action for workers, for issues that concern workers across society and across employers, and for effective solidarity to workers in dispute.”

Unfortunately nothing has been forthcoming from the ICTU or any of its affiliates. It appears that the ICTU and unions affiliated to it are happy to let this motion grow dust on the shelf in head office, or don't see it as an urgent priority. The TULF stepped in and filled this void,



- The invasion was intended primarily to capture Kyiv and depose the Ukrainian government.
- The invasion of Ukraine is merely a precursor to Russia continuing to march westward until it controls all of Europe.

Needless to say, like most emotive speculation, none of the above can be adequately substantiated with reference to established facts. Nor indeed does any of it correspond to the stated aims of the Russian government, who see their goal as “demilitarisation, denazification and liberation of the people of eastern Ukraine.”

We need not take Putin at his word, though we can certainly substantiate the claim that the people of eastern Ukraine have been subjugated since the “Euromaidan” coup in 2014: since then nearly 14,000 civilians—predominantly ethnic Russians and Roma people—have been killed in the Donbass by Ukrainian forces, of whom the neo-Nazi Azov Regiment (now under siege in the port city of Mariupol) are regarded as the most notorious for their brutality and cruelty.

In truth, the violence inflicted on the population of the Donbass in the previous eight years, which increased sharply before the Russian invasion on 24 February, is one of the principal decisive factors in pushing the conflict from civil war to the tragic situation we can now observe, as the self-declared People’s Republics in Donetsk and Lugansk requested military support from the Russian Federation to defend themselves against Ukrainian offensives.

Lie no. 2: Sending weapons into Ukraine is an anti-war measure

An interesting inversion of basic common sense and decency during the past few months has been the triumph—in Western political life at least—of the idea that sending heavy weaponry into a war zone, as NATO-aligned countries have been doing to Ukraine since the end of February, is an anti-war measure, and not simply an act that prolongs conflict and increases the number of direct and indirect casualties of war.

It should be remembered that the primary victims of any war are civilians. In addition to the war dead, it is projected that this conflict will produce at least 10 million displaced people from Ukraine. In this context alone it is a crime against humanity that the possibility of diplomatic resolution has been so roundly ignored, and indeed rubbished, by establishment political voices and their lackeys in the media.

What is instead happening is that, at the behest of American arms manufacturers, the United States and various European countries are sending old military equipment, including tanks, missile-launchers, and fighter jets, into Ukraine, just to be replaced with new weaponry—produced and sold at a premium by the United States, of course.

“The true war is a celebration of markets,” observed the great author Thomas Pynchon; and nowhere is this sad fact more accurately perceived than in the Ukrainian conflict. In place of principled anti-war campaigning we have instead a fire sale for weapons manufacturers, fuelled by the innocent deaths in a conflict that continues to be entirely avoidable, from all viewpoints but that of the war profiteers.

In truth, the violence inflicted on the population of the Donbass in the previous eight years, which increased sharply before the Russian invasion on 24 February, is one of the principal decisive factors in pushing the conflict from civil war to the tragic situation we can now observe.

Lie no. 3: Ukraine is capable of winning the war

Perhaps the most insidious deception of all is the central assumption of almost all Western war propaganda, which is that Ukraine can win, and is winning, the war. Any sober observation of the conflict shows that Ukraine has lost and continues to lose territory to Russian forces at an alarming rate. The advances of Russian forces in the east of Ukraine are at best slowed, but not halted, by Ukrainian resistance.

No amount of weaponry sent into the conflict will upset the basic facts that Russia has immense superiority in artillery and air combat, meaning that any conventional war is already tactically lost for Ukraine. The likely outcome of this equation is the resort to insurgency, an outcome that would be particularly bloody and tragic for the civilian population of Ukraine.

It is impossible for any thinking, feeling person to take pleasure in any of this. War is hell on earth, which should be avoided at all costs. We have a duty to fight war with peace—just as we have a duty to fight lies with truth. It should be noted that the dissemination of the deceptions described above is made all the more possible by the outright ban placed on “pro-Russian” (i.e. dissenting) media in the early stages of the conflict.

It has never been more vital for us to promote the cause of peace, truth and humanity than at this moment, as socialists and as human beings. The entire, rapacious machinery of imperialism is our opponent in this war of ideas: therefore we must be steadfast in our principles, and our commitment to the truth

not willing to stand idly by and let this battle for workers’ rights stop with a motion at Congress. If the ICTU won’t act, ordinary workers will.

The Fair Employment (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill (2022) will be launched by the TULF on 2 June in Dublin. It will cover numerous workers’ rights lost to trade unions, along with union recognition, union access to all workers, and collective bargaining rights. The TULF will be calling for the ICTU to launch a national campaign, in conjunction with affiliated unions and trades councils, to seek the support of the Government, political parties, Dáil deputies, senators, local authorities and wider society to amend existing legislation and to introduce the Fair Employment Bill, which will be the first step to starting the process to tip the balance of power back to workers.

This was a huge task for volunteer grass-roots union activists to take on in their spare time, and an indictment of the lack of action, ambition and urgency by unions and the ICTU in building on motions and policies adopted since the Congress.

The TULF follows in the long line of self-sacrifice made by ordinary workers in achieving all that workers have achieved. They are not willing for hard-won gains to be sacrificed by trade unionists who have never stood on a picket line in their lives but have lived on the backs of the struggles and sacrifices made by previous generations of workers.

Anyone looking for information can contact the TULF through its email address: tuleft@gmail.com.

On 7 May TULF will host a discussion with the newly elected

This battle against anti-worker legislation was brought to a new level when a motion sponsored by the Dublin Council of Trade Unions was unanimously supported at the delegate conference of the ICTU.

general secretary of Unite, Sharon Graham, entitled “How to build working-class power,” as part of this year’s James Connolly Festival, sponsored by *Socialist Voice*. Since her election last year, Unite has gone on the offensive in fighting for workers’ rights, with many victories for workers and new ground won. As a result, the membership of Unite is growing, as these victories inspire and embolden workers to organise and fight for a bigger share of the profits they produce.

At this discussion, Sharon and other union activists from the TULF will map out the pathway back to radical trade unionism.

These two strategic initiatives by the activists of the TULF will amplify its slogan: Trade unions must be radical or they will become redundant.





Housing and the Irish state

GRAHAM HARRINGTON
HOUSING

THE RECENT announcement that the state plans to allow local councils to buy homes in order to house refugees from Ukraine is another example of the class interests responsible for the present housing “crisis.”

In reality there are more than enough housing units—90,158 vacant dwellings in 2021, according to the Residential Buildings Report. It is not cynical to imagine the present Government’s strategy as being to deliberately focus attention on refugees and away from the landlords, developers and other class

forces that use the housing situation for profit.

A former bishop of Cork, Cornelius Lucey, once said that “public housing is akin to Bolshevism. A home-owning citizenry will make more compliant citizens.” This has been the housing policy of the state since the counter-revolution of 1922–23. Building housing for the people was never the objective: the point was to squeeze the most profit possible. If people were left homeless or in sub-standard accommodation, then that was no harm.

