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“Behind the addiction to cocaine and drugs, behind the addiction to oil and coal, is the true addiction of this phase of human history: the addiction to irrational power, profit, and money, and the enormous deadly machinery that can extinguish humanity.”
Luis Arce, president of Bolivia,
 21 September 2022.



Socialist Voice
 43 East Essex Street
 Dublin D02 XH96
 (01)6708707
<https://socialistvoice.ie>



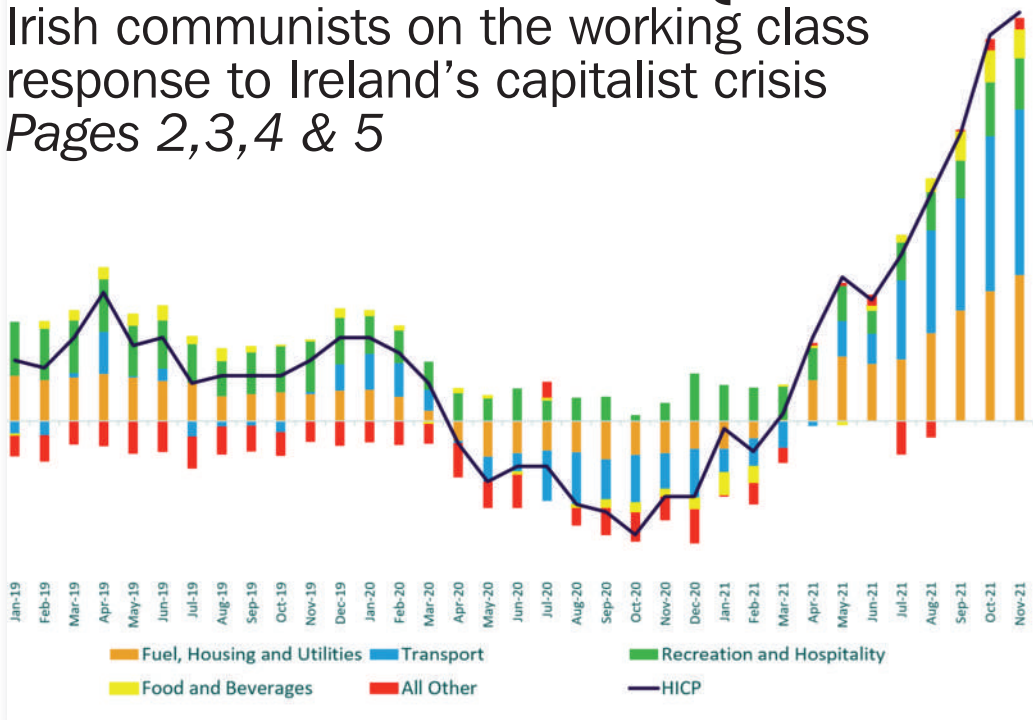
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Socialist Voice

INFLATION AND A BUDGET TO REINFORCE INEQUALITY

Irish communists on the working class response to Ireland's capitalist crisis
 Pages 2,3,4 & 5



CAPITALISM

BUDGET TO REINFORCE INEQUALITY

EUGENE MCCARTAN

THE COALITION government of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Green Party has announced its 2023 budget. This is taking place in a period of growing inflation, rising energy costs, and falling consumer confidence and spending.

The increase in social welfare payments comes nowhere near meeting the rate of inflation. The €12 increase in social welfare will not keep up with inflation; to do that it would have to be more like a €25 increase.

The €500 tax rebate on rent will be swallowed up with rising rents. Absolutely no action in tackling the root causes of rents being as high as

they are; no rent control or rent caps: business as usual.

In real terms, this will mean that during 2022 and 23 inflation will run at 16¼ per cent. Incomes will have to rise by this amount over that time just to stand still. They simply do not meet people's needs.

Real incomes will fall, interest rates are rising, while at the same time this state's main trading blocs are stagnating and will most probably fall into recession.

NATO's proxy war with Russia in Ukraine will have a long-term economic impact on the economies of the member-states of the European Union. Germany, the powerhouse of the EU, is being affected most by this



THE COST-OF-CAPITALISM'S CRISIS

JIMMY COCORAN
INFLATION

ON 24 SEPTEMBER there was a massive turn-out in Dublin to protest against the increase in the cost of living. More than 20,000 people took to the streets—and it could have been higher except for traffic hold-ups in Kildare, which resulted in delays of more than four hours for those coming from the south.

The protest was fuelled by the anger in working-class communities against the

increase in the cost of energy, food, clothes and accommodation and the genuine fear for their future. It is part of a wave of protest that is building throughout the capitalist world, as inflation means real cuts in wages at a time of increasing profits for the capitalist class.

In Britain this has manifested itself in the most widespread strike movement in decades, led by class-conscious union leaders. (Although, because of the malign influence of monarchy on British society, the strikes were suspended

during the period of mourning for Elizabeth Windsor.)

As the organisers of the September and future protests are a broad coalition, which includes socialist and non-socialist organisations and individuals, there was little unanimity in their demands, other than price controls and calls for taxation on the super-profits of the energy companies. This is reflected in working-class communities, where the rising cost of living is a main talking-point—coming, as it does, on top of more than a decade of “austerity,” a housing crisis, and a

THE COST OF SURVIVAL?

SAJEEV KUMAR
COST OF LIVING

SASHI THAROOR, the Indian politician who wrote a book on British colonial plunder, *An Era of Darkness* (2016), once made a satirical remark: “They say the sun never sets on the British empire; that’s because even the god did not trust the British in the dark.”

The Queen's death and mourning have temporarily diverted the attention from the people's issues, such as cost of living, climate change, and inflation, but

only for a short period. After the mourning is over, impending winter will give people the realisation that they are short of money to buy heating oil or to pay their electricity bills. When the dilemma of whether to feed themselves or to keep themselves warm takes over they will begin to mourn over their own condition.

The constitutional monarchy, which is preserved on taxpayers' money to remind them of Britain's glorious colonial past, seems to have assets worth \$28 billion, while people who mourn the Queen's death are finding it hard to make ends

meet. A revelation by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in the Pandora papers said that millions of dollars were taken from Britain by the royal family through tax evasion to the tax havens. Monarchies have always thrived on looting the people.

Prabir, who wrote an essay in *People's Democracy* about “market fundamentalism” and the increase in electricity charges in the EU, asks a valid question: Why did electricity charges go up four times last year in Germany when only a tenth of its electricity production depends on natural gas from Russia?



aggressive strategy of domination and control of markets and resources now in full force by the United States.

The Government is projecting that gross national income will grow by 0.4 per cent in 2023 and that domestic demand will increase only by 1.2 per cent while projecting inflation to be about 7 per cent.

Rising energy costs resulting from both the proxy war against Russia and massive profit-taking by energy monopolies will probably drive the Irish economy, as well as other economies within the EU, into recession.

Some people are predicting a 5 per cent loss of national income and output. It could be more, as this state's economy is over-reliant on globally traded services and goods, while its revenue is dependent on the creaming of "imperial rent" from transnational corporations declaring and paying their minimum taxes in this state.

The same applies to the miserable increase in the minimum wage. This

will only drive tens of thousands of low-paid workers into greater poverty and increase the number of the working poor. They will then have to rely upon family income supplement to live, increasing the state's contribution in subsidising low-wage and super-exploitation.

This budget has been designed to protect the income of the professional classes and high-paid workers at the expense of the bulk of workers. The tax cuts benefit only the better off. One-off payments covering energy costs and child benefit in the main will end up in the pockets of the private energy corporations and those private providers of child care.

Part-time and low-paid workers will be the big losers from this pro-wealthy budget. The standard rate cut-off point for income tax was increased by 8.7 per cent and in effect indexed to inflation. Most if not all the increases in spending on health tend to be swallowed up and are in fact a further source of wealth for the private and corporate medical sector, private

Rising energy costs resulting from both the proxy war against Russia and massive profit-taking by energy monopolies will probably drive the Irish economy, as well as other economies within the EU, into recession.

consultants, and wealthy GPs.

This budget will do very little for working people. It will further accentuate the deep inequality within this corrupt state. It will certainly do little in the struggle to decarbonise and to save our planet from destruction.

The increase in spending on the military is only a further indication that the state is committed to the global war and domination strategies of NATO and the EU. It is fully wedded to, and dependent on, imperialism.

