

anspréach

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1969: BURNTOLLET THE ROAD TO DERRY

An Ghaeilge

Who Politicised the Irish Language?

War & Conflict

Observations Through
a Marxist Lens

The Sperrins

Dalradian & The GPO

We Exist

Protestant Irish
Republicans

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Dear reader,

An Spréach is an independent Socialist Republican magazine formed by a collective of political activists across Ireland. It aims to bring you, the reader, a broad swathe of opinion from within the Irish Socialist Republican political sphere, including, but not exclusive to, the fight for national liberation and socialism in Ireland and internationally.

The views expressed herein, do not necessarily represent the publication and are purely those of the author. We welcome contributions from all political activists, including opinion pieces, letters, historical analyses and other relevant material. The editor reserves the right to exclude or omit any articles that may be deemed defamatory or abusive.

Full and real names must be provided, even in instances where a pseudonym is used, including contact details. Please bear in mind that you may be asked to shorten material if necessary, and where we may be required to edit a piece to fit within these pages, all efforts will be made to retain its balance and opinion, without bias.

An Spréach is a not-for-profit magazine which only aims to fund its running costs, including print and associated platforms.

Is iris poblachtach sóisialta í **An Spréach** curtha le chéile ag roinnt gníomhaithe polaitiúla. An aidhm atá leis ná tuilleadh léargais agus dearcthaí ón phobal poblachtach sóisialta a chur i do láthair mar léitheoir, ábhar nach mbaineann amháin leis an troid shaortha shóisialta náisiúnta in Éirinn agus idirnáisiúnta.

Ní hionann na dearcaidh luaite anseo agus dearcadh an fhoilseacháin ach is iad dearcaidh de chuid an údair iad. Cuirfear fáilte roimh gach gníomhaí polaitiúil ábhar a chur ar fáil, ailt tuairimíochta, litreacha, anailís stairiúil agus gach aon ábhar cuí san áireamh. Tá sé de cheart ag an eagarthóir ailt clúmhillteach nó ionsaitheach a fhágáil ar lár.

Caithfear ainmneacha iomlána agus fíor ainmneacha a bheith ar fáil, go fiú nuair a úsáidtear ainm cleite, sonraí teagmhála ábhartha san áireamh. Ná déantar dearmad, tá seans ann go n-iarrfar ort eagar a chur ar do shaothar sa dóigh is go bhféadaimis an spás leathanaigh a líonadh mar is ceart. Tá seans ann ar a bharr sin go ndéanfar coiriú ar phársa le seo a eascú ach déanfar achan iarrachta an cothromas agus dearcaidh an phársa sin a thabhairt, gan claonadh.

Is iris neamhbhrabúis í **An Spréach** a sholáthraíonn airgead maidir le costais reatha amháin, costais clódóireachta agus tairisí atá bainteach léi.

The Assassination of Airey Neave

30th March 1979

The New Year Statement issued by the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) in 1979 defiantly declared that ‘the strategy of the INLA will be geared to ensure imperialism and its agents will see the futility of its policy of inflicting large scale human misery on our people’. The Republican Socialist organisation, established by Seamus Costello in 1974, didn’t disappoint.

On the 30 March 1979, The INLA pulled off one of the most spectacular military operations of the as yet unfinished struggle for national liberation and socialism. To make it all the more impressive, this operation was carried out at the very heart of the imperialist beast, the Palace of Westminster, London.

The target of the INLA spectacular was the Conservative Party hawk, Airey Neave MP, the Shadow Secretary for the Occupied Six Counties and a close advisor to Tory leader Margert Thatcher. A former member of the British Army and Tory spokesperson on Ireland, Neave had long been arguing that Irish Republicanism could only be defeated by all out war.

When a Vote of No Confidence collapsed Britain’s Labour Government on March 28th 1979, it was widely expected that the Tories would sweep to power, and as a result Neave would most likely become Britain’s Secretary of State in the Occupied Six Counties and be free to wage his policy of all out war against the Irish Revolution.

The INLA decided to act. On March 30th 1979, INLA Volunteers gained access to the underground car park at the house of commons.

Concealed within a tool box the Volunteers were carrying a 16-ounce bomb fitted with a mercury tilt switch. This was fixed to the floor panel under the driver’s seat of Neave’s Car. The sophisticated design of the bomb meant it would explode when the mercury moved out of the level position. Having successfully fitted the explosive, the Volunteers made good their escape.

Shortly before 3pm, Neave returned to his car. As he drove up the ramp of the House of Commons car park, the incline triggered the bomb and it exploded with devastating effect. A high ranking British Imperialist hawk had been taken out of action by Republican Socialists.

The assassination of Neave was a major propaganda boost for both the INLA and the wider war for national liberation and socialism. The operation was international headlines and put Britain’s ongoing colonial role in Ireland firmly on the agenda. The operation also demonstrated that the most senior British Imperialists were not safe anywhere. So long as they continued to occupy Ireland.

In August 1979 The INLA issued a statement to The Starry Plough Newspaper, the organ of the Irish Republican Socialist Party, accurately summing up the importance of the operation. It said, “In March, retired terrorist and supporter of capital punishment, Airey Neave, got a taste of his own medicine when an INLA unit pulled off the operation of the decade and blew him to bits inside the ‘impregnable’ Palace

of Westminster. The nauseous Margaret Thatcher snivelled on television that he was an ‘incalculable loss’—and so he was—to the British ruling class.” •



‘WE EXIST’, PROTESTANT IRISH REPUBLICANS

By Creig McRoibín

I am a republican, but I haven’t always been. I was born into a protestant and unionist family, post Good Friday Agreement. Before this I had family in the British army and the RUC. Previously I believed these people were defending the north from terrorists. I would look around and see Rangers football shirts, on the queen’s birthday I waved a small union flag. In short, I believed I was British, and this was total normality to me.

I went to an ‘integrated’ school which doesn’t deserve the title ‘integrated’. I learned about the Battle of the Boyne and British kings and queens, the only thing I knew of the Irish rebellion was the year it happened. In this school, casual sectarianism was normal, and an eye wouldn’t be bat at it, ‘Fenian’ ‘Hun’ ‘Taig’ you’d hear and say daily. I also remember making a joke about bloody Sunday, which is probably the most shameful thing I can remember saying, as well as believing what the UVF did

was justified.

“you view Republicans as invaders who were out for your blood... there was a total siege mentality

Now, I can see these beliefs and jokes were abhorrent but when you are raised this way, you view republicans as invaders who were out for your blood, despite this not being reality, now it seems like a form of brainwashing young protestants go through, there was a total siege mentality.

I was too young to vote, but I was planning to vote DUP when I reached the age, even though I am bisexual, and they don’t support my right to marriage, even though I’m pro-choice and even though they implement crushing austerity which grinds away at the working class.

Approximately two years ago I took a class in sociology. I was introduced to three theoretical perspectives, two which I still hold dearly as my core beliefs. Func-

tionalism, which I don’t hold, and Feminism and Marxism, which I do still hold. I was instantly hooked on the idea of class conflict and how capitalism works, it just instantly made sense coming from a working-class background.

That night when I went home I started reading into Marxism, I bought a communist manifesto half-jokingly out of pure curiosity which is still sitting on my shelf. I was absolutely astonished when I finished looking into Marxism for several weeks, everything which I had held as ‘good’, the free market, capitalism, unionism (mind you, I was a right wing libertarian before I was a Marxist) were all tore down around me and I saw the true nature of the things I believed in. however, even after I considered myself a Marxist, the last thing I let go of was my sense of ‘Britishness’ (which I now cringe at typing).

I, for the first time, called myself Irish. I firmly believed that, as Connolly said: Britain had no right in Ireland, has no right in Ireland and can never have any right in Ireland. I was finished with unionism.

So how then, do we show more

unionists the evils of Britain and capitalism?

“unionist communities have been decimated by austerity from the Tories, DUP and Sinn Féin

It’s no surprise that unionist communities such as the Shankill road have been decimated by austerity from the Tories, DUP and Sinn Féin, and we as socialist republicans have to reach a hand out to places like the Shankill road and large swaths of east Belfast and show these people that we are not evil murderers, we are people who want to help free them from the austerity imposed by people who they currently believe they have no choice but to vote for, the DUP.

This is how we will win the hearts and minds of people who currently consider themselves unionists, soft or hard, and I cannot overstate the damage that any sort of patronising or attacks would have on this process which we *must* undertake. •

1969: BURNTOLLET THE ROAD TO DERRY

“

The water was cold and waist deep in parts. Pelted with rocks from both sides of the river we eventually got out the far side and climbed up a muddy incline to the high road. An open lorry, heading for Claudy, stopped beside us. My heart sank as I saw people hiding in the back.



This year marks the 50th anniversary of the brutal attack on student Civil Rights supporters at Burntollet that was to change the course of politics here forever. Some 200 loyalist men and youths, many drawn from the ranks of the sectarian “B” Special Constabulary, ambushed a legitimate civil rights march just outside the town of Claudy. Around 80 RUC officers, assigned to protect the marchers and prevent violence, stood aside and allowed the attackers to launch volley after volley of large stones at the civil rights activists. Worse still, RUC men assisted their colleagues from the B Specials when they waded into the shocked and terrified students with clubs and batons, hospitalizing 13 of them.

John Keane recalls the fear and loathing he encountered on the road to Derry.

On New Year’s Day 1969 a small group of Queens University students, members of Peoples Democracy, left Belfast City Hall for a four day march to Derry.

P.D. was a loosely left-wing student group set up to support the aims of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association and if possible expand on them to achieve even more democracy for all working people in the north. It had no formal structure or political manifesto.

