

# anspréach

Issue 3 Jan-Mar 2019 £2.50/€3.00

Independent non-profit Socialist Republican magazine



## An Chéad Dáil Éireann

100 Years: The Democratic Programme  
& The Counter-Revolution

### Ireland

The transition to  
a Socialist Economy

### Bloody Sunday

A Belfast reaction

### Bulwark to change

The Irish Financial Class

### 1887: The O'Halloran Sisters

One family's fight against Irish landlordism and English rule

**CONDEMN ME,  
IT DOES  
NOT MATTER.**



**HISTORY  
WILL ABSOLVE ME.**



*Edgewise*

## Contents

Is iris poblachtach sóisialta í **An Spréach** curtha le chéile ag roinnt gníomhaíthe polaitiúla.

An aidhm atá leis ná tuilleadh léargais agus dearchaí 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 dearcadh luaite anseo agus dearcadh an fhóilseacháin ach is iad dearcadh 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 dearcadh 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.

Suíomh gréasáin [anspreach.org](http://anspreach.org)  
 Riomhphoist [info@anspreach.org](mailto:info@anspreach.org)  
 Facebook [/anspreach](https://www.facebook.com/anspreach)  
 Twitter [@anspreachmedia](https://twitter.com/anspreachmedia)  
 Instagram [/anspreach](https://www.instagram.com/anspreach)

- p2 **1991 IRA Mortars Land On Downing Street**
- p3 **One Island Two Failed States**
- p4 **Bloody Sunday A Belfast Reaction**
- p6 **100 Years An Chéad Dáil Éireann & The Democratic Programme**
- p8 **Bulwark To Change The Irish Financial Class**
- p10 **50 The Third In Our Series Chronicling Five Decades Of History**
- p11 **Brexit The Lefts Case For Exiting The EU**
- p12 **Smash The EU**
- p14 **William Drennan When Erin First Rose**
- p15 **The Irish Land Question From 'The Workers' Republic', 1898**
- p15 **The Wobblies James Connolly And The US Golden Years**
- p16 **Colonial Amnesia Palestine**
- p17 **Cuba: Origins of the Revolution The Little David Against The Great Goliath**
- p18 **Notes For Revolutionaries**
- p19 **Review: Shiners, Dissos And Dissenters Irish Republican Media Activism Since The Good Friday Agreement**
- p20 **Housing In The Six Counties The Front Line In The Battle For Class Unity**
- p22 **Zionism Is Anti-Semitism**
- p23 **The Red Nation Solidarity From The Irish Diaspora: USA**
- p24 **The O'Halloran Sisters One Family's Fight Against Irish landlordism And English rule**
- p26 **Defining Socialism For A New Ireland**
- p27 **Venezuela US-Led Economic War, Not Socialism, Is Tearing Venezuela Apart**

**An Spréach** is an independent Socialist Republican magazine formed by a collective of political activists.

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 views of 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 relevant 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.

Web [anspreach.org](http://anspreach.org)  
 Email [info@anspreach.org](mailto:info@anspreach.org)  
 Facebook [/anspreach](https://www.facebook.com/anspreach)  
 Twitter [@anspreachmedia](https://twitter.com/anspreachmedia)  
 Instagram [/anspreach](https://www.instagram.com/anspreach)



# 1991: IRA Mortars land on Downing Street

At approximately 10am on the morning of the 7th of February 1991, as British Prime Minister John Major sat down with his War Cabinet in the Cabinet room of number 10 Downing Street, a white Ford Transit van, parked itself over 200 yards away, at the intersection of Horse Guards Avenue and Whitehall, outside Britain's Ministry of Defense.

A large hole cut from its roof, its driver door opened and out stepped a Volunteer of the Irish Republican Army, who calmly made his way to a waiting motorcycle driven by another Volunteer in the IRA Active Service Unit, upon which they promptly made their escape.

Concealed within the van, were several improvised metal mortar tubes secured to its floor, containing Provisional IRA developed Mark 10 Mortar rounds, three to four feet long, each with a short-fuse timing device and armed with warheads containing 40lbs of high-grade plastic explosive Semtex.

This operation was like many others conducted by the IRA. The mortar devices they had developed were first used in combat in 1979 by the IRA's South Armagh Brigade, and employed extensively in attacking British Army Barracks. These, and later variants, caused the British Army to significantly adapt their tactics and strategy, and move a significant number of their Base's at least one mile from their imposed border in Ireland, such was the IRA's technical capabilities.

But this operation was also quite different. It had to be conducted in unfamiliar territory. Moreover, there was no direct line of sight between the launch site and their intended target. IRA Volunteers had to be meticulous, and mathematically devise the exact location that the mortars should be fired from in order to hit their intended target. Too close and they might overshoot. Too far away and they might not reach.

Additionally, the direction of the mortars' aim created the biggest issue, just a few degrees to the left or the right and they'd be knocking out buildings on either side of their intended target.

The van had to be parked perfectly. Just eight minutes later, as a uniformed officer of London's Metropolitan Police walked his way to the abandoned weapons platform, the firing mechanism contained inside initiated, and the van shuddered backwards.

Launched using fast-burning propellant made of weed killer and sugar, they were fired in two volleys: first as a pair to balance the recoil, then a single in the middle. The trajectory sent them in an arc over the roofs of the Horse Guards buildings on Whitehall, with two landing in Mountbatten Green behind the Foreign Office, on Downing Street. The third mortar landed in the rear garden of number 10 Downing Street, just yards from the British War cabinet.

The substantial building shook violently, and the Cabinet Room's bomb-proof windows buckled inwards, as the Prime Minister and his War Cabinet scurried like rats, taking cover underneath their substantial table.

The damage to Numbers 10 and 11

Downing Street – the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer's official residences – was substantial. The direct hit left a crater several feet deep at its impact site.

Almost immediately, British security personnel in the capital scrambled to secure all Government buildings for fear of impending attacks. Hundreds of officers sealed off the entire area in Central London around the main British Government offices, from the Houses of Parliament to Trafalgar Square, leaving Whitehall almost deserted, as a secondary device contained within the van ignited, causing the vehicle to burst into flames and seriously curtailing any British attempts at forensic examination of both it and the weaponry.

Greater still was the damage caused to Britain's war and propaganda machine, as the IRA displayed their ever-growing capability to strike at the heart of the British Government and bring Britain's war in Ireland to the capital of their crumbling Empire.

"Like any colonialists", said P O'Neill, nom de guerre of the IRA's Army Council, "the members of the British establishment do not want the result of their occupation landing at their front or back doorstep ... Are the members of the British cabinet prepared to give their lives to hold on to a colony? They should understand the cost will be great while Britain remains in Ireland ... Let the British government understand that, while nationalist people in the Six Counties are forced to live under British rule, then the British Cabinet will be forced to meet in bunkers". •

# ONE ISLAND: TWO FAILED STATES

By Tommy McKearney

A century has passed since Irish men and women, with overwhelming electoral endorsement, rejected foreign rule and convened the First Dáil. Drawing inspiration from the 1916 Proclamation, they issued a Declaration of Independence and a Democratic Programme. In the years that have elapsed since, little has been achieved that would justify the optimism of those historic days. The political entity north of the border is a byword for failure while the southern state masks its deep running inadequacies by highlighting the success limited to its well-off upper class.

The political and administrative chaos that is the northern state is clear for all to see. Rancid sectarianism mixed with endemic corruption in the body politic has resulted in a statelet that is in terminal decline. It should be kept in mind, that it was not sectarian bigotry or light fingered politicians that produced the unlovely state of Northern Ireland. On the contrary, it was the creation of the artificial Six County colony that inevitably resulted in the sorry mess that is now bedevilling its creators' present day heirs in London.

Rapidly changing demographics, frustration in Britain at problems

arising from the backstop, the seemingly endless stories of political scandal, and all of this taking place against the embarrassing backdrop of a socially reactionary Unionism has left the North's constitutional position in a twilight zombie zone. While the DUP remains firmly of the opinion that the earth is flat, the moon is made of cheese and that Stormont will stand red white and blue through eternity, a significant percentage of unionism is now reconciled to the ending of partition.

When the Ulster Farmers Union and almost every business organisation in the Six-Counties criticise the leading party of unionism for its ham-fisted response to one of the major issues of the decade, the message is ominously clear. The smart money is on change.

In contrast, the southern state appears to be an oasis of calm and good governance. From a distance, this may seem to be the case. With the Taoiseach's department alone spending almost €500K in the past 18 months on publicity videos, it is easy to see how attention may be diverted from reality.

A reality, nevertheless, that is far from the pleasant and jovial atmosphere enjoyed by the South's bourgeoisie and their political representatives in Fine Gael and Fianna Fail. Reality such as hired mercenaries being employed by bankers and dispatched to evict a group of pensioners from their family home in County Roscommon. Or the

reality of tens of thousands of citizens living in temporary or unsuitable accommodation while too many working families are paying exorbitant rent. Moreover, life for working people in the Republic is becoming more fraught as a report by the think tank Tasc recently pointed to the fact that 44 per cent of workers in the state are 'precariously employed'. Adding to this picture of misery is a health service deemed recently as among the EU's most unequal and a police force plagued by recurring scandal.

In light of the situation south of the border, it is deeply worrying to realise how much control of the people's destiny lies in the hands of powers outside the state. The value and exchange rate for the Republic's currency, the Euro, is set by the German dominated European Central Bank. In itself this is major dilution of sovereignty but when coupled with other aspects of EU legislation covering competition law and state aid (i.e. the prevention of same) this amounts to transferring economic decision making to centres outside of Ireland. There is also the question of Ireland's so-called neutrality, now compromised beyond existence by membership of the EU's Permanent Structured Cooperation on security and defence (PESCO) and opening Shannon airport to US warplanes and armed troops.

In brief, we are looking at a situation in Ireland where one

political entity - the Six Counties - has failed to such an extent that it is in terminal decline while the other jurisdictions south of the border is failing its citizens on an alarming scale. In other words we are looking at two failed states.

How far this is from the ideals advanced in the Mansion House a century ago by the First Dáil Eireann when the Democratic Programme asserted, '... the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies to be indefeasible.' How distant is the constitution of the 26-Co state that guarantees the 'rights of private property' to that of the First Dail's declaration that, 'all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare' and 'the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the Nation's labour'. •



# BLOODY SUNDAY: A BELFAST REACTION

By Pádraic Mac Coitir

Ireland has seen many Bloody Sundays, the most infamous of which happened in Croke Park and in Derry. During the Tan War the IRA was very active in Dublin and after gathering intelligence on RIC and British army personnel local units attacked them in lodgings, killing 14. This was a pivotal moment during that phase of struggle. Later that day the British army and RIC drove in armoured vehicles to Croke Park where a match between Dublin and Tipperary was taking place. After positioning themselves in and around the pitch they opened fire on the players and supporters killing 14. This happened on 21st November 1920 and within a short time became known as Bloody Sunday.

Growing up in Lenadoon in Belfast I read some books about the Tan war and my heroes at that time were Tom Barry and Ernie O'Malley. I also read novels such as those written by Walter Macken. It was the action, as opposed to the politics, in those books that left an impression on me.

When the most recent conflict started in 1969 I would hear my parents and their friends talk of historical events and how things may be repeated in Belfast and other parts of the 6 Counties. Things did indeed get bad with the British army, RUC and unionist gangs killing many Catholics, nationalists and republicans. Lenadoon had been quieter than other parts but that was to change when internment was brought in by the British in August 1971. Heavy rioting took place on an almost daily basis and the IRA became very active with bombings and shootings against an enemy that heavily outnumbered them.

Every day after school me and my mates would go looking riots in and around Andersonstown and for us it was one big adventure. Of course there were times when it got frightening especially if we were

caught up in gun battles or when the British army snatch squads chased us. Hundreds of rubber bullets were being fired and we saw a lot of people getting seriously hurt. I was hit a number of times but fortunately only around the legs so it was mostly bad bruising.

Most nights we went to the local youth club in Oliver Plunkett school and although the youth leaders tried to keep us inside whenever the British army was driving or walking past we would inevitably get out to throw bottles and bricks and occasionally the rioting would last for hours. On Sunday afternoon 30th January 1972 my friends and I were on our way to the youth club when we saw older people standing at Lenadoon shops so we went over to hear what was going on. Some were crying and others were very angry as they started to talk about many people being killed in Derry. We were so young we didn't understand the full significance of it but we knew this

was something very serious. Some were saying it was worse than what took place the previous August when many people were killed, the majority of them in Ballymurphy. We then walked up to the youth club and on the way people were standing at their doors listening to their radios. When we got into the club the leaders spoke to us and told us many were killed and they told us the club would be closing and we should go straight home. We didn't go home but walked around the estate and it was unbelievable how many people were out even though it was very cold.

When I got home my mother and her friends were sitting in the kitchen and they were in a very sombre mood and when I asked how many had been killed they said reports were coming in of at least twenty dead and even more injured. Next morning when I got up to go to school I looked out the window and saw some IRA men hi-jacking lorries at the back of Lenadoon shops. I rushed out and as

I knew one or two I asked if I could go with them. They said I should be going to school but I pleaded with them and they let me into the front of the cab and we drove off. I was in my element and thought this was my big chance to see 'real' action. There was very little traffic on the roads and the lads said there were no British soldiers to be seen. I was very excited as they drove down the Shaw's Road then towards my school, La Salle. I still had my uniform on under my parka jacket and I was nervous as I thought they were going to tell me to get out. We drove into the school grounds and most of the teachers were standing at the steps and all the pupils were looking out the windows.

The local units must have been told to drive hi-jacked vehicles to the school because there must have been about half dozen other lorries there. My form teacher and other teachers saw me but didn't say anything to me. Many years later I





spoke to my form teacher and he too recalled that day when I was in the lorry and the terrible events that had taken place.

