

Socialist Voice



COLOMBIA GUSTAVO PETRO AND FRANCIA MARQUEZ WIN

José Antonio Gutiérrez reports Page 6



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"We will coup whoever we want. Deal with it."—**Elon Musk**, principal owner of Tesla Inc. (which relies heavily on Bolivian lithium), 24 July 2020, commenting on the violent coup that overthrew President Evo Morales.

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PROTECTING THE PRIVILEGED



TOMMY MCKEARNEY PARTITION

THIS YEAR marks a century since the foundation of the 26-County state. Difficult as it may be to believe, the powers that be are now preparing to celebrate what they will describe as a successful political entity.

There will be no mention of the hundreds of thousands forced into economic migration over the period of its existence. No mention of the homeless or the housing crisis, recently highlighted by Michael D. Higgins. No mention of the obscenity of a two-tier health service. And certainly no regret will be expressed for the selfish abandonment of the northern Six Counties.

What will be highlighted will be the so-called success of the “Celtic Tiger” and the benefits of modernisation that are supposed to have been derived from membership of the European Union. There will be little reference to the fact that, in spite of the so-called benefits, Ireland is one of the most expensive countries in the EU.¹ Moreover, with inflation running at the highest level in twenty-two years and the cost of living spiralling, nothing will be done to alleviate hardship for the least well off until October, if even then.

Still, it’s not all doom and gloom. Not every section of society is suffering. If you are one of the top civil servants you will be eligible for a pay increase of between 10 and 15 per cent, which will benefit four thousand people earning

over €150,000 per year.

That, in a nutshell, is what this 26-County Free State is all about, and has been since its founding fathers ordered the shelling of the Four Courts in 1922. It was designed by people determined to preserve class privilege and the system that sustains it. While the controlling mechanisms may have changed, the objective remains the same for those now in office.

This is the context within which we should assess current political manoeuvring in Leinster House. With less than six months left before Micheál Martin hands the reins to whoever Fine Gael nominate, the Blueshirts are already setting out their stall. Judging by what they are recently saying, it would appear that they are determined to

WHY DOES IRELAND REFUSE TO CAMP



Statement by the Peace and Neutrality Alliance

30 June 2022

THE WORLD still applauds the great effort that our government made in advocating negotiations for peace that led to a settlement, and the 1998 Good Friday Agreement on this island.

So why is our present government rejecting neutrality and refusing to lead the campaign for negotiations for peace to end the horrific Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Instead, we are parroting pro-

western/NATO war propaganda, that Ukraine can win this war, with more weapons, and that at the same time we can help destroy the Russian economy.

PANA since the start of the war in Ukraine has called for an immediate ceasefire and for negotiations. Unfortunately, the response from Taoiseach Micheál Martin has always been increased EU militarisation, membership of NATO, whilst dismissing the right of Irish people to a referendum on this issue. NATO is now a global military alliance that works actively to spread nuclear missiles to its member nations in support of US militarism.

Roger Cole, Chairperson of PANA, stated, “We reject the idea that the expansion of the NATO military alliance

achieve a remarkable feat, that is, to become even more reactionary than their predecessors.

In keeping with its history, the party is planning to protect the most privileged class in society. They intend to do so through a combination of economic measures and pro-partition policies. Shamefully, they will be supported in this endeavour by Fianna Fáil and the Green Tory Party.

Although less dramatic in headline-grabbing than a recent spat in the Dáil between Leo Varadkar and Pearse Doherty, another statement by the Tánaiste in the same chamber was much more telling. When referring to a shortage of taxis in Dublin, he lamented the absence of full-blown Uber or Lyft services. Ignore the *faux pas* highlighted by Miriam Lord in the *Irish Times*: the real message revealed the true intent of a Blueshirt minister—and, incidentally, one supported by his coalition partners.

Rather than enabling the provision of a proper public transport service, the Tánaiste was advocating the use of a private-sector operation that exploits labour to the maximum. Generally referred to as the “gig economy,” the type of labour market being sought by the Republic’s neoliberal coalition government is one in which pay and conditions are screwed down to a minimum. Referred to recently by Sarah O’Connor in the *Financial Times* as the “servant economy,” she likened much work in the gig economy to domestic service in the Victorian era.²

There is no question but that this is precisely the type of neoliberal system sought by the Fine Gael leader and his supporters. Moreover, they will ruthlessly employ dire necessity among workers in order to enforce their will.

With inflation stalling market economies everywhere and increasing the cost of living, the capitalist ruling class is eager to minimise the damage to themselves. Rather than tax the wealthy and expand and improve public services, a Fine Gael-led coalition will seek to make the working class pay for this crisis by lowering wages and reducing the terms and conditions of employment. Never ones to miss a good crisis, they will use the present situation to make permanent their objective.

Crude neoliberal economic policies, however, come as part of a package designed by the party that sees itself as having inherited the mantle of Cumann na nGaedheal. Hand in hand with a determination to preserve economic privilege for the few is an equal and complementary determination to maintain the truncated state established a century ago.

If there existed a question about the party’s determination to maintain partition, all doubts were dispelled by a recent speech to an official Fine Gael gathering addressed by Charlie Flanagan TD. While commemorating John A. Costello, a man who once proclaimed that the Blueshirts would be victorious, Flanagan criticised Sinn Féin for its “constant beating of the united Ireland drum.” He added that “preparing for a united Ireland without unionism is without realism.”

Note how he used the word “preparing.” So nothing can be done until the DUP advocate a “Brits out” strategy?

Nor did he stop at that. Undaunted by his failure to rehabilitate the Black and Tans, Flanagan commended the North’s zombie economy.

In reality, Flanagan and his party

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colleagues are not greatly concerned about unionist sensitivities. What they are concerned with is maintaining their century-old creation, with all the benefits this has accrued for its privileged ruling class. From their point of view, an end to partition would at best put all back in the melting-pot, at worst would present them with a united working-class opposition.

Nevertheless, and in spite of their efforts, there are increasing demands from throughout the country for something qualitatively different from that envisaged by Varadkar and his coalition partners. The impact of the 2010 financial crisis is still felt by working-class people, and this is now being exacerbated by increases in the cost of living. As a consequence, confidence in the old 2½-party system has been greatly undermined. The de facto merger between Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil has opened up the real possibility of a significant change in the party-political make-up of the next Government.

