

# Socialist Voice

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**With characteristic ruling class arrogance the leaders of the G7 principal imperialist powers met at Hiroshima where the United States inflicted nuclear mass murder on a nation already defeated writes *Jimmy Corcoran* Page 2**

## THE RULING CLASS WANTS WAR



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## THE RULING CLASS WANT WAR



### JIMMY CORCORAN IMPERIALISM

IT IS A TRUISM that all wars must end. They can end either in a victory for one side, in a stalemate or sometimes with a political change if one of the protagonist countries pulls them out of the war, as happened in Russia following the October

Revolution. In the NATO proxy war against Russia, with both sides having access to nuclear weapons, there is another possible ending: nuclear armageddon.

At the time of writing, the war in Ukraine shows few signs of ending. It is in fact escalating as NATO continues to pour armaments, including the promise of F16 fighters, into the country and urges the Zelensky government to

launch its much heralded counter-offensive. Peace proposals from the government of the People's Republic of China have been ignored by the capitalist media and rejected by NATO. The leaders of six African countries – South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, Republic of Congo, Uganda and Zambia – are planning to travel to both Ukraine and Russia to try and broker a ceasefire. Again, this has been all but ignored by

## NEITHER KING NOR KAISER



### CLOVER CARROLL MONARCHY

NEUTRALITY AND Irish republicanism have been connected throughout history. They go hand in hand and cannot be separated from one another but despite this, the so-called Republicans of Sinn Féin have seen it necessary to go to the British king's coronation as if any Irish Republican should recognise such a pompous position. Writing on the British coronation in 1902, Connolly stated: "Were we able to follow our own inclinations in the matter we would be inclined to treat it with contempt as being of but little importance to the cause for which we stand, or to the workers with whose

interests we are concerned. To us, as Socialists, it is but of little moment who may for the time being wear the trappings of royalty; that we are compelled to acquiesce in his rule by the bayonets of his hireling soldiery and police is for us sufficient; and to us, as workers, the personality of the head of the Capitalist system in these islands is of small concern when we realise that our exploitation by the master class would proceed apace even if King Edward VII were a Christian gentleman".

Over 120 years later Connolly's words can be applied directly to the coronation of Charles. In the same piece Connolly continued, "when Capital and its cringing slaves are united in adoration of the monarch



the capitalist media.

NATO, it seems, is determined to continue the war. How else can one view the decision of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin? In an article in the South African Communist Party journal *Umsebenzi Online*, Professor Alexander Mezyaev stated that an analysis of the activities of the ICC shows that “maintaining international conflicts and preventing their resolution” is one of its three main goals<sup>1</sup>. Issuing an arrest warrant for Putin certainly seems designed to encourage Russia to continue the war, especially if surrendering to the ICC is a precondition for a ceasefire. It should be remembered that Russia and Ukraine were very close to agreeing a peace deal last April until Boris Johnson was despatched to Ukraine to demand that Zelensky continue the war. For the moment, continuing the war helps US imperialism achieve a number of strategic goals. It has increased its domination over Europe politically and economically, by pursuing a strategy to break EU energy relations with Russia and replace them with dependence on US reserves and those of its client states in the Middle East. NATO has increased in size, as have arms industry profits.

It is not just NATO that wants the war to continue. The Irish ruling class are fervently in favour of continuing the war. The silence from the Irish government, Dáil opposition and the media on the results of an opinion poll commissioned by the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) has been deafening. The poll showed that 87% of Irish people are in favour of a ceasefire and negotiations to end the

who has been successful in uniting in his person, all the baser attributes of the mediaeval monarch and the modern stockjobbing capitalist; we also in imagination hasten thither in order to offer to King Edward, in the name of ourselves and our class, the only homage we owe him – OUR HATRED.” Republicans today must entirely oppose the monarchy. The occupied six counties saw the newly crowned king bring his force of 300 troops into Derry to patrol the Bogside only 54 years ago, the same troops who three years later took part in the mass shooting of unarmed civilians that resulted in 14 deaths. Do we really want to show the man who led the troops responsible for this our respect?

With the opposition to the

**The silence from the Irish government, Dáil opposition and the media on the results of an opinion poll commissioned by the Peace and Neutrality Alliance (PANA) has been deafening. The poll showed that 87% of Irish people are in favour of a ceasefire and negotiations to end the war.**

**Republicans today must completely oppose the monarchy**

war<sup>2</sup>. The same political actors who are loudly proclaiming that violence is not the way to resolve political problems are engaged in an orgy of self-congratulation celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, condemn anyone calling for a ceasefire in Ukraine as a “Kremlin stooge”. We are “informed” by the media that a ceasefire means giving into Russian aggression.

Why would the Irish ruling class wish the war to continue? As long as the war continues, increasing numbers of refugees will come to Ireland, further exposing the two-tier refugee response of the Irish state as well as highlighting the lack of housing, doctors, school places and transport links in working class communities. Why would the government refuse to campaign for a ceasefire and to oppose further EU money being spent on armaments? After all, the 26 counties is neutral and as such could be well placed to support peace initiatives.

However, while the state is theoretically neutral, the Irish ruling class is not, its position in Ireland being dependent on its subservience to imperialism. It is hoping to fatally undermine, as a prelude to completely abandoning, what remains of Irish neutrality. It believes the current war offers an ideal opportunity to achieve this goal. The Irish public has been fed the NATO narrative in which Russia is the root of all evil and, like Germany in 1914, has launched an unprovoked attack on a weaker, peace-loving neighbour. As a result, Russia must be defeated in order to save “civilisation”. The CPI opposed the Russian invasion of Ukraine, but we recognise the reality is far more complex than the “Ukraine

monarchy from republicans, the Irish Citizens Army emblazoned on their banner “We serve neither king nor kaiser but Ireland”. This simple declaration of neutrality must be kept by every republican today with the encroaching possibility of the coalition government bringing Ireland into NATO. Even Sinn Féin have changed their stance on NATO and PESCO membership. PESCO was set up for furthering the military cooperation of EU member states but most of these states are already in NATO. 22 of the 27 EU member states are part of NATO and PESCO, with only Denmark not having membership in either. Is Ireland so endangered by other countries that we need to be involved in the growth of the military of Europe? The only

good/Russia bad” version being peddled by the media. I would recommend reading “Now or Never”: The Immediate Origins of Putin’s Preventative War on Ukraine”<sup>3</sup> by Geoffrey Roberts for a detailed analysis and chronology of the steps towards war.

The government has decided that removing “the triple lock” on the use of Irish troops abroad is the next step on the road to NATO. Its “Consultative Forum on Neutrality”, chaired by a pro-NATO academic, which will tour the country in late June, will no doubt “find” widespread support for abandoning neutrality despite all opinion polls on the issue showing that the majority of Irish people still support maintaining it. Clausewitz maintained that war was politics by other means. In Ireland it is clear that the Ruling class and their allies will support the continuation of the war in Ukraine in the hope that it will help them achieve their political aim of abandoning Irish neutrality. ★