The hi-jacked lorries were driven to the Shaw's Road and used to barricade the streets. More pupils left the local schools and within a short time hundreds were out and we were all standing around talking of what happened the previous day. In Derry a protest rally was held calling for the ending of internment and thousands took part. It left the Creggan and wound its way through the streets of the Brandywell and the Bogside before being stopped by the British army in the city centre. Tensions were running high and there were some minor scuffles between a small number of protesters and the Brits, most of whom were from the Parachute regiment. Water cannons were used and this led to even more rioting. The British army charged the protesters and they ran the short distance to the Bogside. Within minutes live rounds were fired into the crowd and 28 unarmed people

were shot, fourteen of whom were killed. We believed the events of Bloody Sunday would prove to be a turning point for the IRA. That year was to become the most violent with almost 500 killed, including 130 British soldiers.

A number of the lorries were set on fire as we heard dozens of British army vehicles approaching and when they arrived serious rioting took place. We also heard a lot of shooting and people were running about saying it was the IRA (or the Ra or the boys as we called them). Rioting and shooting took place throughout the day in our own and other republican areas. Protests and rallies were taking place throughout the country and the people of Dublin vented their anger by burning the British embassy to the ground.

When the funerals were over many called for an inquiry into the deaths in Derry and the day became known as Bloody Sunday. Within days the British government said they would initiate an inquiry but many people

were reluctant to take part claiming it would be yet another whitewash. A senior British judge, Widgery, was appointed and within months published a report exonerating the British army from any wrongdoing.

This led to even more anger and again we all thought this would be a major turning point in the struggle. But the British establishment were unmoved and they brought in even more draconian laws. In fact some of those responsible for the massacre were decorated for their 'services' to the British crown. Another inquiry was carried out by this by a leading British judge called Saville and he published a report years later. Some of those campaigning for truth and justice about what happened on Sunday 30th January 1972 believed the Saville inquiry afforded them a degree of 'closure'. However, many others were of the opinion that the Saville Report didn't go far enough and they continue to seek justice. •



# 100 years: An ché

By Daithí Ó Riain

## “These are Revolutionary Times”

On January 21st 1919, the democratically elected representatives of the Irish People established the All Ireland Socialist Republic- the Republic that had been Proclaimed in Arms in 1916.

On that historic day, An Chéad Dáil Éireann, the Revolutionary Government of the Republic, met for the first time in the Mansion House, Dublin at 3.30pm. Before a packed public audience and representatives of the Irish and International Media, the Dáil declared itself the only legitimate Government in Ireland. During its first session lasting nearly two hours and conducted entirely in Irish, Dáil Éireann issued the Declaration of Independence, agreed a Provisional Constitution of the Irish Republic, sent a message to the Free Nations of the World, elected three

delegates to the Paris Peace Conference and most importantly, outlined the Democratic Programme of Dáil Éireann, which in conjunction with the 1916 Proclamation is the revolutionary outline of a socialist society in Ireland.

Building on the 1916 Proclamation, the Democratic Programme reasserted “the right of the People of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish Destinies. Declaring Padraig Mac Piarais as the First President of the Irish Republic it continued, that “The Nations sovereignty extends not only to all men and women of the Nation, but to all its material possessions, the Nations soil and all resources, all wealth and wealth producing processes within the Nation” and proclaimed that “all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare”.

In the Words of Liam Mellows, any reading of the Democratic Programme makes it clear that “The Irish Republic is the People’s Republic”, the Socialist Republic that James Connolly gave his life for. Importantly, it is also clear from

reading the Democratic Programme that that Republic would not just be free, but Gaelic as well.

The Provisional Constitution agreed at the first meeting of Dáil Éireann established a President and Four Ministers as the Cabinet of the Irish Republic. With many elected TDs still in prison, Cathal Brugha, the hero of the Battle of South Dublin Union, was named as acting President, while Eoin Mc Neil was named Minister for Finance, Michael Collins as Minister for Home Affairs, Count Plunkett, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Richard Mulcahy, the Minister for National Defence.

Under the direction of Dáil Éireann the cabinet immediately began the work of overseeing the establishment of Republican Dual Power across the country, to undermine the illegal British Forces of occupation and build the Irish Republic from the bottom up. Institutions to defend and build this revolutionary republican system of Dual Power were quickly established including the Republican police, Dáil Courts and the Land Commission. The Republican Army which had

been in existence since Easter Monday 1916, now gave its allegiance to Dáil Éireann.

As part of the system of Republican Dual Power, County Councils across the country began to give their backing to Dáil Éireann and the Republic became very much a state within a state that had the popular allegiance and support of the Irish People.

As the Republic was being established in Dublin, the opening shots of the Black and Tan war rang out in Soloheadbeg, Tipperary.

IRA Volunteers from the 3rd Tipperary Brigade, under the leadership of 1916 veteran Seamus Robinson, staged a daring ambush to liberate explosives guarded by the Royal Irish Constabulary.

The mastermind of the operation was the legendary guerrilla Séan Treacy, who believed the revolutionary armed struggle was the only path to National Liberation in Ireland. In December 1918, the unit received intelligence that a consignment of gelignite was to be moved from the British Army Barracks in Tipperary to



# ÉAD DÁIL ÉIREANN

Soloheadbeg Quarry at some point in January. The IRA decided to liberate it.

Everyday from January 16-21st the IRA Volunteers took up ambush positions from early morning to await the precious delivery. On January 21st, the consignment was spotted by IRA scouts leaving the barracks on a horse drawn cart led by two council workers and guarded by just two armed RIC men.

As the horse drawn cart drove into the ambush zone, masked IRA Volunteers confronted them on the road and demanded they surrender. The RIC immediately took up firing positions and the volunteers were forced to engage and neutralise them. The weapons and ammunition were confiscated from the dead RIC men and the IRA then commandeered the cart full of explosives and made good their escape. The council workers were held under armed guard until the explosives were safely dumped and then released unharmed.

Many of those who took part in the opening ambush of the 'Tan War

would become household names in the epic guerrilla struggle that followed. Seamus Robinson, Sean Treacy, Dan Breen and Sean Hogan would all play a key part in the war against British Imperialism in Ireland. In response to the ambush the colonial administration declared South Tipperary a special military zone, while on January 31st, An t-Óglach, the organ of the IRA, defiantly declared that the establishment of Dáil Éireann "justifies Irish Volunteers in treating the armed forces of the enemy - whether soldiers or policemen - exactly as a National Army would treat the members of an invading army".

The IRA action at Soloheadbeg greatly inspired the general population as it was a clear signal that the Irish People's War for National Liberation and Socialism had begun.

Over the course of the 'Tan War which waged from 1919-1921 the IRA and the mobilised Irish People fought British Imperialism to a stalemate. However, the Republic was betrayed by a mutually

beneficial alliance between domestic capitalism and British Imperialism and was suppressed during a violent counter revolution that has continued to this day. Yet in the words of the 1916 Proclamation "The Irish Republic is entitled to and hereby claims the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman".

The Socialist Republic as set out in the Proclamation and Democratic Programme remains the objective of genuine Irish Republicans today. Therefore, the only legitimate honouring of our revolutionary history is to rebuild the All Ireland Socialist Republic Proclaimed in 1916 and Established 100 years ago on January 21st 1919.

This is not an aspiration or rhetoric, it is our duty. •

# THE IRISH FINANCIAL CLASS: BULWARK TO CHANGE

Conor McCabe

There is a lot more to class than accent or dialect. It is a power relation, the dynamics of which have shaped the contours of the Irish state since its establishment over 90 years ago in the courtyard of Dublin Castle. Although the south gained a form of political independence, it remained in a financial union with the UK for decades afterwards.

The cost of this was staggering in terms of poverty and emigration due to the lack of indigenous investment and a fierce reluctance by the political establishment to force Irish banks to recycle savings in the state via credit formation. Since the 1980s Ireland has carved out for itself a niche role in global finance, facilitating tax evasion and loose regulation via its offshore financial centre, the IFSC. This is protected by the elites that profit from it to the detriment of the rest of Irish society.

The economic interest of this moneyed class has had an inordinate influence on our laws and on the scope and direction of government policies. It has been able to do this because its objectives and operational procedures are deeply embedded within the institutions of

the state itself. It is without doubt the greatest block to progressive change in Ireland.

Take housing for example. It is no secret that we are in the midst of a housing crisis and the way to solve it is to build more houses. The problem is not the solution, which is refreshingly self-evident, but rather the question of whose economic interests should be served or side-lined by whatever plan is put in place. Should we protect the financial interests of speculators and hope that they do the right thing, or should we protect ordinary households because we know that the former will only ever look after themselves?

The housing plans put forward by successive governments were designed in such a way as to ensure that the speculative price of a house will continue to rise. The government will try to help people 'afford' that price but it will not do anything to dampen, stall, or reverse its upward ascent. It will say that property speculators need the right encouragements to build, and that the best incentive for them is a rising market. Meanwhile, accommodation is out of reach for ordinary households and this is compounded by official state policy.

The problem is that we are not just dealing with the relationship between property speculators and political parties: we are also talking about banks; land-hoarders; estate agents; insurance companies; the Department of Finance; the Central Bank; the Revenue Commissioners; tax lawyers; The Housing Agency; Real Estate Investment Trusts (Reits); the Department of the Taoiseach, and the Department of Housing and Local Government.

The plans of all of these companies, agencies and institutions are framed by a shared economic interest and common cultural and intellectual reference-points, and these are not down to nor exclusively held by any one person or group. These economic class interests have an institutional form: they are supported and maintained by the state apparatus and by the way the state operates. They are deeply embedded in our legal and taxation systems, both of which prioritise the interests of speculators and financiers over the common good. They are imbedded throughout our banks as well as the regulators and in the policy units of our government departments.

There has been in Ireland a forty-year move to shut down social housing and the class that has benefited from that

will not allow any crisis for ordinary people to reverse that trend. In fact, the selling-off of our public housing stock, the almost complete privatisation of the rental sector, and the creation of the myth that home ownership 'is in our DNA' has been one of the great ideological successes of that class. They are not going to give that up for anyone. Trade unions and civil society groups can lobby government and hope to influence the outcome, but in general Irish state departments will bow to the logic of capital accumulation. Progressives need an organisational class strength to challenge it.

Irish progressives should embrace all of the elements discussed - in terms of politics, gender, and organised labour - in a commonwealth of trade unions, civil society and political representation. We need to do this in order to shape our own future. The alternative to the current situation of seeing the interests of Ireland's moneyed classes made law is quite straightforward: we make the laws ourselves. And in order to do that, we need to organise.

Class power and class interests cannot be tackled at an individual level. The only thing that can take on

“ *The greatest trick that capitalism ever played was convincing the world that money was neutral. It was able to do this because money exists in an abstract and opaque space, with its own language and gatekeepers to knowledge.*



deeply-embedded class interests is a counter-class organisation. In other words, if we want to take on those who are organised at a class and state level then we need to do the same – we also need to organise at a class level with the aim of shaping the direction of the state in a progressive way. But again whereas the solution is somewhat straightforward, the pathway to it is fraught with tensions, contradictions and compromises.

Societies are never static. It is simply impossible for them to be so for it has too many millions of moving parts. Society is in a constant state of development: it is an ongoing process. Institutions, however, are a different matter. Once a class interest takes an institutional form it is very difficult to dislodge it. The issue that confronts us today is not so much societal but institutional change. We want the state to be reflective of where we have already arrived in our thinking. The question is how do we harness the change that is happening and give it an institutional expression? How do we replace the old conservatism and embedded financial interests with the new in terms of social

solidarity, and how do we do it without making things worse? Without a workable method of implementation any vision put forward of a progressive and equal Ireland is merely an aspiration. It is a set of words that serves no threat to power and its institutions.

In order to tackle Irish moneyed class interests and their control of the money system we therefore need civil society organisations and trade unions working in tandem with a progressive political sphere. We need a structure that is robust enough to make our objectives real, flexible enough to allow us to achieve them, and reflective enough of the particular and specific class antagonisms and gendered exploitations that are at play in this state to allow us to confront the class that opposes us. We also need to challenge the received ‘common sense’ of the Irish moneyed class, and this means research and discussion via activist education.

When we talk about education we are talking about a way of harnessing this experience and

creativity of activists, and placing that energy within a conceptual framework of economic class and gendered power relations and how they operate in Ireland today. Education used in this way simply gives direction and focus to what is already there. Education is not The greatest trick that capitalism ever played was convincing the world that money was neutral. It was able to do this because money exists in an abstract and opaque space, with its own language and gatekeepers to knowledge. As citizens we are required to support the profit-seeking strategies of financial institutions that have significant control over money and credit, but we are not supposed to question those strategies, the logic that underpins them, nor the power relations that envelop its world.

Change requires a strategy. It must involve civil society, organised labour, and political representatives working in tandem with agreed objectives in terms of work, health, housing,

child care, education, and taxation. A commonwealth of progressive forces is needed in order to realise those objectives and to defend them from the state and its institutions when it that requires ongoing education and research, as well as organisation and activism. It is entirely achievable. •

(Conor McCabe is a research associate with UCD Equality Studies Centre and author of *Sins of the Father: The Decisions That Shaped the Irish Economy*. His new book, *Money (Sireacht: Longings for Another Ireland)*, is published by Cork University Press.)



# JANUARY - MARCH 1969

The third in our series of '50', chronicling history from five decades ago, in what could be argued is one of recent histories most tumultuous periods. In this edition, we have given particular focus to a number of the headlines of the period, including, the imperialist aggression in Vietnam & Cambodia, Black liberation movements in the America's and the rise of the Civil Rights movement in Ireland.

Mid-January - The Black Panther Party initiated the 'Free Breakfast for School Children' Program at St. Augustine's Church in Oakland, California, the program became so popular that by the end of the year, the Panthers set up kitchens in cities across the US, feeding over 10,000 children every day before they went to school. At the same time the BPP began to purge members due to fears about law enforcement infiltration and various petty disagreements.

1st January - People's Democracy March Began  
Approximately 40 members of People's Democracy (PD) began a four-day march from Belfast to Derry. The Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association (NICRA) and some nationalists in Derry had advised against the march. The march was modelled on Martin Luther King's Selma to Montgomery march. The first day involved a walk from Belfast to Antrim.

2nd January - The People's Democracy (PD) march continued, on day two, from Antrim to Maghera.

3rd January - The third day of the People's Democracy (PD) march took it from Maghera to Claudy.