Budgets in our society are for feeding the illusion that governments stand above the fray, are referees in the struggle between working people to win a greater share of the wealth they produce and those who own and control that wealth.

Governments are not bystanders in the day-to-day struggles to survive: they are for serving, protecting and ensuring the reproduction of capital, for protecting privilege and the power of the owners of capital. ★

crisis in the health service.

Working-class communities are acutely aware that it is they who will bear the brunt of the pain and suffering as inflation continues to surge, as is the norm in capitalist society.

In their search for solutions to the crisis they look to the electoral process, primarily Sinn Féin and the small left parties, while many still have faith in Fianna Fáil or Fine Gael and believe—as the Government and the media maintain—that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is the cause, ignoring the fact that prices have been rising since last year.

As the CPI maintains, it is not a cost-of-living crisis: it is a cost-of-

capitalism crisis, this being just the latest manifestation of that crisis. And without a clear understanding of the cause of the crisis it is impossible to find a solution.

The capitalist drive for profits is the cause of the increase in the price of energy. The United States, the EU and Britain have no problem diverting billions, which could feed, house, educate and improve the health of every person in the world today, to weapons of war, guaranteeing bigger profits for already wealthy shareholders.

The left must use this opportunity to advance the cause of the working class. We must inject class politics into the campaigns against the cost of living.

Working-class communities are acutely aware that it is they who will bear the brunt of the pain and suffering as inflation continues to surge, as is the norm in capitalist society.

Any solution to the present crisis that does not advance the interests of the working class and move towards socialism can be only a temporary respite.

We must help build a movement from the bottom up by campaigning for socialism in our communities, our workplaces, our schools and colleges. Any such movement must be led by a class-conscious working class and not by professional politicians who see it as a vehicle to a Dáil seat.

Socialism is the only alternative to the increasing misery of capitalism, with war, hunger, poverty and the complete destruction of the environment the only future capitalism has on offer. ★

The answer is the greed of a few transnational companies to make colossal profits, using the Ukrainian war as an excuse.

The cost-of-living crisis and inflation are theft on people, an attempt by a class to make profits by reducing the standard of living of another class. This antagonism cannot be resolved in the present system, because one class lives on the blood of the other.

The Ukrainian war has also applied sudden brakes on the commitment of the EU to invest in green energy and to adhere to the targets of reduction of carbon emission to achieve net zero before 2030. The reason is that fossil fuels are creating massive profits for

the transnational companies, which compromise the future of life on earth.

At the same time, when the cost of living and inflation are strangling the people, the cheerleaders of neoliberalism are insisting that the solution to controlling inflation is to keep wages under control. Trade union leaders like Mick Lynch have rejected this solution, saying that the wages are trying to catch up with the price increase. In other words, wage increase is not the cause of inflation. If the wages are not rising, it will reduce demand in the economy, leading to a decline in economic growth.

The millions of dollars that have to be invested in renewable energy sources, improving public transport and

The Queen's death and mourning have temporarily diverted the attention from the people's issues

planning production based on human needs rather than luxuries remain unused in the tax havens. The remedy is a different society, in which production is controlled publicly—in other words, socialism.

There is no lack of money; what is lacking is the political will to make those investments. And what prevents the political will is that the class that controls the economy also controls the politics.

The capitalist system, which brings out the worst in people, caused Rosa Luxemburg to remark: "Socialism or barbarism." Now we have reached a point in history where the capitalist mode of production is making us realise that it's "socialism or extinction." ★



IRELAND

CAPITALISM: THE ENEMY OF ALL WORKERS

CATHOLICS	42.3%
PROTESTANTS	37.3%
NO RELIGION	17.4%
EXPLOITED	99%



JIMMY DORAN CAPITALISM

THERE HAS been a lot of surmising over the recently announced results of the census in the North of Ireland.

For the first time since partition, Catholics now outnumber Protestants there. The census found that 42 per cent of people in the North are Catholics, 37 per cent are Protestants, 1½ per cent are of other religions, and 17½ per cent have no religion.

This narrative about religious breakdown is a manufactured division, created by Britain to maintain its rule in the Six Counties. The one thing that all these people, of any religion and none, have in common is the deprivation and exploitation of capitalism inflicted on 99 per cent of them by their common enemy: British imperialism.

British rule and the capitalist class are secure so long as the working class are diverted into concentrating on each other's differences rather than on what they have in common: oppression.

None of the problems that working people face every day in the North are caused by religion. The underfunding of the health service, the housing waiting-list, poverty wages and rack-renting landlords have nothing to do with religion and everything to do with the capitalism

AISLING JOYCE PENSIONS

THE GOVERNMENT is attempting to push the state pension age to 70 by the back door. It is proposing to do this by adding 24 per cent to the pension rate if people forgo their pension and work on till they are 70.

By working to 70 you give up a total of €63,180* in payments over the five years—all to receive an extra €62 a week. At that rate it would take an extra 1,019 weeks, or 19½ years, to get this money back.

This is a typical tactic of right-wing governments: muddy the waters and confuse the situation to make it look like something it is not. Like all such tricks, it's a con job. This one is designed to raise the retirement age to 70 by stealth.

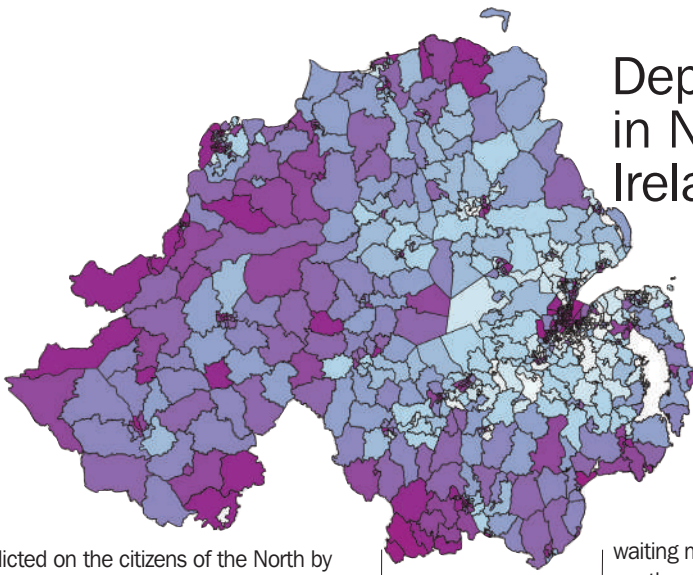
They want to introduce five rates, depending on what age you retire at, as follows:

Retire at 66:	€253 per week
Retire at 67:	€266 per week
Retire at 68:	€281 per week
Retire at 69:	€297 per week
Retire at 70:	€315 per week

THREE CARD TRICK



Deprivation in Northern Ireland



inflicted on the citizens of the North by British imperialism.

It's time that Protestants, Catholics and the rest of the people in the North joined up the dots. There are not two (or three) "communities" in the North: there are two classes, and one is dividing the other to stay in power.

The reality is that the bottom 30 per cent of households in the North account for only 14 per cent of total income, while the top 30 per cent account for 51 per cent. The top 10 per cent of households alone receive 24 per cent of all income, while 45 per cent of households have no savings. The North of Ireland is a very unequal place.

The National Health Service is a shadow of its former self. Today 184,000 people in the North are waiting more than a year for a first hospital outpatient appointment. A further 66,000 are

waiting more than a year for surgery or another form of treatment in hospital, while 48,000 are waiting more than six months for a hospital appointment after being referred by their doctor for further tests.

43,971 households are on the housing waiting-list, with at least 24,717 children under the age of eighteen affected. There are 444,000 children in the North; 103,400 of these children live in poverty. That is almost 1 in every 4 children living in a family that struggles to provide for their basic needs, providing a warm, adequate home, nutritious food and appropriate clothing and to pay for child care—children whose parents often have to get into debt to make ends meet and do not have the means to save money for unexpected costs or family outings.

316,000 people, or 17 per cent of

None of the problems that working people face every day in the North are caused by religion.

This is discrimination against workers who are not physically or mentally fit to work past 65 because of the nature of their work. It is also discriminating against people because of their age, as they will be treated less favourably because of this.