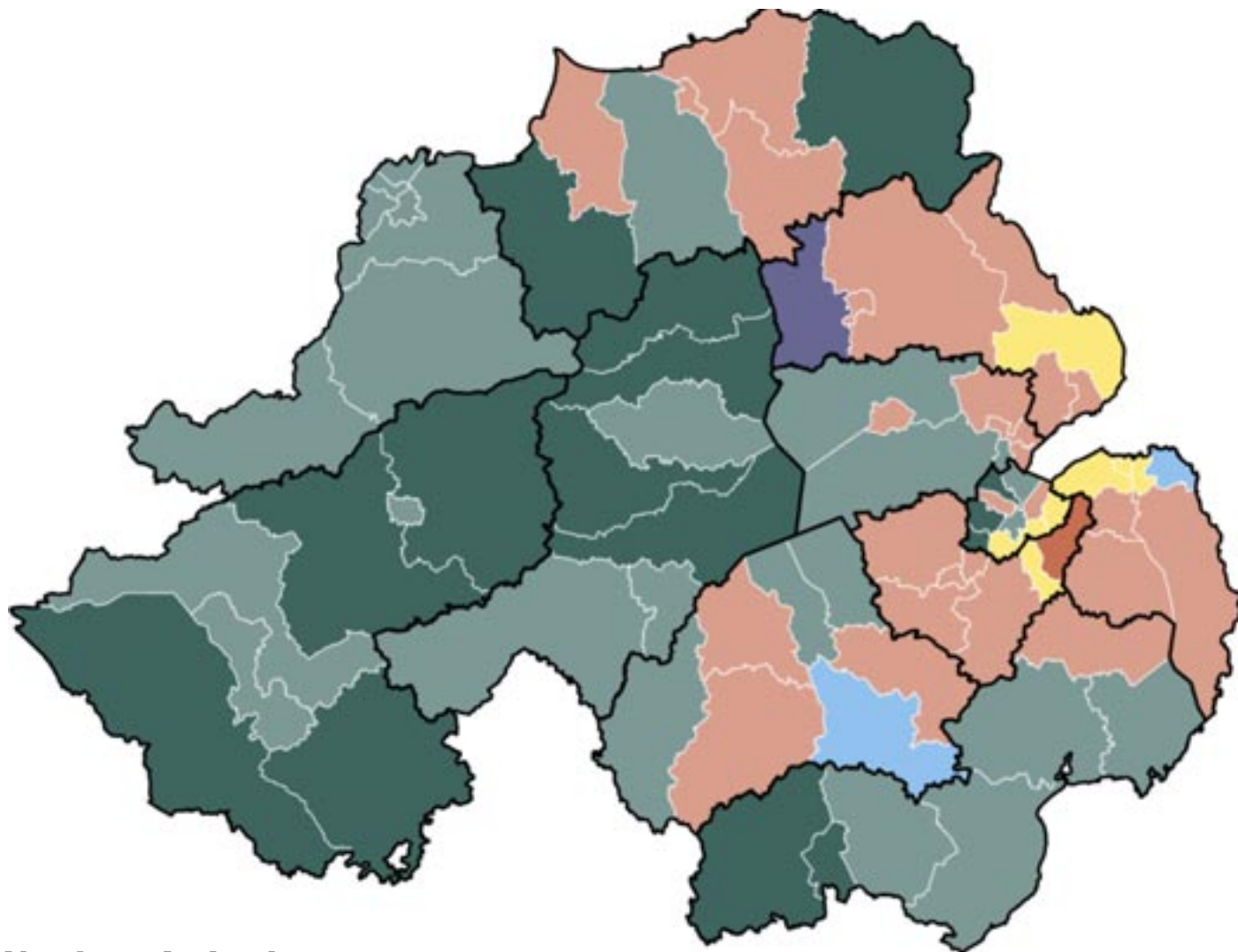
## Notes

- 1 Mezyawv. A, “The fascistisation and nazification of international relations: Events in Ukraine from the point of view of Marxist-Leninist theory.” *Umsebenzi Online*. Volume 21, Number 4, 14 July 2022
- 2 Peace and Neutrality Alliance, “Ipsos Omnipoll on War in Ukraine”. 22 May 2023 (<https://www.pana.ie/posts/ipsos-omnipoll-on-war-in-ukraine>)
- 3 G. Roberts, “Now or Never”: The Immediate Origins of Putin’s Preventative War on Ukraine” *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Vol 22 no.2 p.4-26.

country to have occupied Ireland and the country that continues to do so is Britain.

Sinn Féin has rightly shown support for the ending of the blockade on Cuba and for the current coalition to condemn Zionist violence against Palestinians but when President Biden came to visit Ireland it seemed little more than a facade as they welcomed him with open arms. Words mean a lot, but they lose all meaning when the leader of the country that is funding Israeli apartheid and that keeps the sanctions on Cuba is welcomed with open arms. Neutrality is not shaking hands with the oppressors: it is saying that they have no right to be oppressors. ★





## Northern Ireland Council Elections

### First Preferences:

SF: 30.9% (+7.7)  
 DUP: 23.3% (-0.8)  
 ALL: 13.3% (+1.8)  
 UUP: 10.9% (-3.2)  
 SDLP: 8.7% (-3.3)  
 TUV: 3.9% (+1.7)  
 GRN: 1.7% (-0.4)  
 PBP: 1.0% (-0.4)  
 AON: 0.9% (-0.2)  
 Changes w/ 2019.

### TOMMY McKEARNEY UNIONIST CRISIS

LAST MONTH'S local government election results were even more significant than simply the storming performance by Sinn Féin. The outcome has underlined an inexorable direction of travel that points to the decline not just of unionist political hegemony, but of the very union itself. Not only is unionism losing out in the crucial numbers game but is also witnessing the economic failing of the Six Counties.

The DUP vote actually held up, yet in spite of that Sinn Féin still won more seats. Even more ominous for avowed supporters of the English connection was the realisation that overall they are in a minority across local government in the North. Councillors elected who publicly favour ending partition have a small numerical advantage over those committed to its maintenance. When the constitutionally agnostic such as Alliance is also taken into consideration,

those identifying purely as unionist are left in a minority of slightly over 40% across all eleven council districts.

Coming as this does on the heels of the disconcerting sight of Sinn Féin's Michelle O'Neill claiming the First Minister's title (if not office) coupled with the unnerving demographic shift recorded in the latest census toll, the evidence of fundamental change is clear to all but the most myopic.

That this fact is certainly recognised by hard-headed observers of northern life became apparent recently when BBC in Belfast recorded a series of podcasts in the run-up to the local government elections. One episode dealing with the challenges facing unionism in general was addressed by two well-known local political commentators, BBC reporter Gareth Gordon and Sam McBride, Northern Ireland editor of the Belfast Telegraph and Sunday Independent. Both participants are outstanding journalists

# CIL ELECTIONS IN THE NORTH

but by no stretch of the imagination can they be described as carrying a banner for Irish republicanism.

Their assessment of the situation was stark: unionism is in decline and apparently incapable of reversing the trend. Coming as it did from two people with no obvious reason to undermine the North's position within the UK, this is telling. Moreover, election day results bore out their analysis, lending weight to the view that the current status quo is not permanently sustainable.

Nor indeed is the latest political upset the only factor auguring against the long-term future of the partitioned statelet. Where once Belfast's wealthy bourgeoisie enjoyed a place at the forefront of the British Empire's manufacturing elite, that day has long gone. No longer is it possible to advocate the unionist case by pointing to the economic advantages of being embedded within the Empire's captured territory. The Empire is no more, Britain's economy is faltering and the North is the weakest and poorest region of the UK.

Worse still from a unionist perspective is the depressing fact that productivity in the Republic is on average 40% greater than that of the North. A recent report by the ESRI to an Oireachtas committee recorded this fact, along with the finding that the Six Counties lag behind the South in important aspects such as a shorter average life expectancy, lower average household income and greater levels of poverty.

None of which diminishes in any way the obscenity of inequality in the Republic, nor should there be any tolerance of that fact. Nevertheless, productivity is a key measure of a society's wealth-generating capacity and while not overlooking how income in the 26 Counties is so ill-distributed, this means the North has lost what it long said was practically its very *raison d'être*.

Stalled in the trough of economic decline and political stalemate, the prospects for unionism and the union have never been bleaker. Caught up also is the hapless DUP, the leading party of unionism. Unable to manoeuvre in any positive direction that might help "make Northern Ireland viable", the venerable Sir Jeffrey Donaldson is leading Ireland's unionism and the union to where it is best placed ...in the dustbin of history.

**It certainly suits the three imperialisms who control Ireland – Britain, the US and the EU – with the willing help of the local ruling class. Sectarianism and the invented political excuses it requires ensure that the real intentions and interests of capitalism and the local ruling class are hidden from most of the population.**

## Barry Murray SECTARIANISM

THERE'S NOTHING like the craic on the street during election campaigning. Memorable quotes are born like: "we want real change not loose change". But mostly there is a carnivalesque atmosphere around canvassing and people can appear to become interested in what the candidates are saying. You are told wonderful stories of how politics should work and about how they have been failed by the system. And, oh yes, you are always getting their number one. People are wonderful and they will never send you away feeling you haven't convinced them to vote for you.

All of this hides a deeper and, as history has shown, an often lethal story. Local Council elections are certainly not disconnected from the sectarian basis upon which this statelet was set up. In fact everything about elections in the North follows a strict "them and us" theme. Even election literature and posters overtly reflect whose side each candidate is on or, in some cases, is not. One hundred years after imperialist-imposed partition, very little has changed in this respect.