4th January - Burntollet Ambush; on the fourth, and final, day of the People's Democracy (PD) march took the marchers from Claudy to Derry. Seven miles from its destination, the People's Democracy (PD) march was ambushed and attacked by a loyalist mob at Burntollet Bridge. The ambush had been planned in advance and around 200 loyalists, including off-duty members of the 'B-Specials', used sticks, iron bars, bottles and stones to attack the marchers, 13 of whom received hospital treatment. The marchers believed that the 80 Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officers, who accompanied the march, did little to protect them from the Loyalist crowd. As the march entered Derry it was again attacked at Irish Street, a mainly Protestant area of the city. Finally the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) broke up the rally that was held in the centre of the city as the march arrived. This action, and the subsequent entry of the RUC into the Bogside area of the city, led to serious rioting.

5th January - "You are now entering Free Derry"- the Bogside and Creggan neighbourhoods, was secured by community activists for the first time on following an incursion into the Bogside by members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Residents built barricades and carried clubs and similar arms to prevent the RUC from entering. After six days the residents took down the barricades and RUC patrols resumed, but tensions remained high over the following months.

The Soviet Union launches Venera 5 toward Venus.

12th January - Martial law is declared in Madrid, as the University is closed and over 300 students are arrested.

17th January - Los Angeles Panther Captain Bunchy Carter and Deputy Minister John Huggins were killed in Campbell Hall on the UCLA campus, in a gun battle with members of the 'US Organization' (a rival black nationalist group who's relations with the Panthers were soured by the work of the COINTELPRO).

22nd January - Black workers at the Eldon Chrysler plant in Detroit march on the autoworkers' union with a list of grievances. The workers had formed ELRUM - the Eldon Revolutionary Union Movement - and they called a strike the next day.

An assassination attempt is carried out on Leonid Brezhnev by deserter Viktor Ilyin. One person is killed, several are injured. Brezhnev escaped unharmed.

24th January - Brian Faulkner, then Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce for the Orange State, resigns from the cabinet in protest at the policies of Terence O'Neill and the lack of 'strong government'.

26th January - William Morgan, then Minister of Health and Social Services, resigned from the six county administrative government.

28th January - A "Third World" strike has been dwindling on the US Berkeley campus. Governor Reagan arranges to have police intervene to protect students from disruption.

3rd February - Terence O'Neill, then 'Northern Ireland' Prime Minister, announced the dissolution of the Stormont parliament and the holding of an election on 24 February 1969. This was a political gamble by O'Neill in an attempt to strengthen the hand of those in favour of reform.

February 4 - In Cairo, Yasser Arafat is elected Palestine Liberation Organization leader at the Palestinian National Congress.



5th February - Turmoil increased as off-campus anarchists attacked a police line and the police retaliated in forays that strike at students merely walking off campus. War between students and the police has erupted. Governor Reagan declares "a state of extreme emergency" on the Berkeley campus and surrounding area.

6th February - The New Ulster Movement (NUM) was formed. This pressure group was established to promote 'moderate and non-sectarian policies' and to assist those candidates who supported Terence O'Neill, then Prime Minister, in the election on 24 February 1969.

13th February - Front de libération du Québec (FLQ) bomb the Montreal Stock Exchange.

17th February - In the run-up to the election on 24 February 1969 the BBC programme 'Panorama' interviewed the main political figures. This programme was broadcast across the UK and was an early instance of viewers in Britain having an opportunity to see the conflict in the north being discussed in depth.

18th February - El Al Flight 432 attack: Four members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, machine-gun El Al's flight 432, a Boeing 707 preparing for takeoff at the Kloten Airport near Zurich.

24th February - An election to the Stormont parliament was held. The main feature of this election was the fragmentation of the Unionist party into 'Official Unionist' and 'Unofficial Unionist'. Of the 39 unionist candidates returned in the election 27 were in support of the policies of Terence O'Neill, then Northern Ireland Prime Minister, while 12 were against or undecided.

28th February - Terence O'Neill was re-elected as leader of the Unionist Parliamentary Party and thus was confirmed as Prime Minister.

3rd March - The Cameron commission was established to consider the reasons for the unrest in Derry.

17th March - Another shootout with the 'US Organisation' left two more Panthers dead.

18th March - 'Operation Breakfast' began the covert bombing of Cambodia by U.S. planes.

19th March - British paratroopers and Marines land on the island of Anguilla, ending its unrecognized independence.

# THE LEFT CASE FOR BREXIT

By Eamonn Ó Cléirigh

Since the inception of the European Union and Ireland's membership of it, Socialist Republicans have always been in opposition to the neo-colonial super institution.

Several years ago I actively campaigned, along with many other Socialist Republicans from across the country, for a Leave vote in the referendum. We didn't do so because we agreed with the analysis of the Right, the Tories, Unionists etc. but because the Republican Left always had its own analysis and reasoning to stand in opposition to the EU.

In the immediate aftermath of the referenda the scaremongering from constitutional Nationalists began and the Socialist Republican critique was suppressed, demonised and in many respects it just disappeared, allowing the constitutional Nationalists to run with their narrative for the most part. This has resulted in the felon setting of those who have taken the republican left position in support of EU withdrawal and occasionally the erection of posters with buzzwords of little substance such as 'NO BORDER – NO BREXIT', 'PROTECT THE GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT', and 'BREXIT HARD BORDER – BROUGHT TO YOU BY THE TORIES, DUP, UUP, PBP'.

European imperialism in Ireland is an impediment to the creation of the 32-county Democratic Workers Republic that we struggle for. A state within which all of

the nations' resources are applied for the betterment of all its people. European economic and fiscal imperialism must cease as part of the creation of a new Republic. Therefore the right of the Irish people to defend itself from economic and geographic exploitation is fundamental.

The European Union holds an economic grip on Ireland and its resources. Our economic sovereignty is paramount, and equally so should be our actions in wresting the reins of power from E.U bureaucrats and cementing it within working class communities and national industries. Currently three-quarters of fish caught in Irish waters are taken by non-Irish fishing boats. Let us reclaim our waters from the multinational super trawlers and allow our own fishing communities to flourish. Astonishingly, 100% of our lead, silver, zinc and copper resources are outside of Irish hands, with all of them being shipped across Europe to be refined. Ireland could instead use its own natural resources to build industries manufacturing jewellery, solar panels and electronics.

I campaigned for a Leave vote in the referenda because I believe that a better world is possible and we, the Irish working class, deserve better. The E.U is an increasingly militarised institution that puts the interest of big business over that of its people. It is no longer merely suspect that the E.U intends to build a super-state army, with both Germany's Angela Merkel and France's Emmanuel Macron openly calling for its creation. CEO's of major arms companies such as BAE Systems dominate the advisory boards to

the European Commission regarding 'Defence Research', and gain fortunes in military contracts alongside private security forces utilised for border security.

British occupation and E.U membership rob us of our national self-determination, sovereignty, and the fundamental right to decide upon our own futures.

This is not anti-Europe, but anti E.U! The E.U project has failed the working masses with forced fiscal policies, poverty and austerity. The greatest achievement of the E.U project has been the opening of borders and the integration of European peoples but we don't need the E.U for this. Fortress Europe only has open immigration for its own people while it allows migrants to drown in the Mediterranean Sea trying to seek refuge in Europe. A free Ireland should welcome with open arms all of the world's peoples.

The scaremongering of the constitutional Nationalists does

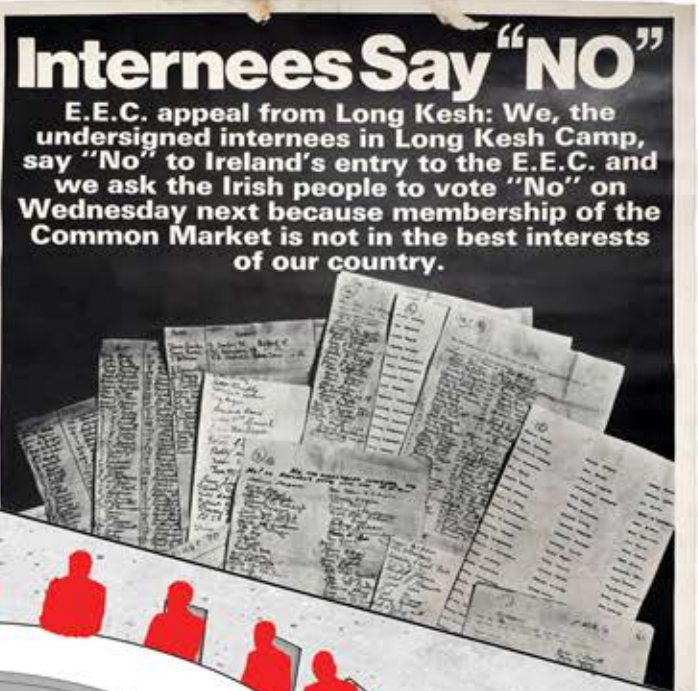
nothing but spread discontent within the wider republican base and their lies only serve as a distraction to fuel the fire. Those who would point out the strange bedfellows of anti-imperialists on the Brexit front should look at their own right wing associates within 'progressive Europe'.

No Brexit doesn't mean no border. The ongoing British occupation and partition created the border, not the EU, and with or without a hard border the core issue remains, the partition of our country and British occupation.

Withdrawal from the EU won't solve Ireland's ills and a Tory Brexit will not do the working class any favours either, but it is important to understand why the Republican Left is in opposition to the EU, which is for polar opposite reasons of that of the Right and other Brexit campaigners.

What kind of Europe do you want, a People's Europe or Big Businesses Europe?

Poblacht na nOibrithe abú. •



# S M A S H

Membership of the European Union remains a polarising topic which continues to split opinions within the continent's left, often to the detriment of unity and ideological clarity. Confusion is particularly rife in Ireland, with many of the EU's most crucial aspects underreported or indeed misrepresented by liberals and centrists eager to promote a progressive haven of integrity. Marxists should unapologetically challenge this narrative and remain resolute in our criticisms.

The European Union is nothing more than an imperialist empire which protects capitalism's right to exploit workers in a centralised, authoritarian hub. Those who don't fit racist and profitable standards both inside and outside its borders are treated deplorably as gigantic corporations are given free rein to exploit Europe's most profitable labour. Under the watchful eye of Brussels, capitalism is vociferously championed in a project that cannot be reformed; only a class-conscious revolution spearheaded by the working class can restore the continent to its full potential of cooperation and implement socialism.

Economic dominance remains one of its most unsavoury principles. Far from the equality of outcome that Marxists seek, EU legislation gives workers no choice but to comply to exploitative legislation formulated by privileged billionaires.

Employment conditions and production locations dictated by EU bureaucracy allow the project's hierarchy to exert totalitarian control over its member states, herding European workers at will in a cash cow which prioritises financial growth over those at the heart of production.

Crippling sanctions are authorised for those who dare to challenge these corrupt norms; the rejection of EU protocol by the radical left in Greece (Syriza) was brutally crushed by implementing huge levels of austerity onto the population and reinforcing neoliberalism. Ousting an elected socialist government and creating markets directly subordinate to Brussels' authoritarianism was not only a tactic intent on crushing Greek spirit; a clear message was sent to other member states that a class-conscious revolution against Europe and capital would not be tolerated.

Closer to home, Ireland also remains no stranger to Europe's bully-boy economic tactics. 2009's Lisbon Treaty remains a significant point of contention that brutally exposes the European Union's domination of this island. Granting Brussels the legal authority to control immigration and judicial matters was rejected three times by Ireland's southern government before the threat of losing EU subsidies proved too costly for the right-wing Fine Gael/Fianna Fáil coalition to bear. Well aware that Ireland is reliant on the financial intervention of European capital whilst a member of the project, EU bureaucrats used their financial clout and dominant status to successfully implement the treaty and tighten their grip around the island's production

lines and resources.

Socially too, the European Union's record is appalling. Despite its persistent use of progressive rhetoric, it has become one of the most dangerous regimes that the world has seen in modern times.

Fortress Europe is more than a nickname; the project's humanitarian record is blotted at best, saturated in both racist stereotypes and hypocritical double standards. Many of those who defend the project's legitimacy consistently overlook its treatment of non-member states, particularly those of so-called 'developing' status. The EU-funded wall between Turkey and Syria remains a particularly nauseating example of just how far European ruling classes will go to preserve profit over the lives of ordinary people. Built upon the taxes of compliant member-states in a project that Donald Trump could only dream of, it is specifically designed to keep Syrian refugees from taking the easiest route into Europe as their situation becomes more and more desperate.

Further influxes of so-called 'unskilled migrants' would destabilise the profits and gains of a centralised hierarchy and as such are treated deplorably and encouraged to risk life and limb via difficult routes in an effort to keep them out, highlighting the incessant greed of a capitalist fortress. Despite presenting the wall as a statement against Turkish EU involvement because of Erdogan's human rights record, the mask slips when capitalist society is intrinsically analysed. Its treatment of

non-member states is also highly hypocritical. Despite its barbaric treatment of Syrians and other stigmatised nationalities, its relationship with Israel couldn't be more different – highlighting a further corruption of the capitalist project. The EU grants Zionists special trades deals, particularly within the arms industry, despite not being a member state and rewards this profitable venture with relaxed visa entry requirements into Europe – a painful injustice when compared to Syria's hardships.

More than that, the European Union kills thousands of non-Europeans regularly, in an ongoing trait which affects the Irish proletariat in more ways than is often realised. Buddying up with fellow bureaucrats in United Nations offices, 'peace-keeping forces' armed with imperialist ammunition and weaponry are used to promote 'western values' and enforce capitalism in an arrangement that forces indigenous populations to conform to western markets and neo-liberal agendas.

The Irish Defence Forces (IDF) play a leading role in this campaign; recent missions in the Congo, Syria, Jordan and Lebanon have done nothing to strengthen working-class solidarity or improve conditions for the international proletariat. Led by bureaucratic generals and European mandates, ordinary Irish citizens are herded around the globe to protect the status-quo in a cause that is not their own. This arrangement will only become more structured with Ireland becoming the latest EU member-state to join the Permanent Structured Co-Operation (PESCO), a militarised

# THE EU

By David Swanson

European force commanded directly from Brussels which further destabilises the campaign for national sovereignty in the form of a workers' republic. These are dangerous times in which the rank-and-file of the IDF should be encouraged to agitate and organise in the vision of Marx and Connolly, rebelling against the Irish aristocracy who send them to reinforce a world order which is structured to protect capitalist interests to the detriment of the international working class.