The challenge for the left is to draw a lesson from the past and ensure that change is more than cosmetic. We can’t afford or tolerate a new De Valera arriving to replace the old discredited regime, and then repeat, with whatever may be a modern spin, that Labour must still wait.

- 1 Emma Taggart and Padraig Hoare, “Ireland and Denmark most expensive countries in the EU,” *Irish Examiner*, 21 June 2022 (<https://bit.ly/390d2ys>).
- 2 Sarah O’Connor, “Farewell to the servant economy,” *Financial Times*, 14 June 2022.

FAIGN FOR PEACE IN UKRAINE?

represents a legitimate response to the current war in Ukraine, when that alliance is dominated by imperial powers such as the US, UK, France, and Germany with their own bloody history of murderous imperial wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and who continue to support brutal and oppressive regimes such as Israel and Saudi Arabia.”

The fact that ever-increasing energy and food costs, rapidly growing inflation and the cost-of-living crisis is the number one concern to Irish people and to the vast majority of people in the EU and elsewhere. This growing anger and increasing awareness of the geopolitical interests in prolonging this war may yet influence this government to accept the

need for peace negotiations in Ukraine.

The Taoiseach has stated that Ireland is not a politically neutral country and that it needs to reflect on its military non-alignment. He then went on to state that Ireland would not need to hold a referendum to join NATO. This implies that he favours Ireland’s inclusion in NATO, which would terminate its neutrality and cause a rise in defence spending. Ireland’s current €1.1 billion in defence spending makes up 0.3 per cent of its national GDP. It is required of all NATO countries that they spend at least 2 per cent of their GDP on defence. This would mean defence spending would increase by at least €6.2 billion from current spending.

Recent research by the “European

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Council on Foreign Relations” now show that while Europeans feel great solidarity with Ukraine and support sanctions against Russia they are split about the long-term goals. They divide between a “Peace” camp (35 per cent of people) that wants the war to end as soon as possible, and a “Justice” camp that believes the more pressing goal is to punish Russia (22 per cent of people).

So how representative is our Taoiseach Micheál Martin and other EU leaders who attended their consultative dinner this week in Madrid hosted by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez of Spain, for all 27 EU member states and all 30 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), demanding more justice, or war against Russia?



INFLATION & STARVATION



SAJEEV KUMAR
ECONOMICS

CAPITALISM IS a system that has an innate tendency to get into a cul-de-sac of crisis, and the only way it knows for coming out of crisis is by further exploitation of the working class.

The cost-of-living crisis—caused by inflation, which eats up the earnings of the working class by price increases—and starvation have emerged as two important issues following the pandemic and the Ukrainian war.

The working class all over the world are fighting the cost-of-living crisis, because their wages are not catching up with price increases. The people are trying hard to limit their needs to a bare minimum to make ends meet, and this has an adverse effect on the standard of living and the quality of life.

In Britain there are stories of elderly people who have a travel pass for public buses travelling around the whole day just to keep themselves warm, because they cannot afford heating oil for their homes and queuing up in food banks to survive.

Capitalism's greed to exploit resources—natural and human—pushes it to war. War in a globalised world causes trade disruptions and a supply-chain breakage, which causes price increases and finally ends up in misery for the people not only in countries involved in war but in other countries as well.

The rising fuel prices have a domino effect, increasing the price of all other commodities. Even the EU's production powerhouse, such as Germany, which depends heavily on Russian energy, is finding the cost of production going up, which contributes to price increases.

The advocates of neoliberal policies say that inflation is caused by the absence of unemployment, which creates an increase in bargaining capacity for labour, which drives up the cost of production, resulting in inflation.

If the diagnosis is wrong, how can the treatment be right?

The solution they put forward for tackling inflation is to increase unemployment, which will make people compete for jobs, accepting lower wages, creating a race to the bottom in wages, which reduces the cost of

OPINION WHAT IS THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT FIGHTING FOR?



NICOLA LAWLOR
LABOUR

AN INTERESTING but not entirely new debate has begun in *Socialist Voice* in recent issues on the question of “social partnership” and national wage agreements.

On the one hand, Jimmy Doran has condemned “social partnership” outright as class betrayal, with strong statements that it is anti-democratic, embodies insider dealing, reduces workers' demands, produced wage moderation, deliberately demobilises workers, and has led to a decline in strikes, a decline in union density, and the Industrial Relations Act (1990), which is said to have stripped all power from workers and unions. As he says, “social partnership has devastated the trade union movement.”

In response, and contrast, to this, Niall Cullinane wrote in June another view on national wage agreements and

the related “social partnership,” arguing that all the ills of the movement cannot and should not be laid at the feet of partnership and instead suggesting that unions change their tactics and demands to combine national bargaining on wages with local “job control” issues, and that rather than trade tax cuts instead to seek better job protections and collective rights.

I think if one strips aside Jimmy's polemics the core point being made is that partnership removes the attention of unions away from the work-place and places its focus, more often than not, on secretive pay negotiations so distant from workers as to have a negative impact on organising, participation and union activity at the work-place level.

And the central response from Niall is that this doesn't necessarily have to be the way and is more a result of weak (in this case) union power and tactics than national bargaining itself.

production, thereby bringing down inflation. But the actual reason for this solution is to increase profitability.

As they claim, inflation is not caused by high wages, or full employment, or increased demand (too much money versus too few commodities): the actual reason is lack of supply, because of sluggishness in investing, a result of a decreasing rate of profit as well as the ban on fuel and food grain from Russia.

Inflation is a class war waged against the 99 per cent by the elite 1 per cent. The money extracted from the working class through inflation is transferred to the rich as subsidies and tax cuts to promote investment. But the investment won't happen, because the solution proposed for overcoming inflation by increasing interest rates will only cause a lack of investment and weaken production, thereby affecting economic growth.

The solution can only be to raise wages to catch up with price increases and to increase demand in the economy, which will create an atmosphere for investing in production to match the demand.