But there are great efforts by everyone involved to hide the sectarian elements that are central to who votes for what. It's a well-practiced art. Silence by the electorate on who they actually vote for is the greatest method used to hide the obvious. Unionist political parties say a vote for them protects the Union. In reality, it's to keep the Taigs in their box. Nationalist parties say they just want to "work for all". The real motive is somewhat different. It says "we have overtaken, numerically, our former masters". Again, this has its origins in the years of lethal conflicts since the foundation of this statelet. The rule always was and still is "Say nothing, about anything, 'til you hear more". The wink and the nod secures the deal. The advent of the pacification process dressed up as peace here by the GFA, has only added to that way of thinking. Sectarianism is now institutionalised and official. The obvious question is: who does all this sectarian politicking really suit?

It certainly suits the three imperialisms who control Ireland – Britain, the US and the EU – with the willing help of the local ruling class. Sectarianism and the invented political

excuses it requires ensure that the real intentions and interests of capitalism and the local ruling class are hidden from most of the population. The common-sense narrative is that the "warring factions" cannot agree and therefore have to be managed. The good-sense narrative is, in turn, carefully hidden. And it's true that even those of us who know better get drawn into the "them and us" sham battles: such is the power of a century of the "Green and Orange" engineered divide.

This time, as a consequence of all of the above, "the good guys" lost the election and their clear socialist message was not heard amidst the clamour to ensure that "the other side" were defeated. The old maxim "vote them in to vote them out" was alive and well. Independent Socialist Republican candidates (among others) who do not subscribe to the Us and Them political fear-mongering, were defeated. Well, we are down but certainly not out.

So what is next? What is to be done? Socialist Republicans will continue to build within their communities for a People-Powered Participatory Democracy in a 32-county Ireland. They will continue to pursue social and economic justice for the 99% of the population, and the right of the working class to own, control and distribute the wealth they create. They will continue to fight for a proper all-Ireland health care system, free at the point of use; for public housing; for free education; and work for all of the rights of humanity. They will continue to fight inequality and exploitation, wherever and whenever they can.

The counter-revolutionary former republicans have clearly teamed up with all three imperialisms in Ireland to ensure they are the chosen managers of the country's future. In time an increasing number of the electorate in the North will come to realise that the "sectarian headcount" which was the recent local council elections, cannot be in their material interests. In the next four years it will become apparent to the wider population, that inequality and exploitation is still a constant feature in their lives.

The craic and promises of "the phantom number ones" during campaigning, is all fine and dandy, but the only result at the end of the day must be "real change not loose change". That is, an end to all imperialist and capitalist ruling by fooling. ★







## JIMMY DORAN EXPLOITATION

CAPITALISM HAS survived despite a roller-coaster of crises for over two centuries. It uses many means to survive, but one of its greatest weapons is controlling the narrative and dividing the working class, to divert attention from the cause of all the crises faced by and paid for by the working class: namely capitalism. Ruling by fooling.

So we are told that there is a "labour shortage". There is no labour shortage; there is a wage shortage. But the greed of employers to seek ever-increasing profit prevents them from increasing the share they give to workers for producing all the wealth of the world. Capitalist greed has reached such a level – wages are so low and prices so high – that workers cannot sustain themselves and their families on the wages being offered.

Billions are paid out by the state in rent and family income subsidies to subsidise the poverty wages paid by employers and the exorbitant rents charged by landlords. This is the capitalist state: subsidising low pay and high rents for the benefit of landlords and employers who make record-breaking profits.

Capitalism is devouring itself in a frenzy of greed. At one time it was the navies, the poor and unemployed that left Ireland to work abroad. Capitalist greed has now pushed high earners onto the emigrant ship as accommodation

# THE THREE CA

## BARRY MURRAY HYPOCRISY

SIMON COVENEY, the Dublin TD, and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, was interviewed on RTÉ Radio 1 in late May about the loss of jobs at Meta, Facebook's parent company, over the last few months.

True to form, tongue in cheek, he regretted the job losses and vowed to help those now unemployed. What he didn't specify, needless to say, was how he would help those now left redundant. That's the secret bit that us plebs are not allowed to hear. He did reference that Meta should ensure good severance packages. He knows well he is on safe ground there, as most of those big tech companies are so extravagantly wealthy that a few extra pence of redundancy pay is only a pin-prick to their overall incomes. Coveney wants to give the impression that he is behind helping those now unemployed, when in fact

# Y THE PRICE OF CAPITALISM

becomes unaffordable and a decent life is beyond the means of the majority of workers in today's Ireland.

There are vacancies across all types of work: bus drivers, teachers, craftworkers, nurses, etc., but still employers refuse to match wage increases to inflation. They are prepared to close pubs and restaurants or open for shorter hours rather than to pay staff properly. Many sell up and close, as profits soar in property, shares and the tech industry.

Inflation is bandied around as a term as if it is some sort of a mystery. The reality is it is caused by price increases which along with poverty wages lead to record profits. Inflation is at a forty-year high and profits are at their highest for seventy years. The IMF studied the relationship between wages and prices over the last fifty years and found no evidence of a wage-price spiral.

There was a time when a reserve army of labour could be tapped into from abroad but the greed of the capitalist class and the commodification of shelter has led to a situation where it is unaffordable and impossible for most people coming into the country to put a roof over their head on the poverty wages being offered.

Despite this, the rise of the far right goes unchallenged. The ruling class are happy for them to be the boot-boys of capitalism, for them to blame immigrants living in tents for the housing crisis rather

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than the capitalist system which put them there.

The state is awash with money, with record corporation tax which is but a tiny percentage of the billions in profits made by global corporations on the backs of the workers of Ireland. The corporations can well afford to pay higher wages which would allow workers to pay some of the exorbitant rents demanded by landlords. But the landlords and the employers are one and the same: neither are willing to give a fair share of the profits to those who produced them.

The government is not on the side of the people, nor even neutral. Despite their best efforts to facilitate multinational corporations to evade tax, they now have to appear to be taxing them. This has resulted in a bumper corporation tax booty despite them refusing to take over €13 billion from Apple. The state has so much money they are creating a "Sovereign Wealth Fund" to store it in rather than spending it on the workers who created it.

This isn't the first time this has happened. In 2008, the "pension reserve fund" had €27 billion in it. This money was also collected by the state from taxes on the people in Ireland. The government told the citizens this money was to be invested by the state towards paying the pensions of workers in the future. Instead this money was used to bail out the banks and not one penny went towards the pensions of workers in

Ireland. The only pensions it contributed to were the golden handshakes to the likes of Fingleton, Fitzpatrick and Quinn who still managed to go on living a lavish life of luxury despite them being at the heart of the 2008 financial crash and subsequently declared bankrupt.

What about the pensions of workers? The state continually tries to increase the retirement age to fill the hole left by the plundering of the "pension reserve fund" used to pay for the banks debts.

What about the bailed out banks? As soon as they return to profit they are sold off to private investors – the same people who bankrupted them in the first place – in a merry-go-round of boom, bust, bailout, boom, boom for the rich.

What will the government do with this "Sovereign Wealth Fund"? Will they build public housing or an all-Ireland Health Service? Or will they keep it as an insurance policy to bail out the bankers when their greed leads to the next crisis in the capitalist system?

The system isn't broken – this is not corruption or cronyism – this is simply how capitalism works. It works for those who designed it: the capitalist class. There is no crisis that capitalism cannot solve so long as the rest of us pay for it. The government, the state, is an essential part of how it all operates.

As James Connolly said "Government in a Capitalist Society is but a committee to order the affairs of the capitalist class." #Organise ★

## ARD TRICK: DON'T ASK, DON'T HEAR

Meta is legally bound to pay redundancy.

When asked, not pressed, by the interviewer as to why Meta and many other tech companies in Ireland and world wide, were laying off hundreds of thousands of workers, he simply said it was a fact that they were. He rambled on about having met the heads of at least twenty tech companies while in the US as far back as March (probably on the annual Paddy's Day junket) and these companies had told him that major lay-offs were happening. Sure we all know that! But what he didn't say, nor was he asked, was why were these massive redundancies happening. He did venture to say that the companies concerned "hired too many people recently". What? So the companies hired too many people? That's justification for mass lay-offs of workers? The thought did not occur to him that workers are people who have mortgages and other bills that were based on the fact that they had a job? Did the RTÉ presenter pose that

*The Pillars of Society*  
1926

Georg Grosz depicts the post-war German bourgeoisie – business man, priest, banker, general as corrupt and corrupted

scenario to Simon Coveney? Of course not.