Home ownership in the 26 Counties reached a peak in 1991, with 81 per cent owning their own

Housing must be a public good

ON WEDNESDAY 13 April residents of the Devanny housing estates held a protest in their area and expressed their continued anger at Dublin City Council and the planners involved in this quango as these bodies seek to privatise more public lands.

There was a good turn-out by residents, local political activists, including the independent councillor Cieran Perry, the Community Action Tenants’ Union (CATU), and comrades from the Dublin Branch of the CPI.

Speaking after the event, a Communist Party member, Pól Ó

Deoráin, said that the building of false hopes by so-called left-wing parties must stop, as they keep banging on about cost-rental, “help to buy” and “affordability schemes” while they continue to talk about getting young people onto the “property ladder.”

We as a party are against the financialisation of housing. The state needs to control housing as a public good. There must be no selling off of public lands. We are opposed to these ridiculous council deals in which the developer has to allocate a certain percentage of a new build to the council, but only if





home, but dropped to 67 per cent in 2016, with the figure for young home-owners being half that. This is part of a shift from being one of the highest rates of home ownership in Europe to being one of the lowest.

Contrary to the establishment's ideology, the fact is that capitalism is what has caused the collapse in home ownership, since a shift towards rental accommodation has proved more profitable than the credit bubble of the "Celtic Tiger" era. And a mere 0.004 per cent of the population own 8 per cent of the houses.

The state is not a neutral force trying to mediate between landlords on one side and renters on the other: the state is the product of the

A former bishop of Cork, Cornelius Lucey, once said that "public housing is akin to Bolshevism."

irreconcilability of class antagonisms. The state will need to alleviate the worst of the effects of its housing policy, particularly since some transnational corporations are questioning setting up in Ireland as a result; and it can do so with the use of subsidised charities, co-operative housing bodies, and other means that do not challenge directly the profitisation of housing itself.

The present situation of homelessness and high rents should not be termed a "crisis," as this implies that it is accidental. Instead, government housing policy is working perfectly well. Schemes such as HAP, RAS and rent supplement allow for massive subsidies from the state to landlords.

Bishop Lucey (probably too honest to be a bishop) said again in 1957: "The man of property is ever against revolutionary change, consequently a factor of the first importance in combating emigration and preventing social unrest and unemployment marches and so on is the widest possible diffusion of ownership." In 1973 the state introduced a policy whereby residents could buy their council houses for a large discount.

It is not for nothing that we are seeing the beginnings of social movements now that the shift towards home ownership has ended. At the same time, housing precariousness also has a grip on workers, in that a lack of rental security will hardly encourage people to go on strike, for example. According to Rory Hearne, the State Investment Fund is a part-investor in Finance Ireland, a debt-servicer of mortgage in arrears.

No solution to the state's housing policy can ignore the obvious and open class interests at play. It is not just a cliché to say that what we need is a class-conscious challenge against the landlords, property developers, and their political and legal representatives. Universal public housing, with rents linked to income, allows us to meet people where they are band to build on this to strike at the heart of a strategic weak point in Irish capitalism. It also opens up the connection with low pay and all the means the capitalist class use to exploit us, at home or in work.

Since it is the Ukrainian refugees that opened up this article, it is worth pointing out that rents in the Soviet Union were a mere 3 per cent of income. That's what can happen when the property-owning class are removed entirely.

If what Bishop Lucey said was true, so too is the reverse: that struggling for universal public housing, with rents linked to ability to pay, can form a part of developing a collective system, where communities are sustainable and no-one has to worry about having safety and security.

Such a model would no doubt be an attack on the capitalist system as a whole, and eventually on the likes of the European Union and American corporations, i.e. on imperialism. So we shouldn't squander the opportunity. Capitalism creates its own grave-diggers, and those struggling to work long hours to pay higher and higher rents may prove to be the grave-diggers of the system that created us in the first place.

they receive inflated prices for them.

This is no accident. The state pumps billions into the pockets of landlords and developers. They are scroungers. Some of them serve in the Dáil. If it wasn't so serious it would be laughable.

Whether it's HAP, getting councils to pay far over the odds for long-term leases, or this Land Development Agency that has been launched—indebted developers getting a nice price for handing their botched projects over to the LDA—it's another bail-out for the ruling class.

I don't recall that being

announced for people choosing between a meal and filling the petrol tank. The state serves the interests of developers and landlords. They have it set up so that once people buy a house they are desperate to see its value go up and up. The government is then forced to keep the show on the road by pumping billions more into inflating house prices, wedded to the idea of increasing property prices.

If you had the state building housing, and put a stop to the get-rich-quick schemes for developers, house prices would fall and money would instead be going towards

providing accommodation for people.

It's time for action, and this party will initiate a public demand for public housing. We will not be using the housing issue as a means of getting elected onto the council or other talking-shops. We demand that article 43.2.2 of the Constitution be implemented, which states, in relation to the "rights" of private property: "The State, accordingly, may as occasion requires delimit by law the exercise of the said rights with a view to reconciling their exercise with the exigencies of the common good."



BAD NEWS

Tommy McKearney reflects on the wretched state of the Irish media

THE DESPICABLE treatment of Clare Daly and Mick Wallace by the *Irish Times* in its Easter Saturday edition is more than simply evidence of the wretched state of the Irish mainstream media: it is also a reflection of concerns gripping the 26-County establishment.

The sanctimonious piece by Naomi O’Leary was titled, without any obvious irony, “Stars of state media” by a newspaper based in a state that ruthlessly enforced its Section 31 legislation for decades.

The article in question was printed over a two-page centre

spread claiming that the two are “popular figures in media controlled by authoritarian regimes.” The message the reader was expected to take from this was that the pair are tools, knowingly or otherwise, of governments deemed undemocratic by both the *Irish Times* and Western powers.

Had this article appeared in one of the tabloids pandering to a sensation-seeking readership it would be possible to dismiss it as just another nasty piece of journalism to be binned with the rest of the rubbish. However, this was no run-of-the-mill scribbling hoping to beat the editorial deadline: by the writer’s own admission, the article had entailed ten months of research—considerable time devoted, therefore, to establishing the entirely unremarkable fact that Daly and Wallace are frequently

interviewed favourably by Russian, Chinese and Arab broadcasting networks.

Such is the degree of anti-Russian hostility being generated at present that merely reporting that politicians are being interviewed by Moscow media is deemed sufficient to undermine their credibility. Yet this in itself does not explain why this research began months before Russia invaded Ukraine, nor does it explain why China and the Arabic-speaking world are also in the mix.

Whether conscious or not, the underlying rationale for this article lies in the changing dynamic in the global order and in this case the response by the Irish establishment to what is happening. Having spent decades ingratiating and submitting itself to and within the Western capitalist model, Ireland’s ruling caste has no appetite for having its privileged position disrupted or challenged.

Nevertheless, to paraphrase a former British prime minister, the winds of change are blowing, whether they like it or not. The axis of global economic power is shifting, away from the United States and western Europe towards China, Russia, and their allies in the Middle East. For decades the United States has been the leading global economy. Now, however, the latest statistics from the World Bank in Washington show that China’s GDP is—depending on which of two calculations is used—either the largest or second-largest in the world.¹

Worth keeping in mind when

European Union on the decline

FROM PEOPLE’S NEWS,
31 MARCH 2022

GEOPOLITICALLY and militarily, the EU has never been a big player. Contrary to some great-power fantasies in the Brussels political bubble, it is merely an appendage of the USA. Economically, too, the cartel of states is barely getting off the ground in the face of fundamentally conflicting national capital interests.