If there is enough money to spend on war and weapons and to provide tax cuts to transnational corporations, there cannot be a lack of money for raising the wages of workers suffering from the cost-of-living crisis. In fact what is lacking is the political will, thanks to the class orientation of

Inflation is a class war waged against the 99 per cent by the elite 1 per cent. The money extracted from the working class through inflation is transferred to the rich as subsidies and tax cuts to promote investment.

This leads us to the crucial questions of what are we fighting for and what do we see as the main purpose of the trade union movement. Are we, the trade union movement, about market interests or political class? If one sees its function in the narrow sense of just improving pay and conditions, a market actor, that will lead one to certain strategic and tactical decisions. However, if one sees it as an instrument of power for the working class for increasing class-consciousness and militancy in the struggle to overthrow capitalism, then one will take a different approach to these issues.

This is not a new debate and has been at the core of internal struggle in the movement for more than a century, with different positions more or less dominant at different junctures. And I am also not saying that Jimmy or Niall sit strictly in one or other camp only: both articles contain elements of both market and class positions, because the reality is that the trade union movement is both at the same time, without ever being settled.

The most important point to take away from Niall's article is that "the problem with social partnership in the

As difficult as this is, the trade union movement, right now at this historical juncture in this balance of class power, must focus its energy and resources on rebuilding unions structurally at the work-place level and organising new sectors and workers into the movement.

people in power.

Capitalism was in a systemic crisis even before covid-19, but its fragility was exposed during the pandemic. The war in Ukraine, which resulted in sanctions and embargoes on Russia, stopped the exporting of food grain, fuel and fertiliser from the country, thereby causing food insecurity (in the poorest countries in central Asia, Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, and many African countries), fuel becoming dearer, and a decline in food production. Even modest estimates say that 2.3 billion people are in acute starvation as a result of the combined effect of covid and the Ukrainian war.

The reason for starvation and food insecurity is unemployment, the fall in real wages, the ban on Russian food grain and fertiliser, and monopoly in agri-business.

A system that produces enough food to provide for 7 billion people in the world but still lets 2.3 billion starve has no reason to exist.

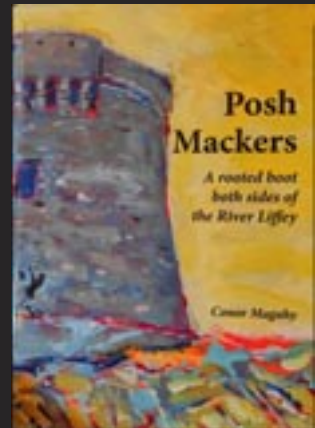
There is an alternative. "When nothing goes right, go left." The ruling class have declared class war through "austerity" and inflation; it is the historic duty of the working class to acknowledge the class war and engage in a fight for socialism.

If we don't fight for an alternative way of organising production, in other words for socialism, the next generation will have to live with barbarism.

Irish context is that union engagement derives from a position of structural weakness . . ." This mistake must be avoided by the movement at all costs, otherwise we will see history repeat itself and the negatives outlined by Jimmy exacerbated.

As difficult as this is, the trade union movement, right now at this historical juncture in this balance of class power, must focus its energy and resources on rebuilding unions structurally at the work-place level and organising new sectors and workers into the movement. That is the immediate task that confronts us. Removing pay bargaining from this site of struggle and mobilisation will hinder, not assist, strengthening and building unions back up.

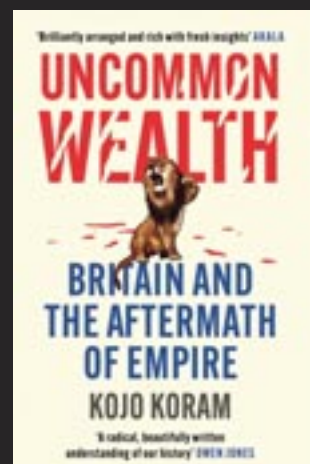
Therefore, national wage agreements or partnership should be avoided at all costs. Individual unions should concentrate on building and strengthening themselves and militantly pursuing big pay claims. The national movement should concentrate on winning legislation that makes it easier for affiliate unions to organise and win significantly in work-places and sectors. This should be our focus now.



Connolly Books

On 15 July, at 7p.m., Conor Magahy will launch his first book, *Posh Mackers*, a moving and at times humorous account of his early childhood in Dublin, set between the years 1978 and 1988. It tells the story of what happens when poverty, snobbery and obsessive-compulsive disorder collide.

Conor describes himself as a "proddy shinner with a memoir that would make Angela cry." He routinely transports visitors to Dublin round the city centre, both literally and figuratively, with whimsy and tall (true) tales.



On 28 July, Edward Molloy will be in conversation with the author Kojo Korum on his latest work, *Uncommon Wealth: Britain and the Aftermath of Empire*. In it he traces the shocking tale of how Britain treated its former non-white colonies after the end of empire, a blistering revelation of Britain's scandalous and disastrous treatment of newly independent countries.

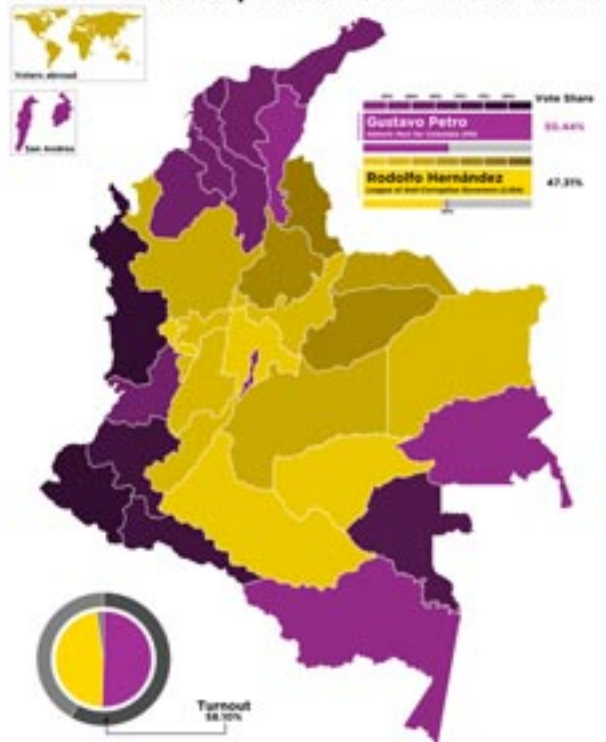
Kojo is a writer and academic, teaching at the School of Law at Birkbeck College, University of London. In addition to his academic writing he has written for the *Guardian*, *New Statesman*, *Dissent*, *Nation*, and *Washington Post*, and he is the editor of *The War on Drugs* and the *Global Colour Line*.

