

Socialist Voice

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“Our strategy should be not only to confront empire but to lay siege to it, to deprive it of oxygen.”

Arundhati Roy

(Indian author and political activist).

Recovery for whom?

Eugene McCartan Page 2

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Recovery for whom?

IT IS CONSTANTLY repeated in the pro-boss media that the Irish economy is in recovery, and that this is in full swing throughout the European Union. One has to ask the serious question: A recovery for whom, and at what price?

They repeat the mantra that unemployment levels are coming down. Unemployment in the 19-country euro zone is at its lowest level in nearly nine years, at 8.7 per cent—down from 9.7 per cent in 2016. This comes amid a strong economic growth rate of 2½ per cent last year.

But behind this supposedly good news lies a grimmer reality.

Fixed-term or temporary contracts are increasingly the norm throughout the EU since the crash of 2008–10. This has resulted in widespread income insecurity among tens of millions of workers, but growing profits for employers

To paraphrase the multi-billionaire George Soros, never miss the opportunities presented by a crisis to advance your position.

Throughout the EU, workers have experienced increasing attacks on hard-won rights and their terms and conditions, seeing legislation that supposedly protects workers' rights being watered down and in some cases removed altogether. Employers remain reluctant to risk open-ended contracts, which further down the line could be an unwelcome burden because of severance pay and other legal requirements.

This is leading to what is termed a “dual labour market,” resulting in some workers getting a healthy pay packet, reasonable benefits and employment security while others are reduced to low wages, job insecurity, and few if any avenues for promotion.

In January 2018 the Spanish

government announced that 2017 was a record year for job creation, with 21.5 million employment contracts. But 19.6 million of these jobs were temporary.

In Italy, the largest trade union federation estimates that the number of people with temporary or part-time jobs who are seeking permanent full-time work grew to a record 4.5 million in the first half of 2017. The numbers looking for full-time work had more than doubled, from 756,000 in 2007 to 1.8 million in the first half of 2017.

In Portugal unemployment was 7.8 per cent in December, the lowest in eight years; but only 34 per cent of employment contracts signed between 2013 and last year were open-ended, that is, full-time work. From 2013 to the end of 2017 nearly three million employment contracts were signed, but by the end of 2017 only about one million of these jobs still exist.

Portugal's economic recovery is largely in the tourism industry, where seasonal work is widespread, while in the building industry, contracts are valid only for the duration of specific construction projects. This pattern of employment practices is repeated throughout the European Union.

There is a recovery for big business: profits are up, CEOs' bonuses are up, shareholders' dividends are growing, while workers see their living standard under constant downward pressure, with our rights eroded and precarious employment as the norm, which in turn is leading in an insecure future.

This is not good for workers, for their physical or mental health. It is not good for their families or their communities. Our only possible defence is our strength in numbers, leading to strength in organisation if we join and are active in our trade union.

The old slogan is come back to haunt another generation: We either organise and resist or we bend the knee and starve. ★



Land value tax A response

■ See “Understanding land value tax” by Eoghan O’Neill, *Socialist Voice*, January 2018, p. 10

Dáithí Ó hAirtir

DO NOT think it is correct to suggest that land is finite but can be reused. We have seen in Chernobyl that land will not be reusable in any human lifetime; it is useless for habitation for thousands of years.

Likewise with dumps or incinerators: the dioxins released leach into water and soil and lead to illness.

Secondly, with climate change and rising sea levels the sum total of land, and more specifically arable land, will be reduced. We cannot look at it as a fixed property, because it will make our analysis outdated extremely quickly.

Why are these class issues? Well, firstly, when we consider the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, we know that capitalists will resort to even more environmentally destructive policies in order to maintain their profits. This is why we see fracking, oil pipelines and Arctic drilling as the big environmental issues of our time. Profit pressures force capitalists into more and more unproductive and destructive mechanisms, compounding the amount of land that will fall into a state of unusability. It will also mean that capitalism will never truly tackle climate change.

Secondly, with the collapse of arable land it will lead to massive

displacement throughout the developing world and the necessary intensification of imperialism in order to maintain the imperial core's hold over that subjugation.

It is important to get these things theoretically correct, as if we proceed from wrong assumptions we will end up down an ideological cul de sac. Any analysis of Irish land use must take into account an environmental lens and also a population lens.

On the land value tax in general, Karl Marx referred to such taxes as “capitalism's last-ditch attempt” to “save capitalist domination and indeed to establish it afresh on an even wider basis than its present one.” Shifting the store of value from labour to ownership is an ideological decision that I'm not sure I agree with.

Secondly, how do we assess the value of the land? Is that a market-based pricing mechanism? Surely a backward step to start incorporating market actions in our solutions.

We need to create a tension over land monopolies. That is not done, in my opinion, by adding additional costs to the ownership of land but instead by striking directly at those who are landowners. We need land reform in the vein of what was promised before the Irish Revolution. We should look for guidance from the Fenians rather than from market socialists. ★



International Working Women's Day, 2018

Join us on Thursday 8 March at 8 p.m. in the Liquor Rooms, Wellington Quay, Dublin, for our celebration of International Working Women's Day.

On 8 March, a day established to honour the accomplishments, the lives and the struggles of working women, we wish to mark the courage of women—women who in the past struggled fearlessly against difficult conditions in domestic and industrial labour and who in the present continue to struggle in an era of increasing hatred, division, and exploitation.

In 2018 women are bravely facing these challenges. Our event wishes to showcase the endurance of contemporary socialist-feminist activism, and the continued relevance of International Working Women's Day.

Our event, "A Different Perspective: The Lives and Struggles of Working Women," will shed light on the activists who are leading the charge in resisting sexist-capitalist exploitation and oppression within our community, both in Ireland and internationally. Our host of speakers will lead a discussion focused on working conditions, abortion access, housing, imperialism, and neo-colonialism. Through this discussion we will illuminate the vitality of the socialist-feminist struggle in 2018. A range of artists, musicians and poets will provide entertainment on the night.

Join us in the celebration of revolutionary women, past and present!

We are asking for a donation of sanitary products (pads, tampons) on entry. These will be donated to the Homeless Period, Dublin, which shares these products with front-line services for distributing to women in need. ★



Repeal the 8th! The role of trade unions

Laura Duggan

JOINTLY HOSTED by the Trade Union Campaign to Repeal the 8th Amendment (TUCR8A) and the Coalition to Repeal the Eighth, this public meeting dealt with article 40.3.3 as a work-place, class, equality and human rights issue.