This is also confirmed by a new study published by the conservative Institute of the German Economy, the Institut der deutschen

Wirtschaft (IW). “The EU’s position as a global economic superpower is increasingly at risk,” it says.

On the one hand, the many crises of the last two decades—the financial crisis, the euro crisis, the refugee crisis, Brexit, Corona, and now the war in Ukraine—are responsible for this. However, these problems are also home-made; after all, the EU has repeatedly proved to be completely unfit for crises, and national capital interests have clashed time and again.

In the financial crisis, homage was paid to the banks; in the euro

crisis, the industries of the southern countries were sacrificed; there was no European co-operation even in the refugee crisis; there was no effective fight against pandemics so as not to disrupt the profit hunt. And now the Ukraine war is being further fuelled by arms deliveries.

The IW researchers see the second important reason for the economic decline of the EU in the rise of the competition. The US and China, in particular, “have been able to outpace the EU in a number of relevant competitive factors,” they say. The EU’s share of global economic output has fallen because other economies have grown faster.

Such is the degree of anti-Russian hostility being generated at present that merely reporting that politicians are being interviewed by Moscow media is deemed sufficient to undermine their credibility. Yet

reading these reports is that GDP calculations are more than a little subjective, as they measure services as well as manufactured goods. This is more than a matter of semantics. Services, including the financial sector, are often transitory and always vulnerable to erosion, and make up a much greater portion of the American economy than that of China. Consequently, the long-term prospect is that, all else being equal, Beijing will displace Washington as capital of the world's wealthiest and most industrially productive great power. And all that under the direction of a vibrant Communist Party.

Compounding the capitalist world's anxiety about losing out economically is China's foreign policy, exemplified by its "belt and road" project. Described as constructing a 21st-century Silk Road, China is investing abroad in infrastructure that is proving as beneficial to host countries as it is to the benefactor. Implemented for the most part in less-well-off regions, this initiative has, not surprisingly, won support among countries weary of and damaged by the heavy-handed, violent and rapacious exploitation of US-led capitalism.²

Consequently, it is no exaggeration to say that the free-market economic system as defined by the United States, Britain and the EU has not faced such a fundamental challenge to its hegemony since the immediate

post-war era, a time when Soviet-style communism was gaining support among working people everywhere. The difference now is that the new kids on the block, namely China, Russia, and their Middle Eastern allies, are not exhausted and depleted by a savage war necessitating decades of basic internal reconstruction rather than high-tech export-led development.

What will not be different, though, is the response from capital to the challenge. As in the past, imperialism will employ the twin strategy of fifth-columnists and open military engagements, coupled with aggressive McCarthy-style propaganda. It is this latter tactic that we are now experiencing, and not just with this latest attempt to vilify Daly and Wallace.

Ireland's mainstream media are owned or controlled by the ruling establishment and invariably serve the interests of their patrons. As mentioned above, there is nothing new in this assertion. The tendentiously censored coverage of the Northern conflict was a perfect example of this in practice, a situation where the *modus operandi* was to control and indeed create the narrative in order to control the response. So, rather than identifying the conflict as the result of a failed and repressive state, the Provisionals were deemed the sole culprits, thereby facilitating a selfish "do-nothing" response from Dublin governments.

In the latest manifestation of

this narrative-controlling strategy, we can expect more of the same type of treatment inflicted on the two Irish politicians. The stakes are high for the ruling class, and the outlook is uncertain. In common with most free-market economies, Ireland, north and south, is experiencing the damaging impact of inflation, a situation that will last for many months and possibly several years and, as always, inflicting most harm on working-class communities.

Under such circumstances and conditions there is the real possibility that the spectre of a Connolly-inspired solution reinforced by developments in the East will become attractive among a majority of our citizens. In fact as we go to press there are those organising a festival in Dublin to celebrate the life and work of the said James Connolly. Not only that, the organisers have invited Daly and Wallace to speak.

What can one say? Well, it's simple: a plague on the mainstream media's McCarthyism, and on to the Workers' Republic!

NOTES

- 1 Caleb Silver, "The top 25 economies in the world," Investopedia, 3 February 2022 (<https://bit.ly/3ELtqLm>).
- 2 See, for example, Ian Neubauer, "In Solomon Islands, Australia's largesse faces China challenge," Al Jazeera, 4 April 2022 ([tinyurl.com/2hsef22v](https://www.tinyurl.com/2hsef22v)).

China's economic catch-up process in particular is unparalleled.

The EU countries are also falling behind internationally in terms of private household consumption expenditure. This is hardly surprising, given that all economic and financial crises have been met with drastic cutback programmes, while pressure on wages has been steadily increased in order to boost competitiveness on export markets. This has been at the expense of purchasing power, which means that people are consuming less and less.

Meanwhile, China is lifting millions out of poverty through higher incomes, and domestic demand is also part of the economic strategy in the USA.

However, reversing the austerity measures is not what the authors of the study recommend. Rather, their proposals are aimed at making the EU more attractive as an investment location and thus attracting more capital from other regions of the world.

The EU's own "location index" clearly shows that the USA is the more attractive investment location. It would be difficult to catch up in terms of the availability of natural and financial resources. What could be remedied, however, is Europe's "chronic lag in corporate financing and skilled labour." With reference to the EU Commission's DESI or digital index, the report also complains about problems in the digital

agenda. According to the index, the EU performs worse than the USA in all the indicators considered. And the lead over China is rapidly melting.

"How well the transformation to decarbonised, material-efficient and resource-efficient production succeeds and how quickly and extensively the European single market can be deepened will be of great importance for the future competitiveness of European industry," it concludes.

Paradoxically, these researchers believe the solution is more co-operation between member-states, despite the fact that this has not happened in any of the previous crises. In other words, the descent seems unstoppable.





Evolution or revolution?

BARRY MURRAY
HUMANITY

IT WOULD APPEAR that, one way or another, humans have always been trying to find a better way to live and survive in the world, particularly from a materialist viewpoint, to meet their needs and develop their capacities—not always with success—by their own volition or as they would want it to be.

It could be said that when people set up their “one-man band” or “one-woman band” businesses there is a conscious attempt to break out of the wage-slave system.

They may well be wrong about that and end up under even greater strain or insecurity than if they were just employed. Unfortunately too, once their business begins to expand, if it does, they will end up exploiting other workers, which defeats the original “your own business” concept. They will also end up trapped and exploited themselves, at their level, within the capitalist pyramid.

We know that the earliest human societies held co-operation in work as a normal and necessary way of life; work was a means to an end, to provide food and shelter. In Ireland the *meitheal* was a

system of shared and reciprocal methods of working.

Once the Industrial Revolution gathered pace, these work methods died a slow death. The “dog eat dog” society was to the fore, although even today, in agriculture in particular, there is still neighbourly reciprocal work, though inescapably as a part of factory farming in the race to the bottom within the neoliberal capitalist system. To the people involved it’s just “common sense” to help your neighbour. They don’t know or appreciate the politics of capitalism and co-operating.