Coveney went on to say that being dumped by these tech companies was not really a problem for those made redundant as they were highly skilled people and would get jobs in other tech areas. Right? He was creating the impression that these workers would simply walk from Meta and into an equivalent tech job. That they wouldn't really be unemployed! Well, he knows that's not true. Why? Because he had earlier stated that more than twenty tech companies in Ireland were now laying people off. So there would likely be no equivalent available jobs. But what he didn't say, nor was it put to him, was that there would now be a large pool of unemployed skilled workers that all employers could now pick and choose from, while simultaneously bargaining wages downwards. Employers will now have a field day, with an increased number of employees competing with

each other for less work. This area was not explored by the RTÉ presenter, either.

By way of unrelated mitigation Coveney blurted out that his government had created 4,000 jobs in the last year. And what? How does that help the recently unemployed tech workers?

The sad thing about all of this is that the presenter cannot or will not ask the really relevant questions as to the reason why tech companies, and others, are making workers redundant at will. The areas of a failing capitalist system might well be exposed if they did. And the reality of what capitalism does to people's lives would also come into focus. That could not be allowed by RTÉ or any other pro-system media outlets.

So the real questions are deliberately and strategically avoided in case the paymasters are offended and turn off the financial taps. Multinational companies and tech companies are the real power in Ireland. The government just manages their affairs. ★





## AN ANALYSIS OF SINN FÉIN'S ASCENDANCY IN IRISH POLITICS: THE CARTEL PARTY MODEL



Sinn Féin, in a historical victory in the northern assembly, becoming the largest party with 27 seats compared with the DUP's 25 seats, has crossed a threshold that looks likely to be repeated in the South in the near future.

**EOGHAN O'NEILL**  
**REPUBLICANISM**

Countless articles have been written on the metrics and projections, so there will be no further discussion of these in this article. What will be attempted here is to frame the ascendancy of Sinn Féin under the lens of the "Cartel Party model", to offer an analysis that objectively looks at the limits of what alternative Sinn Féin can offer. This isn't to target Sinn Féin specifically, but to try to demonstrate that under the present conditions and balance of class forces, any opposition party in the Dáil will sooner or later be adopted into the political party cartel in its ascent to political governance.

The Cartel Party model was first developed in 1992 by Richard Katz and Patrick Mair<sup>1</sup>, who looked at the shifting dynamics and make-up of political parties, from mass parties to catch-all parties to what may now best be

described as cartel parties – an oligopoly/monopoly market of political parties in which rather than competing on policy, competition rests on their ability to politically manage the economic system: the capitalist economy. This author has previously added to the theory on the basis of a class analysis of the cartel model. For Sinn Féin, in general terms, their upswing of support can be broken into two general areas: a growth in support of a United Ireland, partly flowing from Brexit, and a growth in support for an alternative to the establishment political parties.

When previously addressing the subject in 2014-2015, Sinn Féin could have been regarded as being outside the cartel model: a party whose principles went against the establishment status quo regarding austerity, the EU, NATO, militarisation, neutrality, unification, support for anti-imperialist struggles, i.e. Cuba, Palestine, etc. In order to establish whether Sinn Féin have succumbed to

the cartel party model or if it still holds its credentials of being an alternative to the establishment, to the cartel, we will look at four different categories and apply them to current SF policies and statements.

### **Four criteria of the cartel model:**

- 1** Decreased dependence on grass-roots funding, more in favour of funds raised by central government.
- 2** Organisational changes designed to free central party leaders from control by active elements of the party on the ground.
- 3** Policy convergence among parties – (i) downsize expectations (ii) free parties from traditional policy responsibilities and constituencies – increasing institutional externalisation of such commitments.
- 4** An "ideology" of managerial competence to replace the various ideologies of principle as basis for choice among parties

Before delving any further, let's expand a bit on the cartel model and why parties who grow in popularity are vulnerable to joining it. In the 21st century, we have witnessed a shift in the make-up of political parties from being popular mass parties, where party life was intertwined with personal life. However, right across the Western world,



within our representative democracies, political parties became much more savvy, relying much less on mass support but shifting towards professionalism, in other words professional politicians trained for a career in political life and the hiring of other professionals in media or drafting policy, to get their message across. This in effect de-coupled political parties from mass-support and so, right across Europe, the membership of political parties shrank.

In order then to maintain a career in politics, one had to be continually re-elected or be appointed to positions by elected colleagues. The result of this is parties that were all about trying to manage and stabilise the economy. Given that the Irish economy from the 80s onwards was an economy built around a comprador bourgeoisie – a coalition of gombeen-men who profited from construction, property speculation and the financing of the deals on behalf of foreign capital – and finance capital, government policy has been geared toward protecting and expanding their interests. This is why we have observed policy convergence among parties: i) downsizing of expectations, and ii) freeing parties from traditional policy responsibilities and constituencies, increasing institutional externalisation of such commitments and support for EU/euro membership and treaties, etc.

In effect, within the cartel parties, actual government policy narrows in scope and with a lack of policy differentiation, the risk of failure (the party being wiped out) is much less likely, bar in extreme circumstances of economic crisis. Therefore, as a career politician, your interests are much more secure. This in turn means that both in government and opposition, such parties will always have a chance to govern, as long as they can “stay in the race”. Once you are inside the cartel your “brand” of politics is centred around how well you can manage the interests of the economic model rather than bringing about an alternative, or sweeping changes to policy that go against or are antagonistic to those interests.

So with Sinn Féin professing themselves to be an alternative to Fianna Fáil/Fine Gael, which is manifesting in an upswing in their popularity, the question we ask is whether or not they will be able to withstand the power of the cartel, the closer they get to government power. In terms of policy alternatives, SF have released a large number of policy documents (59 since 2019), ranging from the cost of living crisis, a vision for renewable energy, delivering affordable homes, childcare, healthcare, public transport, gambling and a whole host of other areas with greater or lesser

importance for communities in Ireland north and south. This by any measure is an impressive feat and by all accounts their policy-makers have been busy on the ground listening to the challenges that people face on a day to day basis.

From reading and sifting through a lot of these documents, it is difficult to see significant or meaningful alternatives on offer. This is meant by way of observation rather than criticism as the goal here is to analyse where SF lie: within or outside the cartel. Absolutely, they are offering different solutions to the many crises people face than the governing parties, which is welcome; however their fundamental economic strategy does not challenge the power of the gombeen and finance capitalists. The economic base can remain intact even if the political superstructure changes for the first time in generations.

Given this and the fact that they have or are making signals to reverse their previous principled positions regarding the EU, NATO and, by extension, neutrality, these signals demonstrate to US and EU investment and finance capitalists that principles will not get in the way of pragmatism for SF. As Mary Lou McDonald contends in a recent question posed to her about the Party's alignment in the pan-European political grouping: “For us, it's a question of positioning ourselves in the best possible way to advance positive politics, progressive politics, and also Irish interests”.<sup>2</sup> What this alludes to is that criteria 3 and 4 have been satisfied in the affirmation of the cartel.

Under criteria 1, a decrease dependence on grass-roots funding, more in favour of funds raised by central government: evidently the more TDs one has, the more funding will be sourced from central government. However, looking at SIPO figures<sup>3</sup> which are summaries of two main sources of income, it is interesting to note the drop in membership and subs between 2020 and 2021 (from €195,000 to €128,000; with state funding increasing from €4.7m to €5.1m in the same period). Any party that has a certain number of elected officials will be more dependent on central government funds, hence more jobs at risk if the party doesn't insulate itself within the cartel. Taken on its own, it won't tell us if the party has been adopted into the cartel model, but taken with criteria 3 and 4, a more compelling case can be argued.

In terms of criteria 2, organisational changes designed to free central party leaders from control by active elements of the party on the ground: this is much harder to qualify as inner-party democracy and organisation is not going to be publicly broadcast. It is hard for this author to state whether statements

made by party leaders or spokespersons have been agreed upon by SF internal debate and agreements, only SF members and those close to SF can answer this. So there is no way to prescribe criteria 2 with any certainty.