Like most trade union meetings, *Repeal the 8th: The Role of Trade Unions* started a little behind schedule. Organisers, speakers and audience members were chasing after each other to ask advice, cash in favours, and update each other—doing all the behind-the-scenes work that kicks campaigns off and keeps them afloat.

The meeting was well attended by trade union officials and activists as well as by non-union members.

The meeting was chaired by Ailbhe Smyth, convener of the Coalition to Repeal the 8th Amendment, with her usual blend of humour and passion. Dr Fiona Bloomer and Claire Pierson opened the meeting by giving an overview of the ground-breaking survey "Abortion as a Workplace Issue: A Trade Union Survey North and South of Ireland." This survey can be found on the web sites of the participating unions: Unite, Unison, Mandate, CWU, and GMB.

The survey is broken up into three main parts: Views on abortion—broken down by gender, age, religion, profession, and region; Abortion as a workplace issue—a range of scenarios related to disclosure, advice and support, time off, and sickness pay; and Qualitative responses—discussion groups and personal remarks.

Maggie Ryan, on behalf of the TUCR8A, spoke on the class aspects of access to abortion and how these link directly to trade union struggle, as well as precarious work, low pay, and the difficulties of obtaining leave, particularly for those precariously employed or in feminised professions, such as teaching and nursing. She spoke of the secrecy surrounding women's health, and the fact that this needs to be addressed for real progress to be made. She held up a TUC publication, *Supporting Working Women through the Menopause*, and said, to much applause, that she looked forward to the day the ICTU could produce the same, along with one about abortion.

Emily Waszak brought a new perspective to the table. Speaking on behalf of a new campaign group, Migrant and Ethnic Minorities for Reproductive Justice, she pointed out the need for an intersectional approach—an approach that acknowledges class struggle but also how racial

and ethnic discrimination overlap with it. She succinctly highlighted the fact that the "right to travel" is non-existent for women in direct provision and for the many migrants who do not have the means to prove their identity in order to travel.

A speaker from the British Trades Union Congress joined the panel to add an international flavour. Philipa Harvey of the National Union of Teachers mirrored the journey that twelve women from Ireland make every day to obtain access to abortion to offer solidarity and speak on the need to be prepared to fight to maintain access once repeal is won.

The respected community and reproductive rights activist Cathleen O'Neill further examined the 8th Amendment as a class issue and argued that it is a further erosion of the lot of working-class women. She emphasised the ground that had been lost for women and community supports during the recession and stressed that these need to be won back.

Drawing the many threads together, Mags O'Brien (ICTU Global Solidarity Committee) closed the meeting by referring to the hypocrisy of the Government and the rhetoric about Ireland's commitment to human rights while women are still denied access to essential health services. ★



Ireland's housing crisis: Solutions

HOUSING

Jimmy Doran

A NUMBER of proposed solutions have been put forward for the manufactured housing crisis. So let us analyse their suitability and see who they benefit: the citizens and society as a whole or landlords and profiteers.

Limited-equity affordable housing, also known as the cost-purchase ownership model, is one whereby the tenant buys 50 per cent of the home and the other 50 per cent is paid for in rent. It could be owned by a co-op, a housing association or the state and would be available to low-income families.

This system would make it more affordable to the tenant or owner without affecting the profit of the builders or property prices generally, which would continue to rise, putting these homes out



of the reach of more and more citizens. It boosts corporate profits while making it more affordable for tenants to own part of their home. They will have a mortgage debt for up to forty years, and will have to pay rent on the other half and all the other costs of maintaining the property for the rest of their lives, despite never owning more than half the home.

These payments leave the tenant with little or no disposable income, even though they will have a secure home. When they are available only to low-earners this stigmatises those living in them and ghettoises the whole area—as all solutions that are not universally accessible do. Developers benefit, at the expense of citizen and state.

Co-operative housing

involves non-profit houses being built and then purchased by those who qualify, i.e. those on low incomes who are high enough on the waiting-list to get



Beyond the National Health Service

SOCIALISM

Dáithí Ó hAirthí

WITH THE mainstream of the Democratic Party in the United States beginning to get behind Bernie Sanders' "Medicare for All" policy, it brings a sharp focus to how this sort of policy is financed.

That such a policy could be gaining traction in the United States, especially in its current Trumpian political climate, shows that there is no innate anti-chauvinist or anti-capitalist principle attached to a universal health service. Such a health service is required to be of a certain character, not just universal, in order to be anti-

capitalist.

This is particularly relevant in the realms of Irish political action because of our proximity to Britain. As the DUP hold the balance of power in the British parliament, Britain has rediscovered the failed northern Irish statelet. This has led to a number of well-meaning (and not-so-well-meaning)

commentaries on the situation in the North, including the expansion of abortion rights to people living there—but only if they can obtain access to it through England, Scotland, or Wales.

This has seen the "benevolent" British liberal Tories and the British Labour Party lauded in some quarters for deigning to bequeath abortion access to the poor benighted Irish; but it shows the NHS for what it is. It is an imperial construction, primarily for the benefit of imperial citizens. The fact that it can be captured and dictated to by as regressive a force as the DUP shows how it poses no ideological barrier to the worst revanchist or sectarian forces—and the fact that it becomes the domain of the British to expand or vindicate rights on their whim shows the NHS for what it is.

The concept of labour aristocracy is a well-worn one, but it fits here. The spoils of imperialism are used to buy off the imperial core's working class, elevating them to a level above where they would be in a market where their own labour power



or tweaks?

one. The buyer gets a cheaper, more affordable home, but they still have the mortgage debt to take a massive proportion of their income for forty years.

The state subsidises costs through the land provision and not taking building profits, which enables the owner to buy the home. In the future they or their children can sell the property for a massive profit, taking all the financial benefits that were subsidised by the state and the original non-profit building cost. The individual and the bank gain, at the state's expense.

Social housing involves the state giving qualifying purchasers a grant towards the cost of buying a home; it may also provide a low-interest mortgage. Once again little disposable income is left after mortgage payments. Developers get the benefit of the subsidy, as it goes directly to them in the cost of the home, which is privately owned and will eventually be sold

relative to capital was the only determinant of remuneration. But yet it is defended. The British left is now in a purely defensive struggle, to hold on to the NHS and protect it against privatisation; to see pay increases for junior doctors and nurses.