Both events will be followed by a Q&A and drinks reception. Admission is free, and all are welcome! Further details can be found on the Connolly Books Facebook page.



COLOMBIA LEFT WIN

2022 Colombian presidential election 2nd Round



JOSÉ ANTONIO GUTIÉRREZ
COLOMBIA

THE ELECTORAL VICTORY of Gustavo Petro in Colombia is, without a doubt, one of the most significant political developments in Latin America in the last decade.

Colombia has traditionally been a stronghold of conservatism. The left and social movements have been routinely devastated for seven decades of unabashed right-wing terror.

Colombia holds a number of shameful records. It is the most dangerous country in the world in which to be a trade unionist, with more than half the trade unionists killed annually in the world murdered there. It is the country with the biggest internally displaced population: a staggering 8 million. It has one of the worst land distributions in the world, with a Gini coefficient of 0.897 in land distribution and where 0.1 per cent own 59 per cent of the arable land. It is, with Brazil,

the most dangerous country in which to be an environmental activist.

About 1,500 community activists and nearly 400 demobilised guerrillas were assassinated since the peace agreement between the government and FARC-EP guerrillas was signed in 2016.

These records are the expression of systematic class violence from the tiny oligarchy, with their regional lackeys, against any type of alternative. Four left-wing candidates were murdered before the 1990 elections alone—an election that, had it not been for all these murders, the left wing would in all likelihood have won.

In the recent election Petro won despite a number of failed attacks against him, while some Petro campaigners were murdered on the election day, including two youths in the Pacific coastal town of Guapi.

Not surprisingly, Colombia has also been the most closely aligned country to US imperialism in the region. The various Colombian governments for the past decades have slavishly followed all Washington's dictates. Colombia was the only country to participate in the

THERE IS A BETTER WAY

PAUL DORAN
LAND OF THE FREE

RECENTLY I had the good fortune to travel to the United States for a week. It was, to say the least, an eye-opener.

Among the grandeur of the superwealth that I witnessed in New York I saw sights that for me were

emotionally draining and shocking.

I went out of my way to talk to New Yorkers. One black man, a vendor selling fridge magnets and other gadgets, was a US army veteran who served in Vietnam. He looked twenty years younger than his actual age of seventy-two. Born and bred in New York, he told me how they are trying to push his people out of the area with

exorbitant costs for rent and how they are trying to charge people for crossing from Queens into Manhattan as a method of keeping the poor from that area.

"This is my state, and I was born and bred here," he said with passion. We shook hands, and I wished him well, saying how delighted I was to meet him.

Everywhere you go in New York there are all types of security people, armed to the teeth, which gives an uneasy fear to your mental being. You wonder what type of night they had

ON TRANSPHOBIA

MIRANDA LYNCH
IDEOLOGY

RIGHT-WING and liberal media have been attacking trans people in increasingly vicious ways. How can we analyse this from a left-wing viewpoint?

In 1919 Lenin said the following in a speech on anti-Semitism: "The hate of the workers and peasants, the landowners and capitalists tried to divert against the Jews. In other countries, too, we often see the

capitalists fomenting hatred against the Jews, in order to blind the workers, to divert their attention from the real enemy of the working people: capital."

In *Labour in Irish History*, Connolly wrote the following: "Hence the bourgeois press and politicians incessantly strive to inflame the working-class mind to fever heat upon questions outside the range of their own class interests. War, religion, race, language, political reform, patriotism—apart from whatever intrinsic merits they may possess—all serve in the

hands of the possessing class as counter-irritants, whose function it is to avert the catastrophe of social revolution by engendering heat in such parts of the body politic as are the farthest removed from the seat of economic enquiry, and consequently of class consciousness on the part of the proletariat."

While anti-Semitism, racism, sexism, transphobia, sectarianism, hatred against refugees etc. are unique struggles that should certainly not be compared directly, the tactics of the ruling class are far from unique each time. Again and again we see the ruling classes exploit bigotry and prejudice, to divide the working class

Petro won't have it easy. He assumes power in a country that suffers from endemic dependence on the United States, a country that is broke, with massive inequalities and a rekindled armed conflict.

Korean war in the 1950s; it is the only NATO "ally" in the region; it has served as a platform for destabilising and launching putschist adventures into neighbouring Venezuela; and it has massacred thousands of its own citizens to comply with the US-decreed so-called war on drugs.

Colombia has been the scene of one of the biggest US military interventions outside the Middle East: "Plan Colombia," a counter-insurgent operation designed to attack left-wing guerrillas with the excuse of counter-narcotics operations.

With ten US military bases, Colombia is the third-largest recipient of US military aid (after Israel and Egypt, with Ukraine possibly competing right now).

Colombia has one of the biggest armies in the hemisphere. Its combined forces—including a militarised police—amount to nearly half a million people. This is not counting the paramilitary tentacles that are often in collusion, if not in open connivance, with the official army. It is no coincidence that one of the first political responses to Petro's triumph was the resignation of the Colombian ambassador to the United States.

The importance of the triumph of Petro, therefore, cannot be overstated.

This is the expression of a long-brewing malaise against the regime, growing from the very entrails of society. The support for Petro came from those long forgotten, ignored, marginalised: smallholders, indigenous, the urban poor, the black population, impoverished middle classes—all those who had been at the receiving end of the regime's policies and violence.

This electoral triumph is the result of the cycle of protests that shook Colombia and its oligarchic peace between 2019 and 2021, which were themselves the expression of a long cycle of protest, which began with the indigenous and sugar workers' mass protests in 2008.