The aim of the Derry March organizers was to recreate Martin Luther King’s famous Selma to Montgomery march and heighten international awareness of the second class citizen status endured by the North’s Catholics...

Although the Unionist government, headed by Terence O’Neill, had not banned the march, NICRA’s leadership had advised against it. From the very start the marchers were harried by a group of about 40 bible-spouting Paisleyites led by Major Ronald Bunting, a buffoon who commanded a desk during World War 2.

But his obstructionism was enough to allow the RUC to force the marchers to accept a number of delays and diversions.

“Gerry persuaded me that we should join the march when it reached Maghera.

I was first year student at UCD but most of my friends from school, like Gerry Breen, had gone to Queens. Gerry persuaded me that we should join the march when it reached Maghera on the 2nd.

It was a bizarre road trip. We hitched a ride into Maghera that

night with a loyalist who dropped us outside the town’s Orange hall. As he took his cudgel out of the boot of his Mini he directed us to the far side of the town where the marchers were to be billeted.

Loudspeakers were booming Bunting’s “reds under the beds” warning to an overflow crowd at the Orange hall.

“We took to our heels and ran for our lives.

On the north side of town we asked a friendly group of youths where “the fenians” were. A middle aged woman, no doubt noting our Belfast accents and longish hair asked “why, are ye lookin’ to join them?”

We took to our heels and ran for our lives. The marchers never made it into blockaded Maghera, staying instead in a place called Brackaghreilly.

Our second lift on the road home that night was a Volvo estate and we told the driver we were from Scotland. But when we picked up the thread of the conversation between him and his passenger we realized they were with the march. Gerry and I had been picked up by Belfast dentist Frank Gogarty, an executive member of NICRA and a supporter of the march. We arranged to meet at his house the next evening, January 3rd. and he drove us into Claudy through a barrage of loyalist missiles.

The morning of January 4th we set off for Derry. We had been told that loyalists were assembling in the fields along the side of the road and we took a vow of non-retaliation and sang “we shall overcome”. I always felt a bit of a fraud when singing the verse that went “we are not afraid...” but in my heart I felt it would not be like Selma to Montgomery. There was TV crews and press photographers. The police had put

on their helmets and many carried riot shields.

Obviously the loyalists would attack and the police would drive them off. Our plan was to run like hell through the gauntlet of hatred that awaited us. But there were hundreds of them and the rocks, taken from a local quarry, fell like hailstones.

The police cut and ran.

From my position halfway down the body of marchers I saw them jump into their vehicles and heard the slamming of the doors and the revving of their engines. The loyalists, wearing white armbands, drove a wedge into the middle of the marchers, bludgeoning young men and women alike and forcing us down a steep embankment and into the river Faughan. The water was cold and waist deep in parts. Pelted with rocks from both sides of the river we eventually got out the far side and climbed up a muddy incline to the high road.

An open lorry, heading for Claudy, stopped beside us. My heart sank as I saw people hiding in the back. But an English voice called out “civil rights?” and we jumped into the lorry. In Claudy, civil rights supporters organized lifts to The City Hotel where the Derry Labor Party gave us a steak dinner.

“once more the RUC had failed to protect the marchers.

The main body of the march had been attacked again on the outskirts of the city and once more the RUC had failed to protect the marchers. Later that night the police would riot and attack the innocent citizens they were supposed to protect.

Burntollet was the last hurrah of the old Unionist landed gentry whose loyal peasantry had taken

matters into their own hands by attacking the march O’Neill had refused to ban. It was also the end of O’Neill whose half-hearted attempt to reform his one party statelet was too little too late.

“if you give Roman Catholics a good job and a good house, they will live like Protestants.

He survived for another three months and in his last newspaper interview revealed; “It is frightfully hard to explain to Protestants that if you give Roman Catholics a good job and a good house, they will live like Protestants, because they will see neighbours with cars and television sets. If you treat a Roman Catholic with due consideration and kindness they will live like Protestants in spite of the authoritative nature of their church.” •



THE HOLYLANDS

No matter how many times I deny that I am a culchie, my friends in Belfast regularly claim that I am; often prompted when I let a few hi's or wan's slip. And while I still claim to be a townie from Strabane, when it comes to the Holylands, sure aren't we all one in the same?

I've been studying at Queen's University Belfast now for four years. I lived in university halls for my first year and for the past three I've been living in different houses around the Holylands area and will be living here next year too. I love it, because there's a real sense of community there. This is clear when you go to the Hatfield on a Tuesday night, and then to the Spar on University Avenue for the cure the next day. It's like popping to the corner shop at the bottom of your estate; you'll surely bump into people you know.

But living here isn't all sex, drugs and bootleg remixes. There are

serious issues at play, and when it rolls around to St. Patrick's Day we only hear the consequences of those issues. The media and those not part of the student community here demonise and stigmatise us and our bars, without ever stopping to ask questions deeper than "how do we control these rogue students?"

There are two questions we need to look at when we look at the Holylands; why is it that these young students are choosing to live here while they study, and why is it the way that it is essentially?

To address the former, it is undeniable that the centralisation of resources plays a major role here. While areas of Belfast are undoubtedly in serious deprivation, some of the issues we face outside of the city are quite different. Access to higher education is relatively poor as we look towards the north-west of the island. While Letterkenny IT and Ulster University Magee exist, and have strong reputations as institutions, they have relatively small student populations. Therefore, many students that may have been able to simply commute to university while still living at home find themselves looking towards Belfast and Jordanstown to get the qualifica-

tions they need, when they may have preferred to stay at home. While we will always have people looking to move away to work and study, it's important that it is out of choice and not necessity. With deadly roads and poor public transport, commuting to Belfast every day simply isn't an option for many of us culchies; we have to live here to study here.

Furthermore, with the prices of 'luxury student accommodation' being quite high, it's no wonder students are piling into private rentals and there are empty rooms in university halls. But we don't need more luxury accommodation. We need clean, warm and affordable accommodation while we study. We are not demanding luxury, we're demanding the bare minimum. But we know that these luxury halls are simply another way for universities to exploit international students, seeing them as nothing more than customers willing to pay the extortionate prices.

This then leads us then to our second question; why is the Holylands the way that it is? Well, one major thing is the landlords who run the place. With no form of accountability, we hear of tenants having their broken boilers unfixed

Grian Ní Dhaimhín

and damp and mould problems going unresolved for weeks on end and not getting their full deposits back for ridiculous reasons, among plenty of other issues. These cases are not rare, they have become a characteristic of the area, and the landlords are cashing in the more we ignore it. Despite living here being a cheaper option than halls, rent prices are not a reflection of the standard of the housing in the area and are continuing to increase. Non-student renters are being priced out of the area as landlords attempt to turn the Holylands into nothing other than a student slum. As landlords, universities and the media consistently demonise, stigmatise and penalise students, the students living there feel they are not wanted, go on to resent the area.

I'm not claiming that students are blameless in this situation. However, students have to move away from home at 18 years old just to get the qualifications they need and are judged and demonised as soon as they sign their lease. The issue of the Holylands is systemic and consequential. Let's start by tackling that, by listening to the students who live there and fighting the institutions that turn a profit by criminalising us. •

DECOLONISE THE CURRICULUM!

"DECOLONISATION CONTINUES TO BE AN ACT OF CONFRONTATION WITH A HEGEMONIC SYSTEM OF THOUGHT; IT IS HENCE A PROCESS OF CONSIDERABLE HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL LIBERATION." - SAMIA NEHREZ

By Mariah Donnelly

When I reflect on my own education, it astounds me at the lack of strong women that were presented to me as agents of change throughout history, especially considering that I went to an all-girls school. The curriculum I was taught was completely dominated by White Western heroic men who either invented revolutionary technology, wrote groundbreaking literature, or won wars. That curriculum did not represent me and it fails to represent most students in society because it reflects the stories and experiences of the elite.

The call to decolonise the curriculum which is sparking across the world today – however it is definitely not a new phenomenon - is a resistance to the normalisation and legitimisation of Western knowledge as the loci of all knowledge production. As I write, the student movement Anti-Racist Action at Goldsmiths University, London, is in its 10th day of occupying Deptford Town Hall against the systematic racism that permeates the university as a result of the ideology that assumes that white Western produced knowledge which focuses on the individual and the division between subject/object of knowledge is superior to any other form. This comes following their student union leadership elections where an education officer candidate was a victim of racial abuse during her campaign.

“
As I write, the student movement Anti-Racist Action at Goldsmiths University, London, is in its 10th day of occupying Deptford Town Hall against the systematic racism that permeates the university

This is not the first we have seen of mass student movements taking action against the racism that underpins and fuels their educational institutions. The 2015 #RhodesMustFall Movement in South Africa saw students organising for the removal of the statue of the British colonialist Cecil Rhodes on the campus of the University of Cape Town. The movement ignited reflections across universities and global attitudes towards knowledge production which inspired students to organise to demand their universities to decolonise, inspiring movements such as Why is my curriculum White? at University College London and Silent Sam at the University of North Carolina, where a statue of a confederate soldier was ripped down in 2018 by student activists who rightly viewed the statue as a racist emblem.



What does it actually mean though, to 'decolonise'?

Many faculties in universities have blatantly – whether intentionally or not – misunderstood 'decolonise' for 'diversify.' Diversify is connected to expanding reading lists, whereas decolonise movements begin by exposing how Western colonialism and imperialism has stolen and appropriated knowledge as well as lands and bodies, as well as conveying knowledge systems – for example, indigenous knowledge – as being inferior because they do not align with this narrow framework of Western epistemology. There's a clear reason why this has been the case in many university faculties. This is because universities are more content to diversify because it enables them to turn a blind eye to the colonial roots of Western knowledge systems. This in turn maintains and fosters the reproduction of unequal knowledge and power relations while suppressing revolutionary fervour needed to completely challenge and dismantle the global hegemonic power of Western knowledge. Diversifying, however, can all too quickly turn into tokenism when attempted by elite educational institutions. This is why decolonisation is so crucial – and student organisation is key. ...