In the much-vaunted post-war consensus the Labour Party's welfare state was built, but the state was essentially bankrupt following the Second World War. To pay for the swelling social costs, it saw Britain intensify its colonial interests throughout South-East Asia as well as growing ever closer to the United States, which was its main financier at the time.

That "special relationship," which persists to this day, saw the murder of Greek communists in 1945 and the invasion and destruction of countless countries since—first in the name of Cold War and now in the name of fighting terrorism.

The link between the NHS and imperialism is clear when we remember that prescription charges were introduced within the NHS after the intensification

on at a profit. The owner, the bank and the developer profit, at the state's expense.

Universally accessible publicly built and owned housing for a rent relative to income is a right for all citizens to avail of. The citizen benefits through affordable rent, which frees extra money to provide for all the other needs of the family, thus boosting the local economy. It also removes the stress and burden that mortgage debt would put in their lives.

The state benefits, as this ends the housing crisis when every citizen will have a home available, and also benefits with the huge social dividend that a properly housed population will give in the form of improved health, education, productivity, and social well-being.

With a plentiful supply of housing, prices will stabilise; so the boom-and-bust property bubbles will be a thing of the past, along with homelessness,

of the costs of the Korean War. That also prompted Britain to demand a loan of £750 million from the colonies—which they had no choice but to accept—to keep the British exchequer afloat.

Even today, as the NHS is systemically underfinanced to force its privatisation, it is Britain's position as an imperialist aggressor that keeps its economy afloat, and its health system paid for.

As communists, surely we should be struggling for better than a more progressive redistribution of imperialism's spoils. Even the so-called revolutionary left in Britain does not grapple with the continuing link between the NHS and the imperialist nature of the British state. But how could it be otherwise? The British state is fundamentally imperialist, and the institutional offshoots of that state are therefore required to be imperialist in character, in order to maintain that order.

Rather than looking on the NHS as a model to be followed—or, even more pressingly, viewing it as something to be extended south in the event of a 32-county

and private rented accommodation, as the rackrenting landlords will not be able to compete with differential rents. The homes will be a state asset in perpetuity—when one family are finished with them they will be passed on to another—and will pay for themselves over time.

The workers in the state-owned building company will have decent, well-paid, permanent jobs, stabilising the building industry, at the expense of speculators, banks, profiteers, and bogus employers, for the common good.

The choice is simple. Will we have universal public housing, which benefits the whole of society, and a permanent solution to the housing crisis, or do we take the other temporary "solutions," which subsidise corporate profits or at best temporarily ease the burden of mortgage payments, till debt do us part. ★

worker's republic—we need a health service that is fundamentally anti-capitalist, that struggles against the contradictions inherent in capital, and that operates to raise up our class, in conflict with the ruling class.

But such a thing would necessarily come into conflict with the power of the pharmaceutical industry, the hegemony of the psychiatric industry's incarceration policies, and the entire capitalist-medical complex. Medicine and "wellness" has never been more branded.

We can look to Cuba for examples of a good community-based health system; but, with a different population profile and low population density, we need to think to ourselves, what does a socialist health system look like in Ireland?

Hopefully it will be one that places us firmly outside Britain's and the EU's imperialist vampirism. ★

Left **LONDON February 2018**
65,000 people protested against NHS cuts and privatisation

EU driving privatisation

HEALTH

THE CRISIS IN healthcare is Europe-wide. The pace of market-driven healthcare 'reform' has speeded up since capitalism's 2008 crash as neo-liberal governments – with both conservative and social democratic labels – have imposed the costs of saving the banks on working people.

Public health services with their massive property holdings, substantial staff numbers and massive cost streams are a tempting target for cuts and privatisation.

Even the pro-EU European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) pointed out that "...EU institutions are calling for major healthcare reforms as a means of consolidating public expenditure."

Countries under the cosh – like Greece – or others "in receipt of financial assistance" get no choice but to implement these 'reforms' and are obliged to do as they are told in their respective Memorandums of Understanding (MoU).

As the ETUI says: "Other member states too have been encouraged to undertake reforms to their national healthcare systems.

While initially the encouragement was issued in the form of 'recommendations', these have, under the most recent changes in European economic governance, become increasingly tantamount to 'instructions'."

Decisions of the European Court of Justice and the European Commission mean that services delivered by national health systems are now considered to be economic activities, and EU rules on the internal market (free movement of goods, persons, capital and services), public procurement and state aid, increasingly apply to healthcare services.

A 2011 European Commission directive on cross-border health care, drawing on internal market rules, presented this as an expansion of 'choice' for patients. ★





Something to celebrate

Next January the Peadar O'Donnell Socialist Republican Forum will mark the centenary of the first Dáil Éireann and the publication of one of modern Ireland's landmark documents, the Democratic Programme.

Tommy McKearney reports

THE FORUM will celebrate the occasion with a conference in Liberty Hall, Dublin.

While it is important that seminal events are remembered, it is also necessary that we learn from them. There are lessons from that era that are not only of historical interest but have relevance to contemporary Ireland and its relationship with the rest of the world. The celebration on 19 January 2019 in Liberty Hall, therefore, will go beyond a simple commemoration: it will also explore the progress, or lack of it, since then and ask participants to contribute towards making a positive and progressive impact in the days to come.

The people who participated on that historic occasion in 1919 not only asserted the Irish people's right to self-determination and independence but also identified a need to rectify serious social and economic issues that had a detrimental effect on Ireland's

working people. Moreover, they also created a political arena that had the potential to implement these tasks. That the eventual outcome did not fulfil its intention is cause for regret rather than outright dismissal.

Firstly, therefore, let us look briefly at the conditions under which working people live and labour in today's Ireland. A century after the publication of the Democratic Programme, which included the statement that the Republic will "reaffirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare," there can be little doubt that this objective has been decisively rejected by governing institutions in Ireland.

The dogma of free-market capitalism is ruthlessly implemented, with little care for its effect on working people. There is a housing and homelessness crisis, with the neo-liberal Irish state, in spite of an obvious emergency, insisting on the provision of houses through the private sector,





‘The people who participated on that historic occasion in 1919 not only asserted the Irish people’s right to self-determination and independence but also identified a need to rectify serious social and economic issues that had a detrimental effect on Ireland’s working people’



notwithstanding the abject failure of this policy. Lengthy hospital waiting-lists, and the spectacle of patients parked for hours on trolleys, is a national disgrace. Exacerbating difficulties within the health service is the absence of adequate provision of home help for the elderly.

Nevertheless, this state persists with the detrimental practice of maintaining a parallel private and public health service.