The EU referendum presented a unique opportunity for the proletariat of the North of Ireland to unite in class solidarity, striking at the heart of European capitalism. This opportunity was missed, with many influenced by the polarising messages of the leading parties within the Stormont Executive.

The reactionary rhetoric of anti-immigration mixed with British chauvinism which emerged from DUP Vote Leave representatives distorted Marxist justifications for leaving the European Union and heavily impacted on the narrative leading up to the referendum. The DUP's actions also highlighted the ideological haziness of the Orange and Green divide; Sinn Féin rejected their lifelong criticisms of European imperialism, embarking on a questionable U-turn in favour of further Irish involvement. Guilty of distorting the project into a progressive haven of caring values in a move which mirrors their more recent shift to the political centre, questions should be asked as to whether they can acceptably claim to represent working-class communities in the North. These two

factors contributed towards a messy and demoralising debate, with little to no Marxist analysis. In an unusual and bitterly disappointing twist of fate, the objective of leaving the European Union was stolen and championed by the political right, impacting on individual perceptions and voting intentions. Faced with the galling prospect of voting with the DUP's immigrant-bashing utopia, many were driven to align themselves with a campaign spearheaded by the likes of Tony Blair and Theresa May in a carnival of reaction which led to the North eventually voting to remain.

Even in these unfortunate circumstances, the Irish working class can influence proceedings and form a united front against the EU's incessant domination. Whilst Guardianistas and middle-class publications decry that the British working-class who carried a Leave majority across the sea are nothing more than racist demagogues in their efforts to cool the growing embers of proletariat awakening, we hold an important bargaining chip to influence proceedings and ensure a Marxist exit from the European Union.

The British establishment's imposed border in Ireland has become a key feature of negotiations with the EU post referendum, offering a second chance to influence international class-solidarity. The British ruling class's rigid insistence to deny voters their legitimacy in the EU referendum has produced a radical current willing to bypass parliamentary representatives and reactionary careerists. This is relevant in both Ireland and Britain; our agitation

against the implementation of a hard border will encourage working-class comrades in Britain to continue their campaign for a worker's Brexit amidst a 'People's Vote' opposition hell-bent on securing a second EU referendum. In a show of resilience which will strengthen relations between the Irish and British proletariat against respective master-classes and bureaucratic dominance, a spark can be found which has the potential to form cracks in the European Union itself.

Pushing these aims to fruition is essential to weaken the EU's dominance in Ireland. With the ongoing suspension of the Stormont Executive and rising proletariat ambitions across the continent in the form of the Yellow Vests movement, we now have a unique and perhaps life-changing opportunity to crack European capitalism and formulate a new Irish state in the vision of Connolly and Garland which will guarantee equality of outcome for all citizens. More still, as the EU continues to weaken, a truly progressive Europe can be realised. Where Syriza failed, we shall avenge them through international solidarity; the successful implementation of our demands will see the workers and youth of today able to take control of their own destinies, sparking a consciousness which will lead to a revolutionary struggle in each individual member state of the EU.

The subsequent merger of these upheavals into a general European revolution will ensure that capitalism will be abolished, and those who ruled over us in the past will become a distant memory.

There can be no debate that our goal as Marxists is to fully sever ties with the European Union. Its economic dominance and socially abhorrent record has not only severed the legitimacy of Irish sovereignty, but allowed European capitalists to tighten their grip on those at the heart of production. As we continue to agitate for an Irish withdrawal, we should also remain fully committed to strengthening international working-class solidarity across the continent to not only leave the project, but strike at the heart of capitalism and create a progressive Europe embedded in Marxist values. We should remain unapologetically devoted to agitating and organising for a better future in which corruption and despotism will become a distant memory.

The EU must go, on the say-so of the international workers of the world.



# When Erin first Rose

When Erin first rose from the dark swelling flood,  
God bless'd the green island and saw it was good;  
The em'rald of Europe, it sparkled and shone,  
In the ring of the world the most precious stone.  
In her sun, in her soil, in her station thrice blest,  
With her back towards Britain, her face to the West,  
Erin stands proudly insular, on her steep shore,  
And strikes her high harp 'mid the ocean's deep roar.

But when its soft tones seem to mourn and to weep,  
The dark chain of silence is thrown o'er the deep;  
At the thought of the past the tears gush from her eyes,  
And the pulse of her heart makes her white bosom rise.

O! sons of green Erin, lament o'er the time  
When religion was war, and our country a crime,  
When man in God's image inverted his plan,  
And moulded his God in the image of man.

When the int'rest of state wrought the general woe,  
The stranger a friend, and the native a foe;  
While the mother rejoic'd o'er her children oppressed,  
And clasp'd the invader more close to her breast.  
When with pale for the body and pale for the soul,  
Church and state joined in compact to conquer the whole;  
And as Shannon was stained with Milesian blood,  
Ey'd each other askance and pronounced it was good.

By the groans that ascend from your forefathers' grave  
For their country thus left to the brute and the slave,  
Drive the demon of bigotry home to his den,  
And where Britain made brutes now let Erin make men.  
Let my sons like the leaves of the shamrock unite,  
A partition of sects from one footstalk of right,  
Give each his full share of the earth and the sky,  
Nor fatten the slave where the serpent would die.

Alas! for poor Erin that some are still seen,  
Who would dye the grass red from their hatred to green;  
Yet, oh! when you're up, and they're down, let them live,  
Then yield them that mercy which they would not give.

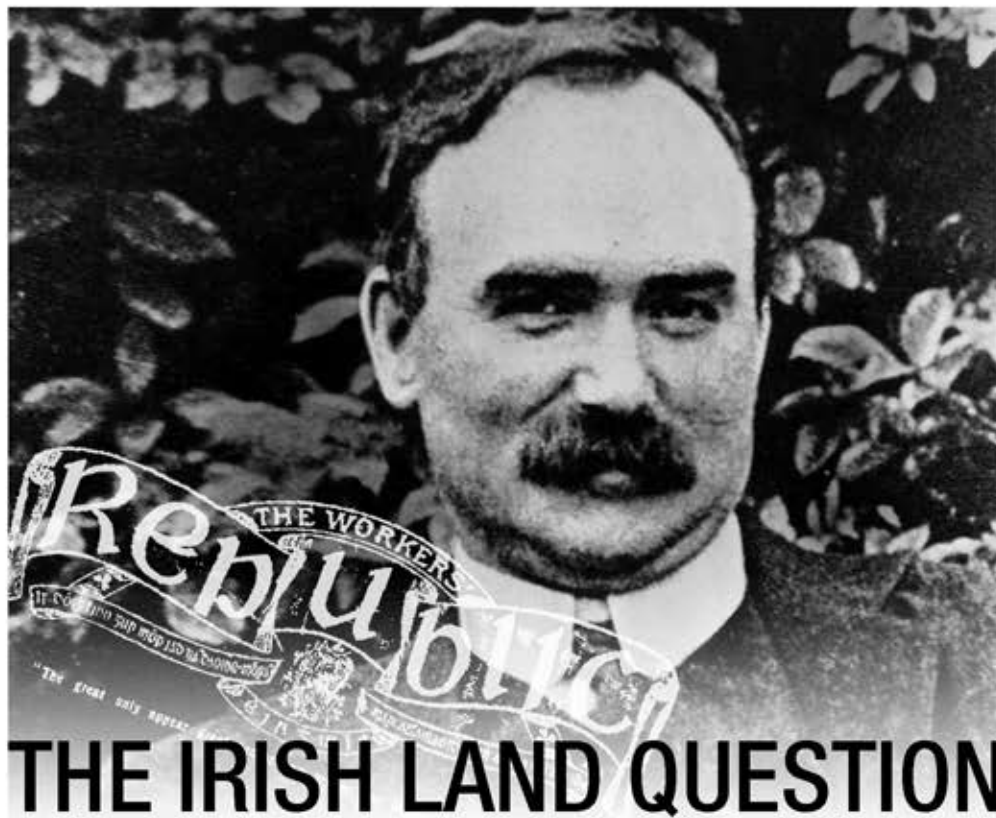
Arm of Erin, be strong! but be gentle as brave;  
And uplifted to strike, be still ready to save;  
Let no feeling of vengeance presume to defile  
The cause of, or men of, the Emerald Isle.

The cause it is good, and the men they are true,  
And the Green shall outlive both the Orange and Blue.  
And the triumphs of Erin her daughters shall share  
With the full swelling chest, and the fair flowing hair.  
Their bosoms heave high for the worthy and brave,  
But no coward shall rest in that soft-swelling wave;  
Men of Erin! awake, and make haste to be blest!  
Rise! arch of the ocean, and queen of the West!

- Dr William Drennan

William Drennan was a co-founding member of the Society of United Irishmen. This poem contains the first printed reference to Ireland as 'the Emerald isle'





## THE IRISH LAND QUESTION

For very many years we have seen the London Parliament sending forth Land Act after Land Act, each and every one of them heralded by a declaration that it embodied a complete cure for the land question in Ireland. To-day the land question is as far from being settled as ever it was; at least in appearance. The reason may escape the eye of the Home Rule or Unionist editor, who dare not notice any point of industrial development other than it suits the interests of his employers to bring before the public, but it is very palpable indeed to all who seek, with unbiassed minds, to ascertain the truth.

The successive Land Purchase Bills, Land Courts for adjustment of rents, etc., are perhaps powerful enough in softening the rigour of the relations between landlord and tenant; and were this island surrounded by a wall of brass shutting out the world from intercourse, might serve to settle for a long time the agrarian disputes in Ireland. But as long as the produce of Irish farmers must sell upon the market side by side with the produce of countries better situated, better equipped and better organised for agricultural operations, so long will the Irish produce be undersold: so long will Irish farming fail to pay. Were the landlords to disappear to-morrow, and their titles to land to become extinct, the peasant proprietors remaining would still be involved in a hopeless struggle for subsistence, whilst this island remains dominated by capitalistic conditions.

Every perfection of agricultural methods or machinery lowers prices; every fall in prices renders more unstable the position of the farmer, whether tenant or proprietor; and every year – nay every month – which passes sees this perfection and development of machinery going more and more rapidly on. We are left no choice but socialism or universal bankruptcy.

Meanwhile it is instructive to notice that the United Irish League agitators – from Mr. William O'Brien down – have no remedy to offer which does not smack of socialistic principles. The compulsory expropriation of the graziers; the break up of grazing lands; the state help for agriculture; in fact, every proposal advocated proceeds upon the assumption that 'property' has no rights as against the welfare of the community, and that the life and prosperity of the people is, or ought to be, the first care of statesmanship. So far our United Irish League agitators are borrowing the arguments of the socialists to suit their own purposes; but they, with characteristic class selfishness, stop short at the application thereof. They will not carry them beyond the rural districts; yet we challenge Mr. William O'Brien to tell us a single sufficient reason for refusing to apply to property in towns the same stern principles he would advocate in the country. Property of all kinds ought to be subject to the community, and if the welfare of the community requires that 'legal' rights of property shall be subordinated, or even totally set aside, it must be done.

*James Connolly*

*From Workers' Republic, September, 1898*

## JAMES CONNOLLY, THE WOBBLIES & THE US GOLDEN YEARS

By Alan Stewart

Relatively little has been written about the years that the great revolutionary socialist, James Connolly, spent in America. In 1902 James Connolly had toured the United States. There he had lectured on political philosophy and on a range of trade union topics.

In 1903 he returned to Dublin. However he had a wife and six children to support. His income was simply not sufficient to make ends meet. So he decided to seek work in America.

He duly set off, travelling ahead of his family. His wife Lillie stayed behind for a time to prepare their children for the voyage. It was around this time, tragically, that their eldest daughter died in an accident.

On his arrival Connolly soon moved to Troy, New York (where there is now a statue of him). He worked for the Metropolitan Insurance Company as a salesman until the recession caused the firm to falter. He then went to Newark, New Jersey where he got a job with the Singer Sewing Machine Company.

By this time Connolly's family had joined him and he was heavily involved politically both as a member of the Socialist Labour Party and as an organiser for the Industrial Workers of the World.

The IWW -or the "Wobblies" as they were known- had originally appeared in the Western States, winning recruits amongst "unorganised, semi nomadic lumbermen and miners." And what they stood for was syndicalism, the belief that completely autonomous unions could lead the masses to socialism. Connolly did go through a syndicalist phase. Certainly syndicalist sentiments are to the fore in two of his pamphlets, THE AXE TO THE ROOT and SOCIALISM MADE EASY. His time with the Socialist Labour Party was coming to an end however. He would in fact leave the SLP after clashing with its leader, the gifted but volatile Daniel de Leon.

Instead Connolly joined the Socialist Party of America. It was led by Eugene Debs who would go on to win 900,000 votes as a presidential candidate in 1912. The Socialist Party was certainly a growing force. Between 1902 and 1912 its membership jumped from 10,000 to 118,000. It would in due course boast a congressman, 56 mayors, 100 councilmen and 145 aldermen. These were indeed "golden years" for socialism in the US. •



# COLONIAL AMNESIA IN PALESTINE

By Christian Ngakes

Within most - if not all - struggles for national liberation is an often-ancient collective memory filled with inspiring heroes, martyrs, and guiding ideals. This is apparent in the mythology of the Fianna which has inspired generations of Irish people to resist the tyranny of British imperialism and assert their right to their land and culture. However, collective memories also provide historical and ideological cover for imperialism. Just as memory can be a means to liberation, it can and does serve in the hands of the ruling classes. This sort of telling

of history is highly revisionist and requires purging history that delegitimizes colonization and exploitation more generally. In this ongoing political and ideological process large chunks of history are seemingly forgotten in service of imperialist powers. Revisionism absolves and even glorifies the past rulers in favor of more current ones.