The Employment Equality Acts (1998–2015) ban discrimination in employment on a number of grounds, including age. The acts also outlaw direct and indirect discrimination, and discrimination by association at work, on the grounds of gender, civil and family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Travelling community.

If you are unable to work beyond 65, either physically or mentally, you are being discriminated against because of this physical or mental disability.

"Disability" includes physical, intellectual, learning, cognitive or emotional disabilities and a range of medical conditions. "Discrimination" is defined as less favourable treatment. An employee is discriminated against if they are treated less favourably than another employee is treated, has been treated, or would be treated.

A living wage is defined as the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs. Needs are defined to include food, housing and other essentials, such as clothing. Ireland's state pension is approximately half what is considered necessary to meet a person's basic needs.

Your pension is deferred pay, not some sort of a favour in the gift of the Government. Workers pay for it through PRSI deductions every week of our working lives. The pension rate should provide a living wage for people in their old age.

State pension: €13,156 per year
Minimum wage: €20,685 per year
Living wage: €24,944 per year
Taoiseach's pension: €130,000 per year

A living wage is defined as the minimum income necessary for a worker to meet their basic needs. Needs are defined to include food, housing and other essentials, such as clothing. Ireland's state pension is approximately half what is considered necessary to meet a person's basic needs.

With \$111,360 of GDP per capita, Ireland ranks second in the ten richest countries in the world, according to the IMF.

Part of this policy is that it gives people a "choice" to work longer if they want to. This is another three-card trick, as the choice is not there for people who

cannot afford to retire on €253 a week. They are being forced to by economic reality. If the state wants to give workers the choice to work on till they are 70 there should be no financial incentive to do so. A decent pension should be provided for all citizens aged 65.

These are just some of the problems faced by the working class every day in the Six Counties, none of which are caused by religion. They are caused by capitalism, and the particular strain that is forced on the citizens living in one of the last colonies in the world.

Citizens need to decolonise their minds. The people in the South of Ireland suffer similar deprivation, despite not having hang-ups about what religion their neighbours are.

It's time to concentrate on our common enemy: imperialism. We must move beyond the colonial construct of difference and build an independent all-Ireland economy for the common good, where the resources of Ireland are owned by the people of Ireland and are used in our interest, where all citizens are treated equally. For too long the citizens of Ireland have been exploited by a tiny elite who live off the fruits of our labour.

"If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the Green Flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this country and watered with the tears of our mothers and the blood of our martyrs."

James Connolly ★

Maybe the state should go full circle and instead of extending the working age at the end of your life should do it at the beginning of it and bring back child labour. Don't for a minute think they wouldn't if they could get away with it. After all, the ending of child labour was forced by the trade union movement; and it wasn't given up without a fight.

"I have a total irreverence for anything connected with society except that which makes the roads safer, the food cheaper and the old men and old women warmer in the winter and happier in the summer."—Brendan Behan.

*€203 × 52 = €10,556 job-seekers age 65+
€253 × 52 × 4 = €52,664 pension × 4
Total: €63,180 ÷ 62 = 1,019 weeks ÷ 52 = 19.6 years ★



IMPERIALISM

IN WHOSE INTERESTS WAS THE NORD STREAM GAS PIPELINE SABOTAGED?



EUGENE McCARTAN
ENERGY

IN THE LAST WEEK of September there were a number of leaks in Nord Stream 1 and 2, culminating on 29 September in a major rupture.

The construction of the Nord Stream pipeline cost billions, to bring natural gas from Russia to Germany. It

passes along the sea bed of the Baltic Sea; it also passes through Swedish and Danish waters, which both countries have declared “special economic zones,” therefore clearly their territorial waters.

The United States has been opposed to the Nord Stream project for a very long time, culminating on 7 February this year when the Biden

regime declared: “There will no longer be a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.” When a journalist asked Biden to clarify this he said enigmatically: “I promise you, we will be able to do that.”

The United States has been unhappy with both German and French freelance work in easing tension between Ukraine and Russia. Both countries sponsored the Minsk 2 agreement between Ukraine and Russia in 2014.

But when the Ukrainian government returned to Kyiv they turned their back on it, under pressure from both the United States and Britain. Both countries had been engineering a war with Russia for some time; their planning and intervention in Ukraine culminated in the 2014 coup.

The German parliament, the Bundestag, voted against increasing arms supplies to Ukraine, 476 to 179. This was in response to mounting pressure from the German people, who are demanding an end to the war and the lifting of sanctions on Russia.

Germany, an exporter of high-end consumer goods to both China and Russia, has been hard hit by the illegally imposed US sanctions against both countries. The German people have also experienced an increase of 19 per cent in food prices.

Germany, the powerhouse of Europe, has been the major force in pushing a more independent political and military strategy for the EU, the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), to advance and protect EU interests both in Europe and globally. Following the suspected terrorist attack on the Nord Stream pipelines, one of Germany’s leading manufactures, the Wolfgang Grupp, called for a “break with America.”

MARXIST HEDGE SCHOOL IN THE ARAN ISLANDS

A. C. O’CONNOR
LEFT UNITY?

THERE WERE Lord of the Rings references aplenty earlier this month as participants of all shapes and persuasions—representing organisations often refusing to openly collaborate—were ferried to the postcard setting of Inis Oírr. In between ancient ruins and tourist traps, the media platform Left Bloc, with support

from Trademark (Belfast) and others, held its premiere weekend of workshops and talks tackling the big bad, seeking to wipe out the world of men: Capitalism.

Bernadette McAliskey was the first champion to speak. Having fought at the Bogside and in the House of Commons, on reflection it was the battle between “50 separate parties of 50 members apiece” all rowing over whether the USSR (or China) was

“state-capitalist or a degenerated workers’ state” that she considered not worth her energy. In the face of climate collapse, she demanded better. Her advice to those groups: “Grow up.”

The former insurgent commander Victoria Sandino continued this mood with a retelling of the horrors committed against working-class people by the US-backed Colombian state and far-right militias. She thanked Irish people for their continued financial aid and guidance in peace talks that led to her Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) make the transition to a legal political party—a reformation that has produced mixed results.



The sanctions on Russia and the forced dependence on American gas are doing real damage to the economy of EU member-states, thereby weakening a major competitor to American transnational capital. The United States has now strengthened its political, economic and military control over the European Union—though not all elements within the ruling classes of the EU will be happy with this strategic turn of events

As winter approaches, the demands of German workers would only have grown stronger, and there was the definite possibility of the German government being forced to break ranks with US war strategy. A break with the sanctions policy could have resulted in the reopening of Nord Stream 1 and 2 to get the gas flowing so that people could heat their homes. The sabotage of the pipelines now blocks off that option.

The visit of the German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, to the Gulf region (Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Qatar) last weekend [24–25 September] seeking more oil supplies failed to produce the result he had hoped for.

For Germany to get access to Russian gas it will now have to go begging to Ukraine and Poland to allow gas to be delivered by the old Yamal and Druzhba pipelines, built by the Soviet Union. This weakens any potential peace initiatives coming from Germany under pressure from the German people.

The sabotage of the gas pipeline was an anti-people attack, designed to prevent the people securing peace in Ukraine and Europe.

With the imposition of the illegal sanctions on Russia, particularly in relation to energy supplies, the United States has forced European states to buy American fracked gas—and to pay eight to ten times the contracted price with the Russian firm Gazprom.

So the US proxy war in Ukraine has served a number of strategic goals. Firstly, it has trapped Russia in a war from which it appears there is no way out: it has to be a military victory for one side or the other.

Secondly, it has forced significant neutral European states (formerly neutral at least) to throw in their lot and join NATO.

Thirdly, it was a call to heel for any

Thankfully, the event organisers came with an understanding that at any left-wing lecture there are numerous more self-proclaimed professors in the crowd than there are on stage. A Q&A section led by female participants at the end of the talk by the journalist and author Sarah Jaffe resulted in an empowering discussion of care workers, unpaid domestic labour, and unionising homemakers.

After all, even “general strikes” typically exclude half the working population.

Following his talk in Connolly Books in the previous days, Vijay Prashad consolidated the weekend, in full Ted Talk prowess, with an emotive scolding

further independent solo runs by Germany or France in their dealings with Russia and, no doubt, China.