Typifying the Irish state’s neo-liberal ethos is the fall-out from the Carillion fiasco.¹ So determined was the Dublin government to assist the privileged elite that this reckless British company was awarded responsibility for the design, building, financing and maintenance of six new schools around the country. This so-called public-services company powerfully illustrates the drive towards the privatisation of public services that has been relentlessly pursued over the past decades.

Whereas once the capitalist state provided a protective structure whereby an elite would profit from manufacturing and finance, this has now become a situation where the state also ensures that a favoured few benefit by being paid handsomely to manage public services. In the process, standards are frequently lowered, trade unions are often expelled, and ultimately, if privatised, the management fails, as Carillion and others have done, with the taxpaying public picking up the bill.

Illustrating the sheer mendacity of this regime was the astonishing spectacle last year of an Irish government refusing to accept €13 billion in taxes owed by the enormously wealthy Apple Corporation.

In the light of all this it is reasonable to ask whether a sovereign Irish republic as asserted in the Mansion House ninety-nine years ago exists in any real sense in Ireland today. In the first place, a raft of restrictions is imposed on the

popular will as a consequence of membership of the European Union. This can only get worse if proposals for closer integration, coupled with the strengthening of the euro zone, are implemented.

Moreover, it is likely that this will come about, since the Davos poster-boy Emmanuel Macron is proposing this very package and has recently been receiving backing from the supine leadership of Germany’s Social Democratic Party.

More worrying still is the flagrant violation by the United States of what is left of Ireland’s neutrality. This was emphasised last month at Shannon Airport, where the vice-president of the United States, Mike Pence, posed for photographs as he shook hands with American soldiers in combat fatigues. These soldiers, bound for Kuwait, are clearly not tourists, and their presence in Shannon Airport makes the Irish government party to their military campaign.

As Aengus Ó Snodaigh TD (Sinn Féin) said, “these images are a stark reminder that the civilian Shannon Airport has virtually become a forward base for the US army to carry out military operations and exercises.”

Let us not be complacent either, because this situation has a resonance beyond national pride. The *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* has moved its symbolic Doomsday Clock to two minutes before midnight,² thanks largely to the “unpredictability” of Donald Trump.

Compromising neutrality, therefore, poses a risk that Ireland could be dragged almost unwittingly into an imperial war.

To address the problems arising from a diminished sovereignty coupled with the destructiveness of neo-liberalism, it is worth reflecting finally on a central concept promoted by the first Dáil. This was the extension and empowerment of democracy. Those who gathered in the Mansion House on that January day could have taken their seats in the British Parliament but, while forming a significant bloc in the House of Commons, would nevertheless have remained as impotent as the Irish Party had been fifty years before. Just as

then, there is now a need to facilitate a more participatory form of democracy, one that is not at present available.

The Peadar O’Donnell Socialist Republican Forum is not calling for anything as dramatic as the creation of an alternative parliament. What it seeks to do, among other things, is to draw attention to the limitations imposed by a reliance on the existing parliamentary process, where, in the words of Lenin, “capital exercises its influence on the state power.” The powerful and inspiring campaign against the water tax taught us that single-issue campaigns are effective but can be limited. Without the continuous popular pressure of a mass movement the ruling class make strategic concessions that can be eroded in time.

The Forum plans thereafter to use its celebration of the first Dáil in 2019 to explore and advocate the establishment of a wider forum, aimed at encouraging political discourse and promoting the creation and direction of a bottom-up mass movement.

Doing this, however, requires the building of a regularly convened assembly or arena designed with the intention of identifying and promoting a comprehensive programme capable of transforming Irish society. What the assembly would be named, how it would be made up or where it might be convened are matters for democratic agreement and are not a prerogative reserved by the Peadar O’Donnell Forum.

What the forum does insist upon, though, is that a hundred years after the first Dáil the Irish working class must be allowed to realise the promise and potential of that assembly’s Democratic Programme. ★

1 Paul Mason, “Ink it onto your knuckles: Carillion is how neoliberalism lives and breathes,” *Novamedia*, 15 January 2018.

2 “Doomsday Clock moved to just two minutes to ‘apocalypse’,” BBC News, 25 January 2018 (www.bbc.com/news/world-42823734).



The Manifesto

The name is communism

In February 1848, 170 years ago, writes **Jenny Farrell**, Marx and Engels published the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, commonly called the *Communist Manifesto*, the birth certificate of scientific communism. A hundred years later Bertolt Brecht, the German communist poet, attempted a versification of it. Here are extracts, translated into English by Jack Mitchell.

Wars ruin the world and a spectre is haunting the ruins.
Not born in war, seen around in peace too, for some time now.
Nightmare to rulers but friend to the children that live in the townships.
Shaking its head as it peers into half-filled plates in poor kitchens.
Standing in wait then for those that are weary at pit-head and yard-gate.
Visiting friends in the prisons, passing in without pass-card.
Seen even in offices, heard in the lecture-halls, personally
Sometimes mounting giant tanks and flying in death-dealing bombers.
Speaking in various tongues, in all tongues. Keeping silent in many.
Guest of honour in ghettos and slums, the terror of palaces
Some here to stay, and for ever: its name in Communism.

Much you've heard tell of it. This, however, is what its founders say.
If you read history you read of the deeds of immense individuals;
Their star, in its rising and falling; the march of their armies;
Or of the pomp and destruction of empires. For them, for the founders
However, history is foremost the history of conflicts of classes.
They see the peoples internally split into classes and
Warring within. Patricians and knights, plebeians and slaves
Nobles, peasants and craftsmen, proletarians and bourgeois today
Keep in their turn the whole mighty household in motion, creating
And distributing the goods that are needed for living, but also
Fighting their fight to the death, the old fight, the one for dominion.

...

Never before was unleashed such a wild surge of creation
As that which the bourgeoisie in its epoch of sway has unfolded
One which bowed nature to man and made steam and electrical power
Cleared rivers for shipping and continents ready for tillage.
Never before had humanity guessed that asleep in its womb
Such liberations were lurking and powers of production like these.

This, however, was how it went: blast-furnace, weaving-loom, steam-power
Revolutionised manufacture and now the guilds and all feudal
Property turned into fetters that cramped this colossal creation
And up rose the bourgeoisie and shattered the fetters.
Free competition moulded the state form of the bourgeois class.

You see then how hurricane-like is the rise of productive forces
Smashing the time-honoured modes of producing, believed everlasting
And with what impetuosity classes, subservient yesterday
Tear up all the title deeds, ridicule hoary and reverend prerogatives.