Recently, there has been a growing interest of 'powerful knowledge' in policy and academic communities which originates from the academic Michael Young. This sexy-catchphrase has infiltrated curriculum reform and vocational schemes and is broadly taken to mean knowledge which is specialised and will enable an individual to be equipped for life and their future career. Powerful knowledge was established as a response to a class-based analysis of access to cultural capital within education and therefore was used as a mechanism to expand cultural capital through powerful knowledge to the working classes. The idea itself is undeniably patronising, and completely misses the mark in its aim of expanding access into education.

What these educational elites really mean therefore by powerful knowledge, is that the skills they are given are needed to enhance and maintain the global capitalist market. Neoliberal agendas have completely diminished the idea that education is about the development of the self in favour of the idea that it is about the development of commodified robots that merely work to serve the economy. We see this in all aspects of the curriculum today - music classes are closing, while arts and creativity-based subjects are being undermined in favour of what is referred to as STEM - science, technology, engineering, and maths in schools. The widespread rise in popularity of this idea of powerful knowledge in education has therefore not been as positive as its name may suggest.

“**...curriculums influenced by this Westernised model convey colonialism as some sort of normal social relationship. It doesn't question, problematise, or challenge the systematic oppression and exploitation inherent to colonialism.**



Powerful knowledge facilitates the reproduction of the power inequalities by making them invisible through position the Western systems of knowledge as dominant and the locus of other knowledge production. In doing so, curriculums influenced by this Westernised model convey colonialism as some sort of normal social relationship. It doesn't question, problematise, or challenge the systematic oppression and exploitation inherent to colonialism. The fundamental problem here is that this curriculum model and framework has become hegemonic around the world today.

We therefore need, as a matter of urgency, a decolonised curriculum if we are to challenge, resist, and dismantle the prevalent problem of dominating white Western knowledge in our curriculums. This is because a decolonised curriculum places, questions, and problematises issues of gender, race, sexuality, class, and ability into meaningful conversation rather than fostering the idea that we all share the same identity. What these decolonisation and anti-racist movements are calling for is the celebration of difference, rather than the exclusion of students as it currently stands within our Western curriculums, and as reinforced and fostered by this concept of powerful knowledge. Decolonisation confronts difficult questions and exposes the colonial roots of what we are taught in educational institutions and it is crucial if we are to challenge and oppose the capitalist educational factories that are churning out robots instead of human beings.

We need a curriculum revolution that places the experiences of those most disadvantaged in society at the forefront, rather than the experiences of the elite few which continues to dominate curriculums today and which is reproduced and reinforced by the awful idea of 'powerful knowledge.' If we want to curriculums for the people then it is paramount we abandon the notion that white Western men are the loci of all knowledge and wisdom. We must include indigenous knowledge, women's experiences, working-class experiences, immigrant cultures - to name a few - if we are to go beyond our current narrow-minded curricula. •

TAKING THE P*SS SINCE TIME BEGAN, Irish humour and satire.

By Olivia Wylie

Now here's something fun to get into for April Fool's Day: satire. Insult. It's an art all of its own. It lets us get emotions out. And Ireland may have a claim to the highest refinement of the art form.

Old stories say that the power of a satirical word is great. Several Irish terms exist for satire, all deriving from the root words for "to cut" or "to strike". Satire was levied through verse compositions, artfully crafted within a set of accepted technical rules. As a recognized skill of the trained poet, the proper composition of satire required lengthy training, memorization of traditional pieces of satire, and study of the traditional styles. The professional poets were the master craftsmen of satire, paid highly for their art. I use the pronoun 'they' intentionally here: both men and women acted as bards, fillid, and satirists.

“More fantastical stories suggest that people could die by satire, though it may not be as fantastic as it appears at first.

Calling someone out on their bad deeds and bad manners wasn't just for show, either. In the story of Bres and the Bard, a venal and thoughtless king of Old Ireland is taken off his throne by the words of the bard he insulted and illegally refused food. That was the first satire, and it invalidated the king in the eyes of all who followed him. Satire kicked his legitimacy out from under him, and in such an oral culture, the loss of your good name was the end of the line for you in those parts. Oh, and Bres also broke out

in hives, which was another effect of being satirized. More fantastical stories suggest that people could die by satire, though it may not be as fantastic as it appears at first. Psychologists have found that people without social connections die at an alarming rate. If everyone around you despises you, that level of psychological trauma can actually shorten your life. And, of course, we have to remember that being self-sufficient in this period was practically impossible. It took most of the day to bake a loaf of bread, and most of six months to grow the wheat and grind it. If the community spread a verbal agreement to shun you, you wouldn't last long.

People being satirized for their misdeeds show up again and again in more than legends: in law tracts, in the recordings of abbies and the records of court proceedings, satire appears as a form of legal and public redress for wrongs.

Even Saint Patrick was noted as a satirist and curse layer, and one of his epithets in Irish is 'he who God gave the hottest tongue'. There are a great many folk tales about just how well he could curse everything from snakes to the Rock of Cashel, along with a couple kings. Here's one he laid in folklore: "May they be cursed in the head and the brain. May they be cursed in their eyes and their foreheads. May they be cursed in their ears and their noses. May they be cursed in fields and in pastures. May they be cursed when sleeping and when awake, when going out and returning, when eating and drinking, when speaking and being silent. May they be cursed in all places at all times."

Humor could also be subtle: for example, this triad: Three things that constitute a physician: a complete cure, leaving

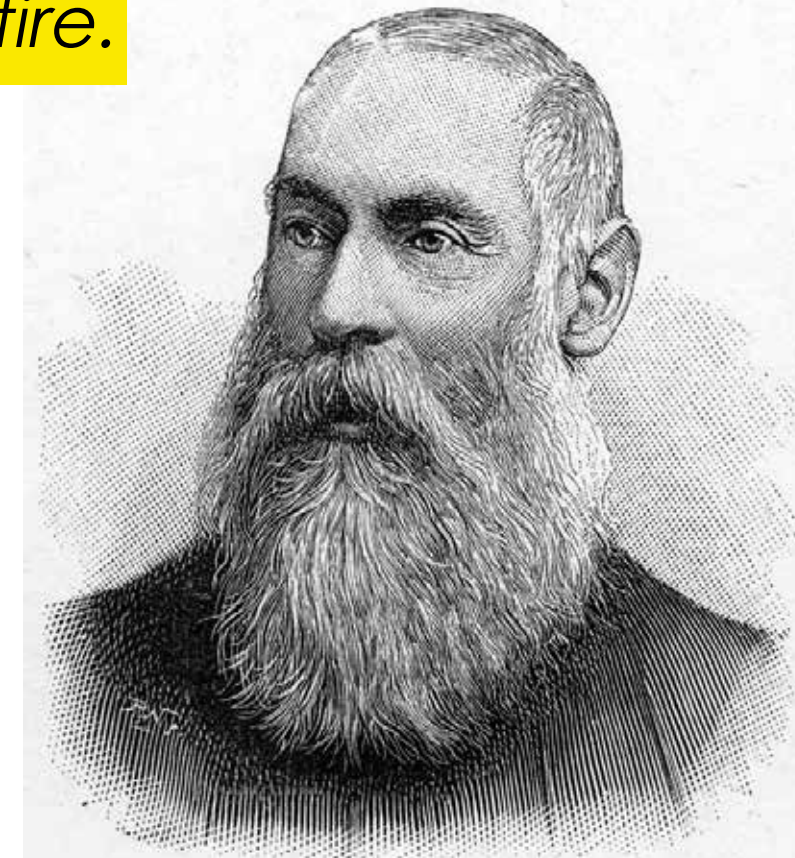


Photo Layfayette, Dublin.
THE LATE CAPTAIN BOYCOTT.

no blemish behind, a painless examination. This sort of subtle jab at physicians who poke, prod and act roughly with patients can easily go over the head of those who aren't looking for it, but it's one of the true hallmarks of oblique Irish humor.

“Anyone who was tempted to take the man's money was told exactly what the creature had done.

And don't think that the art of weaponized humor and satire died with the last Ard Ri. A Captain Charles C. Boycott, British land agent in 1880 to the absentee Irish landlord the Earl of Erne, evicted Irish tenants from the land after they'd asked for rent reductions that would make paying possible. Word of one more cruel deed by the land agent spread like wildfire.

In retaliation, the entire community refused to work in Boycott's service or sell him goods. Anyone who was tempted to take the man's money was told exactly what the creature had done to families who'd asked for a little mercy. Thus, the satire did its work, and the boycott was born.

Jonathan Swift continued the tradition with his 'A Modest Proposal' among many other great works, pointing out just how unacceptable things had grown in Ireland. In laughing at the absurdity, people felt both valid in their fears and bolstered by the humor.

That's what satire is best for: it is the subtle knife of those who are treated as voiceless. The French philosopher Penjon has written, "Laughter is nothing but an expression of the freedom which we experience or long for. Always and everywhere, laughter is the echo of freedom." •



WHO POLITICISED THE IRISH LANGUAGE?