The Zionist colonization of Palestine reflects such weaponized imperialist memories. Underlying colonization is the continued dispossession of Palestinians. A central component is that of revisionism which serves to erase Palestinian history—and thus Palestinian claims to their own land. By refusing to acknowledge the long history of Palestinians, Zionist forces claim exclusive rights inherent in

ethno-religious apartheid states. To assert their exclusive ancient right, Israeli state and private institutions regularly destroy Palestinian communities and history in the process of “verifying” Zionist claims of ownership.

This selective or reconstructed memory also includes covering up the foundations of British imperialism on which the Israeli state was erected in 1948. For the British, colonization of Palestine was, to quote former British Governor of Jerusalem Ronald Storrs, an opportunity to establish a “little loyal Jewish Ulster in a sea of potentially hostile Arabism.” Such a statement reveals the western foundations of Israel and the function of Zionists as administrators of imperialism. By purging this memory from collective

memory, the state of Israel is emboldened to claim indigenous status which it uses to displace indigenous Palestinians.

The continued Zionist campaign of colonization and ethnic cleansing relies on an ancient memory plagued with a convenient case of amnesia. The Zionist narrative is one that evokes King David while seemingly forgetting much of the history leading up the founding of Israel in 1948. Gone are the many concentration camps the British used to detain Palestinians when they dare resist displacement subjugation. Gone is the memory of the Deir Yassin massacre and gone is the full memory of the Nakba which is framed as as Israeli independence rather than ethnic cleansing. In constructing a new memory of the land, the Zionist narrative encourages consent from segments of Israeli society thereby providing willing participation of Israelis as both colonizers and military occupiers. In imperialist centers like the US and Britain, it also bolsters support for a system of apartheid.

Such revisionist tendencies of imperialism necessitate the preservation and passing on of a more honest memory of struggle. National liberation, from Jerusalem to Belfast, must always include confronting revisionism at all levels—from the rewriting of history and folklore to the physical destruction of the people’s material history and culture. Only then can people adequately confront the insidious ideology supporting imperialism. •





# CUBA: ORIGINS OF THE REVOLUTION

## THE LITTLE DAVID AGAINST THE GREAT GOLIATH

By Frank Fernando González Herrera

In recent weeks, on January 1, 2019, the world commemorated the 60th Anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban Revolution. The road has not been easy, and many heroes and martyrs have sacrificed their lives for the dream of a free and sovereign Cuba.

The beginning of the revolutionary movement that triumphed in 1959 was the product of the contradictions of the capitalist system in Cuba and the economical domination of US imperialism. To provide an interesting fact, in 1953, Cuba was in third place among the nations of America in terms of North American investments. It was only surpassed by Venezuela and Brazil, according to the analysis offered by Paul M. Huberman and Leo-Sweezy, in the book "Cuba, Anatomy of a Revolution".

However, this did not mean the improvement of the standard of living of the Cuban citizen. In that period, 23.6 percent of Cuba's population was illiterate, with a total of 9,000 unemployed teachers. 60% of the peasants lived in huts of guano roof

and ground floor, without sanitary service, nor potable water. The fundamental food of these peasant families was based on rice, beans and viands. Only 4% ate meat; 2% consumed eggs; and 11% took milk. His diet had a deficit of more than 1,000 calories a day, with absence of essential vitamins and minerals.

To these statistics, we should add the coup of 1952 against the constitutional order of the Republic, established in 1940. The social and political situation of Cuba in the 1950s stimulated the awakening of national consciousness, especially in the country's youth.

After the failure of the revolutionary movement in the assault on the Moncada Barracks in 1953, and during the trial of the survivors of this armed action, the then young lawyer Fidel Castro denounces the crimes and tortures of the army against his comrades, analyzes the situation in Cuba and exposes the political program that the Cuban Revolution would assume almost 6 years later.

"I come to the close of my defense plea but I will not end it as lawyers usually do, asking that the accused be freed. I cannot ask freedom for myself while my comrades are already suffering in the ignominious prison of

the Isle of Pines. Send me there to join them and to share their fate. It is understandable that honest men should be dead or in prison in a Republic where the President is a criminal and a thief. I know that imprisonment will be harder for me than it has ever been for anyone, filled with cowardly threats and hideous cruelty. But I do not fear prison, as I do not fear the fury of the miserable tyrant who took the lives of 70 of my comrades. Condemn me. It does not matter. History will absolve me."

The prison of the revolutionaries was hard, but this time was of learning and preparation for the new stage of struggle. On May 15, 1955, they were released by virtue of the implementation of the Amnesty Law in Cuba. Mexico would be the destiny of the Cuban revolutionaries to prepare the armed struggle against the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. During this period, Che Guevara joins the Expedition of the Granma Yacht as the group's doctor.

On December 2, 1956, the 82 expedition members arrived on the Cuban coast, and after the failure of the first battle against the Dictatorship Army and the dispersion of the group, only a dozen fighters managed to reach the Sierra Maestra with a few rifles. The government of the United States, the Dictator Batista

and his thugs thought that this was the end of the Revolution. They were wrong, this was just the beginning. The will of the Cuban people triumphed, and the Guerrilla demonstrated that the people in arms were capable of defeating a regular Army, well prepared and trained by North American advisers.

On January 1, 1959, the Rebel Army and the Underground movement in the cities took control of the country. Batista had escaped. Twenty thousand dead revolutionaries, a country full of social and economic problems was the result of 6 years of dictatorship.

From that moment until now, Cuba is a truly free and sovereign country. The land, the industries and the means of production belong to the people, not to the foreign transnationals. Education, health and access to sports are free for all our citizens. In the international sphere, the Cuban people have given innumerable signs of solidarity in almost all areas.

As we mark the 60th Anniversary of the Revolution, and despite all the challenges we still have to face, Cuba has overcome and is an example that the will of a united people can change the course of history. •

By Frank Fernando González Herrera is a Bachelor of International Relations at the Diplomatic College of Cuba 'Raúl Roa García'.



# NOTES FOR REVOLUTIONARIES

'The people must fight for their lives and freedom always – and to root them in the soil and exalt agriculture and debase landlordism must be their weapon'

- Roger Casement

'If you do not interfere in politics, politics will eventually interfere in your life'

- Vladimir Lenin

'Persevere in plain living and hard struggle, maintain close ties with the masses'

- Mao Zedong

'Those who do not move do not notice their chains'

- Rosa Luxemburg

'For capitalism war and peace are nothing but business'

- Karl Liebknecht

'The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'

- Audre Lorde

"Stormont is still there, but it is a Stormont with Republicans in it. Stormont has not changed. The whole apparatus of the Stormont regime is still there, it is still controlled by the British, it is still unjust, it is still cruel. The RUC is still there. The whole civil service are still there, the same civil servants who controlled the shoot-to-kill policy, who controlled the plastic bullets, who controlled the H Blocks of Long Kesh, who took responsibility for ten men dying. It is all still there. But, saviour of saviours, we have two Sinn Féin ministers there, who happen to close hospitals. The sad thing about all this is that the British set this up. This is the British answer to the Republican problem in Ireland. It's a British solution, it's not an Irish solution. It's not a solution that we have control of. There are people up there and the British ministers are handing money out. But the whole thing is built on sand"

- Brendan Hughes

You don't fight fire with fire. You fight fire with water. We're gonna fight racism with solidarity. We're gonna fight capitalism with socialism. Socialism is the people. If you're afraid of socialism, you're afraid of yourself"

- Fred Hampton

'Landlords, like all other men, love to reap where they never sowed'

- Karl Marx

'Sit down and bargain  
All you, like grizzled old foxes.  
We'll wall you up in a splendid palace  
With food, wine, good beds and a good fire  
Provided that you discuss, negotiate  
For our and your children's lives.  
May all the wisdom of the universe  
Converge to bless your minds  
And guide you in the maze.  
But outside in the cold we will be  
Waiting for you,

The army of those who died in vain,  
We of the Marne, of Montecassino,  
Treblinka, Dresden and Hiroshima.

And with us will be

The leprous and the people with  
Trachoma,

The disappeared ones of Buenos  
Aires,

Dead Cambodians and dying

Ethiopians,

The Prague negotiators,

The bled-dry of Calcutta

The innocents slaughtered in

Bologna.

Heaven help you if you come out

Disagreeing:

You'll be embraced tight in our

Embrace.

We are invincible because we are the

Conquered,

Invulnerable because already dead;

We laugh at your missiles.

Sit down and bargain

Until your tongues are dry.

If the havoc and shame continue

We'll drown you in our own putrefaction.'

- Primo Levi

It is a fallacy to believe that a Republic of any kind can be won through the shackled Free State. You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The Free State is British created and serves British Imperialist interests. It is the buffer erected between British Capitalism and the Irish Republic.

- Liam Mellows

"I say to my people's masters: Beware. Beware of the thing that is coming, beware of the risen people, who shall take what you would not give"

- Padraig Pearse

But while Ireland is not free I remain a rebel, unconverted and unconvertible. There is no word strong enough for it. I am pledged as a rebel, an unconvertible rebel, to the one thing - a free and independent Republic.

- Constance Markievicz

Intolerance has been the curse of our country.

- James Larkin



# Shinners, Dissos and Dissenters

## Irish republican media activism since the Good Friday Agreement

### A review

By Dieter Reinisch

How to inform supporters and the public about its political ideology is a regular point of discussion for all political organisations; even more so for radical organisations who cannot rely on the mainstream media for spreading their message. This is particularly true for Irish Republican organisations that developed a critical analysis of the peace process.

While an increasing number of organisations opposed to the current settlement have emerged in the past 20 years, in recent years, none of them was able to provide a lasting platform for political debate. In this situation, although being a new and still relatively small publication, *An Spréach* occupies a crucial place in the political sphere of Republicanism for providing a regular channel for debate.

The past three decades saw the rise of several Republican papers, on the one hand, published as party organs such as *Saoirse*, *Sovereign Nation*, and *Starry Plough*, on the other hand, as platforms for collective debates such as *Fourthwrite*, the *Blanket*, or *Forum*. The past decades also witnessed the subsequent fall of these publications. Understanding the

strength of these publications and the weaknesses that, subsequently, led to their downfall in circulation and quality is a crucial task for the success of *An Spréach*.

Paddy Hoey has published a timely book on just that. In his monograph, *Shinners, Dissos and Dissenters*, Hoey analyses the media activism of Republicans. While putting on a particular focus on what he calls "AGFAR", which is the rather idiosyncratic acronym for "Anti Good Friday Agreement Republicanism" (while it comes rather bumpy, it is still a better invention than the otherwise oftentimes used "VDR" for "Violent Dissident Republicanism"), he also includes the publications and internet activism of much "older" groups such as (Provisional) Sinn Féin, the IRSP, and even the Workers' Party.

Hoey is a Lecturer at the Edge Hill University who has recently started writing on contemporary Republicanism for newspapers such as the *New European* and scholarly journals. In doing so, Hoey established himself as one of the more interesting and informed academics in the field.

Hoey separates Republican organisations since the 1986-split into four distinct blocs. The first one is Sinn Féin, the second one is RSF and the 32CSM, the third one is *Fourthwrite* and the *Blanket*, and the last bloc is *éirígí*, RNU, and, most

recently, *Saoradh*. While the readers not necessarily need to agree with his distinction and his introductions to the groups – the parts discussing RNU shows him as being least informed of its formation and development – his strength lies in the analysis of the third bloc.

For Hoey, *Fourthwrite* and the *Blanket* provided the intellectual ground for the emergence of the fourth bloc. Hence, his analyses of these two publications are most revealing. Following the cessation of these publications, the "newer" organisation lacked publication strategies and, thus, were unable to reach a similar level of political and theoretical debate.

Most interesting for activists will be what Hoey writes about attempts to provide a counternarrative throughout history since the United Irishmen in periods of media-blackout, censorship and Section 31, rather than his outlines of post-1994 *An Phoblacht* or the *Andersonstown News*. Accordingly, the achievements and failures of the three long-running papers *Starry Plough*, *Saoirse*, and *Sovereign Nation* lack thorough analysis; instead, the failed attempt to establish *Daily Ireland* by the *Belfast Media Group* in 2005/6 is explained in detail.