...

Thus, when this class, provided with new title deeds and prerogatives
Had conjured up means of production in past times undreamed of
Then it became like the sorcerer who could no longer control
The subterranean powers he had so craftily raised.
Acting like dammed-up water that first feeds the crops and then
Drowns them completely, the means of production, ever expanding
Multiplying thus the might of this class, expanding still further
Threaten that class with extinction; just as the founders have shown us.

...





Bertolt Brecht

For millions of workers however
 Whom it commands as large armies planlessly ordered about
 Herding them into the sweatshops, now out of the sweatshops again
 Brusquely on to the icy streets – the truth is now dawning, they whisper
 Amazed to each other that the days of the world of the bourgeois are numbered
 Since it in its ceaseless increasing increased their misery only
 Since it has grown too narrow to compass the wealth it created.

Now however those weapons wielded with deadly effect
 To shatter the feudal world are turned on the bourgeoisie.
 Yes it too has brought forth a class that will bear those death-dealing
 Weapons against it, for all through the centuries, bound in its service
 Grew with the bourgeoisie also the proletariat of the modern
 Workers, living by labour and finding work only so long as they
 Work in the bourgeois interest, increasing his capital interests.
 Just as the capitalist sells his commodities, likewise the worker
 Sells his commodity, namely his labour-power, being subjected
 Therefore to competition and all the ups and downs of the market.
 Appendage merely to the machine he sells his simple knack
 Costing no more than the cost of his keep and whatever little he needs to
 Reproduce and bring up his kind, that most useful of species
 Since labour-power's price, like the price of all other commodities
 Depends on its cost of production. Out of the tiny workshop of old
 Handicraft grew the great factory ordering army-wise
 Work and the workers, slaves of the bourgeois state but also
 Slaves of a certain bourgeois, his overseers and the machine.

...

Therefore the one class capable of defeating the bourgeoisie
 And shattering the fetter its state has meanwhile become
 Is, in our time, the working class. It is this by its size and condition.
 All that once guaranteed life in the older society now is
 Rubbed out, done away with, in the life of the proletariat.
 Propertyless, head and provider no longer to wife and children
 Hard to distinguish by nation or native place now, for the selfsame
 Subjection at the selfsame machine marks him from Essen to Canton
 Morals and religion confront the proletarian as fata morganas
 Mirroring to him, far off unattainable, edens in deserts.

...

His is the movement of the immense majority, and his dominion is
 Domination no more but the subjection of all domination.
 There oppression alone is oppressed for the proletariat must
 As society's undermost stratum, in rising, completely demolish
 The social set-up entire with all its uppermost strata.
 It can shake off its subjection only in shaking off all
 Subjection from all people.

For the full text of Brecht's poem in English see the translation by Darko R. Suvin,
 accessible at <http://sdonline.org/31/on-brechts-the-manifesto-comments-for-readers-in-english1/>



Cover of the first edition, written in German, published in London in 1848. It reads: "Manifesto of the Communist Party | Published February 1848 | Proletarians of all Lands, Unite! | London | Printed in the offices of the Workers' Educational Association | By J. E. Burghard | 46, Liverpool Street, Bishopsgate."



WAR AND PEACE



National Day of Action against US Wars at Home and Abroad

Resolution of the Conference on US Foreign Military Bases, held at Learning Commons Town Hall, University of Baltimore, Maryland, 12–14 January 2018

WHEREAS the United States has been in a state of perpetual war and has been using its unrivalled military might in every corner of the world to subdue, dominate and exploit sovereign nations for the benefit of its rich and powerful elite and corporations in violation of international law; and

WHEREAS it is widely recognized that the Pentagon itself, its 1,000 bases worldwide, its endless wars, its enormous use of fossil fuels, toxic substances and massive pollution around its bases has made the US military machine the world's biggest institutional consumer of petroleum products, the world's worst polluter of greenhouse gas emission, and this huge military waste footprint from US bases is

sickening both people and the earth; and

WHEREAS the US military and war budget almost equals that of the rest of the world combined, reaching \$700 billion in the Pentagon alone, not counting nuclear weapons, so-called Homeland Security, mercenaries employed by the State Department, debt for past wars, and many other expenses totalling well over \$1 trillion; and

WHEREAS, while the United States ranks first by far in military spending, it ranks 7th in literacy, 20th in education, 25th in infrastructure quality, 37th in quality of health care, 31st in life expectancy, and 56th in infant mortality; and

WHEREAS the bipartisan militaristic foreign policy and spending has enriched the coffers

of the war industry, causing ever-higher levels of economic inequality, racial, ethnic and gender discrimination and oppression, poverty, hunger and homelessness; and

WHEREAS the global militarization and racism of US war policy has greatly increased the militarization of the police, attacks on civil liberties and the growth of White Supremacy at home; and

WHEREAS since 2001 the United States has used its military force for invading and bombing in numerous countries—Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, Yemen, Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan—eventually costing the American taxpayers \$4 trillion in Afghanistan and Iraq alone, and is now threatening to attack Iran and North Korea; and





WHEREAS there are over 39,000 homeless military veterans, on any night more than 1.4 million are at high risk of homelessness, of which 9 per cent are female veterans, and 20 military veterans or active duty military take their own lives each day; and

WHEREAS the development and enlargement of nuclear armaments has heightened the threat of nuclear annihilation; and

WHEREAS it is vital that the workers, unions and peace, social justice and environmentalist forces unite in a joint movement to promote a foreign policy independent of the political and economic interests of Wall Street, corporate America and the military-industrial complex;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the organizations endorsing the Coalition Against US Foreign Military Bases, including those present at the Conference on US Foreign Military Bases convened in Baltimore, Maryland, call upon all peace, social justice and environmental forces in the United States to join hands in organizing a United National Day of Anti-War Action in the spring of 2018 to demand:

- Ending all US wars, bombings and drone attacks and other forms of US aggression, including economic sanctions and weapons sales;
- Closing of all US bases on foreign soil;
- Bringing all US troops home;
- Using the funds of the massive military budget for human needs and protection of the environment;
- Dismantling all nuclear weapons.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Coordinating Committee of the Coalition Against US Foreign Military Bases and the organizations and activists present at this Conference commit ourselves to helping with the organization of this United National Day of Anti-War Action, and we invite our international friends to join us. ★

WHEREAS the United States maintains close to 1,000 foreign military bases and tens of thousands of troops in more than 175 countries of the world at the cost of over \$150 billion a year; and

WHEREAS the bipartisan militarization of our foreign policy has led to the death of an untold number of civilians, terror by drones, destruction of infrastructure and the environment, massive number of refugees, creating chaos and terrorism by destabilizing sovereign nations; and

WHEREAS, in addition to hundreds of thousands of civilian casualties caused by US wars, 6,831 US military personnel have died in wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and about one million have been injured; and

Educational peace project proposed for schools

A NUMBER OF peace activists and groups have come together to promote an educational project in national and secondary schools entitled “Fly Kites, Not Drones / Eitleoga Seachas Dróin.”