BY CIARÁN MAC GIOLLA BHÉIN

Like so many families across Ireland, my own doesn't have to travel too far back to find native Irish speakers. My father's grandparents hailed from the Glens of Antrim. They, like so many others, did not pass the language on to their children and thus broke a chain of linguistic continuity stretching back three thousand years. Within a few generations, a multitude of similar decisions across Irish society had a cataclysmic impact on our language and culture. The nineteenth century, in particular, heralded the decisive period of this 'language shift' – a calamity experienced by innumerable indigenous cultures across Europe and the globe.

As a result of this 'shift', and in an attempt to understand it, some linguists divide languages into four categories. Lowest on this pyramid are the "peripheral languages", or the 98% of all languages (including Irish) spoken by less than 10% of humankind. The destruction of diversity at every level of biology and culture has followed in the train of capitalist global expansion. As with the environment, measures are needed to protect languages against this erosion. Attempts at securing such 'protection' in the North, however, have been dismissed as 'political' and 'contentious'. The DUP's catalogue of abuse represents merely the most blatant manifestation of a hostility, which permeates public attitudes even amongst supposed liberals and progressives.

These attitudes are undoubtedly shaped by our colonial past and a more recent neoliberal perspective that understands the price of

everything, but the value of nothing. This view, which assumes that the domination of English is somehow natural, passive even positive, ignores that questions of language are inextricably linked to power, identity and of course, politics. Rather than a recent innovation by activists, the politicisation of Irish has deep roots in our colonial history. As Prof Gearóid Ó Tuathaigh rightly argues – 'Because of the particular nature of conquest and the power structures that that has fostered, it is impossible to separate the language from politics.' The rapid decline in cultural diversity became a calling card for Empire, regardless of its origin. Yet, nineteenth-century Ireland witnessed a particularly devastating collapse, unparalleled across Europe. Accelerated immeasurably by the death or emigration of almost two million Irish speakers, during a famine rationalized by a heady mix of imperialist racism and free market dogma, the ideological inheritance of this catastrophe is still felt today.

Contemporaneous Irish language communities and the modern northern revival in general are rooted in working-class communities

- victims of inter-generational discrimination and marginalisation, many of whom have learnt Irish to attain consciousness, challenge the neo-liberal consensus and strengthen their sense of identity through connection with place and history.

As these communities emerged out of conflict and began to assert their rights in the face of unfulfilled promises and frequent hostile and at times racist attacks, their efforts were also condemned for making the language itself 'political'. Outside the worst excesses

of political unionism, much of this narrative is framed in pseudo-progressive and inclusive rhetoric around the peace process. This narrative implies that activists have fostered their own marginalisation – if only we could be more moderate, if only we could do more to encourage others to engage with Irish, if only we could convince people that they have nothing to fear.

None of this rhetoric stands up to any objective scrutiny. What does a 'brighter future' mean when Irish schools are denied any specific Special Educational Needs provision and have to overcome enormous hurdles just to get off the ground? What does 'shared future' mean when Irish is deemed a 'single identity issue' not worthy of recognition never mind funding? What does 'shared spaces' mean when Irish is banned from public signage? And what does 'respect' mean when our language and community are constantly sneered at and ridiculed by the largest party in the state?

Claims of 'politicisation', perhaps deliberately, ignore the historical context, wherein the language constituted the chief cultural target in the conquest and colonisation of Ireland. The Irish language's minoritized status was by no means natural or accidental, but paralleled a process of dispossession, genocide and exploitation in Britain's first colony. This history laid the ideological foundation for exclusionary Orange/One party rule after partition. The liberal post-conflict consensus has replaced "religious" dominance with "cultural" conformity through highly-politicised policies such as TBUC (Towards Building United Communities). Liberal condemnation of the politicisation of the language really means that an activist community have the audacity to challenge centuries of linguistic marginalisation in tandem with a rejection of contemporary socio-economic exclusion. ...

Dissent against colonisation, empire and neoliberal dogma is not anti-progress, anti-peace or contrary to developing community relations. In fact, it lies at the heart of any genuine attempt to create a shared society based on equality and human dignity.

The concerted attempt to manufacture a 'Northern Irish' identity, exposed the determination to negotiate belonging and rights around how closely one accepted the official version of past, present and the future. In our recent history, this has facilitated the political vetting of Irish language groups and also justified the Department of Education's long-standing refusal to recognise Meánscoil Feirste. Indeed, the first decade of this century witnessed a degree of nationalist integration within this cultural and political zeitgeist – a new dispensation where the Irish language enjoyed no official recognition. The denial of rights for Irish speakers, promised to us in 2006, forced activists to come together as a community and form An Dream Dearg in order to give voice to one of the many groups excluded from the much-heralded peace dividend.

From denying its right to exist, the state had successfully 'pigeonholed' the language, drip-feeding groups with limited funding packages, as well as gradually and grudgingly recognising Irish-medium Education.

The larger question of the status of Irish in society typically only surfaced in the wake of the frequent, repugnant public attacks on our community by leading unionist politicians. Ironically, these gratuitous outbursts allowed us to keep the issue alive in the public mind. As our movement grew, critics claimed that rights for the Irish speaking minority would erode unionists' cultural Britishness. Whilst not based on any quantifiable evidence, this hyperbole distils the issue to its essentialist core, namely that any expression of Irishness or Irish

identity are viewed as a threat to British cultural hegemony. It is little wonder then that the DUP has closely aligned itself with the lunatic xenophobic fringe of the Tory party.

An Dream Dearg's campaign has exposed the intolerance of the Unionist political establishment, acting as a catalyst to the collapse of Stormont's power-sharing institutions and emerging as the main-stumbling block the executive's restoration.

The DUPs continued opposition to even minimalistic legislation demonstrates their inability to break free from our colonial legacy - from the Líofo bursary scandal, to the attack on Irish-medium schools and the stream of derogatory and prejudiced bile emanating from many prominent politicians. The struggle for the Irish language is emblematic of, and stands in solidarity with, the struggle for recognition by minority groups across the six counties.

The veracity of Arlene Foster's assertion that only 'political activists' demand official recognition evaporated in the face of fifteen thousand people taking to the streets in May 2017. The media focus has fuelled a new enthusiasm for the revival across every age-group and religious background. In short, increased exposure to the language, through legislation that provides for visibility and official status, will lead to increased tolerance and acceptance. The validity of an Irish Language Act has been demonstrated by the response to the arguments against it!

The fact remains, however, that any minority community engaged in a struggle for rights and recognition are quite consciously involved in 'political activism'. This doesn't diminish or undermine their campaign, but rather strengthens it.

As many international language communities

testify; the denial and disavowal of rights is controversial and 'political', not their assertion. The right and opportunity to 'learn and use' your native language, according to internationally acclaimed language expert Fernand de Varennes, 'flows from a fundamental right and cannot to be considered as a special concession or privileged treatment'. Adam Ramsey summed it best when he stated; Of course the Irish language is political: it's always political for marginalised minorities to express themselves. It's always political to defend diversity in the face of those who demand a monochrome society. •

Occupied Space

They colonise your brain
To make you think the same
But all that's left is shame
Like Pavlov's dog, well trained
We bark out the sheep's refrain
Writing in a foreign tongue
Dillon, Kavanagh and Burns
Through a self-induced haze
Await to hear the praise
To find themselves proclaimed great
wordsmiths
In the English firmament
Such a backhanded compliment
Whilst I, in vain attempt to do the
same

~ Colum Mac Giolla Bhéin



'THE RHYTHM OF TIME'



There's an inner thing in every man,
Do you know this thing my friend?
It has withstood the blows of a million years,
And will do so to the end.

It was born when time did not exist,
And it grew up out of life,
It cut down evil's strangling vines,
Like a slashing searing knife.

It lit fires when fires were not,
And burnt the mind of man,
Tempering leadened hearts to steel,
From the time that time began.

It wept by the waters of Babylon,
And when all men were a loss,
It screeched in writhing agony,
And it hung bleeding from the Cross.

It died in Rome by lion and sword,
And in defiant cruel array,
When the deathly word was 'Spartacus'
Along the Appian Way.

It marched with Wat the Tyler's poor,
And frightened lord and king,
And it was emblazoned in their deathly stare,
As e'er a living thing.

It smiled in holy innocence,
Before conquistadors of old,
So meek and tame and unaware,
Of the deathly power of gold.

It burst forth through pitiful Paris streets,
And stormed the old Bastille,
And marched upon the serpent's head,
And crushed it 'neath its heel.

It died in blood on Buffalo Plains,
And starved by moons of rain,
Its heart was buried in Wounded Knee,
But it will come to rise again.

It screamed aloud by Kerry lakes,
As it was knelt upon the ground,
And it died in great defiance,
As they coldly shot it down.

It is found in every light of hope,
It knows no bounds nor space
It has risen in red and black and white,
It is there in every race.

It lies in the hearts of heroes dead,
It screams in tyrants' eyes,
It has reached the peak of mountains high,
It comes searing 'cross the skies.

It lights the dark of this prison cell,
It thunders forth its might,
It is 'the undaunted thought', my friend,
That thought that says 'I'm right!'



BOBBY SANDS 1954-1981

The Sperrins, Dalradian and the GPO

By Tomás Ó Loingsigh

On March 14th, representatives from Omagh and Fermanagh District Council arrived at two caravans located in a mountainous, rural part of Co. Tyrone to deliver what appeared to be an eviction notice. Around the corner, two police vans lay waiting.