Fourthly, the sanctions on Russia and the forced dependence on American gas are doing real damage to the economy of EU member-states, thereby weakening a major competitor to American transnational capital. The United States has now strengthened its political, economic and military control over the European Union—though not all elements within the ruling classes of the EU will be happy with this strategic turn of events, which can only lead to growing tensions within and between EU member-states and between the EU and the United States.

The next big test: Can the United States find unchallenged strategic dominance with its economic and military encirclement of China?

The world has been pushed into an extremely dangerous place by the actions and strategies particularly of US imperialism.

So it is clear whose interests were served by having the Nord Stream pipeline permanently out of action: the United States.

Peace, both in Europe and globally, will not be given to us but must be struggled for. The starting-point in Ireland is to end engagement with NATO by the Six Counties administration by demanding that each and every support and facility that NATO receives or uses be closed down.

We must demand a constitutional amendment to put neutrality in the Constitution of Ireland.

We must end all “constructive military co-operation” with the EU, in particular our participation in PESCO.

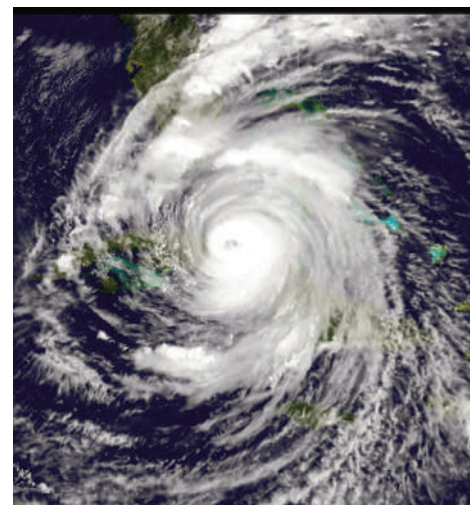
And Shannon Airport must be closed to all military flights.

Only such policies can help to bring about peace. ★

of western hypocrisy on Ukrainian refugees and European leftist critiques of non-white socialist projects: “college students obsessed with a post-colonial mindset when we still live under colonialism.” In explicit contrast to McAliskey’s opening remarks, he passionately thanked his Communist Party, which formed him and taught him discipline, which, he claimed, was a prerequisite for real progress.

A closing remark put the future of Left Bloc to the floor by a leading organiser, Dave Gibney: Can this entity build a fellowship across party and trade union lines or should it remain a political education platform?

Time will tell. ★



Cuban residents in Ireland express their solidarity

29 September 2022

CUBANS RESIDING in Ireland have contacted the Consular Office of the Cuban Embassy to express their solidarity in the face of the serious damage suffered in the western region of Cuba as a result of the passage of the intense hurricane “Ian.”

Likewise, they have expressed their willingness to help Cuba in every way possible from Ireland, a country from which it is very difficult to send material aid to the country because of the absence of available channels for this purpose. However, upon such request the embassy makes available to interested parties details of the bank accounts available for sending monetary donations:

Emergency donations
Holder of the accounts authorised before the emergency due to damages caused by Hurricane “Ian”: Ministry of Foreign Trade and Foreign Investment, with legal address in Infanta No. 16, Square of the Revolution, Havana.

Accounts:
(1) International Financial Bank (IFB)

Account name: Emergency Donations
Account number: 0300 0000 0533 6242
SWIFT Code: BFICCUHHXXX

(2) International Bank of Commerce (BICSA)
Account name: DONATIONS-CUBA
Account number: 0407 6100 8187 0041
SWIFT Code: BIDCCUHHXXX



IRISH DECOLONISATION

GRAHAM HARRINGTON
COLONIALISM

THERE IS NOTHING more foreign to Ireland than capitalism. While the primitive Irish communist system was not perfect, the feudal and capitalist systems of production were brought to this country by an English bayonet.

The Irish left has struggled to understand this contradiction within Irish capitalism, instead seeing the class struggle as one reduced to the work-

place, rather than a class-national struggle with political, ideological, cultural and linguistic forms.

While Marx and Engels finished the *Communist Manifesto* with the famous call for workers of all countries to unite, it is almost forgotten that in 1921 the Communist International updated that slogan for the new, imperialist stage of capitalism, calling for workers and the oppressed of all lands to unite.

Most of the Marxist-Leninist revolutions in the twentieth century were

national in form, for example Cuba, China, Vietnam, Mozambique, Angola. They were no less class struggle in content. The anti-fascist war against the Nazis was called the Great Patriotic War by the Soviet people. There was no contradiction between fighting for the motherland and fighting for socialism.

In Ireland today there is a historical low point in class-consciousness as well as national consciousness. The Irish ruling class has always had an inability to act in the national interest of our people,

PRESERVING POWER AND PRIVILEGE

TOMMY MCKEARNEY
SERVITUDE

WHAT ON EARTH was going on here last month? To all appearances a supposedly sovereign independent republic immersed itself in sympathy and affection for the British monarchy.

Within hours of the announcement of Elizabeth's death, RTE had a crew broadcasting solemnly from London. The Government fell over backwards in its determination to offer heartfelt condolences. Micheál Martin, leader of the so-called republican party, ordered every council building in the 26 Counties to fly the Tricolour at half mast on the day of the funeral.

Perceptions are often deceptive, though, and the reality is that many Irish people were not only unmoved by England's royalist pageant but were deeply uncomfortable at the craven response to it. Ireland has a centuries-long history of a republicanism based not simply on sentiment but on lived experience. For too long the British Crown presided over so much misery and repression that its transgressions cannot easily be forgotten or forgiven.

While it is understandable that socialists and republicans would deplore the unprincipled forelock-tugging from the Irish establishment, it is important to reflect more deeply on the underlying significance of these events. Was it merely an embarrassing display of nostalgia for the old empire, or was there a more hard-headed calculation at work?

There may well be an amount of grovelling involved. With so many Irish people having served in Britain's armed forces (including the Taoiseach's uncles), it would be a surprise if it were otherwise. Nevertheless it is becoming increasingly obvious that, in a rapidly changing world order, an influential section of the Irish ruling class believe it is necessary to reset the connection with Britain. Promoting tolerance and even affection for the "Royal Family" is just one step along the way.

The monarchy is more than pomp and ceremony. As an institution, it serves to reinforce the permanence of existing power structures. What better way to legitimise a rigid, class-based capitalist society than having the office of head of state as a hereditary entitlement, an office that may be

passed, tax-free, from the richest woman in the world to her academically challenged 73-year old son.

As for a funeral cortege consisting of 6,000 uniformed members of the armed forces—well, it hardly indicates a significant change of thinking from the nineteenth-century era of gunboat diplomacy.

And that's exactly the point of it all: to preserve power and privilege for the few. Without doubt, maintaining the status quo is also a matter of real concern for Ireland's ruling class.

The Irish establishment is now faced with a number of threats to its power base. From an establishment point of view, two issues in particular are deemed threatening. One is the age-old matter of the Six-County state, with its potential for creating destabilisation. Results from the latest census have done little to assuage the fears of the Southern bourgeoisie as the continued existence of that dysfunctional political entity is put further in question.

The second issue is a growing challenge to the Irish establishment's dependence for its wealth and privilege on the promotion and practice of neoliberalism.

The Easter Rising could not have happened without the national revival, which was itself an indirect product of the Land War. Without the Rising we wouldn't have had the Limerick Soviet

as can be seen most recently in the fawning over the British monarch. If the bourgeoisie cannot lead the national-democratic revolution, then only the working class can. When Connolly went into the GPO he was not taking a temporary respite from Marxism: he was in fact developing it.

Marxism is not Eurocentric, but Western Marxists are. While we are still a colony awaiting national liberation, we are also very much a part of the West, and this contradiction produces a major weakness in the Irish struggle. While we do owe a lot to the Bolsheviks and the classics of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, Ireland's liberation also has much to gain from national-liberation Marxists, such as José Carlos Mariátegui, Amílcar Cabral, and others.

Even today there exist the remnants of that ancient Irish system. For example, commonage land in Ireland is land that is commonly owned or, in modern times, owned by the state and rented to grazers. There are just over 1 million acres, stretching from Co. Donegal down to west Cork. The lands are mostly in hilly, poorer areas and are not eligible for EU grants under the Common Agricultural Policy. They are also more common in Irish-speaking areas.

The Irish word *meitheal* refers to a

work group that works in common, such as communities in Irish-speaking areas coming together to take in the harvest.