The initiative was first launched in Britain by a number of organisations, including the Catholic Church’s Pax Christi and the Society of Friends (Quakers). It is now actively promoted also on the European continent.

At the heart of this venture is the never-ending war in Afghanistan and the true story of Aymel, an Afghan boy who never really knew his father because of a drone strike.

The “Fly Kites, Not Drones” educational programme aims to have children flying kites on 21 March to mark the Afghan New Year. In the past week schools throughout Galway city and county have been written to with an invitation to them to take up the scheme.

This educational project comes with considerable resources for teachers, which are freely available from www.flykitesnotdrones.org.

The letter sent to Galway schools was signed by the former independent Connemara councillor Seosamh Ó Cuaig and Commandant Edward Horgan (ret’d) of Shannonwatch, as well as two representatives of the Galway Alliance Against War, Dette



McLoughlin and Niall Farrell.

In their letter they recognise that 21 March gives teachers a rather short time this term in which to carry out such a project, but the organisers had only become aware of the project before Christmas. Nevertheless they believe it is a novel idea that could be applied in the classroom from national school to transition year and most certainly in CSPE (civic, social and political education), as it promotes peace and a sense of common humanity.

Deputy Clare Daly (Independents for Change) has also written to schools in her Swords constituency suggesting that they participate. ★

Further information: Niall Farrell, 087 9159787.

Even more US bombs dropped on Afghanistan (with help from Ireland)

AT THE end of last year the US Air Force had dropped about three times as many bombs on Afghanistan as in 2016. New statistics show that by the end of October there had already been 3,554 “fired weapons.” Over the past year they had registered 1,337 munitions drops.

The number of US air strikes on Taliban positions, which now control about 13 per cent of the country, or the “Islamic State” jihadist militia, has been rising dramatically for months. By mid-October military claims had already reached about 2,400 (about 1,000 in 2016).

At the same time more and more civilian victims have been registered. According to the United Nations, in the first nine months of 2017 the number of civilians affected by air strikes increased by 52 per cent compared with 2016, with 205 killed and 261 injured. ★



Catalan elections: workers' kamikaze



'For the sake of all, to avoid further contagion, and to help consolidate the European project, the EU must step in at our hour of need' Oriol Junqueras, Republican Left of Catalunya

SELF DETERMINATION

Tomás Mac Síomóin

A GROWING international tendency that should concern political activists is the rightward turn of working-class voters.

In the United States, workers' support determined the election of the ultra-rightist Donald Trump, presenting himself as fighting neo-liberalism and the globalisation policies of the ruling Democratic Party, seen as driving American industry overseas. In France, workers supported the French ultra-right, led by Marine Le Pen, to protest against the ultra-liberal policies of the Hollande (Socialist Party) government and the weakening of French identity, seen as menaced by the European integration promoted by that government. The famous "red belt" of Paris switched allegiance from the French Communist Party to Le Pen's formation.

The political left has been unable to reverse this transnational tendency.

Similar tendencies emerged in the recent Catalan elections, reported internationally as a battle between Catalan separatists and unionists. The

forces involved are best understood as follows: 30 per cent of Catalans are separatists and want a break with Spain, ideally in the form of an independent Catalan republic. More than 50 per cent are home-rulers, i.e. would support the Spanish connection, inside a federal Spain. Unionists are for the status quo.

The parties that represented these groups in the recent elections are, respectively, the separatist neo-liberal Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalunya) and Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya—Republican Left of Catalunya (ERC), which in coalition formed the outgoing government, dissolved by Spain on constitutional grounds on its declaring Catalunya an independent republic. They were supported by the Candidatura d'Unitat Popular—People's Unity Candidacy (CUP), a far-left separatist party but one that always gives priority to the national question when the chips are down.

The opposition was formed by the leftish middle-of-the-road Socialist Party of Catalunya (PSC), the militantly unionist and pro-business Ciutadans (Citizens), the left-wing home-rule party En Comú Podem

Letter from Cuba



RAÚL CASTRO

Seán Joseph Clancy

TRUMP'S STATE Department has just announced the initiation of a "Cuban Internet Task Force"—another illegal, offensive and typical act of interference in the internal affairs of a nation lining up to conclude its general election process.

It makes a bit of a mockery of their indignation at what Russia was allegedly at during the last campaign there, to say the least.

If the empire's same State Department, CIA and other hungry establishment dogs believe they might get to gnaw on the bone that has so long been denied them, because by next

April, Cuba's government—for the first time in more than five decades—will not have a Castro at the helm, the spies they withdrew from the embassy here for supposedly having suffered "sonic attacks" were not doing their homework.

Despite the best (and worst) endeavours of the neighbouring enemy, the collapse in oil prices, which significantly affected Cuba's access to convertible currency, and a series of devastating and very costly hurricanes and other regional complications, Raúl Castro's progressive, reforming and stable ten-year presidency proved very successful, and he leaves a steady, socialist, stable and stronger Cuba to his successor in office.

People here are far more

aze revenge?

(Together We Can), and the Spanish right-wing Partido Popular, Spain's ruling party.

Junts (known formerly as Convergència), linked to the defunct Christian Democrats, ruled Catalunya for the duration of many legislatures. It now defines itself as "revolutionary," i.e. as seeking an independent Catalan republic, within the European Union. It has always given priority to national rather than social aims, imposing its neo-liberal economic and social diktat on its coalition partner, a compliant ERC.

'a strongly neo-liberal government and a strongly neo-liberal opposition are the likely outcome of the recent Catalan election. The region's workers will pay for allowing themselves to be bamboozled'

Incredibly corrupt by Irish standards, Junts controlled the public media of the Catalan regional government, TV3, and Catalunya Radio, and distributed generous private media subventions—bribes—from public funds. A companion party of

Fianna Fáil in the EU Parliament, it has been paying itself through an extensive network of corruption, whose astonishing reach was recently revealed on a popular independent Spanish television channel, La Sexta (The Sixth) and in recent sensational court proceedings.