In summary there seems to be a shift in the direction of SF to come under the banner of the cartel party model in Ireland. We can say that 3 of the 4 of the criteria have been satisfied, but more importantly their vision of an alternative is to reform current government policy through budgetary measures rather than attempting to transform the economic base. So whether it is today, tomorrow or some day in the future, SF, without a principled ideological alternative to the power of the ruling class and its economic base, driven by its grass roots membership, will succumb to the cartel party and join FF/FG/Lab/Greens.

The reality is that political parties in our parliamentary democracies now constitute a profession of managing the affairs of business. If business drops or pulls out of the country, the economy slumps, reflected in higher unemployment, budget cuts, tax increases and ultimately the removal of that party from power, as we have seen time and time again. That is why parties prescribed as alternatives in parliamentary democracies find it nearly impossible to stay principled on their ideology and pre-election policies. To do so would lead to their demise. In government aspiration and promises quickly get consumed by the pragmatism of conscribing to the diktats of the capitalist ruling class.

All those on the left and those seeking an alternative will put their votes and hopes towards SF and other left party/independent candidates in the coming elections, to make positive and progressive reforms to the current system, to tackle the cost of living, healthcare, housing, ecological and the myriad of other crisis plaguing our people. However, our expectations should not exceed their ability to deliver the reforms they lay out in their policy documents. Only a class-orientated party made up of the working class and her allies, looking to take power off the ruling class, to change the economic base, can offer a viable long-term substitute and solution to the current crisis, and at this stage no political party in Ireland is large and strong enough to challenge for power. ★

**Given that the Irish economy from the 80s onwards was an economy built around a comprador bourgeoisie – a coalition of gombeen-men who profited from construction, property speculation and the financing of the deals on behalf of foreign capital – and finance capital, government policy has been geared toward protecting and expanding their interests.**

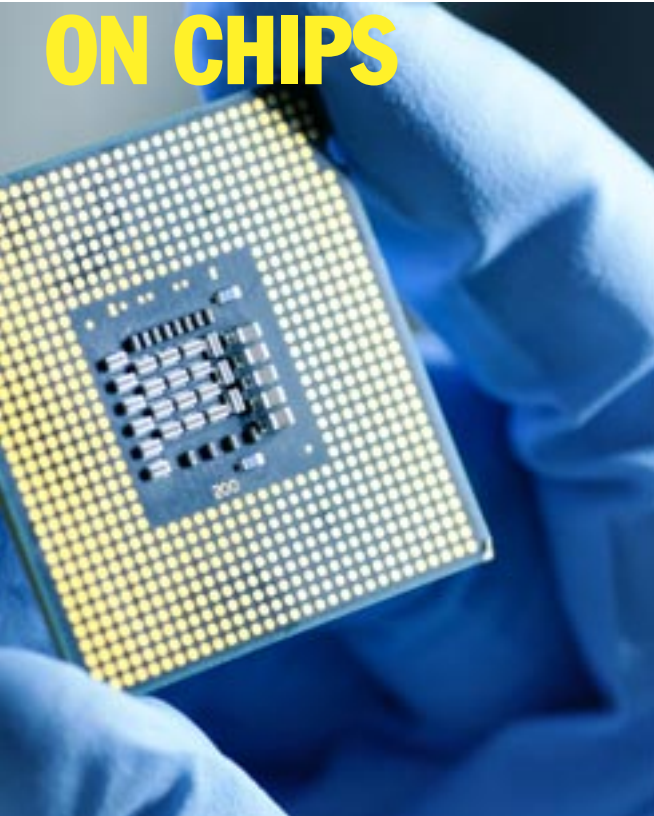
## Notes

- 1 Katz, RS and Mair, P. (2018) *Democracy and the Cartelization of Political Parties*, Oxford University Press.
- 2 “Will Sinn Féin ditch its comrades in Europe on its path to power?” (25th May 2023) *The Irish Times*
- 3 Sinn Féin Statement of Accounts.



# POLITICS

## ON CHIPS



**RICHARD MULLEN**  
**TECHNOLOGY WARFARE**

ON 15 MAY 2023, an interview with the French ambassador in Ireland titled “Ireland must ‘pull its weight’ on increasing defence” was published in *The Irish Examiner*. Most of the interview focuses on the perceived need for the European Union to reduce its industrial and energy dependence on other global actors. The ambassador calls for a “level playing field” with China and warns against the European reliance on imports of 5G equipment, electronics, and batteries from China. On the same day, the big American semiconductor corporation Analog Devices announced new investment into their fabrication facility in Limerick, as a part of a strategic EU-US cooperation in semiconductor supply-chain “resiliency enhancement”.

The semiconductor industry is a chain of chip designers and chip manufacturers, delivering microchips used in all modern electronic equipment; from an electric toothbrush to a fighter jet, the chip-hungry markets generate and maintain ever-growing demand for chip supply. Consumers around the world have been experiencing the effects of supply struggling to meet demand since 2020, as the shortage of chips slowed down the auto industry, the computer industry, and other hi-tech sectors. The shortage, widely attributed to “supply-chain disruptions” in an effort to save the grace of the progress paradigm, turned the public attention to East Asia, the region that makes most of the advanced chips put in devices today.

An important part of the US Pacific strategy after World War II was to intertwine the East Asian states into the American supply chains and

## RADICAL OR REDUNDANT? BUT WHAT IS RADICAL?



**NICOLA LAWLOR**  
**REFORM & REVOLUTION**

THE TRADE UNION Left Forum correctly calls on trade unions to become radical or redundant. This slogan contrasts the pivotal role unions can play, the potential they possess, against their declining power and relevance to many workers. But what is radical? Because as communists, and Leninists in particular, we know that the most left-sounding or radical-sounding slogan, statement or position is not actually necessarily the revolutionary, and correct, position to take.

In a recent article in *Socialist Voice* comrade Niall Cullinane reminded us, based on recent scientific studies and evidence, that workers value practical and immediate gains from unions and value union support on workplace problems and improvements on pay most. The article resurrected an apt quote from Lenin to remind us that we need to engage and meet workers where they are actually at not where we wish they were and bring them step-by-step towards greater political class consciousness.

“It is necessary to know at every moment how to find the particular link in the chain which must be grasped with all one’s strength in order to keep the whole chain in place and prepare to move on resolutely to the next link.” - Lenin

Comrade Niall then finished his piece with a contemporised version of this Leninist position, “While communists should lead, they should not lead so far ahead that those they wish to lead remain too far behind.”

And so now we ask, in this context, what is genuinely the radical, revolutionary, and correct, positions for communists in trade unions to be taking? Well, first of all, groups of unionised workers are different and sectors of workers are different so it needs to be accepted that a position adopted by communists in one union is not necessarily the right position to take in another or in another sector of workers. This adds complexity to our work. However, as a guiding principle comrade Tom Redmond would always say “try come out of this struggle a stronger union, more organised”. This means dogmatically pursuing strikes, or any tactic, as a principle is not the right approach. And it can actually lead to mistakes being made that damage workers and their organisations. We’ve seen some very recent examples of limited industrial actions that actually left the union and the group of workers significantly weaker and in some cases effectively derecognised. Strikes, like any action, are a tactic to be used or not based on whether they will assist in winning the workers’ demands or making the collective of workers stronger and thus increasing their potential to win future demands. Rarely



maintain dominance in an area just off the coast of China and the USSR. Cheap labour and anti-union sentiment were another contributing element, and US military bases sprang up in the vicinity, protecting their interests. Japan was the first to get semiconductor industry deals, and in the 1980s its semiconductor industry made it the world's second largest economy and a direct competitor to US interests. With a combination of political pressure, industrial pivoting, and shifting manufacturing plans towards South Korea and Taiwan, the US managed to restore domination in the field, but the price for this was paid in creating severe bottlenecks in the design-to-manufacturing pipeline.