From the eighteenth century the

Long live the May Day martyrs!



SAJEEV KUMAR
FIRST OF MAY

AUGUST SPIES *left*, one of the Haymarket Martyrs who fought for an-eight-hour working day, said, “You can stamp out the spark, but the ground on which you stand is on fire.”

May Day is the festival of the working class—the only day the whole world celebrates beyond boundaries of religion, caste, colour, sex, race or any other denomination. This year’s May Day is special in many ways, as rallies and the association of people were prohibited during the pandemic.

History shows us that May Day rallies gain momentum during the time of crisis. A big drive for unionisation happened after the

“Great Depression” of the 1930s. During recent times the crisis of capitalism, exacerbated by the pandemic and by the war in Ukraine, has caused high inflation, and, as usual, the working class is bearing the brunt.

The mainstream media are focused on Will Smith’s slap during the Oscar Awards, or on Johnny Depp’s case, while there are 2.7 billion people on the planet who are hungry. That number has further increased from the pandemic and the war in Ukraine.

The corporate media never threw light on Chris Smalls’ effort, which many said was impossible, to form a union in Amazon—the epitome of corporate exploitation. But he succeeded in forming the Amazon Labour Union, which is a mammoth achievement and adds



worker co-operative system, which evolved in response to the Industrial Revolution and its horrors for workers, has been developing around the world. While it still exists within the capitalist system, it has proved to be one way of having a more democratic system of work. There are many examples of worker co-ops around the world: Mondragón in Spain, Emilia Romagna in Italy, and Central and South America. Countries building socialism, such as China, Venezuela, and Cuba, also have varying degrees of worker co-operatives.

The question for Marxists, however, is: Is this the road to socialism, or an abandonment of class struggle?

So, are worker co-ops classless enterprises within capitalism—nice capitalism—or temporarily taming it? Will even radical worker co-ops be eventually drowned in the sea of capitalism?

The data from around the world would appear to suggest that that is not the case. And there are many examples in the world today of successful worker co-ops, despite the odds. But what does that say about the politics of revolution?

Lenin recognised that there was going to be some period of transition between ending capitalism and the evolving of socialism. He wrote: “The transition from capitalism to

communism certainly cannot but yield a tremendous abundance and variety of political forms, but the essence will inevitably be the same: the dictatorship of the proletariat.”¹

Marx never doubted that “in the course of the transition to a wholly Communist economy, widespread use would have to be made of co-operative management as an intermediate stage.”² He also stated that “a Communist society . . . will not develop . . . from its own foundations . . . as it emerges from capitalist society; which thus in every respect, economically, morally and intellectually, is still stamped with the birth marks of the old society from whose womb it emerges.”³

With the developing, emerging intermediate stage (or stages) and transitioning from capitalism to socialism, and on to communism, there appears to be an awful lot of unavoidable thinking about dialectics.

So can we say that worker co-ops, while working within capitalism, can be used to prepare people for the transition to socialism? Will they begin to develop a class-consciousness in workers? Will this end the selfish, individualist, atomised society that is our present neoliberal capitalist ethos? Will the “new radical revolutionary person” evolve from this new work democracy? Will co-ops bring a realisation that there is

We know that the earliest human societies held co-operation in work as a normal and necessary way of life; work was a means to an end, to provide food and shelter.

a world beyond capitalism?

There would probably need to be a critical mass of worker co-ops evolving from the people—not the state, which would be using them to prop up capitalism and co-opt, or even destroy, worker co-ops. If multiple levels of businesses—agriculture, electronics and manufacturing—were run as worker co-ops, could that tip the balance against capitalist inequality and exploitation?

Serious political and legal change would also need to happen. The parallel development of a participatory people’s democracy and the empowerment of community would certainly be a catalyst for improvement in people’s lives and promote wider socialist thinking. Would such development be transformative reform, or is it just liberal social-democratic thinking?

However, Che Guevara once said, “We have no right to believe freedom can come without struggle.” At what point along the line of struggle are we deemed to be reformist, transforming reformers, evolutionary, or revolutionary? Do I detect more dialectics coming on?

Notes

- 1 Lenin, *The State and Revolution*.
- 2 Engels, *Letter to Bebel* (1886).
- 3 Marx, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*.

colour to this year’s May Day.

It is during this period that we are celebrating May Day. It’s not just a celebration for the eight-hour working day but also a reflection on unemployment and poverty, the reasons behind them, and the way forward.

In one of the longest chapters in *Capital*, Marx writes: “In the history of capitalist production, the determination of what is a working day presents itself as the result of a struggle, a struggle between the capitalist class and the working class.” He also cites a report by R. J. Saunders, an English factory inspector, in 1848: “Further steps towards a reformation of society can never be carried out with any hope of success, unless the hours of labour be limited, and the prescribed limit strictly enforced.”

Marx also mentions the resolution of the International Working Men’s Association at the Geneva Congress, which said, “A preliminary condition, without which all further attempts at improvement and emancipation must prove abortive, is the limitation of the working day.”

So it is the class struggle that achieved eight hours’ work, eight hours’ recreation and eight hours’ sleep. This is very important, and not granted by the providence of the capitalists. But in recent times the eight-hour working day has been abolished in many Third World countries, while the right to form unions and the right to collective bargaining is being bulldozed. The rights gained by the sacrifice of martyrs are snatched away.

May Day is the festival of the working class—the only day the whole world celebrates beyond boundaries of religion, caste, colour, sex, race or any other denomination.

On May Day we remember with gratitude the martyrs Albert Parsons, George Engel, August Spies, and Adolf Fischer, who were hanged, Samuel Fielden and Michael Schwab, who were sentenced to life imprisonment, Louis Lingg, who took his own life in prison, and the victims of the Haymarket massacre.

The last words of Albert Parsons are written on the Haymarket Martyrs Memorial: “The day will come when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today.”

Workers all over the world are breaking their silence and organising themselves. The capitalists can only stamp on the spark, but the fire is still alive.

Long live the May Day martyrs!





Marlene Dietrich

Marlene Dietrich, who died 30 years ago on 6 May 1992, must be remembered not only for her importance as a role model for emancipation but also for her outspoken and active stand against her Nazi homeland.

JENNY FARRELL
CINEMA

BORN IN BERLIN on 27 December 1901, she became one of the most famous actors of all time. Her breakthrough came with the film *The Blue Angel* (1929). In 1930 she left Germany for Hollywood. When the Nazis were stripping other artists of their German citizenship, she renounced hers.

Throughout the Second World War, Dietrich actively engaged in the anti-fascist struggle. When she visited

Germany after the war she was deemed a traitor in West Germany, with relatively small numbers attending her funeral as late as 1992.

Dietrich's father, Louis Otto Dietrich, an officer, died when Marlene and her sister were very young. A few years later her mother married Eduard von Losch, who was killed in the First World War. Marlene intended to become a concert violinist, but a wrist injury made this impossible. After that she turned her interest to the stage. She auditioned unsuccessfully at Berlin's famous

The importance of political theory Part 2

CLOVER CARROLL
THEORY

LAST MONTH I wrote an article on the importance of political theory. In that article I explained that it is not enough to read the Communist Manifesto to learn about Marxism properly but that you must examine different points of Marxism.