ERC, which overtook Junts in the recent electoral race, seems to have put its progressive social programme on hold at the behest of its conservative coalition partner.

The well-financed Ciutadans, founded in Barcelona in 2006, with a rumoured boost of €1 million plus from the Irish millionaire Declan Ganley, channelled anti-establishment sentiment into support for itself. It associated its Spanish (i.e. anti-Catalan) nationalism with progress, singing dumb about its own extreme neo-liberalism. (Ciutadans was lauded in the bought mainstream Spanish press; no account of the huge resources employed to promote the party nor, still less, of its neo-liberal economic policies spoiled the celebration.)

The most recent expression of Convergència rule, the government led by Carles Puigdemont (before the Spanish government pulled the plug), is exalted, curiously, by some Irish

socialists and republicans, though it pushed through labour "reforms" and deep cuts in social spending while increasing its support for religious (i.e. Opus Dei) Catholic schools for the privileged, thus alienating workers.

Most working-class voters, descendants of waves of migration from rural Spain to industrial Catalunya, are Spanish-speaking, speaking Catalan as a second language, and are largely loyal to Spain. Inveigled by the pro-Spanish propaganda of Ciutadans, and angry at the anti-working-class policies of the Puigdemont government, they voted heavily this time round for Ciutadans and not for the Spanish Partido Popular, an older working-class enemy.

This tendency was especially marked in the working-class areas of Barcelona and Tarragona, where most Catalan workers are concentrated. Electoral data shows that in electoral districts of below-average incomes an unpredicted 35–40 per cent of the electorate voted for Ciutadans. But Ciutadans achieved its highest vote (42 per cent) in Barcelona's richest district, Pedralbes.

The dominant class always has a more developed sense of where its real interests lie than

other social groupings. Its predictable support of Ciutadans, unlike that of Catalan workers, responded to its class interests.

The centrality of the Catalan independence theme in the period before the election doomed the social theme to electoral irrelevance. This, and the Kamikaze-like voting behaviour of a working class that abandoned left-wing options on election day, opted for the most militantly neo-liberal formation available, thus ensuring the decisive victory of the right. Ciutadans jumped from 25 seats in the previous parliament to 37, becoming the most voted-for party.

However, the Junts-ERC bipartisan machine, with 66 seats, came close to the 69 seats required to ensure a voting majority in the new parliament. With the help of the CUP (4 seats), and after sorting out many serious internal difficulties and defections, it may just be able to assemble the majority necessary to form a new conservative government.

Thus a strongly neo-liberal government and a strongly neo-liberal opposition are the likely outcome of the recent Catalan election. The region's workers will pay for allowing themselves to be bamboozled. ★

focused on the finals of the National Baseball League, an obvious drop in the number of tourists during the latter part of last year and the first month of this one, and other, more mundane affairs of daily life.

Raúl Castro was also at his best and brightest on the international front, and his statesmanship, diplomatic skill and respectful but unflinching adherence to Cuba's fundamental principles have earned him the respect and admiration of the world's most important leaders and a grudging acceptance by even those ideologically opposed to everything he represents.

As Fidel had also done, Raúl ensured that Cuba continued to punch far above the political weight of a poor, blockaded and relatively tiny Caribbean island, for

reasons that go far beyond its geopolitical significance.

Raúl's contribution to and facilitation of the talks between the FARC guerrillas in Colombia and its government will also form part of his legacy.

Unless he can do something between now and the end of his second term in office in a short few weeks' time, his biggest regret may be that he could not create the requisite economic conditions for abolishing Cuba's divisive and socially destructive two-currency system.

In his speech at the closing of last December's session of the National Assembly, Raúl admitted that neither he nor anybody else had truly grasped how complex a problem this was going to be.

He also acknowledged, however, that—allowing for the

distortion caused by the economic, commercial and financial blockade imposed by the United States—the duality prohibited the full realisation of the social, political and economic objectives adopted by the Communist Party's Sixth Congress, which form the basis for policy development until 2030.

Any premature move to unify the currencies would create further inflationary pressure and worsen what is one of Cuba's more invisible but serious domestic economic problems, and something that warrants comment in its own right on another occasion.

Even though Raúl, who is now well into his eighties, will remain on as first secretary of the Communist Party of Cuba until

2020, his departure, and that of his lifetime comrade in arms and colleague, the 89-year-old Machado Ventura, will be profoundly felt.

Just as Fidel's physical presence was palpable in the aftermath of last September's deadly and destructive storms, Raúl's reassuring presence and stately stoicism will be missed by his people.

The changing of the guard is not expected here to result in even a ripple of domestic political or social instability, and interference by the United States to try to create some will only serve to fortify Cuba's renowned capacity to remain united and firm in defence of its sovereignty, socialism, and hard-won right to self-determination. Hasta la victoria siempre, Raúl! ★





Hollywood and the Indigenous peoples

by Dan Taraghan

Ppoeby



Following the American Civil War there was a brief period of Reconstruction in the former Confederate states before the imperialist war was resumed against the Indigenous peoples of America.

RACISM

IT WAS THEN that the colonialists gave full expression to the policy of “manifest destiny” in both extending the borders of the United States and treating the Indigenous nations that opposed them as sub-human.

In a series of films made by Hollywood in the first three-quarters of the twentieth century, a highly biased version of the two centuries of suppression of the Indigenous population was produced, justifying what had happened. These films are still widely shown today without any comment, as though they were pure entertainment. In fact many of them are highly sophisticated vehicles of propaganda, worthy of Goebbels. The films subtly give a

language to a culture of warfare and murder that continues to be used by the American armed forces in their imperialist adventures.

In the early period of silent films the Indigenous peoples were not necessarily evil, but with the coming of sound that situation soon changed. *Drums along the Mohawk* (1939), starring Henry Fonda and Claudette Colbert and directed by John Ford, was set in 1776 and showed the early American Revolutionists on the frontier fighting the Mohawks and the British. In reality they were mainly fighting the British; in the film the Mohawks are the main protagonists, under the direction of the British.

There are crucial concepts in the film, such as the individualist frontier people willing to band together to fight for their property (land stolen from the local people) and to do so rather than waiting for protection from the government. During the Second World War the American parachutists known as the “Screaming Eagles” cut their hair in Mohican style and even wore paint before going into battle.