Petro won't have it easy. He assumes power in a country that suffers from endemic dependence on the United States, a country that is broke, with massive inequalities and a rekindled armed conflict. He will face the fierce opposition of the oligarchic politicians who are entrenched in the parliament but also in all the branches and apparatus of the state. His government will face the structural and violent racism of an elite that despises Francia Márquez, an Afro-Colombian activist who has become vice-president.

This opposition, judging from experience, will not be merely legal but will be willing to mobilise its paramilitary

armies to oppose progressive measures.

Petro, however, has the opportunity to launch a process of change that should go beyond his four-year term, one that depends largely on the power of social mobilisation. None of the challenges he faces will be solved by decree: redistributive measures regarding the land question and the massive inequalities in the country, developing a sovereign national policy that respects the independence of Colombia's neighbours, transforming a largely extractive economy into a productive and sustainable one, giving priority to resources to guarantee infrastructure and social services, as opposed to war, a renewed political solution to the continuing armed conflict—they will require both popular mobilisation and political resolve.

While some of Petro's political supporters are already whispering about political moderation, he would better listen to the protest rumbles on the streets.

What has happened in Colombia is nothing short of historic. The "Israel of Latin America"—as the oligarch and former president Juan Manuel Santos fondly described Colombia—received a massive blow, and has begun to change already.

Everywhere you go in New York there are all types of security people, armed to the teeth, which gives an uneasy fear to your mental being

before their work started. Are they annoyed about debt? Have they anger issues as they stroll the streets? Inside museums or exhibitions there are security people everywhere.

The subway is a disgusting place to go to. There are no access facilities for people with disabilities. Each station stinks of urine and is dank and run down. Customer information is deplorable. It reminded me of the London underground in the early 80s. On the streets at night rubbish bags are left piling up, and the bags are left everywhere.

I witnessed one black person lying

on a pavement as hundreds walked by, just as a matter of course. People begging everywhere you go, some with limbs missing, others with that gaunt look on them. Food is very expensive, which is hard to understand, given the massive agriculture sector in the United States.

I have always wanted to see the 9/11 memorial and was overcome with the sadness as you read the different personalities who died. Such a waste! There is an explanation of how al-Qa'ida came to prominence, yet no mention of how its leadership was financed and supported by the

United States during the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s, or how the barbaric theocracy in Saudi Arabia was the home of the kidnappers of the aircraft that blew up the Twin Towers.

The Martin Luther King memorial was inspirational, yet again no mention that King was a socialist. His various important statement around the walls are a reminder that there is a better way for all of humanity. One can only hope that some day the majority in the United States will be free—free at last.

On the employment side, precarious work has become increasingly common, especially among young people.

and to distract workers so they don't examine their place in society and become class-conscious.

The goal is to divide the working class, by positioning trans people as outside the working class, and claiming that the interests of trans people are somehow opposed to working-class interests. We can see in the areas of housing, health and employment that this could not be further from the truth.

According to research by Stonewall, one in four trans people in Britain have experienced homelessness. Trans people are also likely to be living in a precarious or unsafe housing situation because of discrimination by family members or flatmates.

The waiting list for trans health care in Ireland at the National Gender Service in Loughlinstown is at present between 2½ and 3 years. This is a symptom of an underfunded HSE but also of a "gatekeeping" protocol which requires trans people to prove their transness and increases waiting lists further.

On the employment side, precarious work has become increasingly common, especially among young people. Flexible or temporary contracts and bogus self-employment constructions put trans and LGBT people at risk of employment discrimination, as their bosses can easily reduce their hours or fire them.

For housing, health and

employment we can thus see that trans people are hit by the double whammy of discrimination and economic issues. As socialists we should use our strength in this area and push for public housing, better public health, and an end to precarious employment contracts.

However, we must not limit ourselves to strict economism. Nor should we accuse trans people of dividing the movement when they stand against their own oppression. We should stand with the trans and LGBT community against cynical attacks on them from right-wing media and politicians. Most importantly, we must bring the working class together and unite against all forms of oppression.



THE CPI AND THE REPUBLIC

GRAHAM HARRINGTON
NATION

THE COMMUNIST PARTY of Ireland was not long formed when it had to grapple with the creation of the Irish Free State by British imperialism. The party was the first to recognise the class nature of the Treaty, and believed that the republicans could win, but only if they adopted a social programme that brought the working class into the leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle.

The CPI was at this time a very young and quite inexperienced party, and it had to grapple with the realities of neo-colonialism decades before the communist movement began to appreciate this particular form of imperialism. It's not surprising, then, that the party was not always consistent; but we have to take into account the actual concrete

conditions and context that Irish communists operated in at the time.

It was hoped that the remnants of the Irish Citizen Army could be won over to the CPI; but when this failed, the CPI formed its own military formation, which engaged in drilling and arms training. The labour movement at the time took a critical pro-Free State position, which earned the Labour Party much condemnation from the CPI.

Throughout the Civil War period the CPI looked after its members who were imprisoned in Free State prisons, with members conducting agitation work within the prisons.

Organising the unemployed was a crucial task for the party before the outbreak of war; but with the shelling of the Four Courts the Free State resorted to putting down dissent through all sorts of White Guard terror, with the Special Infantry Corps being formed in the

Free State army as a special unit for putting down strikes and land seizures.

Obviously, party work in the Civil War period was not open, and to a degree the party was in a state of semi-legal, clandestine activity, with its paper printed in London and news of the Civil War, particularly the executions of republicans, being censored by the state.

To the degree that the CPI had an armed section, this never became an independent force. Party members were instructed to carry on with their IRA duties. Seán McLoughlin was commandant of a flying column in Co. Limerick while he held the post of director of organisation of the CPI.

Peadar O'Donnell, a member of the Army Council, was the most senior figure in the IRA won over to the CPI—a great coup for the new party. His influence was crucial on

ANOTHER BLIND ALLEY

JIMMY CORCORAN
UNITY?

IF THE OLD ADAGE that “you can know a man by the company he keeps” is true, then it seems the New Connolly Youth Movement is in a very confused place. On 18 June the New CYM attended the gathering of the Belfast-based *Unity* group, which has “reconstituted” itself as the “Irish Communist Party.”