Historically, companies that designed chips would manufacture them; however, the “pure play foundry” model of companies like TSMC (Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company, the world's largest advanced chip manufacturer, holding more than half of the market singlehandedly) where the manufacturer takes care of making the chip and the customer decides on the design, is the dominant

**With the rise of the Chinese hi-tech companies, Huawei being the most famous example, and the decline of US tech sales in China (with a notable dip after the Snowden revelations), the US intensified its efforts at choking the Chinese ability to participate in the global supply chains.**

mode of semiconductor production today. It has allowed the “fabless” companies like Apple or Nvidia to dominate the hardware world of smartphones and AI, respectively, without making chips themselves and without the need for yearly investments in upgrading the fabrication process. Yearly upgrades, forced by ever-increasing demand and mirrored in the famous Moore's Law,<sup>1</sup> limit the number of companies able to keep up.

Long seen as a site for the assembly of devices rather than manufacturing their own chips or designing them, China was a secondary player in the American semiconductor game in Asia. With the rise of the Chinese hi-tech companies, Huawei being the most famous example, and the decline of US tech sales in China (with a notable dip after the Snowden revelations), the US intensified its efforts at choking the Chinese ability to participate in the global supply chains. Fully aware that full technological independence is impossible to achieve, and heightening the tensions around Taiwan and its manufacturing facilities, the US

proceeded with legislating their trade war on China. Huawei ended up on the US Entity List, preventing the sale of components to the company, and leading to bans of Huawei 5G rollout in US-allied states, as well as the Taiwanese fabrication sites refusing new contracts with Chinese companies. In the most recent US CHIPS Act (2022), State and Defense Departments, as well as companies, receive billions for research, development, and manufacturing costs of bringing the manufacture of chips to the US, while explicitly banning exports of any advanced technology to Russia and China. Europe followed suit with the new EU Chips act (2023). Explicitly citing examples like the European automotive industry, it aims to improve European “competitiveness and resilience” in semiconductor product supply. As should now be clear, it is easy to see that this resilience simply means cutting China out of the game, in what the French ambassador called “levelling the playing field”. The US and its Asian partners maintain their roles in the new European vision of technological dependency. ★

does a group of workers meet and say we want to take strike action. Instead, they will meet and say we want a better pay increases or we want pay ranges published, we need more staff or we want our overtime paid.

Arguably the most radical, and necessary, thing that unions and trade unionists can do at this low ebb of class consciousness is to listen to workers, be humble, discard immature dogmas, respect workers and allow workers, and members, take the lead in setting union agendas and deciding on union activity and priorities. Give guiding support and seek to develop unity of action and purpose based on the crystallised demands of workers. This might not sound radical but it appears abundantly lacking in today's trade union movement, on the both the left and right. Unions seem so far removed from workers and their trials and tribulations in their offices or shop floors. And so, this might well be the link in the chain that we communists need to grasp and reconnect to, then be able to move on greater political consciousness and demands.

Thankfully there is a growing number of trade unionists, most of whom who are not communists or even necessarily politicised, adopting this approach and of engaging workers listening and providing the skills and tools for workers to lead their own campaigns or support existing campaigns. Contemporary union

**Strikes, like any action, are a tactic to be used or not based on whether they will assist in winning the workers' demands or making the collective of workers stronger and thus increasing their potential to win future demands**

organising training, where a union is weak or seeking to strengthen, suggests in escalating an issue workers should seek to take the next smallest, easiest step for all to take. This means not jumping to a step that might be beyond the consciousness of the many. But nor is this lowest common denominator activity. It means always seeking to build consciousness while maintaining unity and strengthening the union organisation. Its building a chain link by link, strengthening structural power.

I think it is fair to ask are unions currently doing the most they can, deploying their staff and other resources, to engage and listen to workers? Are the many trade unionists employed or with release facilities really using their time to engage and listen to workers. Or are they busier trying to meet “powerful” people in order to gain influence or traction? Are they busier on grand vanity projects or personal profile-building campaigns? Are they busy servicing complex individual cases? Are they actively avoiding meeting workers because it's been too long?

These are fair questions. Getting radical for unions at this point is rebuilding our organisation structure and expanding collective union structures into new areas and that needs, above all else, meeting and listening to workers. As sad as that is, that's radical right here and right now. ★

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## ON CHINGIZ AITMATOV



JENNY FARRELL

ONE OF THE lasting effects of the continuing Cold War against all socialist thought and culture is the West's denial of the art of socialist countries. This affects all genres in all the socialist countries. The work of these artists is rarely readily available to the general public, and sidelined in university courses, dismissed highhandedly as "Soviet Era" and therefore by definition deplorable.

Let me introduce you to the amazing Kyrgyz writer Chingiz Aitmatov, born in 1928. His father, a Kyrgyz communist, became a victim of Stalin's terror, executed in 1938 along with 137 other Kyrgyz intellectuals and buried in a mass grave.

In 1942, young Chingiz was given a position in the district administration. He went back to school after the war, studied veterinary and agricultural science. In 1956, he attended a two-year course for young authors in Moscow. His world-famous novella *Jamila* was his graduation submission. Many more stories and novellas followed, written both in Kyrgyz and Russian. In 1980, *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* was published. Due to its at times controversial subject-matter and also the inclusion of tragic elements, Aitmatov's work often came under criticism. However, his outstanding literary achievement was also honoured with several high awards. Aside from writing fiction, Aitmatov was actively involved in politics and died in Nuremberg on 10 June 2008 at the age of 79.

Aitmatov's novel *The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years* is set in the Kazakh steppe at an inhospitable eight dwelling railway junction not far from the Cosmodrome. The junction's name, Boranly-Burannyi (snowstorm), highlights the rough life and

## DOLLAR DOMINANCE



NIALL CULLINANE

A RECENT ARTICLE in *Socialist Voice* – entitled "Multipolarity and US Hegemony" – suggests that U.S. imperialism drives dollar dominance and that the dollar can only weaken by the political actions of countries like China. However, the risk to dollar dominance is unlikely to be determined in the last instance by the actions of foreign states. Rather internal class conflict and contradictions within American capitalism – exhibited between the state, industrial producers and financial capitalists – will probably prove more decisive.

External factors are important, of course. China uses American demand (the world's largest economy) to maintain their domestic patterns of growth. Indeed, the U.S. economy's capacity to run continuing deficits in trade reinforces the role of the dollar as the world's dominant currency. Such deficits also benefit the countries like China. Indeed, China is stuck between a rock and a hard place regarding the dollar. One principal reason foreigners use the dollar is that the United States has easily accessible financial markets, and there are – unlike, say, China – no controls over foreign investors. For China to compete with the dollar, it would at least be required to offer those same advantages to foreigners. How likely is China to cede control



**The theme of peaceful community, human strength and the solidarity of ordinary people runs through all plot levels, as does the potential to destroy other humans. The legends are about power and abuse of power, violence and resistance.**

weather that the small village community must confront. However remote, it is spared neither national nor international upheavals. The inhabitants come to this wasteland for different reasons, and not everyone is cut out for the hardships of life there. The death of one of one of their elders, Kazangap, prompts his closest friend, Burannyi Yedigei (Snowstorm Yedigei), to honour ancient tradition and bury him in the ancestral graveyard. He saddles and decorates his camel and sets off. The novel describes Yedigei's memories on his way to the cemetery. It is the day that transcends Kazangap's life and reflects on the times.

Aitmatov condenses the action by linking two storylines - one set in the present as well as one set in the early 1950s. To this are added Kazakh myths as well as a USSR-US space cooperation programme that has a utopian dimension, although it too takes place in the present of the novel. A fabric emerges in which the past and the future intertwine, in which the best and the most horrendous that human beings are capable of emerges, as well as the possibility of intergalactic cooperation with a civilisation that is more advanced and peaceful than Earth's inhabitants.

The theme of peaceful community, human strength and the solidarity of ordinary people runs through all plot levels, as does the potential to destroy other humans. The legends are about power and abuse of power, violence and resistance. The legend of the Mankurt is centred on the erasure of memory and the subduing of those who survive cruel torture. But it is also about a mother's fight for her son. Parallels are drawn with Stalinism, which is depicted here in the fate of the family of Abutalip and Zaripa Kuttybayev, and in which Aitmatov undoubtedly creates a monument to his own father.

Nevertheless, manifestations of goodness are also found again and again. Aitmatov's positive characters are characterised above all by their love for other people, for children, for animals and for nature.

Violations of this elementary love are offences against humanity. At the same time and closely connected to this is their sense of responsibility for the important work that defines their lives. People of different origins and fates have ended up at this remote railway junction in the middle of the steppe, people for whom work and life here offered a new beginning despite all the hardships. Here, they harness all their strength to ensure that the trains can travel from West to East and back. Yet further blows of fate await them.