In other words, socialism is far from being a foreign import. It was capitalism and colonialism that devastated the Irish language. Even many radicals have internalised the colonial attitudes forced on us. How often have we heard that the problem with Irish is the way it's taught in schools?—almost as if other school subjects, whether English or maths, were taught any differently in what Pearse referred to as the “murder machine” of the education system.

Irish may be a hard language to learn—no language is easy—but then Marxism is itself a very hard theory to master! We shouldn't take this to mean that we can bring socialism to Ireland just by defending the Irish-speaking community or anything like that but instead that the cultural struggle has an important part to play. Just as it was instrumental in the development of capitalism, it has a part to play in the struggle for socialism.

Caomhín de Barra writes in his book *Gaeilge: A Radical Revolution* (2019) that “the poorest people in Ireland in the 18th century were Irish speakers, while the people with wealth, political power and social influence were English speakers.”

The Catholic Church was one of the greatest obstacles to the left in this country. The Church was an ally of colonialism; the famous “hedge schools” taught in English; the university at Maynooth did likewise. No wonder, then, that the counter-revolutionary Free State relied on the Church to keep it in power; and the Church's rule was in many ways almost colonial in the way it conducted itself.

While the Church's influence has been severely weakened, it has largely been replaced by liberalism, with the demand for national sovereignty curtailed lest it offend the EU. This shows how the left has made a major mistake by leaving this ground for far-right groups to occupy. Dimitrov criticised those who opposed fascism through what he called a “national nihilism” rather than an anti-fascist patriotism.

The Easter Rising could not have happened without the national revival, which was itself an indirect product of the Land War. Without the Rising we wouldn't have had the Limerick Soviet (pictured.)

As the CPI agreed at our recent national congress, we need to put the national content back into the class struggle, and the class content into the national struggle. ★

That Britain's governing party is so determined to adhere to the most extreme form of neoliberalism is a source of comfort for Ireland's comprador ruling class. Unsure of how to deal with a developing economic challenge, emphasised by thousands marching to protest against the cost-of-living crisis

That neoliberalism is failing its authors, suggesting a period of instability for capitalism, was shown in the August issue of *Socialist Voice*, in an article by Greg Godels, writing for *Marxism-Leninism Today*.¹ Significantly, a remarkably similar assessment has appeared in an opinion piece published recently on its editorial page by that gospel of the markets, the *Financial Times*.

Prof. Larry Kramer, president of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, pulled no punches in his *Financial Times* article when describing neoliberalism's failings.² In his words, it has “fostered grotesque inequality, fuelled the rise of populist demagogues, exacerbated racial disparities and hamstrung our ability to deal with crisis like climate change.”

There was much in his critique that socialists would agree with. However, and in spite of that, the professor's recommendations for dealing with capitalism's crisis remain fixed within private-sector parameters. Fearing that China's economic model may prove an attractive alternative, he stated that if capitalism is to survive it will need to adapt, as it has done in the past.

Therein lies the problem for capitalism; because, while we know that the system has proved itself capable of adapting, it has rarely done so with a

seamless or painless transition. Conflict arises when economic change is being enforced or resisted, and always with traumatic disruption and pain for working people. On some occasions such adjustments have even led to war or revolution.

It would appear that Britain at present is experiencing the working out of this process of change. Having spearheaded the neoliberal onslaught during the Thatcher years, Britain is now struggling with all the consequences identified by Prof. Kramer. While other developed capitalist economies, such as the United States under Joe Biden, France, and Germany, have been moving in favour of greater state intervention (in the short term at least), Britain has bucked the trend.

In keeping with a ruling class steeped in the myth of empire, its new prime minister has decided not to change but to reinforce policies from the past. The September mini-budget introduced by the chancellor of the exchequer, Kwasi Kwarteng, was just such an attempt to serve the gods of Thatcherite neoliberalism, a package designed to provide more for the already rich coupled with a promise to further restrict trade unions' right to withdraw labour. That this initiative has caused the English pound to slump appears not to have dented Tories'

confidence in its strategy.

That Britain's governing party is so determined to adhere to the most extreme form of neoliberalism is a source of comfort for Ireland's comprador ruling class. Unsure of how to deal with a developing economic challenge, emphasised by thousands marching to protest against the cost-of-living crisis, England can become a point of reference for the Irish establishment. Hence their need to construct a new affinity with British institutions, starting with obeisance to the Crown.

Socialist republicans can some take some comfort from the fact that our history alone shows that they face an uphill task. Nevertheless, we must take every opportunity to ensure that the 26 Counties does not revert to abject colonial status.

A century has passed since Liam Lynch said, “We have declared for an Irish Republic, and will not live under any other law.” Surely we can at least agree with him on that. ★

¹ Greg Godels, “Towards a New Political Order,” *Marxism-Leninism Today*, 17 July 2022 (tinyurl.com/2p9ear6b).

² Larry Kramer, “The market must not become an end in itself,” *Financial Times*, 17/18 September 2022.



HOUSING CRISIS=SYMPTOM HOUSING POLICY=CAUSE PUBLIC HOUSING=CURE
 COMMUNIST PARTY OF IRELAND PÁIRTÍ CUMANNACH na hÉIREANN



A REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY?

CLOVER CARROLL

FORTY-EIGHT TDs and twenty-nine senators are landlords, with others owning shares in companies and some owning both shares and rented property.

The majority of landlords are in Fine Gael, followed by Fianna Fáil. Other parties with landlords or shares include Sinn Féin, the Green Party, and the Labour Party, while some independents also hold property and shares. Michael Healy-Rae is the biggest landlord at present in the Dáil, with eighteen properties and more than 100 acres of land.

These TDs are elected

representatives of working-class people around the country; but do they really represent the interests of those who elected them?

Working-class people struggle to find affordable accommodation, while rents increase and inflation is causing rising prices. It's clear that this cost-of-living crisis is really just the cost of living under capitalism: it isn't a crisis for those who are profiteering, such as those with shares in companies, or properties for renting.

"Representative democracy" is defined as made up of elected persons who represent a group of people; however, that is not what we have in Ireland. Landlords and shareholders

cannot and will not represent the interests of the working class, as that directly conflicts with their own interests.

For example, working 40 hours a week on the minimum wage in Dublin this will be under €2,000, while the average rent in Dublin is nearly €2,100. On top of this, the average electricity bill in Ireland since 1 October is €181 a month. Why won't the Government, those who represent the people of Ireland, do something to alleviate this? Because it would go directly against their interests as landlords.

If we consider raising the minimum wage to a living wage, the companies

DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM: A VEHICLE

BARRY MURRAY

CLASS RULE

THE WORD "DEMOCRACY" (from the Greek *dēmos*, meaning people, and *kratos*, meaning power) is certainly the most used and abused word in the world of politics—particularly bourgeois politics. It is used to mean whatever capitalist power wants it to mean.

It can mean peace; it can mean war, death, and destruction; it can mean poverty (poor but "democratic" and "free") or wealth; it is used to describe "world order" or "freedom," and even regime change.

Our climate destruction is also justified in the name of democracy. Everything that suits capitalism can be justified in the name of their "democracy." It's a very flexible and powerful tool in the hands of Power.

For the people who suffer at the hands of neoliberal bourgeois "democracy" it also holds out a false promise of "making it good." If we hold our breath long enough and prostrate ourselves before our "leaders," for ever, we will get to the promised land of wealth and happiness: meritocracy.

Everyone loves the word democracy. It sounds good, and nice, and fair. It has that air of justice and a benevolent, mysterious status about it. It can

be used to make debates sound sophisticated and a vital part of human life, such as food, water, or air. It's as if no civilised people can live without it (or be allowed to). And yet we do. Or, at least, 99 per cent of the population do.

And no matter how much we on the left try to convince the mass of people that there is no democracy, they don't hear it. It appears that a sizable majority cannot reconcile the link between the wealthy and what is passed off as democracy. And if they do, they think they can do nothing to change it. Even worse, a majority think it's not their business but the business of "leaders."

So, if the notion of democracy is



The CPI Women's Committee gathered members and supporters at the eleventh annual March for Choice, right calling for abortion on demand. For this writer, the stories told at this meeting again revealed how women are still treated in Ireland, north and south and in O'Connell Street left to march with the thousands at the Cost of Living protest reports Paul Doran.



they have shares in will lose profits; and if we were to introduce a rent cap, or public housing for all, they would lose out on their rental income.