Nonetheless, activists will find much to learn in this book. What becomes apparent is that rise and fall of papers heavily relied on single

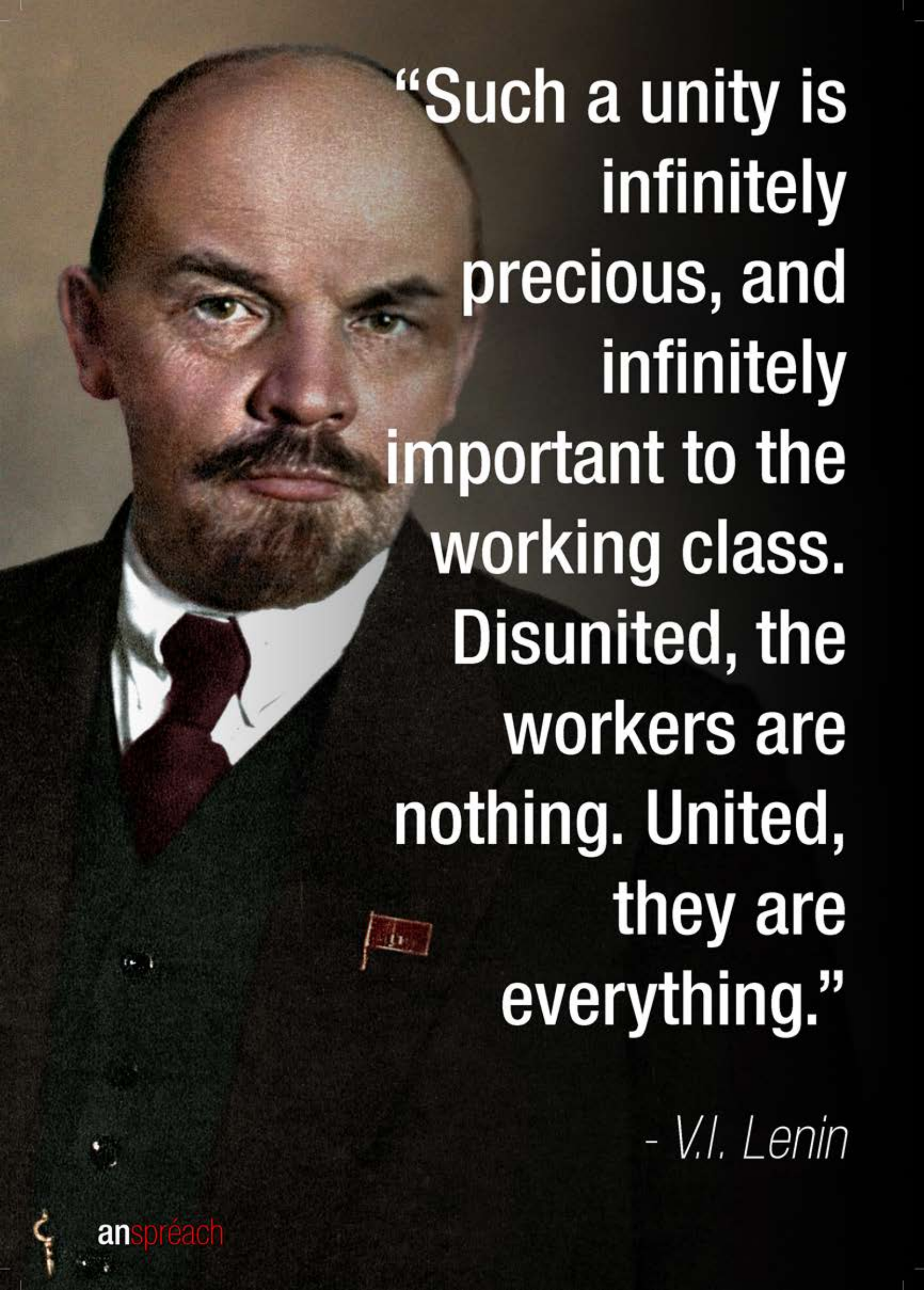
individuals, hence, these publications were hardly reflective of the membership of Republican organisations. For example, Hoey links the discontinuation of the *Starry Plough* to the departure of Liam O'Ruairc and Gerry Ruddy from the IRSP. In essence, the future success of Republican publications demands a coherent, long-term strategy and collective editing.

The past decade has seen several academic publications analysing contemporary Republicanism with John Morrison's *The Origins and Rise of Dissident Irish Republicanism* still being the most informed. Hoey's book is an essential addition to this growing corpus of scholarly literature. Activists determined to re-establish Republicanism within the wider public will find the book useful, insofar that it sheds light on the success and failures of the past. However, as most academic publications, it comes with a heavy price tag. Activists will need to wait until the publication of the much cheaper paperback in 2019. •

Paddy Hoey: *Shinners, Dissos and Dissenters. Irish Republican media activism since the Good Friday Agreement*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018.

Dr Dieter Reinisch is an Adjunct Professor and University Lecturer in History; he tweets on @ReinischDieter and blogs on [www.ofrecklessnessandwater.com](http://www.ofrecklessnessandwater.com).





**“Such a unity is infinitely precious, and infinitely important to the working class. Disunited, the workers are nothing. United, they are everything.”**

*- V.I. Lenin*

# HOUSING IN THE SIX COUNTIES

## THE FRONT LINE IN THE BATTLE FOR CLASS UNITY

By Ruairi Lennon

Housing has often been the arena in which class consciousness and militant action has been instilled in the hearts and minds of the Irish youth. This struggle is ever present in the North. Segregation of housing in urban centres of Derry and Belfast remains an obstacle to social cohesion and the unity of class action from both Nationalist and Unionist communities. Stormont, underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) has largely excluded the working class from its benefits, with the 1998 agreement only serving to build limited cross sectarian relations between careerist political entrepreneurs.

The Independent Housing Commission for Northern Ireland's 2017 report underlines the hunger among the disenfranchised working class for mixed housing and the extent to which the polarisation of communities exacerbates the prominent levels of child poverty within Belfast. With over 90% of public housing segregated on religious grounds there is appetite for a mixed approach to assist the need for social integration with "80% saying they would prefer to live in a mixed religion neighbourhood." It is no coincidence that Northern Ireland constituencies have some of the highest child poverty within the UK, with West Belfast having the second highest rate of child poverty in the UK behind Central Manchester. The constituency in Manchester is itself experiencing mass segregation along ethnic lines, illustrating that the implementation of austerity through the deliberate neglect of social housing and an over-reliance on the private market is withholding the potential of a united working front in communities still divided from sectarian housing policies or mass immigration from those from Asian communities to Britain post 1945.

While housing exclusively cannot achieve social cohesion, it seems

unlikely that a united working class can be achieved without a proactive and sustained commitment by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive (NIHE). According to Savills, existing NIHE stock needs investment of £7bn over the next 30 years and nearly half its stock needs immediate attention. But there is still reluctance to change of status from the NIHE to enable it to borrow against its considerable assets in order to provide the adequate social homes and development of mixed housing projects badly required as a result of the neoliberal austerity agenda. This provides activists with an opportunity to build a campaign for mixed, non-sectarian social housing in Belfast akin to the current 'Campaign for Public Housing' in the South. Such a campaign would also call for a choice-based lettings system which, in effect encourages those currently living in or wishing to be accommodated in social housing to "bid" for properties outside of their immediate neighbourhoods to assist cohesion between communities.

Moreover, there are still 109 peace walls across the occupied six-counties, many in North Belfast which experienced some of the worst violence of the conflict. The Stormont Administration pledged to remove all walls by 2023, this is a highly ambitious yet progressive step in easing sectarian tensions with cross-divide support. Steps have been taken in fulfilling this objective with progress being made when the Springfield Avenue barrier was taken down in September last year and a £440,000 redevelopment project for Peace Lines on the Crumlin Road was announced a month later. This proves that with sustained commitment from community groups and a willing working people, it is possible. A recent report found that "62% of the Protestant/Unionist community and 73% of the Catholic/Nationalist community do say they wish to see the barriers removed within the next generation." Through housing, radical change towards uniting the working class is attainable. The Peace Walls, as the frontline to the sectarian conflict, will serve as our frontline in the struggle for class unity.

However, as Communists our actions must be conducted within the present material conditions and older

generations remain permanently marked by the conflict. We realise that certain communities may be apprehensive regarding the removal of the symbols of conflict or the prospect of mixed housing and as a result, peace lines mustn't be removed until communities feel safe in doing so.

Moreover, these radical changes in the architectural makeup of the city is facilitated by a changing demographic in the North. This facilitates a new political direction with the youngest average population in the UK and holding more open attitudes than their parents. This is compounded by the ever-growing secular population in the North, which will go some way in decreasing tension between flashpoint areas. As the post-conflict generation now enter the world of work and the polling booths, the shift away from sectarian neoliberalism is ahead of us in the North, we must ensure that class politics storms through Belfast in the tradition of Connolly and Larkin.

This poses the question 'Why do we have sectarian housing in the North?' Sectarian housing is a blunt tool with which the powers of capital break us apart. This sectarian divide was inflamed in the minds of those living in Belfast throughout the proliferation of nonsensical sectarian killings in the Troubles. Those in Nationalist and Unionist communities in 'flashpoint' areas often moved into 'safe' areas where the risk of attack by petrol bombs and stones from the other was significantly reduced. However, this was a result of some of the most horrific scenes witnessed in the 30 years of conflict that scarred the Province. On the 15th of August 1969 the RUC, followed by a crowd of Unionists opened fire on rioters and burned people from their homes in scenes of violence which left 6 people shot dead and 1,820 families forced to abandon their homes. Over the 14th and 15th of August 1969 5.3% of all Catholics in Belfast were displaced. Now in 2018 as armed campaigns are long over we can develop a united working people in the tradition of great Irish socialists that went before us, to strike fear into the hearts of our oppressors.

In 1907, James Larkin, trade union

activist and Irish socialist called a general strike of dockworkers as a unified working class. During which the Royal Irish Constabulary refused to break up the strike action, instilling fear into the Unionist aristocracy, who quickly retaliated with organising a regular British Army presence to quell any action. By 1919, a 40,000 strong engineer workers strike demanding a 44-hour week, in a display of pure economic militancy resulted in a Belfast without trams, gas or electricity for the 4-week duration of the strike. The greatest ever display of the iron fist of organised labour in Belfast resulted in the expulsion of 11,000 Catholics, evicted from their places of work and 1,850 Protestant trade union activists also expelled to prevent such a display of organised labour again. In pursuit of this, sectarian measures were implemented, and Protestant workers began receiving benefits relative to Catholic workers such as access to jobs in manufacturing and better access to housing ultimately to increase the control of capital over that of organised labour through granting concessions to one side of the divide. Stemming from the united labour movement, this catalysed the sectarian divide into the Belfast of today.

Likewise, the political class of the North today aims to divide Unionist and Nationalist workers through housing to strengthen the hand of capital. A green or orange Belfast is a different shade of capitalism and it is a lot less terrifying to the faceless corporations on Lanyon Quay than a Red Belfast. Based on class solidarity, built within the labour movement and expressed in campaigns to bring down the Peace Walls and to build mixed social housing.

"Such a unity is infinitely precious, and infinitely important to the working class. Disunited, the workers are nothing. United, they are everything." - V.I Lenin •





**Judaism  
Rejects  
Zionism  
And the State**



**ZIONISM IS  
ANTI-SEMITISM**

By Ciaran O'Brien

This is the kernel of the problem, as we see it: the Jews comprise a distinctive element among the nations under which they dwell, and as such can neither assimilate nor be readily digested by any nation. Hence the solution lies in finding a means of so re-adjusting this exclusive element to the family of nations, that the basis of the Jewish question will be permanently removed.

The above is not my own words, nor is it even the words of some tyrannical Third Reich official. The above paragraph is actually a direct quotation from Leon Pinkser, a Zionist pioneer of the 1800s and founder of Hovevei Zion movement. Zionism has always embraced the notion that the Jews are a people alien from all other. Not equal, but superior.

Yet for all its grandiose dedication to the welfare of the Jewish people, there is nothing supreme about its treatment of Jews who fail to aid or abide the colonial project that is Israel.

When Orthodox and Haredi followers of Judaism are beaten and imprisoned for protesting conscription to the IOF (Israeli Occupation Forces) on the basis that their religion forbids it, is that not anti-Semitic? Where was Zionism's concern for their welfare when it charged them down with horses or water-cannoned them off the streets.

When the 4 Jewish activists in Hebron, documenting the construction of illegal settlements, are hospitalised by settlers under the protection of the IOF, where then was Zionism's concern for its persecuted people?

When the ultimate persecution of the Jewish people was being committed by the Nazi Regime, it was the World Zionist Organisation who broke the global Jewish anti-Nazi boycott by signing the 1933 Ha'avara Agreement which facilitated trade with the Nazis and promoted the transfer of German Jews over to Palestine.

Zionism does not know compassion, nor does it seem to know tragic irony. When Netanyahu echo's the speeches of Hitler he is not emboldening

Semites, but anti-Semites. When he engages in Holocaust revisionism claiming it was the grand mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin al-Husseini (a Palestinian), that convinced a Hitler to commit to the 'Final Solution', he is absolving full blame from the Nazis for their crimes.

Zionism and Israel will never speak for all Jews, and its concern is clearly not for all Jews, only those who fit into its white supremacist vision. When African Jewish families flee to Israel but are separated in Camps, referred to as 'cancers', forcibly injected with contraceptive implants, or lynched by mobs it is clear that Israel is not for all Jews.

To be anti-racist, we must all be anti-Zionist. Anti-Semitism only serves Zionism, because Zionism lives on the idea that Jews are an alien race. It serves no other purpose. It can never be anti-Semitic to criticise Israel, because Israel itself is anti-Semitic. Whilst it may lavish privilege upon white Jews within its borders, its existence is predicated on the belief that even these people are incompatible with non-Jews. That their coexistence is impossible.

Our anti-Zionism must not be misguided however. The myth of 'Jews run the banks' must not slip into the lexicon of Palestinian activists, because it is no truer than earlier right-wing myths of communism being a global Jewish plot for domination. It is the ability of Zionist lobbying globally, particularly AIPAC in the U.S, and through being a white western imperial project that Israel receives its strength. Global racism, capitalism and religious bigotry is what gives Israel a means to act with impunity in its persecution of the Palestinian people.

Zionism's concern is for white supremacism, for the maximisation of profits and reaping of resources from stolen lands, for the geopolitical interests of U.S imperialism and the welfare of global capitalism. It is not for the Jews.



# THE RED NATION

## Solidarity from the Irish diaspora: USA

By Micheáilín De Buitléir

**"Each generation must, out of relative obscurity, discover its mission, fulfill it, or betray it."  
- Frantz Fanon**

Comrades, friends, and relatives,

From occupied Navajo/Dine territory in Turtle Island (aka Gallup, New Mexico, USA), I write to you all. I am a fifth generation Irish comrade on these lands descended from refugees who fled the British genocide of the 1800's. I am an organizer with The Red Nation, and I belong to a small loose network of Irish comrades who do anti racist and anti imperialist organizing for Irish liberation. I wanted to share some reflections upon the work that we are currently engaged in and the present state of organizing among the diaspora here in Turtle Island.

In 2018 we held several major events that we are hopeful are contributing to the struggle and the movement.

On Saturday March 3, 2018 several comrades organized a dialogue about Indigenous-Irish relationships and building solidarity on Ohlone Land (Present day Bay Area California). This brought together dozens of folks that included Irish diaspora, Indigenous activists, and others in Berkeley, California. Presentations and speakers included: Corrina Gould (Chochenyo/Karkin Ohlone) who is a spokesperson for the Confederated Villages of Lisjan/Ohlone, the Co-Founder of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust and Indian People Organizing for Change, Melanie Yazzie (Dine, Chair of The Red Nation), Mary McLroy (Irish Republican Socialist Movement), Chas Jewett (Cheyenne River Sioux), As well as Dr. Sé Sullivan (Lecturer in Gender and Women's Studies, UC Berkeley) and Matt Horton (Co Author of the Irish Statement in Support of #BlackLivesMatter). This was the first event in Ohlone territory where Irish and Indigenous peoples have ever held conversations around mutual

struggles and solidarity between peoples.