In this article I will examine the economic and social relations between the ruling class and the working class through a Marxist framework to show why we must have an understanding of Marxism and how it helps us understand the world around us.

The ruling class rule through ownership of the means of

production and the ownership of land. They use this ownership to push the working class into poverty. The landlords who run the country continue to raise the price of renting accommodation, with an average of €2,044 a month in Dublin. The cost of living continues to rise, with an estimated €3,232 for a family of four in Dublin. This, however, doesn't include the cost of renting. The business owners who continue to raise prices but keep wages at the minimum—that is, the minimum with which a worker can live—continue to increase profits.

Through Marxism we learn two important terms: real wages and surplus value. These are important, as they show how profits increase. Real wages are the buying power of

Max Reinhardt Drama School. However, all this changed when she was discovered by Josef von Sternberg for his new film project.

The Blue Angel was shot largely in 1929 and had its premiere in 1930. Germany was badly affected by the Wall Street crash, and American loans suddenly dried up. Germany crashed badly, and its severe economic crisis was a fertile ground for the rise of German fascism.

The Blue Angel is a tragedy, with the pompous but by no means malevolent teacher Professor Rath as its tragic hero, whose destruction arouses pity and fear as the audience realise that such a fate could befall them too. As in Shakespeare, the destruction is provoked by the times, and by an inability to cope with the times. Rath represents the older generation, taunted by his students. He is, however, coldly destroyed by the young cabaret dancer Lola. His dignity is destroyed, and this causes his descent into madness.

The ultimate blow comes when the company return to his home town and past colleagues witness the extent of his destruction and, as the company director insists on a final humiliation, madness and death.

The Blue Angel foreshadows aspects of Nazi Germany, a ruthlessness that will not shrink from destroying people and that would rise to power meteorically. In 1933 *The Blue Angel* was banned in Germany.

Both Sternberg and Dietrich left Germany for Hollywood in 1930. In the 1930s and 40s Dietrich starred in many famous films and was among the first to embody the emancipated woman on screen, with her characteristic trouser suits, hats, and challenge to other “male” domains.



She had relationships with both men and women and is celebrated to this day by the LGBTI community.

When Nazi Germany revoked the citizenship of many German artists, Dietrich renounced hers. With Billy Wilder and others she set up a fund to help persecuted people flee Germany. In 1937 she donated her entire income from *Knight Without Armour* to helping the refugees.

After the attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941 Dietrich helped sell war bonds. In 1942 the Office of Strategic Services approached her to assist in its propaganda efforts. She recorded American songs in German, but also German songs for use at the front. She was also among those who volunteered in 1944 and 45 and sang to the troops, often under dangerous conditions close to the front line.

After the war, in 1948, she returned to acting, taking on the part—most reluctantly—of a Nazi singer in Billy Wilder’s comedy *A Foreign Affair*, filmed on location in the ruins of Berlin. In 1962 she narrated the American documentary *The Black Fox*, which links the rise and fall of Adolf Hitler to Goethe’s story of Reynard the Fox. She also

Both Sternberg left and Dietrich left Germany for Hollywood in 1930.

toured the world giving concerts and included in her repertoire new anti-war songs, such as Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the Wind” and Pete Seeger’s “Where Have All the Flowers Gone?” In 1975 she retired from public life.

When Marlene Dietrich died, at the age of ninety, her funeral service in Paris was attended by approximately 1,500 mourners in the church, with thousands more outside. Three medals were displayed at the foot of the coffin recognising Dietrich’s fight against Nazism.

Dietrich had requested that she be buried in her birthplace, Berlin, and her body was flown there on 16 May 1992. However, there was little public acknowledgement of this event, and comparatively few people attended the burial. On her last visit to (West) Berlin in 1960 she had been threatened and harassed, and the police had feared disruptions of the funeral by neo-Nazi groups. A wave of hate mail and insults such as “traitor” to a (West) Berlin newspaper and the Senate had caused the Senate to cancel the planned transfer in a Bundeswehr (German armed forces) jet and a memorial service in the Deutsches Theater in her honour. Eight months later she was awarded an honorary grave, which was desecrated a year later.

On her hundredth birthday, 27 December 2001, the city finally apologised for the hostility she had faced there after the war. Not a word about the controversies over naming a street after her, nothing about the cancellation of the official commemoration.

On 16 May 2002, Marlene Dietrich was posthumously made an honorary citizen of Berlin.

wages, i.e. the real value of the money you’re paid. Surplus value is the value of the work you do that the business owner profits from.

For example, for the work for 1 hour you are paid €10.50, but if the work you do in that hour is valued at €21 the business owner has made a profit of €10.50. You need to work 2 hours to afford what you create in 1 hour. But if the business owner increases the price of what you have created, if a new variable is added, such as inflation, the real wages drop. Your 2 hours of work to buy 1 hour’s value are no longer enough.

Real wages also decrease if rent is increased. As the cost of living rises but wages stagnate, the workers are left to be evicted.

Those who are unemployed make up what’s known as the reserve army of labour. For the bosses they are people to point to and say, “I can replace you with any of them.”

Unemployment, homelessness and poverty are not an accident of a flawed system but a need for capitalism to continue to exploit workers. If everyone was employed, profits would go down, as wages would have to be paid, supply would increase, and overabundance would cause a drop in demand. So that profits can continue to grow, demand must be greater than supply. This can be applied to jobs too. A greater demand for jobs creates division and competition among the working class and allows the ruling class to

Unemployment, homelessness and poverty are not an accident of a flawed system but a need for capitalism to continue to exploit workers.

continue to profit from the surplus value of labour.

This is the answer to the question from my previous article, “Why does my boss make more than me when I do all the work?” Your surplus labour is being profited from.

This is Marxism applied to the real world, the importance of political theory and understanding of Marxism—but also the importance of Marxism as a philosophy of the working class, analysing the social and economic factors at play in a capitalist society. This answers many questions plaguing the working class and guides how we fight against this exploitation in organisations such as parties and unions.