Within a capitalist society there is a class war between the capitalist class and the working class. Our two interests contradict and cannot be resolved, unless the capitalist system of profiteering is done away with. While we fight for an increase in real wages—i.e. the actual buying power of wages—the capitalist class fight against it, as that causes a loss in profits. While we fight for a housing system that can accommodate all, the landlords in the Government fight against it. We have seen already their readiness to privatise our basic needs, with the attempted privatisation of water and the implementation of water

charges. The working class banded together and, through mass action, fought against this privatisation.

They sold off Dublin bus routes to the Go-Ahead group, a British public transport company. Go-Ahead pay their drivers €4,000 less per year than Dublin Bus. This pay cut was caused by privatisation. Bord Gáis Éireann was sold off and privatised, taking the possibility of a regulated and subsidised energy industry away from the people.

Those in power want to privatise everything they can, especially if it can translate to money in their pockets. Now we see the Government selling the shares they bought from the banks to bail them out as a promise of privatisation. They continue to sell public land that could be used for

public housing to vulture funds and private developers, exacerbating the housing crisis and pushing more people into homelessness and poverty.

The capitalists need the workers, but the workers do not need the capitalists.

To fix such issues as homelessness and poverty wages we need a worker-run government to put the interests of the people first. Electing landlords and shareholders to positions of power will change nothing. They do not represent our interests. Only through mass action of the working class as an organised class, through unions, and a party made up of the revolutionary workers, can change truly be brought about. True representation in positions of power will come when the workers are in those positions. ★

ICLE FOR THE PROLETARIAT?

so engraved in the psyche of the people, could we use it as a working tool to get people's attention? to allow them to feel safe in their efforts to build towards a new society? Could we use the word democracy more in our language, like the term "work-place democracy," "democratic public housing," a "free, democratic health service," and "free, democratic education system"? Use the bourgeois-democratic armour against them, rework the bourgeois meaning of democracy and freedom.

The word freedom is another infamous term. Why can we not co-opt that word too? The democratic freedom to social justice; to a

socialist Ireland; the democracy and freedom of capped energy and food prices; the democratic freedom of being able to live life to the full, just as the rich can; the democratic freedom to own the means of production and distribution. Working people need to become aware of the real meaning of democracy and freedom, and that it has a meaning and daily reality for them.

For the left it is not enough to be talking about socialism and communism alone: there is a need to get the people into a working relationship with it through their living in the real world, as they experience it.

It would appear that the present

travails of capitalism are going to provide fertile ground for those who will suffer most, to begin to realise that another world is possible. And, more importantly, they have a part to play in that change. We must, first of all, assist in the dilution of the power of fake leadership and eventually create the conditions where the proletariat begin to realise that they are the power for real change.

Would comrades care that with the words democracy and freedom we encouraged the people of Ireland to build and establish a workers' republic? Any reason why we cannot turn the bourgeois "ammunition of words" against them?



THE WOMEN OF IRAN HAVE RISEN



Laura Duggan
LIBERATION

THE WOMEN of Iran have risen up, with cries of “Down with the dictator!”

The catalyst has been the murder of Mahsa (Zhinā) Amini, a 22-year-old woman murdered at the hands of the Gasht-e Ershād (Guidance Patrol), otherwise known as the morality police. She was arrested on 13 September for not wearing a complete hijab, was taken to a detention centre, and a few hours later was transferred to an intensive-care unit in critical condition. She was pronounced dead on Friday 16 September.

Mahsa Amini is only one of the latest of the thousands murdered by the

SANCTIONS NEEDED AGAINST THE ISRAELI KILLING MACHINE



Paul Doran
SOLIDARITY

WHILE THE WORLD looks on at the proxy war between Russia and the United States taking place in Ukraine, in which the Russian and Ukrainian people suffer, the continuing ethnic cleansing takes place in occupied Palestine.

The Ukrainian flag is ubiquitous in the West; what are the colours of the Palestinian flag? or in fact the flags of Yemen, Somalia, etc.? Even a summary of some tragic events in September should draw attention within the international community to the Palestinians’ plight.

On 20 September, Israeli forces plugged with cement two underground wells in the occupied West Bank, making them useless, the official Palestinian news agency Wafa reported. The wells were providing drinking-water for residents in the villages of Al-Ras and Kafr ‘Abbush, south of Tulkarm. The head of Al-Ras village council, Muhammad Majdub, told Wafa that the occupation forces



REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

Statement by the CPI Women’s Committee

Dáil Éireann has discussed at length the plight of the Palestinian people and their suffering. The time has now come to act, and to call it what it is: that Israel is an apartheid state, and that sanctions must be implemented immediately against the Israel killing machine.

Islamic Republic, with at least another fifty people killed during protests that have rocked the country since. Whether she ever intended to shake the regime or not, that is what she has done. Her name has become a rallying cry for all in the country seeking change. Her temporary tombstone reads: "Dear Zhina, you will not die. Your name will become our symbol."

We offer solidarity with all those who seek to throw off the chains of oppression, and we remember that none are so fitted to break those chains as they who wear them. Solidarity is not practised through calls for international intervention, as we have seen play out over and over again to the detriment of all but US imperialism; and solidarity is not practised by targeting people for

plugged a well in the eastern area of the village with concrete, without a warning.

On Tuesday 20 September, Jewish extremist settlers attacked Palestinians in Jerusalem's Old City, injuring at least twenty-one of them, including children, the newspaper *Al-Resalah* reported. According to eyewitnesses, Jewish settlers attacked people in the Old City market, including children and the elderly, spraying them with gas.

On Thursday 22 September a young Palestinian man was killed by occupation forces outside the village of Bayt Sira, to the west of Ramallah, WAFA reported.

On Saturday 24 September a young Palestinian man, Sa'ed al-Kuni, was killed and three others wounded in an Israeli army raid on Nablus, north of the occupied West Bank. He was shot dead by an undercover Israeli force that broke into the neighbourhood of Al-Taawon in Nablus. At least three Palestinians were injured in the raid.

Last February an Amnesty

REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS are under attack around the world, and while small gains have been made in Ireland since the repeal of the 8th Amendment, the Government has continued to fail to deliver free, safe, legal, local and accessible abortion services for all who need them.

As it stands, abortion in Ireland is available up to 12 weeks only, and a pre-abortion consultation must be carried out at least 3 days before accessing the service. These restrictions add additional pressures

their religious expression.

What killed Mahsa Amini was not religion but state repression, expressed through religion. The religion is merely the excuse and the tool used to subjugate, repress, and dominate; and, as we have seen, though everyone in Iran is affected, it is women who face the brunt of it.

We have seen a similar situation here, where the Catholic Church and the state used each other to demean, belittle, control and repress women. The answer was not and is not to challenge and blame individuals for their personal religious beliefs but to tackle the institutions; and this work is being done in Iran, as here.

Islamic feminists, progressive and left-wing forces within Iran and those

International report said that the Israeli authorities must be held accountable for committing the crime of apartheid against Palestinians. Their investigation described how Israel enforces a system of oppression and domination against the Palestinian people wherever it has control over their rights. This includes Palestinians living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories as well as displaced refugees in other countries.

The secretary-general of Amnesty International, Dr Agnès Callamard, stated: "Our report reveals the true extent of Israel's apartheid regime. Whether they live in Gaza, East Jerusalem and the rest of the West Bank, or Israel itself, Palestinians are treated as an inferior racial group and systematically deprived of their rights. We found that Israel's cruel policies of segregation, dispossession and exclusion across all territories under its control clearly amount to apartheid. The international community has an obligation to act."

But essentially nothing has

for people seeking abortion and can be invasive, shame-inducing, and give space for rogue pregnancy services to peddle their misinformation, lies, and fear-mongering.

The current approach assumes ignorance and wrong-doing on the part of the patient. The lack of a person and patient-centric approach to abortion leads those wishing to seek abortion to delaying access and forces many women and girls to travel to England.

We believe abortions should be

exiled are the voices to be heeded in this discussion. It is these people who have continued to fight against oppression and despotism, often at great risk to themselves; and it is only these forces combined that have the means and the understanding to effect the changes necessary within Iran for the betterment of all.

Our duty as communists abroad is to lift those voices and to defend and stand with those who face oppression here.