On March 18, 2018 several comrades organized the St. Patrick's Day Irish Solidarity event in Pueblo Territories (Present day Albuquerque, New Mexico). This featured several speakers including Melanie Yazzie, Padraig O Fearghail (Anti Imperialist Action Ireland), Jerome Chavez (Chicano activist), and Adrienne Cabouet (All African Peoples Revolutionary Party).

Also this past August there was an Irish and Palestinian anti imperialist solidarity panel at the 3rd Annual Native Liberation Conference organized by The Red Nation. This panel featured presentations and greetings from Anti Imperialist Action Ireland as well as the Irish Republican Socialist Party, and a room at the Conference was named the Free Tony Taylor Room.

These events and organizing come off of work laid down in the previous years. In 2015, several activists came together in a critical moment and co authored the Irish Statement in Solidarity with #BlackLivesMatter. This statement was a catalyst that brought a new wave of folks into the fold of Irish diasporic organizing. This organizing is grounded in previous generations of activism including several of my own family members who came before me. And we try and maintain friendly relationships with all left and republican groups in Ireland and Turtle Island, offering platforms and support particularly for all of our comrades in prison, and not engaging in sectarianism.

We engage in this work on many fronts participating in Irish language revitalization, cultural events, and political movement work. We see ourselves as on the frontlines of the Irish struggle in the belly of US imperialism and colonialism. We have no interest in merely doing fundraising efforts for "the boys" back in Ireland. We see US imperialism as the main contradiction where we are, and the us settler colonial occupation including racist cops, ICE, weapons manufacturers, the banks, and resource extraction corporations as enemies of all good people of this

earth. And in building off of the Irish and Indigenous connections and solidarity that has existed (countless examples abound ie Sinn Fein and the American Indian Movement visiting on many occasions, the Choctaw sending aid to the Irish during the "famine period", and more recently several Irish delegations were present at the Standing Rock Uprising where the Starry Plough and the Tri Color were flown alongside Indigenous Nations Flags), we recognize the Indigenous peoples of the lands where we reside, and which are currently occupied, as leaders of the anti imperialist struggle in our small part of the world,

We also unite with African/Black, Chicana, and other liberation movements because we know that a victory for them is a victory for us. We are also openly, militantly, and unapologetically made up of LGBTQ, and we are Feminists. Many of us participated in work supporting the repeal of the 8th amendment and the

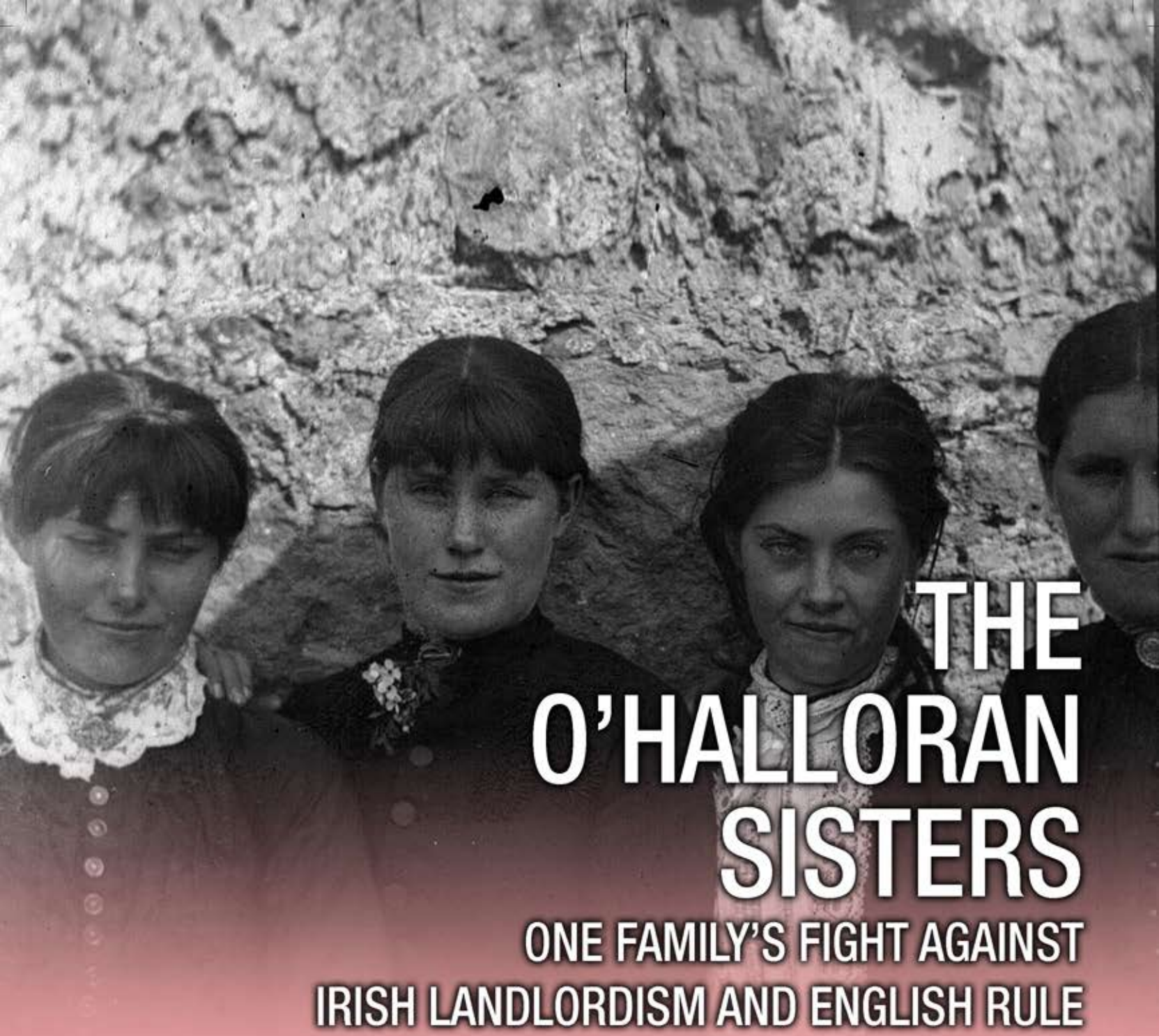
referendum in support of marriage equality (all contradictions of the free state aside).

We have out of relative obscurity discovered our mission given to us by the previous generations of Irish diaspora, and we are claiming our place. Our goal is to host a conference sometime in the next 2-5 years that will bring together the Irish Diaspora of Turtle Island to build for this new period of struggle that we all face, from global climate shift to sharpening capitalist crisis to debates about referendums etc. We want to work with all progressive forces and we want to encourage the participation of our comrades and relatives in Ireland and around the planet. It makes sense from a numbers perspective, with 80 million diasporans around the world, to engage in this work. This is a vision given to us by our late comrade Tom Hayden who wrote the book "Irish on the Inside: In Search of the Soul of Irish America".

I hope these reflections, dreams, and analysis open up further space for all of us to reflect and dialogue about our future and how to build struggle.

I look forward to these conversations and to hopefully being in Ireland in the near future. •





# THE O'HALLORAN SISTERS

## ONE FAMILY'S FIGHT AGAINST IRISH LANDLORDISM AND ENGLISH RULE

County Clare, Ireland, in June of 1887. The Land War in its full swing. Tenants of the ruthless Colonel John O'Callaghan are but one of the many families to participate in the Bodyke rent boycotts. A first-hand account of the day O'Callaghan and his thugs come to evict them.

This is the amazing story of the O'Halloran sisters and their family, as told by brother Frank:

"On the morning of the eviction we were up at the break of day and laid our plans, each to defend a certain point and none to waiver, whatever might come. We boiled plenty of water and meal, and, when all was ready, we kept a look-out for the

bailiffs and the rest of them. At this time I was only home a few months from America, and during my absence, I may add, I did not learn to love Irish landlordism or English rule.

"We had not long to wait, as the attacking party appeared over the hill at about half past ten o'clock, and pretty formidable they looked too - police, soldiers, bailiffs, and all followed by a large crowd of tenants. We had two portholes broken out commanding the eastern rear corner, and had plenty of pitchforks and poles to meet the rifles and the bayonets when they would attempt to scale the windows. Mr. Davitt, however, came up and deprived us of the pitchforks. I guess he thought there would be blood spilt if they were there. When the bailiffs

approached with picks and axes we waited until they would come near enough for the hot fluid to scald them. The police shouted to us to go in from the portholes or that they would shoot, but we took no notice of them.

"I remember that, as they raised their rifles, the thought struck me that it was a queer country where the sons of people were amongst the greatest enemies the people had.

"The police were not more than 25 feet away, but they did not fire. The bailiffs attacked the corner, and the sisters threw cans of boiling water on top of them, making them speedily retire, while the girls stood waiting with more water ready to fire, but they took no notice of them either. The crowd outside became terribly

excited, as they saw by this that we meant no surrender in earnest. I had a long pole defending the corner, and I found that I could not use it effectively from the porthole which I was at, as I was a left-handed man; so I got an iron bar and broke a hole through the roof, a shower of slates falling on the emergency men outside. Then I got water and took off the slates, which I fired at them, but I don't think any took affect but, anyway, we had the satisfaction of seeing that we made it impossible for them to continue at the corner. For about three-quarters of an hour the struggle continued, and finally, the defeated emergency men gave up, some of them well scalded. Then they went to the end of the house and the police got scaling ladders to get through the window on the second storey, so I exchanged

places with my brother and went to the porthole at the gable-end, which he had been defending up to this.

"At this time some unfortunate delay occurred about handing up the water. My brother went to see what was wrong, and while he was so engaged a policeman entered through the window. He was met by Honoria who caught a grasp of his sword-bayonet. He was just bent down in the act of jerking it from her when I saw him. I knew that if he gave the pull he would have cut her fingers off and ruin her hands. There was not a moment to spare. I jumped off the platform and struck him with my clenched fist under the chin and sent him sprawling to the other end of the room. My sister was then in full possession of a rifle, bayonet and all, and sure she did use it. She rushed to the window and scattered the police outside right and left, and cleared the ladder outside, which was crowded. All this happened in a few seconds. My brother had now returned with the water, and I went to Honoria's assistance. I got a big pole: there was a policeman at the top of the ladder; I put it to his chest, pushed him into an upright position. The policeman behind him pressed him on, while the crowd yelled, wild with delight. I

shoved harder and he fell to the ground, amidst deafening cheers and shouts. Others pressed on, to meet the same fate. Now we thought it was high time to evict the policeman we had inside. We got him near the window to throw him out. The police outside rammed their bayonets and wounded us several times, so we had to throw him back again instead of throwing him out. The fight now began properly. We attacked them with all our might and so fierce was the struggle that we smashed a sword-bayonet and injured several of those outside. Eventually we cleared the window again and victory was hailed with thunders of applause outside. The forces outside were dismayed, as if they did not know what to do next.

"We thought that the little respite we got could not be made better use of than by ejecting the policeman who still remained inside, so we caught him again.

"Out he would have gone at the moment for certain, but Father Hannon was at the top of the ladder. He put up his hands and said: 'Don't throw him out, Frank.' The good priest intervened because he knew that the police would fire the next time.

"Well, anyway, his word was law with the whole of us, and little wonder; so I promised him I would do nothing and let him go. The police then rushed in after Father Hannon, and Father Hannon held me as if in a vice. I never felt such a grip before or since. A great big coward of a policeman struck my mother and handled her brutally. 'Father Hannon' said I, 'are you going to hold me while they choke my mother?' He let me go. I made a spring forward and struck the policeman a blow of my clenched fist, which quietened him anyway.

"The house then became full of police, and several of them grappled me. I made no further struggle; I knew that it was useless, and felt satisfied that we had done all in our power. We were all taken into custody to be sent to jail, and Mr. Davitt and Father Hannon got permission for the former to accompany the girls to jail. In a moment or so we were on the car ready to start, when the girls were released, to be prosecuted in the ordinary way. They brought my mother and myself to Limerick Jail, where we were kept until they brought us up for trial. All the tenants took forcible possession immediately, and they remained there until a

settlement was come to the following February."

- The O'Hallorans were then allowed to return to their home. Eventually, in 1909, they along with other Bodyke tenants, were given the chance to buy and own their land – a hard-won victory.

Across Ireland evictions are again becoming more common and intense. Tenants are being victimised by landlords and their mercenaries, who are either aided or protected by state forces in their actions. We in An Spréach stand opposed to the commodification of housing. **If you live in it, you should own it.**

Let us take inspiration from this story, and organise to fight all evictions and the land-lording class itself. •



Photo: A typical eviction scene in 1880's Ireland



# DEFINING SOCIALISM FOR A NEW IRELAND

By Pól Torbóid

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

-James Connolly,

Shan Van Vocht, January, 1897

Like Connolly, I accept that the base conditions in the Irish freedom struggle owe themselves to the imposed economic system here in Ireland, not just to borders or a supposed ethno-religious divide. As a Socialist, I also accept that the base economic conditions in any region or state are what ultimately defines the resultant social or political order, and that to implement true change in Ireland, we need not talk about borders or national sovereignty as the only resolution we seek, but rather we should define and implement an economic position that would properly define what that sovereignty actually is. The dissolution of British border in Ireland, in the absence of a Socialist economy and economic sovereignty is almost a pointless task; "England would still rule you".

Arguably, one of the greatest inadequacies of Republicanism, especially in the modern era, is its failure to lay out an economic analysis of a 32 County Socialist Republic. 'Socialism' is a tag of convenience for some, a buzz-word implying a radical position, when none exists. For others, it is a position that differentiates them from mainstream political parties.

In the absence of defined economic policies, easily disseminated, there exists a gap between Socialist Republicanism and the masses, and

we owe a debt to those we seek to lead to bridge that gap.