IMPERIALISM



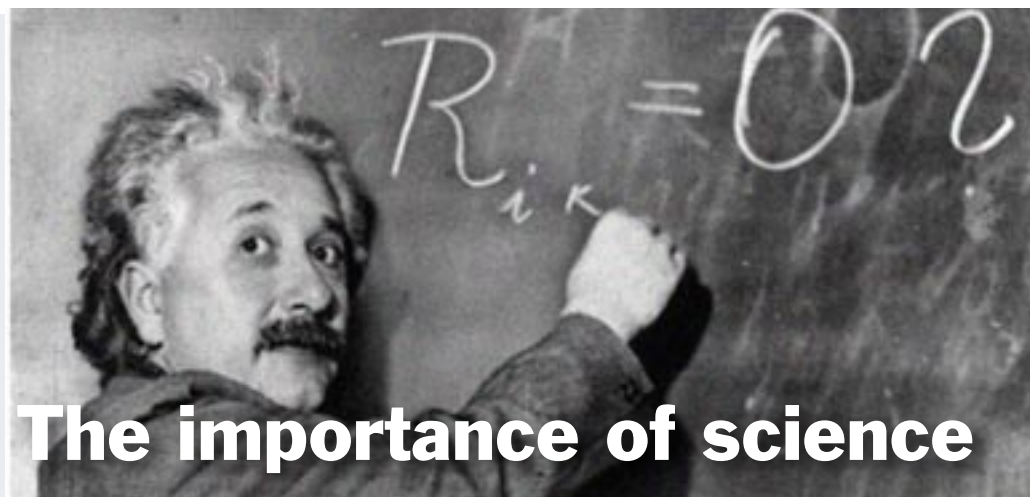
The future of Latin America

Latin America entered the twenty-first century dominated by neoliberal governments. It was the region of the world with the most neoliberal and the most radical governments writes Emir Sader from *Rebelión*

NEOLIBERALISM Arrived in Latin America through the “Chicago Boys” during the Pinochet dictatorship. As a result, it was the region where the greatest manifestations of popular resistance to the effects of neoliberal policies emerged, from the caracazo in Venezuela in 1989 to the demonstrations in Argentina at the beginning of this century and the expression of anti-neoliberal governments.

The continent experienced an impressive sequence of elections of anti-neoliberal governments: Hugo Chávez in 1998, Lula in 2002, Néstor Kirchner in 2003, Tabaré Vázquez in 2004, Evo Morales in 2005, Rafael Correa in 2006. These governments favoured social policies instead of fiscal adjustments; regional integration processes instead of free-trade agreements with the United States; and the rescue of the active role of the state instead of the centrality of the market.

The first decade of the twenty-first century was marked by these governments, which managed to significantly reduce inequalities, unemployment and poverty in these six countries. And the main leftist political leaders in the world were projected.



The importance of science

NIALL CULLINANE
SCIENCE

Comrade Carroll (*Socialist Voice*), April provides an excellent analysis of the role of theory. However, a few points of addition.

The concern with Marxism is perhaps not so much theory but science. A central claim of Marxism is that it is scientific. Characterising science is its method: the systematic study of the

structure and behaviour of the external world through observation and experiment. Science builds knowledge through testable explanations and predictions. It contrasts with prejudice, superstition, personal opinion, and subjective political beliefs. Indeed the scientific method offers a superior and disciplined form of explanation and prediction to all these alternative sources of belief.

Classical Marxists strove to adopt a

scientific method in their work. They attempted systematic study, observation and advancement, in many cases, of testable explanations and broad predictions about the world. In that regard, their theories were broadly scientific.

Christians have theories about what happens in the “afterlife,” but those theories are not amenable to the scientific method—and, as such, their theories are not scientific.

In advancing testable explanations and predictions about the world, the scientific method is committing itself to revisionism. Although embraced in scientific circles, revisionism is a dirty word in leftist political circles. Revisionism in science is commonplace: derived from the limitations of an existing theory or hypothesis in predicting or adequately explaining the evidence.

Revisionism is how science fundamentally proceeds and, through its operation, produces seismic changes in the relevant field of thought. Revisionism throws out not just mistaken ideas at the margins but also long-standing



In the second decade there were crises in some of these governments, the ephemeral return of conservative governments—some by means of coups d'état—until the anti-neoliberal governments spread to Mexico, Honduras, Chile, and Peru. This continent reaches the third decade of the century with the possibility of Colombia and Brazil joining this group of governments, constituting the largest bloc of progressive governments the continent has ever known. This, at the same time, represents the greatest isolation of the United States in Latin America.

From the third decade of the century, what future can we imagine for Latin America?

The first question is, To what extent will progressive governments be able to overcome neoliberalism and install a new economic model? To what extent will they be able to move from being anti-neoliberal to post-neoliberal?

This is a major obstacle, because neoliberalism continues to predominate in capitalism on a global scale. Moreover, even in Latin American countries the weight of financial capital continues to be great, blocking the possibility of resuming a new cycle

of economic growth, a condition for the generation of employment and income distribution policies.

It will be a great challenge for progressive governments to implement policies that can turn the page of neoliberalism. This is only possible through three factors. The first is the integration of Latin American governments and the construction of co-ordinated economic policies. The second is the need to overcome Latin America's isolation, which can be done through the BRICS, a space that brings together governments in favour of a multipolar world with emerging countries. The third is the need to build another type of state that can radically democratise our societies.

The future of Latin America depends on these factors, but it depends especially on the future of some crucial countries of the continent, such as Brazil, Argentina, Mexico, Colombia, and Bolivia, whose weight in the continent is decisive. It requires that in Argentina the right wing, taking advantage of the government crisis, cannot win the next presidential election, that Peronism manages, once again, to have a consensual candidacy, and to give continuity to the reconstruction of

The first question is, To what extent will progressive governments be able to overcome neoliberalism and install a new economic model? To what extent will they be able to move from being anti-neoliberal to post-neoliberal?

the country; that López Obrador, despite the sabotage of major companies, manages to make the Mexican economy grow again, in order to support the government's social policies; that Petro triumphs in Colombia and succeeds in pacifying the country after decades of violence and instability; that Lula be re-elected president in Brazil and succeed in recovering the country from the worst crisis in its history and once again become the great leader that Brazil needs, with an outstanding international performance, projecting Latin America once again at the epicentre of democracy.

The future of Latin America is open. It already has several progressive governments and strong popular anti-neoliberal support. But the survival of neoliberalism in the continent and in the world, and the existence of a right wing and a far right that is here to stay, present challenges that Latin American governments and political leaders have to face.

The fate of Latin America in the coming years will define the destiny of the continent in the entire first half of the century and, in some way, will weigh on the fate of neoliberalism and post-neoliberalism in the world.

fundamentals—Einsteinian relativity theory displacing the fundamentals of Newtonian theories of time and space in physics.

What is the point? If latter-day "scientific socialists" wish to have claims to scientific status taken seriously, they need to do several things. They need to develop their understanding and appreciation of contemporary scientific methods and techniques as they apply to the social world. They need to learn what constitutes valid and reliable claims to knowledge, and how to gather such knowledge objectively. They need to respect the evidence—even when it returns answers one does not expect (or politically like)—and reject theories that do not rigorously explain or predict social behaviour.

This approach to the education of the scientific socialist stands in contrast to those who would instead rely on "class instincts" or "experience formed in struggle." Political experience or class instincts are not a claim to knowledge in the scientific sense. The experience or

instincts of one individual are not a claim to general scientific knowledge. Remember that the intuition of one uneducated in science when they look to the sky is to imagine that the sun moves round the earth. Scientific knowledge based on law-like generalisation acquired through the laborious abstracted study of astronomy and physics proves sense perceptions or sense-experience wrong, offering a counter-intuitive but true account.

A good education for the contemporary scientific socialist should be to base it on the scientific method of social science as found in political science and economics, apply the process to questions of social importance, and generate hypotheses for action and social change. We can then assess such predictions through experience and evidence. Such analysis provides the basis for prescriptions for action; political actions are revised accordingly when at fault or not delivering tangible impact for the party, rather than clung to for personal or ideological reasons.