Hijabi or not, sisters and comrades, it is a better world we build, and it is one we build together. ★

Image left: Uprising in Tehran, Keshavarz Boulevard September 2022
Credit: Darafsh/Creative Commons

changed, and in fact the situation has become worse, as now the Zionist state pays no attention to world opinion. Its first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, stated it for all to hear in June 1938, "I am for compulsory transfer; I do not see anything immoral in it," as they planned the ethnic cleansing of an Arab people from their "Red House."

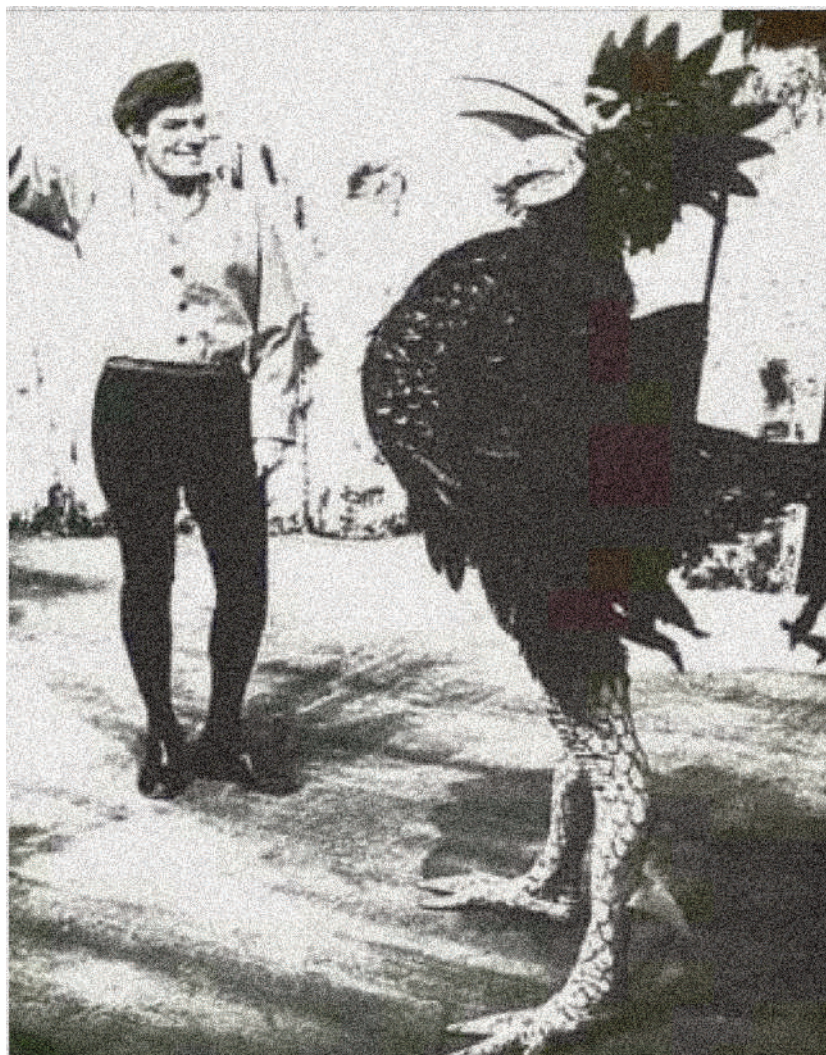
And if one thinks this is not something that so-called learned people would say in the modern era, then Arnon Soffer, a professor of geography, emphasised the point on 10 May 2004 in the *Jerusalem Post*, where he stated: "So, if we want to remain alive, we have to kill and kill and kill. All day every day . . . If we don't kill, we will cease to exist . . ."

Dáil Éireann has discussed at length the plight of the Palestinian people and their suffering. The time has now come to act, and to call it what it is: that Israel is an apartheid state, and that sanctions must be implemented immediately against the Israel killing machine. ★

available throughout pregnancy for anyone who wants or needs one, free from stigma and shame, without apology or restriction. We support the Abortion Rights Campaign and their continued work campaigning on this issue. We joined them and other activists on 24 September at 12:45 p.m. outside the Dáil to show the Government that anything less than free, safe, legal, accessible and local abortions for everyone who needs them, when they need them, leaves far too many people behind. ★



SEAN O'CASEY'S DARK COMEDY



JENNY FARRELL

SEAN O'CASEY'S dark comedy *Cock-a-Doodle Dandy* (1949) is set in Ireland about 1940 and is rarely performed.

Witchcraft is haunting the village of Nyadhanave ever since Marthraun's daughter by his first wife, Loreleen, arrived from London. A rooster causes commotion and embodies indomitable joie de vivre and rebelliousness. The setting in the backwoods suggests a provincial Irish state. A theocracy overlays and dominates all action.

The play takes place outside Michael Marthraun's house. Eerie whispers are abroad, holy pictures are inverted, so Marthraun—small farmer, local politician, and owner of a lucrative bog—tells Mahan, the owner of a fleet of lorries carrying turf from bog to town.

Loreleen is a well-read young woman who has brought with her books that have been banned by the state. She, like other life-affirming characters in this play, is colourfully dressed, like a rooster. Loreleen has a disquieting effect on the other women in the house.

A love of life and an advocacy of a better life go together. Two young workers, wearing colourful scarves, demand more pay and threaten to strike. At the same time they also show themselves open to Loreleen's charms.

Mahan and Marthraun both belong to the (Catholic-Masonic) Order of Knights of St Columbanus, are friends with the old arch-Catholic Shanaar (Irish *seanfhear*, old man), Father Domineer, and the

Sergeant, all of whom still believe in witches. In the constellation of characters, Catholicism, the state and business all belong together.

When a rooster gets lost in the house, chaos ensues. The rooster, after which the play is titled, is highly symbolic: it embodies something menacingly supernatural. Secondly, it symbolises positive vitality and sensuality, courage, and rebelliousness.

The messenger Robin Adair, also colourfully dressed, is, along with Loreleen, the antagonist. Both are completely realistic and immune to superstition. Slowly the characters group around the poles of the humane and life-affirming and the inhumane and life-denying.

Act 2 opens with Marion and Lorna laughing at Mahan and Marthraun and becoming increasingly realistic, less superstitious.

A delivery man appears with a new top hat for Marthraun, to replace the one damaged in the cock hunt, but it has already been shot through in transit by the sergeant—he, like the local politician, is part of the establishment. This is not only indicated by his bizarre behaviour: he also speaks as pompously, and wrongly, as Mahan and Marthraun. They all use words that sound “educated” to them but use them incorrectly, because of their lack of book-reading.

The sergeant tells us that when he shot at the cock it turned into a top hat. Mahan and Marthraun, as well as the sergeant, are beside themselves with fear, and blame the unmanageable women.

Above:
Left: Portrait of
Sean O'Casey by
Augustus John



The whiskey Mahan and Marthraun brought to seal their business negotiations with turns into a fiery monster whenever they approach. When other male, church-going visitors show interest in the liquor, this eerie metamorphosis also frightens them off.

Loreleen, Marion and Lorna appear in colourful costumes, dressed as “gypsies,” rebelliously undermining the Catholic notion of proper women’s dress.

At this moment a golden light appears and has a strange effect, dazing the men. The women have changed so much by now that they can see nothing unusual in either feathered fowl, top hat, or whiskey. They have a glass of whiskey, and ask the men to dance.

At this wonderful moment the men forget their haggling and their fear of witchcraft. Mahan and Marthraun are able to reach a business agreement, and even the top hat loses its menace. As they all dance together, horns appear on the women’s heads.

Suddenly Father Domineer appears, and all but Loreleen and Robin fall to their knees. Domineer threatens the group gathered before him because of their dancing, and he rages that pagan poison is coming into the country through films, books and plays that weaken the priests’ power over souls.

Domineer rebukes the women for their misbehaviour, and the men submit to him. Mahan, however, is not quite so submissive and refuses to obey Domineer’s order to dismiss his best driver, Jack, because he lives with a woman outside marriage.

Domineer kills Jack. The sergeant immediately exonerates the killer. Robin “comments” on the murder. No-one stands up for Jack; he is isolated in the community.

The house is shaken by thunder and lightning, and all but Loreleen run for safety. Domineer emerges. He vows to destroy Loreleen’s books.