The space travellers represent the two great powers, here cooperating in a unique joint project to explore a newly discovered planet with inestimable mineral deposits for the purpose of energy production. With the great self-sacrifice of Aitmatov's heroes, they try to persuade their governments to be open to the new civilisation.

The perversion of mutual support and the dissolution of social cohesion in the interest of money thematically determine Aitmatov's last novel *When Mountains Fall*. Cash nexus now rules where trust, mutual respect and help used to be. The snow leopard, a protected species, a symbol of the high mountain regions of Central Asia and revered there since time immemorial, is sacrificed to Mammon, even if this means the destruction of the region's soul in the immediate future. The old values of a symbiosis between humankind and nature are sacrificed.

Aitmatov's view of humanity is marked by tragic features. Nevertheless, it is not dystopian. With his work, he sharpens readers' awareness of the strengths of humanity: love, mutual trust and solidarity. And he describes how these are mercilessly destroyed by the enemies of humanity. Standing in the shoes of the ordinary people of Central Asia, readers understand even more profoundly our common humanity, which we must defend and protect in common cause. It will not be easy. ★

**China uses American demand (the world's largest economy) to maintain their domestic patterns of growth.**

of money flows in and out of the country and its balance of payments? Doing so would limit China's ability to control credit and financial liabilities – an improbable scenario given that the Chinese elite legitimises their rule on stability and growth.

After decades of marketisation – China is, after all, a country where private firms contribute approximately 60% of GDP, 80% of urban employment and 90% of new jobs (Source: State Council Information Office, People's Republic of China, 2022) and it now has one of the highest levels of income inequality in the world. High-income inequality reduces national consumption (weakens domestic demand) and results in excess savings. With relatively weak domestic demand, economies like China require large, persistent trade surpluses to settle the excess production that drives their economy. Surplus economies like China get foreign assets in exchange for their surpluses. That is where the United States helps China. A country can only import net foreign savings by exporting ownership of assets, and the United States financial markets allow the Chinese unfettered access to local assets.

Indeed, if the United States attempted to reduce its trade deficit, it would cause enormous disruption in global capital flows and seriously destabilise countries like China. China benefits from foreign demand – driven by the dollar –

with a rising share of global manufacturing and the accumulation of foreign assets. But this rising share on the part of China comes at the expense of the declining share of global manufacturing for deficit-running countries like the United States. Thus, any actions by China to break from dollar dominance will likely be partial and unsuccessful without sizeable and disruptive changes within its political and economic structures.

Instead, the possible source of dollar decline will likely originate from internal pressures within the United States. Wall Street and Washington hawks gain from dollar dominance, but it comes at a substantial and, in the long run, unsustainable cost to American producers and workers. The economic malaise reflects the American political class's current chaotic and divided state. The present scenario of ongoing trade deficits cannot sustain as America's real economic value declines. It will not be economically capable of maintaining its burden as the global reserve currency, probably resulting in a fall in dollar credibility and global economic and financial crises of varying magnitudes at some point in the future. The lesson for Communists in all this: be wary of embracing 'campist' economics which appear to be based on simplistic understandings of global trade and financial capital flows. ★



## A RED REVIEWS REDS NA hÉIREANN

EDDIE GLACKIN  
HERITAGE

THE DOCUMENTARY *Reds na hÉireann* (dir. Kevin Brannigan, 2023), shown on TG4 on 24th May 2023, probably served as a bit of an eye-opener for many people whose ideas of communism and communists have been shaped by a century of relentless, hostile propaganda from the apologists and defenders of capitalism – whether in politics, the press or the pulpit. Communists, we were told, are indoctrinated, brainwashed by an alien ideology, incapable of independent thought.

What a surprise then, to see and hear people who had been involved in the communist movement in this

Through all of this common themes run, as was clear from *Reds na hÉireann*: the sense of being part of a mighty, world-wide movement for peace, independence and socialism, the shared belief that another world is not only possible, but necessary.



country, some for many years, talking of their experiences and of how and why they became involved. They joined up precisely because they were critical thinkers who didn't blindly accept the prevailing norms of a society built on exploitation and inequality. The filmmakers are to be complimented on a very interesting, engaging and even-handed documentary.

Wherever they have finished up, all those interviewed shared at one time that vision of a better, more just and equal world, free of war, famine, racism and misogyny. After "the fall" many ceased to believe, not in those values, but in the viability of the Communist movement as a means to achieve them. Disillusionment and demoralisation led some out of politics altogether, while others sought refuge in the clammy embrace of social democracy, and the fantasy that a better world can become a reality without struggle, without challenging

and defeating the power of capital and imperialism.

In this regard it is worth noting that of the ten speakers acknowledged in the end credits of the film, only two are still members of the Party, namely Sean Edwards and Eugene McCartan. There are a lot more of us than that! In fairness, most of the others spoke of why they became involved and that remains valid, whatever their subsequent political destination. With the exception of Fergus Whelan, none of them attacked the Party.

Fergus was a rather odd choice in that, although he was a CYM member for a few years as a teenager, he never joined the Party, in either its Irish Workers Party, or later CPI, form, so perhaps he is not best placed to pontificate on it. In the interests of glasnost, or openness, it would perhaps have given context to Fergus' critical remarks if viewers knew he was a member of Official Sinn Féin/Sinn Féin the Workers Party/Workers Party and an acolyte of that well known "revolutionary" Eoghan Harris, the ideological guru of the Workers Party who then turned advisor to Fine Gael, and finally advisor to the Unionist Party!

Another strange inclusion was the so-called "Communist Party of Ireland Marxist-Leninist". This was the Irish pygmy variant of an international phenomenon in the 60s and early 70s of would-be "super Stalinists", who misappropriated the term "Marxist-Leninist" and were set up and supported by Maoist China to disrupt and undermine the world communist movement. The Irish version came out of an outfit called the Internationalists in Trinity College, who paraded around Dublin like an evangelical sect, brandishing and chanting slogans from Chairman Mao's "little red book", to the great bemusement and occasional amusement of the amazed populace. The CPI-ML had nothing to do with our Party. Standing the besuited posh boy David Vipond in a bye-election in largely rural Monaghan under the catchy slogan "Down with the three major bourgeois parties, Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and Labour" gives a fairly clear idea of their grasp on reality.

Whether under the banner of the Irish Workers Party, CPNI or, since 1970 the CPI, Communists in Ireland, and the youth activists in the CYM or Communist Youth League, have always sought to stand by and champion the interests of all working people, North and South, "Catholic, Protestant or Dissenter". The archive film clips in the programme showed CYL activists in Belfast engaged in anti-war and anti-racist demonstrations in the 1960's, and CYM activists in Dublin being organised by Gerry Fleming and Mick O'Reilly, both subsequently major trade union figures. They were exciting times for young socialists and communists who believed the path to revolution lay in organising and fighting for rights, rather than sticking flowers in our hair, getting stoned and turning our backs on society.

There has been no major struggle in this past century that Irish communists were not involved in. The range of struggles and campaigns the Party has been involved in was immense; in fact we played a leading role on some issues, whether it was fighting against unemployment and emigration in the 1950s, civil rights in the North in the '60s and '70s, the Dublin Housing Action Committee, solidarity with Vietnam and Cuba, the anti-apartheid



movement, and other key struggles.

We opposed the Provos' military campaign as divisive and counterposed to it a strategy of mobilising around demands for a Bill of Rights, a British Declaration of Intent to Withdraw, fighting in the trade union movement for these demands and for the unity of the class. We were centrally involved in the establishment in the early 1980s of "Trade Unionists for Irish Unity and Independence", which sought to win the trade union movement in Ireland and Britain for an end to repression in the North and for a British Declaration of Intent. Communists were to the fore in organising the "Back to Work" campaign in Belfast in the face of massive intimidation from Loyalist paramilitaries. Opposition to joining the Common Market/EEC/EC/EU and the various ensuing treaties such as Lisbon which have further diminished our sovereignty and undermined Irish independence was and remains a central plank in our programme, now more urgent than ever with the increasing militarisation of the EU.