Another film of significance was *Northwest Passage* (1940), starring Spencer Tracy. This was based on Roberts’ Rangers in the pre-revolutionary wars. Roberts’ “Rules of Ranging” are the basis of rules still used by American special forces for going behind “enemy lines” and destroying everything in sight.

However, if there is one film that represents the genre more than any other it is *The Searchers* (1956), also directed by John Ford and starring John Wayne. It

is based on a true story and is one of a number of films made on the same theme, such as *Two Rode Together* (1961).

Cynthia Ann Parker was kidnapped at the age of nine by Comanches, who had killed her family. She grew up among them, married, and had three children. One of her children was Quannah Parker, who became a great war chief among the Comanche. After the wars against the Comanche he became a rancher, and had Geronimo and Theodore Roosevelt as guests at his home.

In the film Cynthia is played by Natalie Wood. Wayne plays Cynthia’s uncle, an original Texas Ranger and later governor of Texas. He recaptured Cynthia, but, mourning her lost children and unable to readjust to white society, she died.

In the film, Wayne’s quest occupies seven years. His objective is to kill all Indigenous people, and his niece. He changes his mind on the latter point, but we are not told what happens to Natalie after her return to white society.

Wayne, of course, was an anti-communist, so it is not too difficult to see that his racism and intolerance against the Comanche could easily have been directed against communists, as was shown in some of his films.

The raid on the Comanche village was typical of the culture of all-out war against the natives, as used in Viet Nam and by the Einsatzgruppen of the SS in the Soviet Union during the Second World War.

One of the first films from the Apache point of view was *The Last Apache* (1954), starring Burt

Lancaster (left) as Massai. This was also based on a true story. Following Geronimo’s surrender, one of his band escaped and returned to Arizona. No-one knows what happened to him, but he was never recaptured.

In the film, Massai travels across the United States, takes vengeance on his enemies, but ends up growing corn. Al Sieber, the famous scout, tracks him down and is surprised that Massai, the savage Apache, has become a farmer. The guns are converted into ploughs, so all is right. Civilization has reached the Indigenous peoples.

Another film, *Geronimo* (1962), has an unlikely Chuck Connors in the title role. He ends up growing corn as well. Interestingly, Geronimo’s wife was played by a real Indian, Kamala Devi, who was born in Mumbai.

All these films gave expression to a vocabulary and culture based on the wars against the Indigenous peoples and the attempts to destroy their resistance. Terms such as “hostile territory, Indian country, Geronimo, Apache, frontier country, good Indians, bad Indians, circling the wagons, ranging,” are all embedded in the American psyche, and are regularly used by the military.

Hardly any of the films give expression to the point of view of the victims. Even when they do, the actors involved are usually white. The recent film *The Lone Ranger* (2013) has Tonto being played by Johnny Depp with a crow on his head. At least in the original television series Tonto was played by Jay Silverheels, a Canadian Mohawk. ★



BOOKS

A story of commitment and defeat



Séamas Ó Brógáin

Michael Ryan, **My Life in the IRA: The Border Campaign** (Dublin: Mercier Press, 2018)

MICK RYAN, a member of the IRA from the age of nineteen, became one of the most active participants in the IRA's "border campaign," launched in December 1956 and officially abandoned in February 1962, though its futility was obvious to many from as early as the first year.

Eight participants were killed—mostly in accidental explosions—and hundreds were imprisoned or interned, including himself.

The campaign as envisaged was a purely military one: to defeat the British army and make the British state abandon its presence in the north-east of Ireland. There was no historical, economic, social or ideological analysis of the north-east (or indeed of the country as a whole), nor would the leadership have had the ability to attempt one, even if they had wished to.

The IRA had no proper equipment, hardly any money, not enough active members, and (as the writer acknowledges) virtually no popular support; the naïve expectation was that these would materialise as soon as the

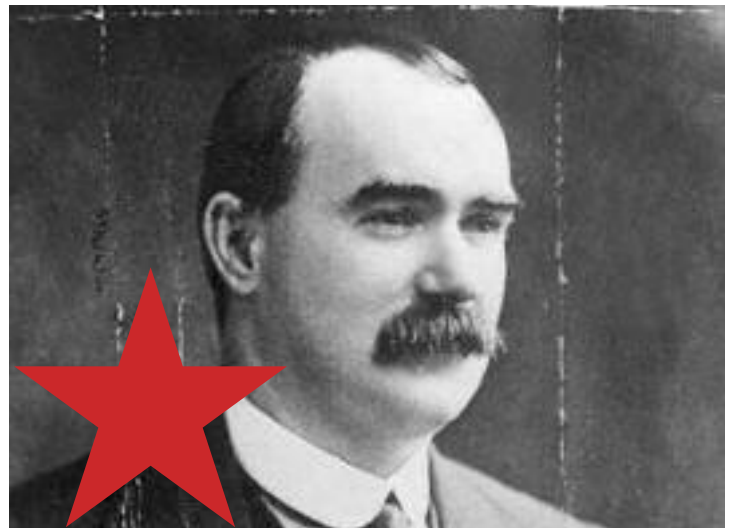
campaign got off the ground.

It is worth emphasising that, whatever one thinks of the idea of this campaign, it was conducted by men who sincerely believed that they were engaged in a war with the colonial power and were continuing the revolution begun in 1916. Their attacks were directed at the British army and the RUC (an armed militia), as well as some public buildings and utilities. This is in sharp contrast to the Provisional IRA and its "armed struggle" in the 1970s and 80s, with its bombs in crowded streets, bombs placed in pubs, bombings in England, and sectarian murders.

After the abandoning of the border campaign and the release of the prisoners and internees, Mick Ryan emerged as a committed and energetic leader and organiser, and he remained an active member up to the organisation's final disintegration and the creation of the Workers' Party.

The ideological vacuum in the leadership made it possible for charlatans calling themselves Marxists to offer themselves as experts and consultants. Mick Ryan was a committed but not uncritical supporter of what is largely regarded as the shift of the republican movement (i.e. the IRA and Sinn Féin) to the left, though this shift was more apparent than real, thanks to the opportunism of a weak and vain leadership (notably Cathal Goulding and Seán Garland) and the machinations of the chancers they brought in as "experts" (notably and notoriously Eoghan Harris).

Mick Ryan has produced a well-written, honest and compelling account of an extraordinary period in modern Irish history, one about which virtually nothing is known to most people today, with little if anything having previously been written by any of the participants. It must be considered essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand this strange period in Irish history. ★



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