The cock dances during this confrontation between all the protagonists, and accordion music is heard. Mahan and Marthraun resume their endless haggling, Marthraun’s attitude towards his wife reverts to what it was. Lorna, however, is no longer the same. Common sense and a new self-confidence have taken hold of her.

Shanaar and the two workers bring Loreleen, who was attacked by an incited mob. There is nothing to indicate that these workers defended Loreleen, to whose sensuality and beauty they had earlier been attracted. They have regressed, failed to realise their potential. Very different behaviour might have been expected from Jack, the driver whom Domineer killed, the more conscious proletarian over whom the priest had no control.

The pursuit by the villagers of Loreleen and the rooster, as well as the attempted intimidation of all the women here, allows for parallels not only with the Middle Ages but also with McCarthyism, which was emerging in the late 1940s.

All hope seems lost. Superstition and misanthropy have prevailed for the time being. But the rooster remains free. Although the forces of humanity leave the stage, he remains, part of eternally renewing nature, expecting to cause turmoil again in future. Loreleen, Lorna, Marion and Robin depart. However, they too may return, only to cause upheaval once more. ★

At this moment a golden light appears and has a strange effect, dazing the men. The women have changed so much by now that they can see nothing unusual in either feathered fowl, top hat, or whiskey. They have a glass of whiskey, and ask the men to dance.



Gabriel Rosenstock’s latest book is *A Selborne Haibun* (tinyurl.com/bdd5hzvh).

GEORGIA MELONI

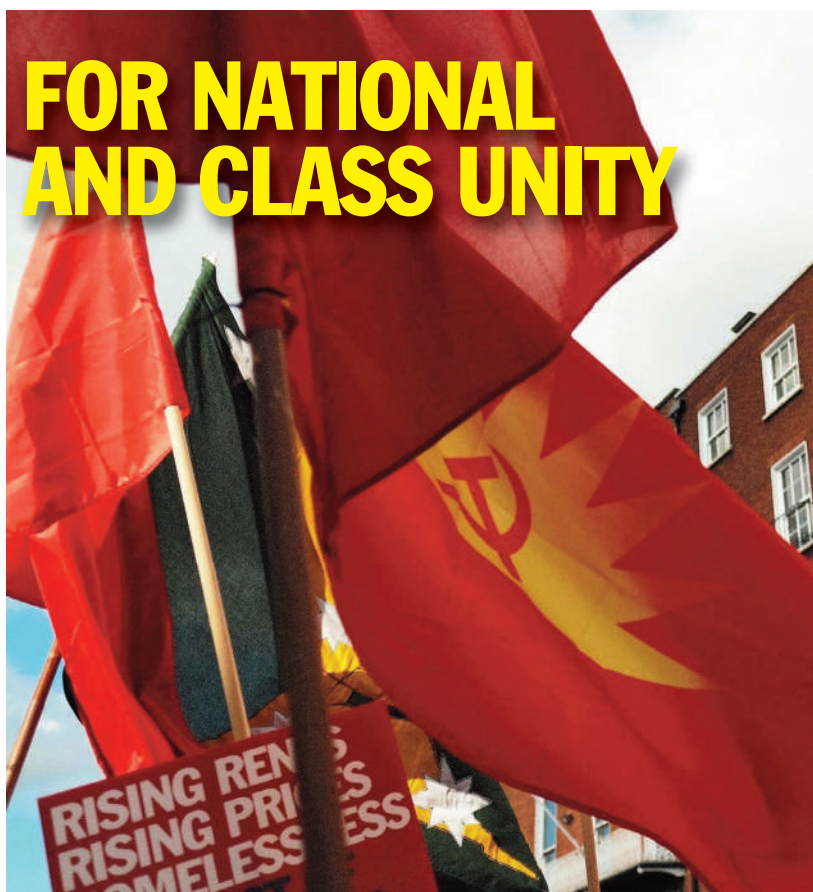
A bilingual limerick
by the Limerick bilingualist
Gabriel Rosenstock

The fascist Georgia Meloni
is a-speaking a lot of baloney
she a-shoots from the hip
when she a-opens her lip
me a-thinks that Meloni’s a phoney

An ceannaire nua Meloni
ag scaothaireacht a bhíonn sí i gcónaí
ach tá Dia lena taobh
(cén fáth? canathaobh?)
Is a cara mór, Silvio Berlusconi



FOR NATIONAL AND CLASS UNITY



UNDER THE SLOGAN “National and Class Unity,” the Communist Party of Ireland held its 26th National Congress over the weekend of 17 and 18 September in Dublin. The congress brought together communists from around Ireland to discuss and vote upon the political resolution and a new constitution. It was the culmination of months of debate in the party branches on the draft political resolution and the draft new constitution presented by the National Executive Committee.

The congress took place as the attacks on working people’s living standards continue to grow, the crisis of the system intensifies, and the military and economic aggressiveness in the form of sanctions by imperialism against peoples and countries they wish to control, led by the United States, grows in intensity.

The mood at the congress was very buoyant and confident, with a significant number of new members attending, while the age profile of the CPI has also dropped, reflecting the growth in membership and increased activity.

One of the central questions contained in the political resolution was our evaluation of the current situation, the contradictions thrown up by Brexit, a new evaluation of the role and impact of the Belfast Agreement, and our continued resistance to the triple lock of imperialism—US, EU, and British—on the lives of the people of Ireland.

Of course the war in Ukraine was also a feature during the debate, and how we need to step up the peace struggle and the defence of Irish neutrality.

The main thrust of the political resolution was a further consolidation of our evolving transformative strategy, which is our understanding of current struggles and how they can be developed into all-Ireland struggles that strengthen the national character of the resistance to imperialist domination and control.

Our task is to give a clear class transformative understanding to current struggles, to try to shape and develop them in a way that strengthens the power of workers and weakens the power of capital, to raise the class-consciousness of those engaged in struggle. This will weaken the mechanism of control and help build the independent political role of the class.

To this end the congress adopted a “Unity Programme: A Pathway Forward: Building Working-Class Resistance.” Such a unity programme will endeavour to move beyond the mere aspiration of a “united Ireland” and to develop a strategy for building the forces that will bring it about. It will develop national demands that mobilise the working class on an all-Ireland basis. It will continue to resist the interference of British imperialism in the affairs of the people of Ireland and the subservience of the Irish government to the interests and needs of imperialism in the form of the triple lock.

This work is already under way, and the congress further clarified and deepened this strategy. The CPI puts forward such demands as an all-Ireland public health service, free at the point of demand, as central to creating the building-blocks of working-class unity.

Other crucial elements include an all-Ireland public housing strategy, a state-led national industrial development strategy linked to sustainability, and an all-Ireland strategy on workers’ rights and repealing all anti-worker laws.

The congress reaffirmed the CPI’s opposition to the European Union and especially to any further integration and the growing militarisation of the EU. The Unity Programme is for strengthening the struggles for national sovereignty and democracy. Also of importance is the defence of the national language and culture as critical elements in the resistance to imperialism.

The congress also reinforced the need for working-class activists to be involved in the trade union movement, to bring working-class needs and interests into the heart of the trade union movement and to break the compliant nature of the current trade union leadership. The “cost of capitalism” crisis provides an opportunity to raise serious questions about the nature of the system imposed upon us, about which demands will push the boundaries and limitations imposed on our class by the system. It provides an opportunity to expose the narrow framework within which discussion and action are allowed to take place.

The 26th Congress was a very challenging but democratic forum, bringing together, as it did, different generations with different levels of experience.

The new party constitution ends the last elements of partitionist structures, which fostered a partitionist mentality among some, which had become an impediment to the development of a strong all-Ireland party, preventing the development of clear all-Ireland strategies for moving forward. The congress reinforced the class and anti-imperialist nature of the CPI and its ideological approach to the national democratic question facing the people of Ireland.

The congress elected a new leadership, one third of whom have not been members of the National Executive Committee before. The election also brought about a shift in the age profile of the leadership, more reflective of the growing number of younger activists.

The final act of the 26th Congress was the adoption of a motion of international solidarity, which reaffirms the class and anti-imperialist world view of the Communist Party of Ireland.

The CPI moves forward more united than before. The young activists are more than willing to write their own pages to be added to 101 years of struggle and resistance by the Communist Party of Ireland. ★