Imagine a not too unrealistic scenario, a decade from now, columns of Volunteers descend upon the halls of power in Dublin and Belfast. British ministers and the leadership of mainstream political parties retreat to the nearest port. Stormont buildings billow columns of smoke as radio and TV stations are seized - a masked rebel forces Volunteer reads a statement live on air, "...the Irish Republic declared in 1916 has been re-established."

Then what? In the absence of defined policies, things would remain much the same; your landlord will still call for your rent - still charging more than it costs them to own the place, and evict you if you can't pay; scrupulous employers will still charge as little as the law allows - and less if they could get away with it; corrupt politicians would remain as corrupt as they always were; banks and their shareholders would continue to offshore as much money as they possibly could extract from our economy, and pay as little tax as possible while doing it.

Unless there is a serious rebalancing of priorities, from the production of capital, to the rights of normal working people, our efforts will be in vain. On that basis, and seeking real and meaningful change for our people, a new 32 County government should immediately move to implement more than just a new political order, but an economic one as well.

At present, there are over 200,000 empty homes across both failed states, and a combined 129,000 on housing waiting lists. If the interests of capital were placed second to the needs of the people, could Ireland's housing woes be solved at the stroke of a pen?

Our oil and gas resources are exploited by private companies, the dividends go largely unseen by the Irish people, and instead enrich an already rich minority. Experts are convinced that the ocean floor around Ireland contains huge reservoirs of

natural gas and oil, with total oil reserves potentially in the neighborhood of 10 billion barrels; an unprecedented amount, and exploration continues. If properly managed, what might the benefits be for the Irish people?

In recent years the argument for a national living wage, replacing the current minimum, has been gaining traction. What effect might this have on our economic outlook and growth? If we placed more money in the hands of those that would spend their it in our economy, paying taxes in the process, instead of those who would spend it elsewhere whilst going to great lengths at tax avoidance, what might be the outcome for our national standard of living?

Do we abandon big business with immediate effect? Where does the management of our national resources fit into our new economy? What lessons can be learned from

other nations, who successfully transitioned to Socialism, or indeed were not successful? What were the pitfalls and what could they have done better? What did Cuba do? Or indeed Venezuela?

These questions, and more, need answers; and in doing that, we should lay out a clear vision of what our proposed new Ireland could or should look like. We must move away from the politics of negative sloganeering and become definitively positive in our outlook.

In putting this short commentary together, it was difficult to keep it concise, such is the scale of the looming task ahead; and I hope over the next number of issues of this magazine, focusing on specific issues, to answer as many of these questions as possible, laying out a broad outlook on what that transition to a Socialist economy and a new Ireland might well look like. •

# US-Led Economic War, Not Socialism, Is Tearing Venezuela Apart.

By Caleb Maupin

The political and economic crisis facing Venezuela is being endlessly pointed to as proof of the superiority of the free market.

Images and portrayals of Venezuelans rioting in the streets over high food costs, empty grocery stores, medicine shortages, and overflowing garbage bins are the headlines, and the reporting points to socialism as the cause.

The Chicago Tribune published a Commentary piece titled: "A socialist revolution can ruin almost any country." A headline on Reason's Hit and Run blog proclaims: "Venezuelan socialism still a complete disaster." The Week's U.S. edition says: "Authoritarian socialism caused Venezuela's collapse."

Indeed, corporate-owned, mainstream media advises Americans to look at the inflation and food lines in Venezuela, and then repeat to themselves clichés they heard in elementary school about how "Communism just doesn't work."

In reality, millions of Venezuelans have seen their living conditions vastly improved through the Bolivarian process. The problems plaguing the Venezuelan economy are not due to some inherent fault in socialism, but to artificially low oil prices and sabotage by forces hostile to the revolution.

Starting in 2014, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia flooded the market with cheap oil. This is not a mere business decision, but a calculated move coordinated with U.S. and Israeli foreign policy goals. Despite not just losing money, but even falling deep into debt, the Saudi monarchy continues to expand its oil production apparatus. The result has been driving the price of oil down from \$110 per barrel, to \$28 in the early months of this year. The goal is to weaken these opponents of Wall Street, London, and Tel Aviv, whose economies are centered around oil

and natural gas exports.

And Venezuela is one of those countries. Saudi efforts to drive down oil prices have drastically reduced Venezuela's state budget and led to enormous consequences for the Venezuelan economy.

At the same time, private food processing and importing corporations have launched a coordinated campaign of sabotage. This, coupled with the weakening of a vitally important state sector of the economy, has resulted in inflation and food shortages. The artificially low oil prices have left the Venezuelan state cash-starved, prompting a crisis in the funding of the social programs that were key to strengthening the United Socialist Party.

Corruption is a big problem in Venezuela and many third-world countries. This was true prior to the Bolivarian process, as well as after Hugo Chavez launched his massive economic reforms. In situations of extreme poverty, people learn to take care of each other. People who work in government are almost expected to use their position to take care of their friends and family. Corruption is a big problem under any system, but it is much easier to tolerate in conditions of greater abundance. The problem has been magnified in Venezuela due to the drop in state revenue caused by the low oil prices and sabotage from food importers.

Americans have been trained by decades of Cold War propaganda to look for any confirmation that "socialism means poverty." A quick, simplistic portrait of the problems currently facing Venezuela, coupled with the fact that President Nicolas Maduro describes himself as a Marxist, can certainly give them such a confirmation. However, the actual, undisputed history of socialist construction around the world, including recent decades in Venezuela, tells a completely different story.

Hugo Chavez was elected president of Venezuela in 1999. His election was viewed as a referendum on the extreme free market policies enacted in Venezuela during the 1990s. In December, when I walked through the

neighborhoods of central Caracas, Venezuelans spoke of these times with horror.

Venezuelans told of how the privatizations mandated by the International Monetary Fund made life in Venezuela almost unlivable during the 1990s. Garbage wouldn't be collected. Electricity would go off for weeks. Haido Ortega, a member of a local governing body in Venezuela, said: "Under previous governments we had to burn tires and go on strike just to get electricity, have the streets fixed, or get any investment."



Chavez took office on a platform advocating a path between capitalism and socialism. He restructured the government-owned oil company so that the profits would go into the Venezuelan state, not the pockets of Wall Street corporations. With the proceeds of Venezuela's oil exports, Chavez funded a huge apparatus of social programs.

After defeating an attempted coup against him in 2002, Chavez announced the goal of bringing Venezuela toward "21st Century Socialism." Chavez quoted Marx and Lenin in his many TV addresses to the country, and mobilized the country around the goal of creating a prosperous, non-capitalist society.

In 1998, Venezuela had only 12 public universities, today it has 32. Cuban doctors were brought to Venezuela to provide free health care in community clinics. The government provides cooking and heating gas to low-income neighborhoods, and it's launched a literacy campaign for uneducated adults.

During the George W. Bush administration, oil prices were the highest they had ever been. The destruction of Iraq, sanctions on Iran and Russia, strikes and turmoil in Nigeria — these events created a shortage on the international markets, driving prices up.

Big oil revenues enabled Chavez and the United Socialist Party to bring millions of Venezuelans out of poverty. Between 1995 and 2009, poverty and unemployment in Venezuela were both cut in half.

After the death of Chavez, Nicolas Maduro has continued the Bolivarian program. "Housing Missions" have been built across the country,

providing low-income families in Venezuela with places to live. The Venezuelan government reports that over 1 million modern apartment buildings had been constructed by the end of 2015.

The problems currently facing Venezuela started in 2014. The already growing abundance of oil due to hydraulic fracturing, or fracking, was compounded by Saudi Arabia flooding the markets with cheap oil. The result: massive price drops. Despite facing a domestic fiscal crisis, Saudi Arabia continues to expand its oil production apparatus.

The price of oil remains low, as negotiations among OPEC states are taking place in the hopes that prices can be driven back up. While American media insists the low oil prices are just the natural cycle of the market at work, it's rather convenient for U.S. foreign policy. Russia, Venezuela, Ecuador, and the Islamic Republic of Iran all have economies centered around state-owned →

oil companies and oil exports, and each of these countries has suffered the sting of low oil prices.

The leftist president of Brazil, Dilma Rousseff, has already been deposed due to scandal surrounding Petrobras, the state-owned oil company which is experiencing economic problems due to the falling price of oil. Although much of Brazil's oil is for domestic consumption, it has been revealed that those who deposed her coordinated with the CIA and other forces in Washington and Wall Street, utilizing the economic fallout of low oil prices to bring down the Brazilian president.

The son of President Ronald Reagan has argued that Obama is intentionally driving down oil prices not just to weaken the Venezuelan economy, but also to tamper the influence of Russia and Iran. Writing for Townhall in 2014, Michael Reagan bragged that his father did the same thing to hurt the Soviet Union during the 1980s:

"Since selling oil was the source of the Kremlin's wealth, my father got the Saudis to flood the market with cheap oil.

Lower oil prices devalued the ruble, causing the USSR to go bankrupt, which led to perestroika and Mikhail Gorbachev and the collapse of the Soviet Empire."

Prior to the 1917 revolution, Russia was a primitive, agrarian country. By 1936, after the completion of the Five-Year Plan, it was a world industrial power, surpassing every other country on the globe in terms of steel and tractor production. The barren Soviet countryside was lit up with electricity. The children of illiterate peasants across the Soviet Union grew up to be the scientists and engineers who first conquered outer space. The planned economy of the Soviet Union drastically improved the living standards of millions of people, bringing them running water, modern housing, guaranteed employment, and free education.

There is no contradiction between central planning and economic growth. In 1949, China had no steel industry. Today, more than half of all the world's steel is produced in China's government-controlled steel industry.

Cuba has wiped out illiteracy, and Cubans enjoy one of the highest life expectancies in Latin America.

When the Marxist-Leninist

governments of Eastern Europe collapsed in the early 1990s, economists like Jeffrey Sachs of Columbia University, who can be counted among capitalism's "true believers," predicted rapid economic growth. Since the 1990s, conditions in what George W. Bush called the "New Europe" have become far worse than under socialism. The life expectancy has decreased and infant mortality has risen. Human and drug traffickers have set up shop. In endless polls, the people of Eastern Europe repeatedly say life was better before the defeat of Communism.



Russia's recovery from the disaster of the 1990s has come about with the reorientation of the economy to one centered around public control of its oil and natural gas resources — much like Venezuela. The Putin government has also waged a crackdown on the small number of "oligarchs" who became wealthy after the demise of the Soviet Union. Once strong state to control the economy was re-established, Russia's gross domestic product increased by 70 percent during the first eight years of Putin's administration. From 2000 to 2008, poverty was cut in half, and incomes doubled.

Neoliberal capitalism has failed. It is only because these facts are simply off-limits in the American media and its discussions of socialism and capitalism that the distorted narrative about Venezuela's current hardships are believed.

When discussing the merits of

capitalism and socialism, American media usually restricts the conversation to pointing out that socialist countries in the third world have lower living standards than the United States, a country widely identified with capitalism. Without any context or fair comparison, this alone is supposed to prove the inherent superiority of U.S.-style capitalism.

If the kind of neoliberal "free trade" advocated by U.S. corporations was the solution to global poverty, Mexico, a country long ago penetrated with

the North American Free Trade Agreement, would be a shining example of development, not a mess of drug cartels and poverty. The same can be said for oil-rich countries like Nigeria, where exports are massive but the population remains in dire conditions.

The governments of Bangladesh, Honduras, Guatemala, Indonesia, and the Philippines have done everything they can to deregulate the market and accommodate Western "investment." Despite the promises of neoliberal theoreticians, their populations have not seen their lives substantially improve.

If one compares the more market-oriented economy of the U.S., not to countries in the global south attempting to develop with a planned economy, but to other Western countries with more social-democratic governments, the inferiority of the "free market" can also be revealed.

The U.S. is rated 43 in the world in terms of life expectancy, according to the CIA World Factbook. People live longer in Germany, Britain, Spain, France, Sweden, Australia, Italy, Iceland — basically, almost every other Western country. Statistics on the rate of infant mortality say approximately the same thing. National health care services along with greater job security and economic protections render much healthier populations.

Even as the social-democratic welfare states of Europe drift closer

to the U.S. economic model with "austerity cuts," the U.S. still lags behind them in terms of basic societal health. Western European countries with powerful unions, strong socialist and labor parties, and less punitive criminal justice systems tend to have healthier societies.

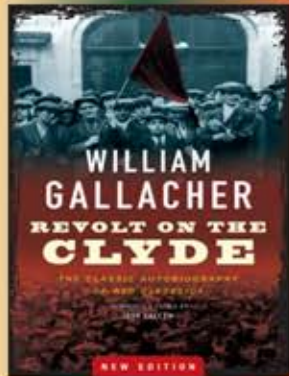
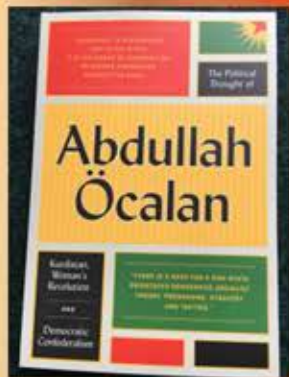
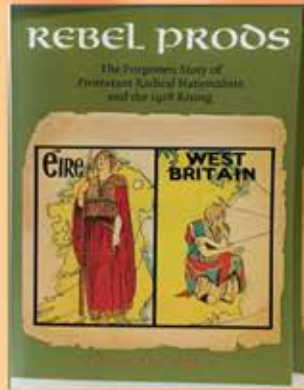
The American perception that socialism or government intervention automatically create poverty, while a laissez faire approach unleashes limitless prosperity, is simply incorrect. Despite the current hardships, this reality is reflected in the last two decades of Venezuela's history. •

Caleb Maupin is a journalist and political analyst who resides in New York City focusing his coverage on US foreign policy and the global system of monopoly capitalism and imperialism.

He has appeared on Russia Today, PressTV, Telesur, and CNN.

159 London Rd Glasgow G1 5BX

books badges t-shirts flags hoodies cd patches



facebook.com/CaltonBooks

@CaltonBooks



07547 743303



Siopa An Spréach  
**An Spréach Shop**



[www.anspreach.org](http://www.anspreach.org)