The caravans, set up on a piece of land just outside the village of Greencastle in the Sperrins mountains, had been dubbed the Greencastle People's Office, or the GPO. They are manned by locals from the Sperrins area who object to the proposed development of a massive gold mine in the Sperrins mountain range. These locals, led by women and men from the Save Our Sperrins community group, are the first line of defense against the development of the mine on their own back door. They fear the release of toxic chemicals and mining by-products, particularly cyanide, into the natural environment of the Sperrin mountains, an area defined by the British government as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Yet, despite irregularities in the planning process, with the community claiming that they did not receive their right to proper prior and informed consultation about the planned mine, and despite the fact that over 10,000 signatures have been collected in opposition to the mine, the eviction threats show that the local authorities of Omagh and Fermanagh are working hand-in-hand with Dalradian, the multinational mining corporation that proposes to exploit the gold under the Sperrin mountains, and ignoring all local concerns.

“The two caravans of the GPO in the Sperrins mountains are just one point in a global network of resistance



regard for the sustainability of the environment or local communities. The two caravans of the GPO in the Sperrins mountains are just one point in a global network of resistance that spans from communities fighting fracking in Britain and the US, to the fight against gold mines in Peru or Greece, and the indigenous communities fighting deforestation in the Amazon, coal mines in Colombia, tar sands exploitation in Canada, or the Dakota Access pipeline in the USA. These communities around the world face the poisoning of their water and their land by industrial chemicals or forced displacement to make way for ever-expanding mines. The primary tactic of those affected has always been the blockade - the closing down of access by contractors and industrial machinery to build and operate the extractive industries. In the context of a nearing climate catastrophe, it is these local communities, and not the middle-class moralists who hector us for not using wooden toothbrushes or reusable coffee cups, that are the first line on the struggle for environmental justice and a sustainable climate future for all of us.

“the struggle against extractivism is the struggle against capitalism and for the future. The locals of Greencastle know that they are the front-line.

In a capitalist economy that emerged from coal-powered steam engines in the Industrial Revolution, and that continues to be inextricable from the fossil-fuel economy, the struggle against extractivism is the struggle against capitalism and for the future. The locals of Greencastle know that they are the front-line, and have built links anti-extractive movements

from around the world. One such movement is the indigenous women-led resistance to the Cerrejón coal mine in Colombia, the biggest open-cast coal mine in the world, and the mine from which the government in the South of Ireland imports up to 90% of the coal burnt in its Moneypoint power station, despite a litany of human rights abuses by the mining company - a company that continues to have its sales wing headquarters in Dublin for tax reasons. The international solidarity between Save Our Sperrins campaign and the indigenous women of Fuerza Mujeres Wayúu is an example of the global movement against extractivism that may be our best hope against capitalist climate collapse.

There is a long history of local communities fighting extractivism and environmental depredation by multinational conglomerates here in Ireland. The images of lines of Gardaí blotting out the landscape of rural Mayo in the long struggle between locals and Shell in Rosport remain seared into our collective consciousness as an example of how far the Irish state will go to protect the interests of multinational oil and gas companies, even above and beyond the safety of local communities and the natural environment. More recently, however, attempts to build a hydraulic fracturing, or fracking industry in Co. Leitrim fell apart when a local community campaign won a major victory with national implications when the government was forced to ban fracking in Ireland completely. Fracking, a controversial method of oil extraction that has been linked to the poisoning of water sources across the US, is now illegal in Ireland completely, showing the power of small local communities if they stand together.

Now, the campaign in Leitrim has turned its attention to the growth of conifer monocrop forestry, a method of forestry that kills all indigenous Irish flora and fauna. Leitrim is the most affected county, as big midlands farmers buy up land in the county to plant sitka spruce to offset the carbon emissions of their beef cattle, leaving Leitrim blotted out by the

ecological dead-zone of Sitka monoculture.

“Now it appears that the notices given to the activists are not eviction notices but warnings to leave, with a real eviction date likely in May.

In the Sperrins, locals have fought the attempts by Dalradian to start building the colossal mine by blockading roads and blocking access to the site by contractor trucks, but the state has stepped in to arrest peaceful activists. After the warning letters from the council, ordering the locals to leave the site of the GPO within 28 days, environmental activists responded by turning up at the offices of Dalradian in Belfast and Omagh, with eviction notices ordering them to leave the island of Ireland within 28 days. Now it appears that the notices given to the activists on March the 14th are not eviction notices but warnings from the council to leave, with formal eviction notices expected within 28 days, and a real eviction date likely in May.

But locals say they are going to resist any attempted eviction, and have called on activists to support them if the council and the state attempt to violently enforce an eviction order. Activists from environmental groups around the country and anti-eviction activists from the Irish Housing Network have committed to stand in solidarity with the local community. With the proposed gold-mines in the natural landscape of the Sperrins, and with the British government discussing the possibility of disposing of its nuclear waste in the North, an area it evidently continues to see as a colonial backwater, the North remains a crucial testing ground for the struggle for environmental justice, and resisting Dalradian will be a key part of that struggle. •

ADIAN
TOXIC
OUR
DREN

STAND UP
TO DALRADIAN
BEFORE ITS
TOO
LATE

APRIL - JUNE 1969

The fourth in our series of '50', chronicling history from five decades ago. This issue deals with the period of April to June 1969, and continues coverage of the mounting conflict in Ireland, the fight for civil rights in the US and topics relevant to international Socialism, including the imperialist intervention in Vietnam.

4th April - British loyalists in the north of Ireland intended to bring down the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) Prime Minister Terence O'Neill, who had promised some concessions to the civil rights movement. To this end, Members of the loyalist UVF and UPV bombed water and electricity installations throughout the six counties, in deceitful false flag attacks, blaming them on the dormant IRA and on elements of the civil rights movement. Across the month of April there were six bombings and all were widely blamed on the IRA. As a response, British soldiers were sent to guard installations.

9th April - At Harvard University in the U.S Students for a Democratic Society (SDS) occupy University Hall and are evicted by police. Thirty-seven are injured and 200 arrested.

17th April - People's Democracy activist Bernadette Devlin was the youngest woman ever elected to Westminster, a record which stood until SNPs Mhairi Black's election in 2015.

17th April - The "Prague Spring" has ended. Communist Party chairman Alexander Dubcek is forced to resign as First Secretary of Czechoslovakia's Communist Party. Soon he will be made ambassador to Turkey.

19th April - During clashes with civil rights marchers in Derry, RUC officers entered the house of an uninvolved Catholic civilian, Samuel Devenny, and

beat him, along with two of his daughters. One of the daughters was beaten unconscious as she lay recovering from surgery. Devenny suffered a heart attack and died on 17 July from his injuries.

21st April - The Ministry of Defence in London announced that British troops would be deployed to Ireland.

23rd April - The Unionist Parliamentary Party voted by 28 to 22 to introduce universal adult suffrage in local government elections. The demand for 'one man, one vote' had been one of the most powerful slogans of the civil rights movement. James Chichester-Clark, then Minister of Agriculture, resigned in protest at the reform. This move further undermined the position of O'Neill.

28th April - O'Neill resigns and is replaced by Chichester-Clark as 'Prime Minister' of the Stormont Government.

30th April - US troops in Vietnam peaks at 543,000. Over 33,000 had already been killed.

6th May - Chichester-Clark, then Northern Ireland Prime Minister, announced an amnesty for all offences associated with demonstrations since 5 October 1968 and this resulted in the release of, among others, Ian Paisley and British Army Major Ronald Bunting.

9th May 1969 - Following his

release from prison Ian Paisley held a 'victory' meeting.

10th May - In an interview with the Belfast Telegraph Terence O'Neill states "if you give Roman Catholics a good job and a good house, they will live like Protestants... they will refuse to have 18 children."

10th May - The US launches an offensive in South Vietnam against Hill 937 (Hamburger Hill). The hill is bombed into a wasteland.

12th May - Winnie Mandela was detained under South Africa's Terrorism Act and was placed in solitary confinement for seventeen months

15th May - Following the arrival of the U.S National guard to squash a the 'Third World Liberation Front' strike at Berkley University Campus, a chain-link fence is erected around a university-owned property called 'People's Park'. Rioting begins as a crowd of about 3,000, many of them non-students, march from a noon rally on campus intent on "taking back" the park. Governor Reagan calls for a tough response against trouble. The Country Sheriffs carry shot guns. A few "street people" on roof troops throw stones down onto the police. By the end of the day one person, James Rector, has been shot and is near death. Another is blinded. At least 128 persons are treated in local hospitals for head trauma from clubbing, shotgun wounds and other injuries inflicted by police.

Hundreds have been taken to a nearby prison at Santa Rita.

16th May - Venera 5, a Soviet spaceprobe, lands on Venus.

25th May - Israeli Occupation Force made the first of four unsuccessful assaults on Arab forces in the town of Latrun, Palestine

25th May - Sudanese government was overthrown in a military coup. Gaafar an-Nimeiry (1930-2009) came to power with the support of communist and socialist leaders.

30th May - Berkeley citizens, numbering approximated 30,000 (out of a total of 100,000 march without incident past barricaded People's Park to protest recent events. Young girls slide flowers down the muzzles of bayoneted National Guard rifles, and a small airplane flies overhead trailing a banner that reads, "Let a thousand parks bloom."

30th May - Riots in Curaçao, a Dutch colony, mark the start of an Afro-Caribbean civil rights movement on the island.

17th Jun - Black Panther William Brent became the 28th person this year to hijack a US airplane to Cuba. The Cubans put him in jail for two years.

28th June - The Stonewall riots in New York City mark the start of the modern gay rights movement in the U.S.