One of the main ideologues behind this move by the *Unity* group is a former member of Official Sinn Féin and the CPI,

Eoin Ó Murchú. In an article in *Unity* (25 June) announcing the event, Ó Murchú stated that his new “party” wants to unite all working people on the island. A fine sentiment, though it was at odds with the essence of a tweet on his Twitter account on 14 June where he stated: “A propos [*sic*] the trans debate, does this include people with white skins wanting to self-identify as Black people?” That is not the first time he has tweeted comments that could be described as transphobic.

The New CYM claim to be totally opposed to transphobia and have even challenged long-time feminist activists who have made comments that were milder than those made by Ó Murchú. The New



It was the failure of the republicans—and the social democrats—to understand the class basis of national freedom that meant that the Republic was crushed under the weight of class-conscious counter-revolution — from the same class that are now presiding over an abysmal housing situation, health services north and south that are similar in their incompetence, and the highest cost of living in the European Union.

It has always been the contention of Irish communists and Irish republicans that sectarianism is the mechanism by which British imperialism maintains its power in Ireland.

Liam Mellows, who wrote his famous *Notes from Mountjoy* in prison, which called for the republicans to take up the social programme drafted by Irish communists.

The party was clear that the Civil War had brought out the class contradictions of the national movement, that, contrary to sentimental feelings, there was little “betrayal”: the Free State was the Irish gombeen class working as they always have done. McLoughlin wrote an article about how the republicans could win the military struggle, which concluded with: “Republicans, here is your chance. With the workers behind you, the Free State relapses into the black hell from whence it came.”

The Communist International was the body that co-ordinated communist parties internationally at the time. In July 1922 it issued a statement “To the Workers of Ireland,” which endorsed the CPI position and made it the policy of the international communist movement:

It is only the young Communist Party of Ireland which has the courage and determination to point the right path and say:— “It is only after the yoke of the English imperialists has been shaken off that the struggle against the Irish exploiters will have any chance of success! It is only after the establishment of real independence that the class struggle will be able to develop untrammelled by any National Question.”

CYM’s constitution states that its members must oppose transphobia. A number of their present members and recent “graduates” have joined Ó Murchú in launching the Belfast party. Do they agree with his views? Or do they turn a blind eye when the comments are made by those with whom the New CYM have made common cause against the Communist Party of Ireland?

Interestingly, in Ó Murchú’s article in *Unity* the issue of trans rights is absent. Is that due to bias, or was it an oversight? Or was the issue ignored by their conference?

Ó Murchú’s party is lukewarm at best in relation to Irish reunification and seems confused as to the cause of the sectarian division within the working class,

The party presented its programme to Liam Lynch, chief of staff of the IRA; but, while sympathetic, he did not appreciate the necessity of the social programme.

The Free State didn’t have the same reluctance to understand their class interests: they ruthlessly upheld “law and order,” with striking postal workers, dockers and workers occupying their workplaces all being attacked by the military of the new state. Because of its agitation on social and economic questions, and its linking of those questions to the struggle to secure real national independence, the Free State minister for defence, Richard Mulcahy, received regular reports on the CPI.

It was the failure of the republicans—and the social democrats—to understand the class basis of national freedom that meant that the Republic was crushed under the weight of class-conscious counter-revolution—from the same class that are now presiding over an abysmal housing situation, health services north and south that are similar in their incompetence, and the highest cost of living in the European Union. Two states resulted from the counter-revolution of 1922–23: an Orange statelet in the north and a gombeen state in the south, both dependent on imperialism.

The CPI was not immune from mistakes in this period. In particular, the party had an over-optimistic view of the forces opposed to the Treaty, essentially seeing it as

particularly in the Six Counties. They call for unity between Catholic and Protestant workers, which, they state, “makes it essential that the need for security among the Protestant population of the North be addressed.”

What does this actually mean? Do they believe that the struggle for national reunification is sectarian and anti-Protestant? It has always been the contention of Irish communists and Irish republicans that sectarianism is the mechanism by which British imperialism maintains its power in Ireland. Ó Murchú’s party seems to believe that republicanism is the cause of sectarianism.

And exactly how do they intend to address this issue? Two other

inevitable that they would see the logic of the national struggle as being another form of class war. Many who opposed the Treaty did so out of sentimentalist reasons and would see no contradiction in later supporting Fianna Fáil.

The party also suffered from internal issues, and particularly with a bad relationship with the Communist Party of Great Britain, which had little appreciation for the particular differences that a party operating in the circumstances of neo-colonialism had to deal with. In some ways the CPI was years ahead of the communist movement on this question. As a sign of where it saw itself, the communist party that the CPI developed most relations with, after the Soviet and British parties, was the Communist Party of India.

The Labour Party was criticised for its negative role in supporting the Free State, with the CPI being ahead of the economistic view that puts all the blame mechanically on the IRA for not being more socialist. Paddy Gaffney from Carlow broke from the Labour Party and joined the CPI and became the party’s first TD. Anchorella Barbara Finch White, a British communist, became the political leader of the party for a time, being the first woman to head an Irish political party.

One weakness of the CPI was its neglecting of Belfast, which in the civil war period had almost no Communist Party presence. We were not alone in not seeing partition as the most permanent aspect of the Treaty

former communists associated with the Ó Murchú party, Ernest Walker and Joe Bowers, have come out in favour of a weighted system on any vote on reunification, in which a majority of Protestant/Unionist votes must agree, irrespective of the size of any vote in favour of reunification (*Socialist Voice*, August 2021)—an Orange veto, in plainspeak.

Does the New CYM believe that reunification is sectarian? Do they accept an Orange veto? If so, their flirtation with militant republicanism is over. The black ties and trousers and white shirts should be replaced with orange sashes, and in their world view William Walker will trump James Connolly.



“LET THE AXE STRIKE AT THE ROOT”



JENNY FARRELL

ENGELS SAID about Shelley: “Byron and Shelley are read almost exclusively by the lower classes; no ‘respectable’ man is likely to have the latter’s work on his table without coming into the most terrible disrepute.”