A good education for the contemporary scientific socialist should be to base it on the scientific method of social science as found in political science and economics, apply the process to questions of social importance

Such training does not mean repeated navel-gazing into the works of nineteenth and early twentieth-century archaic political tracts—arguably an unfortunate trend of continued political education, closer in spirit to the seminary than the "scientific lab." Nor does the scientific method of Marxism mean selecting opinion pieces and articles from random web sites simply because they provide messages that appeal and comfort.

Scientific training would not be for everyone, but not everyone can be a "scientific socialist." To quote the main man himself: "There is no royal road to science, and only those who do not dread the fatiguing climb of its steep paths have a chance of gaining its luminous summits."

However, without science to guide action, communists fumble in the dark as ethically motivated socialists with intuitions drawn from canonical texts of centuries past or idiosyncratic experience that has no claim to knowledge at the general level demanded by true scientific socialism.



SOLIDARITY

Part 2



Notes on the ideology of the Cuban Revolution

EDUARDO TORRES CUEVAS
FROM GRANMA
IDEOLOGY

■ Part 1 was published in the April issue

CUBA'S NATURE as a "privileged satellite" within the US imperialist expansion created an aspiration in its bourgeoisie and sectors of its middle class, linked to the symbolic dominance and prevalence, in many, of the so-called American way of life.

This was a visible influence in our society, which originated in the nineteenth century and was consolidated in the neocolonial period. The Cuban Revolution openly challenged this with the traditions,

customs, habits, beliefs of the most genuine of the "ajiaco" (stew) that constitute the extraordinary combination we call Cuban. It has been forged over centuries. This Cuban way of being, feeling and doing, which necessarily identifies our nation, was developed by the people in confrontation with projections that surrendered to a new style of colonialism.

The subject must be addressed in depth, without over-simplifications or vulgarisation, which have emerged based on improvisation, speculation, and a lack of knowledge of critical aspects of Cuban history and culture.

There are research centres,

researchers, scholars who can contribute to a better understanding of Cuban ideology, which found in Marxism a method and a practice that allowed us to channel much of previous revolutionary thought, particularly that of José Martí. These are our strengths.

The person who made the Cuban Revolution, Fidel Castro, broke with dogmas that ruled out the possibility of a revolution in Cuba succeeding, including the theory of geographical fatalism, the idea that "a revolution can be made with the army, without the army, but not against the army" and that "for a revolution to triumph in Cuba, it must first have triumphed in the United States." He understood that change in Cuba, the road to socialism, must respond to the most pressing needs of Cuban society, and be profoundly humanist, addressing education, public health, agrarian reform, urban reform . . .

And moreover, it must have a vision of the future, a great humanist revolution advancing in the construction of a new socialism confronting the problems of Latin America and the Third World, with US imperialism as the fundamental obstacle.

Cuban thought was also characterised by establishing, from its very beginnings (Félix Varela, José de la Luz y Caballero, Rafael María de Mendive), the link between science, consciousness and virtue.

For the country to develop needed were scientific thought and practice that reflected a patriotic sentiment which in turn contributed to shaping national consciousness (science to create consciousness; consciousness to do science). This was linked to

Obituary **Liam O'Brien** (1945–2022)

EUGENE MC CARTAN
General secretary, CPI

On behalf of the Communist Party of Ireland I would like to express our deepest sorrow at the loss of a great comrade and friend, Liam O'Brien, who died on 6 April.

To his children, Aaron, Jason, Tanya, Cain, and Corinna, we can only guess the deep sense of loss that you are experiencing, and to all the extended family we extend our sympathy and solidarity.

Liam was a veteran and a lifelong

member of the Communist Party of Ireland. He joined the CPI in the late 1960s or early 70s and remained an active member and staunch communist until his death. He suffered poor health in the last few years, which affected his active participation in the CPI, but he always kept himself up to date with what his party was doing—and demanding that we do more.

He was a grass-roots working-class activist and thinker, a self-educated communist. He was active in tenants' and community groups and was involved in many community struggles in Ballymun and Priorswood-Belcamp up

until his death.

Liam never shied away from a fight or a challenge. He well understood the system's mechanisms of power that control the working class. He understood well where real power lies in Irish society: with those who own and control economic power, those who control the political levers; that elections every few years only allow for a changing of the guard, not for radical social and economic transformation.

He was involved in many social struggles, from rent strikes and unemployed struggles to opposing continued British rule in Ireland. One of



For the country to develop needed were scientific thought and practice that reflected a patriotic sentiment which in turn contributed to shaping national consciousness (science to create consciousness; consciousness to do science).

ethical practices in all aspects of the country's life. It was the Cuban school that conveyed in all social spheres the aspiration to build a new, free, humanist society, with social equality.

Overcoming the orthodoxy-heterodoxy dichotomy is the key to developing a true Marxist dialectical understanding of Cuba's evolution and reality, one that allows us to understand not only the original texts that give life to a Marxist point of view but also to appreciate the results of the contribution of Marxist thought in the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first, their contradictions, and that which, through the praxis of the Cuban Revolution, led to the development of a revolutionary consciousness that was not only patriotic but included identification with the revolutionary project, its specific content defining social classes and class struggle, in a country in which slavery, colonisation, neocolonial restoration, the racial problem and its place in the expansion of US imperialism (different in its evolution from the European empires) has shaped and given specific characteristics to the class struggle in Cuba.

Investigation of the development of the communist ranks and revolutionary sectors leads to the conclusion that, in many cases, exposure to texts fundamental to the ideology of the Cuban Revolution is absent or deficient.

Moreover, the absence of certain fundamental aspects of our revolutionary theory can be noted in a significant portion of the population.

In this regard, the formation of philosophers and intellectuals, who need to deepen and update theory, based on Cuban revolutionary practice, must be differentiated from what should be general knowledge of the classic works of the Cuban Revolution's ideology.

I would recommend identifying a selection of readings of the most important works of the revolutionary theory and the dissemination of these works accompanied by seminars, courses, and debate workshops.

Writing manuals is not advisable, given their customary structure, which necessarily reflects the opinions of their authors and reduces the richness, both literary and content, of the classics of revolutionary thought. Additionally, students must have access to selections of readings to evaluate observations of the classics, which are not usually included in the manuals.

In the development of Cuban revolutionaries, particularly communist militants, mastery of the fundamental ideas of José Martí and Fidel Castro, the constructors of Cuban revolutionary thought, is essential. A connection must be established with Marxist training, to create a dialectically linked whole.

Likewise, the works of important Cuban revolutionary thinkers should be considered, such as Felix Varela, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Ignacio Agramonte, Antonio Maceo, Máximo Gómez, Diego Vicente Tejera, Julio Antonio Mella, Antonio Guiteras, Rubén Martínez Villena, Pablo de la Torriente Brau, Juan Marinello, Carlos Rafael Rodríguez, and Blas Roca, among others.

Also essential is the inclusion within these studies of figures who developed a knowledge-building body of thought, addressing who we are, whether in poetry or in the social sciences. Let us name here Fernando Ortiz, Nicolás Guillén, Alfredo Guevara, Roberto Fernández Retamar, and Fernando Martínez, who, along with a number of other essayists, have made an essential contribution to a better understanding of Cuban society.