NOTES FOR REVOLUTIONARIES

Somewhere and by someone, a beginning must be made.
- James Fintan Lalor

A Revolution will only be achieved when the ordinary people of the world, us, the working class, get up off our knees and take back what is rightfully ours.
- James Connolly

This crippling of individuals I consider the worst evil of capitalism. Our whole educational system suffers from this evil. An exaggerated competitive attitude is inculcated into the student, who is trained to worship acquisitive success as a preparation for his future career.
- Albert Einstein

We seem to have lost. We have not lost. To refuse to fight would have been to lose; to fight is to win. We have kept faith with the past, and handed on a tradition to the future.
- Padraig Pearse

History is the only true teacher, the revolution the best school for the proletariat.
- Rosa Luxemburg

We declare in the words of the Irish Republican Proclamation the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be indefeasible, and in the language of our first President. Pádraig Mac Phiarais, we declare that the Nation's sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the Nation, and with him we reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare.
- Democratic Programme of An Chéad Dáil Éireann, 1919

Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you
Ye are many, they are few.
- Percy Bysshe Shelley

Why does the guerrilla fighter fight?
We must come to the inevitable conclusion that the guerrilla fighter is a social reformer, that he takes up arms responding to the angry protest of the people against their oppressors, and that he fights in order to change the social system that keeps all his unarmed brothers in ignominy and misery."
- Ernesto Che Guevara

There is that much to be done that no select or small portion of people can do; only the greater mass of the Irish nation will ensure the achievement of a Socialist Republic, and this can only be done by hard work and sacrifice.
- Bobby Sands

The lesson of history shows that in the final analysis the robber baron must be dis-established by the some methods that he used to enrich himself and retain his ill-gotten gains, namely, force of arms. To this end we must organise, train, and maintain a disciplined armed force which will always be available to strike at the opportune moment.
- Seamus Costello

A feminist, whether she calls herself leftist or not, is a leftist by definition. She is struggling for total equality, for the right to be as important, as relevant, as any man. Therefore, embodied in her revolt for sexual equality is the demand for class equality.
- Simone de Beauvoir

Decolonisation is always a violent phenomenon
- Frantz Fanon

We have deluded ourselves into believing the myth that capitalism grew and prospered out of the Protestant ethic of hard work and sacrifice," said King. "The fact is that capitalism was built on the exploitation and suffering of black slaves and continues to thrive on the exploitation of the poor — both black and white, here and abroad.
- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

A Communist should have largeness of mind and he should be staunch and active, looking upon the interests of the revolution as his very life and subordinating his personal interests to those of the revolution; always and everywhere he should adhere to principle and wage a tireless struggle against all incorrect ideas and actions, so as to consolidate the collective life of the Party and strengthen the ties between the Party and the masses; he should be more concerned about the Party and the masses than about any individual, and more concerned about others than about himself. Only thus can he be considered a Communist.
- Mao

The struggle for women's liberation cannot be successful in isolation from the struggle to overthrow the imperialist system itself.
- Anuradha Ghandy



VEGANISM

& the Revolution

By David Swanson

The topic of veganism continues to divide the left and promote debate. Often associated with twee liberals and pacifists wheeling their trolleys around the local Waitrose, a narrative has emerged that it is closely associated with a privileged lifestyle. Elements of the mainstream media and animal agriculture industry are happy to accept and promote this description in an attempt to smear the movement. This has resulted in the true meaning of veganism becoming confused and distorted. In one of the biggest injustices of our time, an ever-accelerating revolution is being overlooked and shunned even within our own quarters of the radical left.

Vegan activists are tirelessly exposing the internal flaws that capitalism is renowned for. The movement is entirely compatible and indeed moulded on the principles of socialism. Campaigning to take control of a corrupt industry which maximises profit over ordinary lives is a fundamental ethos. Agitating to liberate those who fall victim to an exploitation ladder moulded by economic influence: everyday practice. By directly challenging the integrated custom that some lives are more important than others, veganism aligns itself with radical campaigns throughout history.

The most well-known aspect of veganism is the rejection of meat and other animal products. This in itself is a revolutionary act, in more ways than is often realised. Most obviously, it highlights that animals are treated as commodities raised and slaughtered for cash. By refusing to open their wallets to support this industry, vegans aim to kill corrupt profits and encourage consciousness that animals are also living inhabitants of the

earth who have as much right to freedom as we do.

However, the rejection of these products has other aims which epitomise socialist values. Those of us on the radical left publicly agitate against the inequalities of global food distribution. Boycotting the animal agriculture industry is one of the most stable methods to do this. To use a compelling example, it takes 13 pounds of grain to produce one pound of beef. When placed in the context of capitalist society, this statistic becomes a frightening and nauseating reality. If all the grain currently fed to livestock in Europe was made available for human consumption, it could feed over 800 million people. In a world where 20 million die of malnutrition, an animal agriculture industry propped up by capitalism has literal blood on its hands. By readily making plant sources reserved for the animal agriculture industry available to humans, world hunger would become history.

“veganism is not only compatible with the left but also firmly rooted in socialist principles.

Whilst these arguments alone should convince socialists of veganism's legitimacy, there are many other aspects of the movement which are drawn from radical tendencies. In one of the most appealing ongoing traits, activists continually enter land owned by farms and corporations to document and film the unethical practices of the industry. This showcases an ongoing element of leftist agitation: the abolition of private property. One of the main principles of socialism is that the land and means of production belong to the people, not to our present occupiers. The animal agriculture industry throws this issue into very public view. Backed by wealthy billionaires and a state police, a small group of capitalists exploit workers and animals on plots of land which should rightfully belong

to the ordinary citizen. Vegans are slandered publicly by farmers and labelled as trespassers, highlighting the capitalist nature of the animal agriculture industry. Some face criminalisation for daring to challenge these outdated norms. It is the duty of the radical left to warmly embrace this struggle and to aid it accordingly.

Perhaps the most common slander of veganism is that it simply focuses on the liberation of animals whilst ignoring human suffering and exploitation. This issue should be addressed. An animal agriculture industry rooted in capitalist thought preys on the weakest and most vulnerable of society to complete its objectives. To use a current example, slaughterhouse workers around the world are often resettled refugees of poor economic status. Fleeing from war-torn countries ravaged by Western imperialism, they are exploited by the very national immigration offices which destroyed their homeland. They use their situation as a bargaining chip; a pass into the western world is often subject to filling the void of an industry which many national citizens refuse to partake in. This results in very little negotiating power; freezing environments and desperately poor working conditions produce many injuries and higher levels of PTSD as a percentage than those serving in national militaries. Through these actions, animal agriculture highlights an integral pre-requisite of capitalism. Non-workers steal the produce of all labouring classes and insist that they are the rightful inheritor of wealth. Vegans strive to abolish this inherent flaw in society. Liberation of all species remains a primary demand.

More still, the damaging effects that the animal agriculture industry imposes on the environment has the potential to drastically alter life as we know it. Two acres of rainforest are cleared every day to sustain the demand for animal products, a process which has seen 91% of the Amazon rainforest destroyed. A meat eater needs 18 times more land

than a vegan. In perhaps one of the most frightening statistics, overinflated livestock breeding programs are responsible for 51% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

If these sobering statistics remain unchecked, they will contribute towards the destruction of our planet. Projections show that in the next forty years alone, climate change will produce over 150 million refugees. We must respond now to prevent this. As animal agriculture is the leading contributor, we should embrace the campaign to boycott it by creating a united front with the vegan community. The message is clear: vegans realise that a society of individuals cannot fight climate change, we must collectively organise. Instead of internally squabbling, we should unite to protest against those most responsible. This process will not only show solidarity with our more vulnerable international brothers and sisters in the battle to protect their indigenous communities, but strike directly against the divisions that neoliberalism has enforced upon our society.

“livestock breeding programs are responsible for 51% of global greenhouse gas emissions.

In short, veganism is not only compatible with the left but also firmly rooted in socialist principles. It should be embraced and encouraged as many of the issues within the movement naturally align with ongoing campaigns. Far from a campaign of privileged ideologues, this radical, ever-accelerating movement is continually striking at the heart of capitalism. The emancipation of humankind and the battle for socialism remains unfinished business, but the radical left can find a trusty ally and companion in the vegan community. Through education, agitation and organisation we can create a better world in which everyone, human or otherwise, has equal opportunity to flourish. •

WAR & CONFLICT

Observations through a Marxist lens

By Ciarán Ó Briain

The following article shall explore a Marxist analysis of war discussing what Marxists perceive as being the root causes of both civil and inter-state war, whether war can be justified or progressive, and lastly how they believe war can be eliminated. Operating from a Marxist approach dictates that, since Marxists do not adhere to an absolutist position on war, we must examine each conflict concretely and separately giving consideration to their distinct historical context. Offering a Marxist analysis of every conflict to date is obviously not feasible within the confines of these pages, therefore I have chosen what I perceive to be key conflicts of the 20th & 21st century to best illustrate a Marxist approach to war.

Additionally, in order to present a more sophisticated and informed analysis of the Marxist approach to war I shall include arguments from Marxism's Leninist and Maoist strands of thought. Ultimately I shall assess the strength of a Marxist approach to war, identify and acknowledge its alleged weaknesses, and moreover if possible refute particular critiques of the Marxist approach in order to present it as the most credible analysis of war.

From the standpoint of Marx's dialectical materialism Marxists, when analysing war, ask these questions: "what historical conditions have given rise to the war, what classes are waging it, and for what ends?". Ultimately Marxists accuse capitalism as being the root of all conflict within the world.

Since the advent of capitalism, the class contradictions presented by its progression produce inevitable conflict, domestically and globally. In the 19th century Marx and Engels alleged that through conflict the capitalist bourgeoisie "chases... over the whole surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere". Writing later in the 20th century Vladimir Lenin would expound upon this inherent expansionist and violent nature of capitalism, penning the definitive theory on imperialism which Lenin asserted to be 'the highest stage of capitalism'. The emergence in the 20th century of the superiority of financial capital and the era of monopoly capitalism on a world scale ensured the inevitability of war amongst the major political and economic powers of the time.