Born shortly after the French Revolution, Shelley was heir to a substantial estate and also to a seat in Parliament. He attended Eton College and was subsequently enrolled at Oxford. Britain was in political turmoil in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with food riots, Luddite rebellion, unrest in Ireland, the threat of Napoleon’s armies, and a growing bourgeois reform movement. The ruling class feared that the example set by the French might infect their own working class and reacted with repression.

The young Shelley took part in campaigns for the release of imprisoned democrats and worked to create an association of radical democratic people. At Eton he began to write and also to express atheist views. Atheism was deemed infinitely more dangerous in repressive Britain than the suspect Dissenters and Catholics. In 1811 Shelley was expelled from Oxford and disowned by his family for publishing *The Necessity of Atheism*. This is one of the earliest treatises in England on atheism and argues that since faith is not governed by reason there is no evidence for the existence of a god. The universe could always have existed, and if there had been an initial impetus it need not have been a god.

Shelley was a follower of the radical publicist William Godwin, author of *An Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* (1793), who argued, among other things, for gender equality and against the marital morality of the time. Godwin’s wife, Mary Wollstonecraft, who died in childbirth, had written *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, a foundational document of the early women’s movement, following Paine’s *Rights of Man*. Both Godwin and Shelley respected the views of the women around them, which included unmarried couples as well as independent women who worked and raised their “illegitimate” children. Shelley rejected marriage as deeply misogynistic and was one of the early advocates of women’s emancipation.

In February 1812 Shelley sailed to Dublin, where he campaigned vigorously for the emancipation of Catholics and the abolition of the Union. In 1811 he had written a “poetical essay” in support of the imprisoned Irish

WAR POETRY

THE SHORT life of Sidney Keyes (1922–1943) is in itself a striking metaphor for the cruelty and futility of war. He was killed in action before his twenty-first birthday in Tunisia. His book *The Cruel Solstice* (1944) can be read on Faded Page (tinyurl.com/4282dd4u).

Keyes was an unusual poet, in many ways more interesting than his contemporary at Oxford Philip Larkin. Michael Meyer says of him:

Keyes had developed an acute historic sense which enabled him to recreate the very spirits of those who

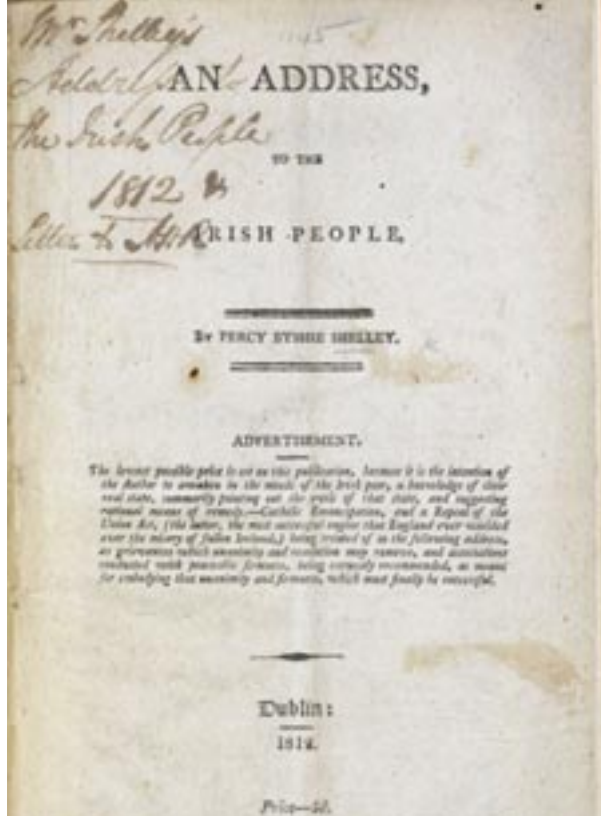
stirred his imagination; and the poet within him dwelt only among the mighty dead. Blake, Schiller, Wordsworth and, above all, Yeats and Rilke, were more intimate to him than the contemporary world. He was in the closest and most constant contact with their minds through their writing, and he preferred their company to that of the living.

Gabriel Rosenstock has taken a poem from *The Cruel Solstice*, a poem called “War Poet,” which shows flashes of the brilliance denied to the world, and translated it into Irish.

- Sidney Keyes (1922–1943) <https://tinyurl.com/5a7c2rrv>
- Recent free books from Gabriel Rosenstock: *Don Quixote in the Land of Shadows*



In preparation for his campaign in Ireland, Shelley had written *An Address to the Irish People*. His pamphlet *Proposals for an Association* appealed to the remaining United Irishmen to give Irish politics a more radical direction by peaceful means.



journalist Peter Finnerty, a former editor of the United Irishmen's journal, the *Press*.

In preparation for his campaign in Ireland, Shelley had written *An Address to the Irish People*. His pamphlet *Proposals for an Association* appealed to the remaining United Irishmen to give Irish politics a more radical direction by peaceful means. Shelley was a great admirer of Robert Emmet and the United Irishmen and wanted to form an association that worked openly towards an egalitarian republic, supported legal equality, and freedom of the press. He also had a *Declaration of Rights* printed in Dublin, in the tradition of the American Revolution, distributed it, and appeared at various events. Together with John Lawless, an associate of Daniel O'Connell, he planned to found a radical newspaper and to publish a new history of Ireland.

In 1814 he fell in love with Godwin's daughter Mary. After the suspension of *habeas corpus* in March 1817 opposition journalists fled or were imprisoned. In March 1818 the Shelleys emigrated to Italy. In the remaining four years of his life Shelley wrote his major works.

Eleanor Marx, in her Shelley lecture, said about his socialism:

Shelley was on the side of the bourgeoisie when struggling for freedom, but ranged against them when in

their turn they became the oppressors of the working-class. He saw more clearly than Byron, who seems scarcely to have seen it at all, that the epic of the nineteenth century was to be the contest between the possessing and the producing classes.