A selection of works that allows for the comprehensive development of Cuban revolutionaries is needed. As a contribution to the realisation of such a project, I submit the following:

Basic library of the Cuban revolutionary
Karl Marx: *The Communist Manifesto; Eleven Theses on Feuerbach; Prologue to the Critique of Political Economy; and Critique of the Gotha Programme.*
Friedrich Engels: *The Role of Labour in the Transformation of Ape to Man.*
José Martí: *Selected works from Our America, on the United States, its national and international projections, the party, and the necessary war.*
VI Lenin: *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism; The State and Revolution.*
Antonio Gramsci: *Selected Letters from Prison.*
Julio Antonio Mella: *Glosas al Pensamiento Martiano y Selección de Otros Trabajos.*
Antonio Guiteras Holmes: *El Septembrismo and Programa de la Joven Cuba.*
Fidel Castro: *Selection of key texts on conceptual issues from the Moncada to his mature definition of the concept of revolution in his speech of 1 May 2000. (The Fidel Castro Centre is at present working on the selected works.)*
Ernesto Guevara: *Socialism and Man in Cuba; Letter to Fidel Castro, 25 March 1965.*

Selection of texts that provide a comprehensive overview of the complexities of today's global strategic panorama
This selection of readings can be complemented with important works that allow a better understanding of the periods in which these classic authors wrote.

Biography of Marx by Franz Mahring; *biography of Lenin* by Gerald Walter; *biography of Martí* by Jorge Mañach and Cintio Vitier; *biography of Guiteras* by José Tabares del Real and Paco I. Taibo; *biography of Che* by María del Carmen Ariet and Taibo; and *biography of Fidel Castro* by Katiuska Blanco.

• Additionally, Army General Raúl Castro and President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez have delivered speeches of special relevance to the ideological struggle and the strengthening of the Revolution's ideology at this time.

The most relevant speeches during party, government and public events, as well as Díaz-Canel's comments on Fidel, *Words to the intellectuals*, and his speeches during the last congress of the Union of Cuban Writers and Artists (UNEAC), should be necessary reading, not only as a complement to the revolutionary classics but also as the key to understanding current strategies and conceptions of the battle faced today by the Cuban Revolution, on all its diverse fronts.

It is evident that the amplitude and complexity of the selections identified as resources implies the need for adjustments in each case, taking into account the level and length of development activities in which they are used.

Liam never shied away from a fight or a challenge. He well understood the system's mechanisms of power that control the working class.

his last struggles was against water charges and opposing the privatisation of water.

He had a great belief in the capacity of the working class to transform and change their lot and to transform society; what was needed was for them to get organised, to become politically active, to be class-aware, that to realise their own interests they need to fundamentally break the capitalist system, to see and realise that they have the power, through their own organisation, to change society; that nothing has ever been given to the working class here in Ireland, or anywhere else. This requires us to be organised and to struggle to wrench what we need and require from those who deny our class justice.

Liam was not some dry political armchair theorist but was a deeply humane person. He had a unique and infectious smile and laugh. He did not suffer fools gladly.

He was extremely well-read, in both political theory and Irish and world history.

He had a great sense of place. He was the quintessential son of the Dublin working class. He was proud of his city, proud of his class and the role it has played in the struggle for our national freedom and independence.

Liam was born in East Wall, reared in Donnycarney, a community with a strong labour and republican tradition. He was a proud Dubliner, father, activist, and thinker. He understood and absorbed the

politics and the strategy of James Connolly, one of his great heroes.

This year, on the 15th of May, we gather in Arbour Hill to celebrate the life of James Connolly and the other leaders of the 1916 Rising; but this year there will be a big gap in our ranks, left by a small man whom we are here this morning to say farewell to.

Liam O'Brien was a militant communist and working-class leader, a staunch defender of socialism and in particular of revolutionary Cuba.

Liam led a great, fulfilled life of struggle and resistance. He struggled hard to leave a better life behind for his family, his community, for the Irish working class, and oppressed people all over the world.



James Connolly Conversations 2022

This year's James Connolly Conversations return as face-to-face meetings. At the same time we will provide an opportunity for others to join in the conversation on line.

The meetings are designed to encourage maximum flexibility and participation. Each one will have a brief introduction to aid discussion. The conversations will cover the following topics:

1 Class

Saturday 28 May

"The necessary result of our analysis is to discover that the very basis of Society today is a struggle between two classes, the Landlord and Capitalist who own all the means of production, and the propertyless class who are only allowed to use and operate these means of life when it suits the convenience or interest of members of the other class to allow them."—James Connolly

This conversation will explore

- the nature of class in Ireland today
- who or what is the working class
- the relationship between class struggle and other struggles.

2 The state

Saturday 4 June

"Governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class."—James Connolly

The ruling classes present their role as a neutral force in society, and the state itself as a benign force, more of an unbiased referee to resolve difference and conflicts within society. But is it?

- How and why did the state emerge?
- Is it as natural as the air we breathe?
- Is it separate from and above class?
- Is it neutral, and are the various institutions of the state neutral?

3 Imperialism

Saturday 11 June

"This transformation of competition into monopoly is one of the most important—if not the most important—phenomena of modern capitalist economy."—Lenin

In contemporary left politics in Ireland the nature of imperialism causes most confusion and division. Some

reduce it to big countries bullying and dominating smaller countries, or narrow it to its military features. But—

- How and why did imperialism emerge?
- What is its material basis?
- Is it more than just militarism?
- How do we understand its role and its power in Ireland?

4 The history and strategy of the CPI

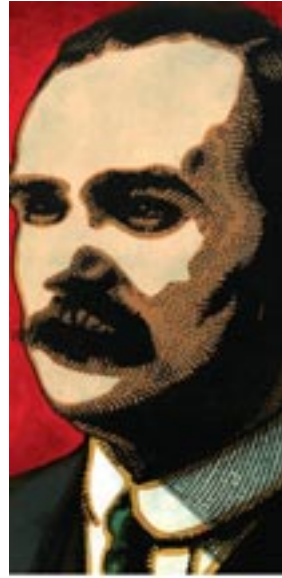
Saturday 18 June

The final conversation will cover a brief history and a discussion of the strategy of the Communist Party of Ireland.

If you wish to attend, or join the conversations on line, email cpofireland@gmail.com.

The face-to-face conversations will take place in Connolly Books, 43 East Essex Street (between Temple Bar and Capel Street), Dublin.

The sessions will take place on four consecutive Saturdays, from 28 May to 18 June, at 11 am



CONNOLLY BOOKS

Connolly Books is named after James Connolly, Ireland's socialist pioneer and martyr

- ★ Irish history
- ★ politics
- ★ Marxist classics
- ★ feminism
- ★ philosophy
- ★ environmental issues
- ★ progressive literature
- ★ trade union affairs
- ★ radical periodicals

43 East Essex Street, Dublin, between Temple Bar and Parliament Street.

Opening Hours: Tuesday to Saturday 10.00 to 17.30
<https://www.connollybooks.org>

Join the fight for socialism *Join the Communist Party*



name	
address	
post code	
email	phone
Send to CPI 43 East Essex Street Dublin D02 XH96	