Lenin best illustrated his theory through the example of World War One (WW1). In a setting whereby the "lords of capital" had divided up the globe in the form of colonies and client states as had occurred by 1914, this manufactured a reality whereby free trade and competition had been superseded by the striving for monopoly, for the seizure of territory for the investment of capital, and for the export of raw materials from them.

This is how Marxists explain the emergence of the First World

War: that the historical conditions that gave rise to it was the emergence of this "super-capitalism" characterised by the reign of monopoly and financial capital, the classes waging it were the competing bourgeoisie of different imperialist nations, all for the ends of gaining further nations to oppress, colonise and exploit for their own aggrandizement. Integral to note however is that imperialism does not always manifest itself through war, Lenin's five principle definition of imperialism reveals that economic imperialism occurs daily and legally through the free market, however, although the phenomena of imperialism via market antics is not the focus of this paper, clarity of the concept of imperialism is significant if one is to thoroughly understand a Marxist analysis of war. Alluding to the critiques of Lenin's theory may also add further clarity.

Opponents of Marxism dispute the level of clarity that Marxists put forward in their argument of imperialism, alluding to the fact that amongst the major Marxist theoreticians in the early 20th century imperialism was a contested concept with Luxembour, Kautsky, Hilferding, and Lenin all putting forward competing theories upon the topic; with Lenin's only emerging as the most prominent due to the Soviet Union's incorporation of it into the state ideology.

Joseph Schumpeter also challenged Lenin's concept of imperialism by arguing that capitalism and war were antithetical to one another as conflict disrupts rational production and that therefore "capitalism is by nature anti-imperialist". Britain's participation in WW1 yielded immense profits for their empire however, allowing them to seize further territories and entrench their colonies, such as in India, where British firms appropriated two-thirds of India's economic surplus.

Schumpeter's arguments equally stand in stark contrast to the reality of modern US imperialism, with the



United States possessing an economy primarily built upon profitability from war with its major national export being weapons (not democracy as they'd have you believe).

Immanuel Wallerstein also argues against aspects of Lenin's theory of imperialism that he regards 'bothersome' and misleading, accusing Lenin as having separated capitalism and imperialism into separate phenomena, therefore construing imperialism into a foreign policy adopted by states at given occasions which he concludes as a unworkable prognosis. Clearly Wallerstein has misinterpreted Lenin's thesis on imperialism.

Lenin's definition of imperialism stands in complete contrast to this notion of imperialism as a policy, he vehemently critiques this idea in 'Imperialism and the Split in Socialism', his refutation of Kautsky's definition that imperialism was a "preferred" policy and tendency of industrial countries to annex agrarian countries. Imperialism is not a policy regarded Lenin, however the initiation of war by states is.

Since Marx and Engels marxists have always regarded Carl von Clausewitz's thesis that war is a "continuation of politics by other means" as the theoretical basis for analysing every given war, and that "all wars are inseparable from the political systems that engender them". Capitalist governments will attempt to camouflage their imperialist aims with politics by presenting them as policy for "the defence of democracy" or being in the best interest of national security. Chairman Mao Zedong acutely summarised the Marxist perception of war:

"War is politics and war itself is a political action: since ancient times there has never been a war that did not have political character... However, war has its own particular characteristics and in this sense it cannot be equated with politics in general. 'War is the continuation of politics by other means'. When politics develops to a certain stage beyond which it cannot proceed by the usual means, ...

... war breaks out to sweep the obstacles from the way... When the obstacle is removed and our political aim attained the war will stop... It can therefore be said that politics is war without bloodshed while war is politics with bloodshed”

“The application of Marxism in explaining the origins and nature of The Cold War is both insightful, and best illustrates the Marxist perception of war being initiated for the political and imperialist interests of the bourgeoisie.

The Cold War emerged, not after 1945, but as a consequence of capitalism's global monopoly being broken by the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917. Recognising the inevitable connection between wars and class struggle, Marxists understand the cold war as product of global class contradictions; leading to a battle for superiority between socialism and

capitalism. The near eight decade long conflict was characterised by the most intense mobilisation of the forces of capitalism to protect plutocratic privilege from what it viewed as the ‘despotism of the proletariat’. The fact such a battle is labelled a ‘cold war’ is a misnomer however, demonstrating the immense ignorance to the actions of the 14 imperialist nations that invaded Russia in 1918.

In 1856 regarding the British colonial domination of Ireland, Friedrich Engels remarked that “how often have the Irish started out to achieve something and every time they have been crushed politically and industrially. By consistent oppression they have been artificially converted into an utterly impoverished nation”. The relevancy of this lies in that British imperialist strategy in Ireland was sought to be replicated in Russia (as it was in many other cases of the world) to oppress and halt those who had begun their quest to establish socialism and build what would become the Soviet Union—a major industrial socialist superpower and bulwark to western imperialism.

“Additionally Engels observation of 19th century Ireland is comparative to western imperialism’s actions in Africa or the Arab world in recent history; Marxists would present Libya as such a case.

The late Fidel Castro for example exposed what he believed to be the true interests of the NATO invasion of Libya, once Africa’s richest nation under Gaddafi, asserting that “the United States and its NATO allies were never interested in human rights” concerns in Libya. Marxists argue that under the banner of human rights and democracy western imperialism once again hide their true intentions of reconquering Libyan assets and resources that were taken

from them by Gaddafi’s nationalisation policies during the ‘Jamahiriya Revolution’.

French foreign policy during this period was driven by their imperialist interests to remain the dominant power in Francophone Africa which was threatened by Gaddafi’s intentions to create a pan-African currency that would break from the French franc. This attempt to establish a pan-African currency was regarded by western imperialists as a threat to the financial security of the whole world. Capitalist states eventually require imperialist expansion to solve political and economic crisis at home. This what Mao meant when he proposed that “the bourgeoisie of all countries of the world... make use of war to divide up the world anew in order to escape from the economic and political and to avoid their own death” (Zedong, 1939). War against Libya was thus a calculated policy by the west determined by imperialism.

“Liberals challenge this notion that a policy of war and expansion is dictated by imperialism arguing instead that states only enter into war after a cost-benefit analysis of its outcomes.

‘Leftist’ American scholars like Richard Barnett allege that imperialist and colonial empires cost more than they produce, particularly when wars are fought to create and defend them. That capitalism, a system principled around profit maximisation, would have a natural progression that dictated imperialist expansion and inevitably war thus seems “irrational” to Barnett. However, as Michael Parenti argues: “those who think of empire solely as an expression of national interests rather than class interests are bound to misinterpret the nature of imperialism”. In reality, the gains of imperialism flow into the hands of the ruling class whilst the costs are extracted from the labour of the exploited masses. Marx commenting on the British Empire in India noted this process whereby the costs of empire were “paid out of the pockets of the people of England” whilst the profits were accrued by a minority privileged elite within Britain.

Marxist analysis primarily focuses on an economic explanation for political phenomena, which is actually a critic levelled towards it by its opponents who argue that Marxism’s ‘economic reductionism’ is a severe limitation meaning when it

comes to analysing ethnic civil wars like in Yugoslavia, the North of Ireland or Rwanda it is largely short-sighted. Whilst its focus upon class and ultimately economics is undeniable, it would be a fallacy to assert that Marxism completely ignores the questions of race or religion within its analysis of capitalism. Mao himself asserted that “the racial question is in essence a class question” and wrote extensively upon how race was used as an avenue for justifying imperialist oppression or being used as a tool for war. Moreover Marxists have offered detailed and critical analysis of such conflicts in Yugoslavia and the North of Ireland.

Michael Parenti in his book ‘To Kill a Nation’ gave a thorough account of imperialism’s role in sparking civil war within Yugoslavia amongst its poly-ethnic population. Parenti points to a 1984 US national security directive that outlines US and European imperialist interests in Yugoslavia which was to create ‘quiet revolutions’ within socialist countries that would see the overthrow of communist led governments and allow the reintegration of these countries into the global capitalist market; leaving them viable for a financial coup d’état by western capital. Likewise Irish Marxist Tommy McKearney offers an expert class analysis of the conflict in “Northern Ireland”, explaining that the religious antagonisms between Catholics and Protestants was a product of the legacy of 800 years of British colonial rule in Ireland and that ‘the troubles’ was an inevitable product of partition which established a protestant supremacist ‘Orange state’ within Ulster that regularly deployed sectarianism as a tool for the division of the working class. In explaining the constant state of war and conflict in third world countries Marxists have given more scientific answers than academics who would explain the genocide and war in Yugoslavia, Rwanda, Palestine and other previously colonised nations as ‘natural’ outcomes of ‘ancient ethnic hatreds’. Marxists refute such arguments explaining:

“If third world nations are impoverished, then it is not because of their climate or culture or natural temperament or some other ‘natural condition’ but because of the highly unnatural things imperialism has been doing to them” (Parenti)

Marxists in their analysis to war have given definitive answers as to whether war is progressive or justifiable, and moreover if it is possible to end war. Stalin neatly defined his answer, arguing that only two categories of war exist: just wars of liberation & unjust wars of pillage. Lenin more thoroughly explains the Marxist position on this stating:

“we understand the inevitable connection between wars and the class struggle within the country; we understand that war cannot be abolished unless classes are abolished and socialism is created; and we also differ in that we fully regard civil wars, i.e., wars waged by the oppressed class against the oppressing class, slaves against slave-owners, serfs against land-owners, and wage-workers against the bourgeoisie, as legitimate, progressive and necessary”

This utopian conclusion that war can be abolished through the erection of socialism and the abolition of classes is justifiably critiqued, with opponents asserting that the series of wars that soviet states involved themselves in such as Afghanistan or Hungary demonstrating that war will persist under socialism.