Completed in 1813, *Queen Mab* is a poetic credo and a political poem. In a cosmic dream journey the fairy queen reveals to young Ianthe the misery of humanity in history and the present. Shelley emphatically rejects religious arguments of something intrinsically "sinful" in humankind and cites the real culprits:

Man's evil nature, that apology
Which kings who rule, For their unnumbered crimes,
sheds not the blood
Which desolates the discord-wasted land.
From kings, and priests, and statesmen, war arose,
Whose safety is man's deep unbettered woe,
Whose grandeur his debasement. Let the axe
Strike at the root, the poison-tree will fall . . .
A garden shall arise, in loveliness
Surpassing fabled Eden.

This poem became known as the "Bible of the Chartists."

From 1819 onwards Shelley wrote *Ode to the West Wind*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *Song to the Men of England*, and *The Mask of Anarchy*, one of the greatest political protest poems in the English language. Poems such as *Song to the Men of England* speak directly to the struggling workers:

V
The seed ye sow, another reaps;
The wealth ye find, another keeps;
The robes ye weave, another wears;
The arms ye forge, another bears.

VI
Sow seed—but let no tyrant reap:
Find wealth—let no imposter heap:
Weave robes—let not the idle wear:
Forge arms—in your defence to bear.

Two hundred years ago, on 8 July 1822, Shelley was drowned. He did not live to see the proletarian movement take possession of his work, but his vision applies undiminished today.

War Poet

I am the man who looked for peace and found
My own eyes barbed.
I am the man who groped for words and found
An arrow in my hand.
I am the builder whose firm walls surround
A slipping land.
When I grow sick or mad
Mock me not nor chain me:
When I reach for the wind
Cast me not down:
Though my face is a burnt book
And a wasted town.

File Cogaidh

Mise an té a lorg an tsíocháin
Is bhí mo shúile féin deilgneach.
Mise a bhí sa tóir ar bhriathra
Agus bhí an tsaighead im' ghlac.
Mise an tógálaí is a chuid ballaí daingne
Ar ghaineamh súraic.
Más tinn a bheidh mé nó as mo mheabhair
Ná bí ag spochadh asam led' shlabhraí:
Má lorgáimse gaotha
Ná leag go talamh mé:
Fiú más leabhar dóite é mo chuntanós
Nó baile creachta.



TO FIX THESE PROBLEMS WE NEED SOCIALISM

The Democratic Programme of 1919 said, “It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter.”

CLOVER CARROLL
FOOD

AS THE COST Of living grows ever higher, and more families are choosing between eating and paying bills—with some parents skipping meals so their children can eat—we continue to produce an over-abundance of food that no one should be without food.

Roughly a third of the food we produce is wasted. From when it's harvested to when retailers throw it out, food is wasted throughout the whole process. The food that is wasted by going past its “best before” date in retail, or wrong orders in food service, is thrown out. This food could easily have been used to feed those who are homeless or going without food to pay other bills.

Even before the food reaches the shelves it gets thrown out for looking “wonky.” A study has shown that more than a third of the fruit and vegetables grown in Europe is wasted because they look a bit wonky. It shows that an estimated 50 million tonnes of fresh fruit and vegetable are thrown away each year because they don't meet supermarket and consumer standards.

Globally, up to half of all fruit and vegetable produce, 20 per cent of meat and dairy foods and 30 per cent of fish produce is wasted each year. This amount of food waste throughout the life cycle of food, from field to bin, accounts for between 8 and 10 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions.

Capitalism puts profits before the environment and hungry families.

With the increases in the cost of living, and as the housing crisis worsens, the Government is ensuring that landlords and business-owners can line their pockets. We have the resources to ensure that every citizen is fed and housed, but the Government simply chooses not to.

In April this year alone 10,049 people required emergency accommodation, with 4,190 of these under the age of twenty-four. A report in February last year showed

that 2,326 children were homeless. With the cost of living at an estimated €3,232 per month, and public land being sold to vulture funds and developers, the future for Ireland's youth in a capitalist country is looking bleak. The Government is not running the country in the interests of the people but in the interests of ever-increasing profits.

Michael Parenti, a historian who has talked at length about socialist countries in many lectures and debates, has talked about the differences between the German Democratic Republic and West Germany. The people in the GDR, when seeing the supermarkets of West Germany, were amazed at the selection of goods; however, they were horrified at the people knocking on their doors begging for money to buy food.

While millions were starving in capitalist countries, bread was subsidised in the Soviet Union, public transport was affordable for everyone, and all people were housed. The people's needs were being met. The only way to bring the people of Ireland out of poverty-stricken conditions, such as living on the streets and going without food, is to bring about the vision of Ireland that the revolutionaries of 1916 had: a 32-county socialist republic. As Comrade Doran pointed out last month, “when faced with an emergency they adopted socialist models to solve the crisis”—but, as has been shown over the years, adopting the models isn't enough. An entire system change is what Ireland needs.

The Democratic Programme of 1919 said, “It shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing, or shelter.”

The Government of Ireland has failed in its first duty. Ireland has a housing crisis, a homelessness crisis, and a cost-of-living crisis. All of these have capitalism in common. To fix them we need socialism.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR Pride is a protest

ON SATURDAY 25 June members and comrades of the CPI joined a protest organised by the Connolly Youth Movement on Rosie Hackett Bridge to protest against the take-over of pride by companies that solely see us as a means to profit, by people who have historically oppressed LGBT minorities and continue to do so and against those who actively seek to divide us. The loud protest was aptly summarised by “No bank, no pigs, no terfs.”

A member of the CYM talked about how queer people are regularly harassed by gardaí, including on the day itself on their way to the protest. A member of the CPI discussed how companies such as AirBnB and Paypal proudly march in the pride parade while profiting off a housing crisis that disproportionately affects queer people and on the dawn of pride moved 300+ jobs abroad to lower wages.

Later in the day the message spread that a different protest, Radical Pride for Housing, was harassed by gardaí, with at least three people arrested. This led to a picket and march from Pearse Street Garda Station to Irishtown Garda Station by a broad contingent of the Dublin left.

The inclusion of the Garda Síochána in the main Pride parade is a slap in the face to the queer people who they harassed on the same day, and every other day. The events of the day have once again shown that the Gardaí are not an ally of the queer community, and that pride is still very much a protest.

Rose, Dublin



JOIN THE FIGHT FOR SOCIALISM JOIN THE COMMUNIST PARTY