Through all of this common themes run, as was clear from *Reds na hÉireann*: the sense of being part of a mighty, world-wide movement for peace, independence and socialism, the shared belief that another world is not only possible, but necessary. Another thing which clearly emerged was that people didn't join because of what was happening in the Soviet Union. In fact, most of us knew little or nothing about the USSR until after we became involved!

Above all else it was the discovery of James Connolly which attracted many of us in the 1960s and continues to do so. The true character of Connolly had been almost a well-kept secret of modern Irish history. The most deep thinking and articulate of the leaders of 1916 and the greatest leader the Irish working class has ever produced (and, like Jim Larkin, an immigrant to boot!) entered into our consciousness around the time of the 50th anniversary of the 1916 Rising. A new way of looking at our country and its history amazed us. Connolly himself describes Marxism as "the key to history" and his extensive writings still powerfully fulfil that function. Whose view of Irish history can remain unchanged after reading *Labour in Irish History*? Whose view of the role of religion has not been influenced by *Labour, Nationality and Religion*? Who has not been impressed by the challenge Connolly puts before us in *The Reconquest of Ireland*?

We did not join up because of the Soviet Union: although it provided a bulwark against imperialism for 80 years and gave us a glimpse of a world that could be, it was not the initial impulse. So when the red flag came down over the Kremlin, our small Party defiantly hung the red flag from our headquarters in Connolly House.

It was and is the reality of Irish life: the poverty, homelessness, sexism and misogyny, crumbling health and social security systems in the midst of vast wealth, the scourge of drug abuse and its effect of working class communities, the establishment parties beating the drums of war to drag us into NATO's orbit, the entrenched sectarianism of so called "solutions" in the North, the terrifying rise of the Right, internationally and at home. Although much has changed over the 50-60 years which *Reds na hÉireann* addressed, the struggle continues. The idealism, optimism, hope and determination which initially led many of us into left wing politics needs to be generated and harnessed anew. Capitalism with its wars, poverty and many injustices cannot provide solutions; in fact it is the fundamental cause. Join us in the struggle to put an end to its horrors.

**OUR FLAG STAYS RED! ★**



## Interview with Temur Pipia First Secretary of the Unified Communist Party of Georgia

**INTERVIEWER: DANIEL DUMILE.**

**What are the biggest ideological legacies that frame the current situation in Georgia. What role for instance, does the legacy of soviet Russia play in Georgian society today, and what has been the impact of the neoliberal turn that really took off in the mid-2000s?**

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, in the post Soviet and mainly post socialist countries in Eastern Europe Georgia was created as a successful experiment of neoliberal policies pursued by the West, especially the USA. After 2003 when Georgia had gone through the colour revolution, the government was effectively neo-fascistic. It was almost the same thing in 2003 as what happened to Ukraine in 2014. And the Saakashvili regime amplified the process, he sped up the process of Georgia becoming a neoliberal society. Georgia was created as an exemplary neoliberal society for all the post Soviet countries to follow.

The workers were in one of the worst positions imaginable. There was no Labour Code in Georgia during the Saakashvili period. He was proud of this state of affairs where labour had no rights, where the working class had no rights. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the social guarantees were mostly cancelled, but those that remained were also deliberately jettisoned.

In terms of foreign policy, we were exemplary for post Soviet countries in that Georgia became a little Israel in the South Caucasus region. Georgia became one of the main supporters of American imperialism in the post-Soviet and post-socialist space. Georgia took part in every military international operation of NATO since 2003.

**What are the biggest challenges faced by the left and the Unified Communist Party of Georgia today? Could you talk about Saakashvili's**

**"Charter of Freedom" law that has been in place since 2011? This law equates communism with fascism, and prohibits communist symbolism and ideology along with fascist symbolism and ideology.**

This law represents the reality that in Georgia anti-communism is elevated to the level of state policy, still to this day. The Saakashvili regime has changed but the law is still there, and is still doing its job. The law is just a representation of all the things that have happened in the past 30 years. The first challenge is to come out from this marginalised position that we are in since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The history of independent Georgia is 30 years old, so the history of Georgia is the history of fighting against communism, total war against communism and the legacy of the soviet past.

**What is the main activity of the Party at the moment? Could you say a few words about the project that you are attempting to get off the ground?**

Our main aim now is to create a platform that will rehabilitate the socialist movement in Georgia. The populace have started to look to the Soviet past, this has never happened before. This is the first time that the economic tensions have become so bad that people have actually started researching whether it was really that bad in socialist Georgia. We are trying to create a media platform in Georgia, which will be mostly online. With this platform, we hope to consolidate existing socialists and activate people that have not yet come out as socialists - the latent socialists. We will give them actual academic critique, experiences of critique, with discussions, with lectures, to answer those questions they have not formulated or asked yet, because it is taboo to speak about socialism. ★



# END NOTES

## BRUSSELS ACTIVIST PEACE FORUM

EUGENE McCARTAN  
PEACE

During May a small but nevertheless significant gathering of peace groups took place in Brussels. The forum was hosted by MEPs Clare Daly and Mick Wallace, drawing activists from eleven countries.

Both these MEPs have been the most outspoken against the war in Ukraine, both in condemning Russia's invasion and the massive military intervention by NATO and the EU in the conflict.

Many of the activists reported on the current state of peace movements and the number of actions for peace taking place right across Europe, many of which go unreported by the establishment media. Those attending the Forum came from Britain, Holland, Czech Republic, Italy, Germany, etc.

It was noted that the media are all too willing to promote war rather than peace. It was also reported to the forum by representatives attending that peace activists are suffer consistent attack, branded as "Putin stooges", etc. There is also growing evidence of increased harassment of peace forces with people losing their jobs in countries like Poland and Czech Republic just for speaking up for peace.

The forum was an important start in the process of building a powerful peace movement to demand an end to the war and to prevent the possibility of it spiralling out of control and even nuclear war.

All delegates agreed upon the necessity for an immediate ceasefire and opening of peace talks.

At the end of the meeting, a brief statement was agreed by all those who attended which read:

"On May 13, 2023, representatives of a number of peace and anti-war organisations from 11 different European countries met in Brussels, at a conference hosted by Clare Daly and Mick Wallace MEPs, to discuss the situation of the peace movement in the context of the war in Ukraine.

Those present deplored the suffering and loss of life caused by the war, and shared a profound concern about escalation of the conflict. There was a strong consensus around the need for anti-war forces in Europe to call for a ceasefire, peace negotiations and efforts to diminish the possibility of nuclear war in Europe."

It was agreed that we would support a number of other peace conferences taking place in the coming months. There was also a proposal to call a world day of action later in the year to demand peace and an end to militarism. It is clear the majority of countries and peoples of the world do not agree with the war, but equally they have not fallen for the NATO ruse that it is an honest broker in the conflict; rather they understand well the role played by NATO in Ukraine which led to the Russian invasion.

The Communist Party of Ireland was represented at the Forum, as was the Peace and Neutrality Alliance. ★

**The forum was an important start in the process of building a powerful peace movement to demand an end to the war and to prevent the possibility of it spiralling out of control and even nuclear war.**

A Chara,

I am writing to applaud the courageous decision by Dublin City Council to decline the application for a WW1 Memorial in Killester, and for their excellent maintenance of our publicly-owned green open spaces and trees over many decades.

The majority of Killester residents do not want political controversy in our quiet residential area, and wish to co-exist peacefully with their neighbours, without feeling in any way pressured or threatened regarding their political outlook. Attempts to glorify the slaughter of those unfortunate enough to have enlisted in foreign armies to fight in imperial wars, and who were manipulated by cynical forces with no care for ordinary people's lives, does not sit well with Irish people in 2023.

This is not the time for WW1 or WW2 Memorials, as both government and media in Ireland are leading a very strong charge to persuade the public to join NATO and abandon our long-time policy of neutrality. It is to be hoped that Dublin City Councillors and left-wing activists will remember that their inspiration, James Connolly, was Ireland's foremost opponent of WW1.

Let us hope that the WW1 Memorial Campaign take this into account, accept the very correct decision of Dublin City Council regarding the use of public land, and agree to preserve the only two remaining public green areas with trees, in Killester.

Le gach dea-ghuíf,  
Aine Ní Bhroin  
Cumann Staire Chill Easra  
Collins Ave E., Killester, D.5

**FIGHT FOR  
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