In summary, having drawn upon extensive Marxist literature from both the orthodox, Leninist, and Maoist strands of thought we have explained the Marxist approach to an analysis of war. We have shown the central-

ity of class struggle and imperialism in causing war. We have demonstrated the inherent inclination of imperialist countries towards a policy of war, and that war is only a manifestation of politics by different means.

We have acknowledged and moreover refuted many of the criticisms of the Marxist approach. Ultimately, Marxism has demonstrated its strength in offering sophisticated and thorough explanation for the persistent state of war of capitalist imperialist countries, and moreover given answers to the necessity and naturalistic credentials of war alongside a proposition as to how war may be eliminated.

Whilst it is in no way a flawless or omnipotent analytical approach to war, the value of the Marxist approach to progressives and anti-war activists is undeniable. •

BOOK REVIEW:

Shane Kenna's 'THE INVINCIBLES'

By Dieter Reinisch

On 6 May 1882, Lord Frederick Cavendish and Thomas Henry Burke, two of the highest representatives of the British colonial administration in Ireland were stabbed to death by a conspirative group within the Irish Republican Brotherhood, the Irish National Invincibles. A new book by the late Shane Kenna sheds light on these assassinations, its circumstances, and the trials that followed this event.

The assassination of Cavendish and Burke sent shockwaves through the British Empire. The assassination is a classic example of what David Rapoport described as the first wave of political violence in the modern era. This first "anarchist wave" is characterised by individual political violence and high-profile assassinations from Tsarists Russia to the Habsburg Empire. As in the succeeding two waves, the anti-colonial struggle of Irish Republicans was at the forefront of this wave.

The Irish National Invincibles occupy a prominent role in the current mythologization of the bygone militant struggle among Republicans upholding the right to wage armed resistance in 21st century Ireland. A tight-knit, well-disciplined group of conspirators staging a high-profile "blow against the Empire", as the late Ruairí Ó Brádaigh called it, attracts many militant Republicans today.

The 2015 publication of "Heroes and Villains: The Rise and Fall of the Invincibles" by Irish Freedom Press in Dublin serves as one notable example. The author, Seán Óg Ó Mórdha, is a former PoW who served time in Portlaoise Prison during the 1990s for charges related to the Continuity IRA.

Earlier this year, O'Brien Press published a detailed and highly readable book on the same topic by the late Shane Kenna. Kenna sadly passed away in February 2017. At the time of his death at the age of 33, he had already established himself as one of the specialists of Fenianism and late Victorian Republicanism. His books included a study of the Irish-American Fenians and a biography of O'Donovan Rossa.

His deep knowledge of Republicanism of this period is reflected in the book. The first chapters explain the social and political context that gave rise to the Invincibles, the day of the assassination, and the investigations. The second half of the book provides a detailed account of the trials and the executions.

Readers already familiar with the subject will find new insight for Kenna provides fresh understanding, based on detailed research. He quotes lengthy from archival documents, statements, and pamphlets. The editors of

the book, Liz Gillis, Gerry Shannon, and Aidan Lambert deserve praise for turning Kenna's manuscript into this volume.

In Kenna's contextualisation of the Invincibles lies the significance for Republican activists today. Several Republicans would consider themselves as modern Invincibles; the militant vanguard that stands in opposition to a much larger, opportunistic nationalist movement. While this may be true in terms of ideology and commitment to scarpify one's own liberty for the freedom of a nation, the Invincibles were the radical outburst during a time of social revolution. Despite the social protest in recent years – water charges, anti- eviction, etc. – Ireland faces no large-scale civil unrest comparable to the Land Wars, and no pre-revolutionary movements attract mass support as the Land League did. To be sure, while ideological continuity persists, the tactics do not reflect economic and social developments.

"The Invincibles" is a timely publication. The National Graves Association launched a campaign to reinter the remains of the Invincibles, currently buried in Kilmainham Gaol and give them a dignified burial in Glasnevin Cemetery. Writing in the afterword, Aidan Lambert, secretary of the Invincibles Re-internment Committee explains: "We made a pledge that post the 2016 celebrations, we would campaign with the NGA to have the remains of Joseph Brady, Daniel Curley, Michael Fagan, Thomas Caffrey and Timothy Kelly exhumed from the prison yard where have lain since 1883."

The Irish National Invincibles were executed for being Irish Republicans. As such, they fought for the establishment of an independent Republic, as women and men did all over Europe in the 19th century, from Hungary and Italy to Poland and Russia. They understood their actions against the colonial rule as their chosen medium to communicate these aims. In that regard, they were no different from Roger Casement. However, while Casement is remembered as an early advocate of modern human rights who received a state funeral when his remains were finally repatriated in 1966, the five Irish National Invincibles are still hidden in Kilmainham Gaol almost inaccessible to their descendants and the public.

As Irishmen who were executed by a foreign ruler for their fight for the independence of their country from colonial rule, they deserve to be honoured accordingly. Shane Kenna's book will strengthen the NGA campaign's argument to honour the Invincibles as true anti-colonial fighters against British colonialism in Ireland. •

Dieter Reinisch is an Adjunct Professor in International Relations and a Lecturer in History. He blogs on www.ofrecklessnessandwater.com and tweets on @ReinischDieter.



'IMPERIALISM DOES NOT HAVE FRIENDS - JUST INTERESTS.'

US Intervention in Venezuela

By Frank Fernando González Herrera

News about Venezuela, the 'humanitarian aid' and the alleged human rights violations of the 'regime' of Nicolas Maduro are world headlines these days. For that reason, I would like to present my ideas about this important topic for revolutionary forces around the world.

It is fundamental to highlight that the socialist process in Venezuela was a reaction against corruption and the abuse of the different administrations against the population since 1958 (with the signing of the Agreement of Punto Fijo that year that it created the new basis of the political regime for Venezuela till 1999).

In this context, The Bolivarian Revolution took political power in 1999, when its leader Hugo Chavez Frias assumed the presidency of the country after winning the 1998 elections. The proposed goals of the new government were the reduction of poverty, the education of illiteracy, improving the well-being of the working class, a new distribution of richness, unity of the nations in Latin America, etc.

Bolivarian government had to make political and economic changes to reach these social objectives: the new Constitution of 1999 was approved with 71 per cent of the votes and the State recovered control of their natural resources, especially oil.

Of course, the new policies of the Bolivarian Revolution affected the interests of US Imperialism and the Venezuelan privileged class. In fact, the attempts at coup d'état are not just a recent phenomenon, in 2002 there was a coup d'état against democracy in Venezuela, and the US supported its preparation and implementation.

With the death of Commander Hugo Chavez in 2013, the Venezuelan people suffered a huge loss. However, the political project continued with the electoral victory of Nicolas Maduro that same year, and more recently in 2018.

So far, Maduro's presidency has been characterized by an increase in hostility and unfair economic sanctions by the US, and internal violence from the Venezuelan opposition. On numerous occasions, Nicolas Maduro has called for dialogue with the opposition and the government of the US, who remain uninterested in peace, or in the development of Venezuela.

The recognition of the illegal government of Guaido is disrespectful. Besides, it is a threat for the security of the region. The USA and others turn their backs on the decisions of the United Nations regards to Venezuela.

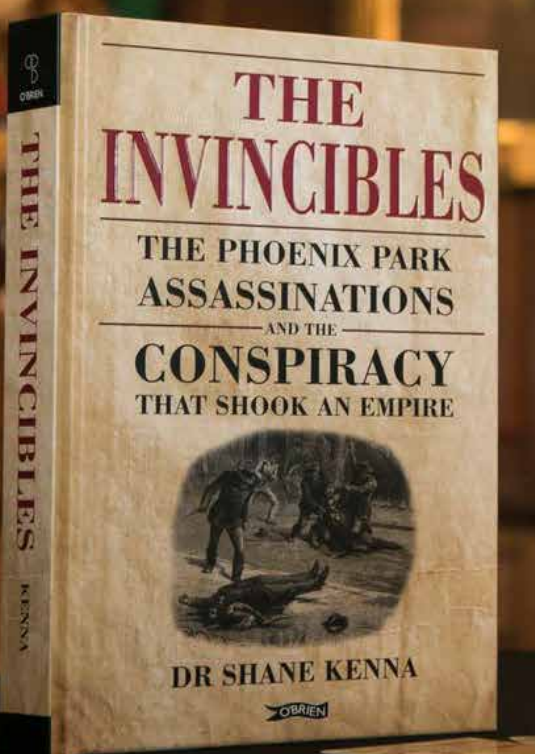
Venezuela has a difficult economic situation, because the USA has imposed sanctions and it has been an accomplice in the robbery of the money of the Venezuelan State, held in foreign banks.

The only humanitarian aid for Venezuela should be peace, and it means the elimination of all sanctions against it, and respect of the principles of the United Nations - to the letter.

By the way, when will the US send humanitarian aid to Gaza, in Palestine? Or, at least, when will Trump talk with his Zionist friends to avoid the continued slaughter of Palestinian children?

Comrades, Imperialism does not have friends, it just has interests. The fight for peace in Venezuela is very necessary. We should say 'No!' to the war and 'Hands Off Venezuela!'.

Hasta la Victoria Siempre! •



• "The Invincibles: The Phoenix Park Assassinations and the Conspiracy that Shook an Empire" by Shane Kenna includes a foreword by Liz Gillis and an introduction by Ruan O'Donnell. It was published in February 2019 by O'Brien Press, Dublin.



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