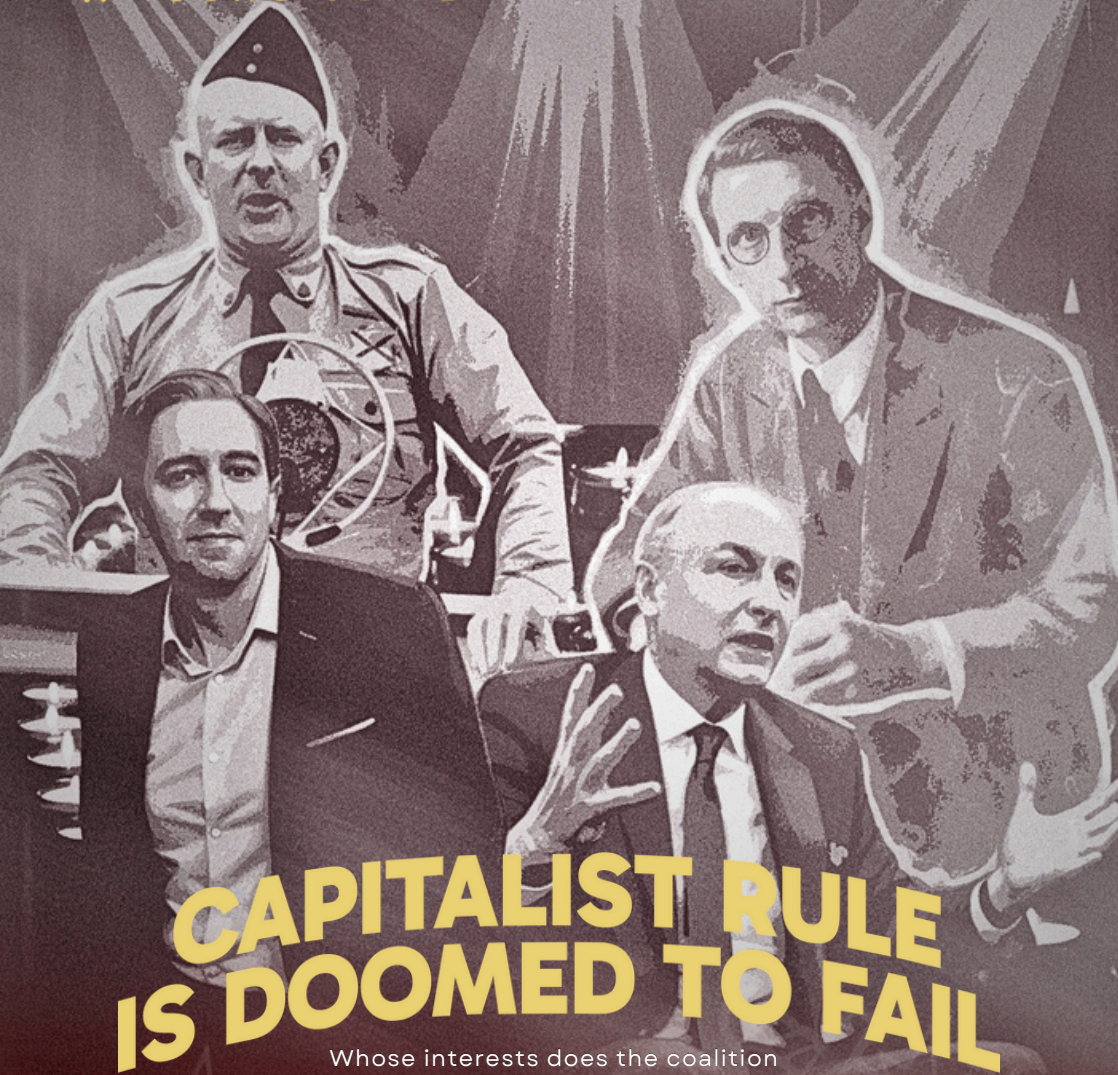




FORWARD

A YOUNG VOICE FOR SOCIALISM



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NEW TOP COP

Who is the new Garda chief?

COMMUNISTS IN THE KINGDOM

CYM launch in Kerry

CMAT'S EURO-COUNTRY

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MORE OF THE SAME

Capitalist Rule is Doomed to Fail

Adam Fagan

All the worst aspects of bourgeois rule today are encapsulated in the Government of the 34th Dáil. The coalition is led by Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, while also including a group of independents of various shades, notably pulled together by Michael Lowry, a “business man” with various corruption and tax evasion scandals under his belt. The government formed following years of anti-popular rule and strong disdain from the working class. The order of the day was clear: maintain and continue the brazen rule of capital in Ireland.

The 34th Dáil emerged after years of prolonging the housing crisis and record homelessness, increasing unemployment and mass dissatisfaction from the people. Unfazed by this, the government has put in its sights a different priority: the final removal of the Triple Lock legislation and the end of military neutrality of the state. What we’ve seen since the beginning of this term have been nothing short of open attacks on the institutions of military neutrality and closer and closer steps towards NATO alignment.

The actions of this government come not from an abstract political will which considers the needs of the people, rather they reflect complete alignment and support for the capitalist class in Ireland. The rule of capital can no longer sit with military neutrality in the 26 counties, and in the context of heightening tensions within the imperialist system, threatening the outbreak of further conflicts around the globe, the state is steadfast in its intention to rapidly enhance the size and capability of its military.

James Connolly wrote famously that governments in capitalist societies are nothing “but com-

mittees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class”. In the age of imperialism, this manifests through direct corruption, lobbying, consistent networking and sometimes even politicians sitting directly on the boards of large financial firms. All of these examples are common in the South. Direct corruption is evident through the countless scandals that have emerged, where contracts are tendered to private developers with massively inflated budgets, while massive amounts of public funds are handed over to outsourcing firms, which employ contract workers on shocking terms and conditions. These “jobs for the boys” have been a consistent hallmark of capitalist governance in Ireland. Corruption is not just a sign of moral degradation, it is inherent to the capitalist state in all its forms.

The largest lobbying group of the Irish capitalist class is the Irish Business and Employers’ Confederation (IBEC), which maintains a very close relationship with government parties and strongly contributes to specific campaigns. IBEC is vocal in cases where government policy steps on the toes of the interests of their constituents, a clear example of this was in July, when IBEC director general Danny McCoy raised the alarm about how the “lack of defense spending” and the Occupied Territories bill could damage the position of Irish firms in the US and EU.

The common thread here is that the state apparatus in capitalist society is structured in accordance with the relations of production. Each department of the state and legislative body is built around maintaining the status quo.

This is not a conspiracy; it can be directly traced to the origins of the state and the foundations upon which it was built.

How did we get here?

Fine Gael was born in 1933 out of the merging of several reactionary bourgeois parties, namely Cumann na nGaedheal, the National Centre Party, and importantly, the fascist Army Comrades Association (ACA) aka the ‘Blueshirts’. Cumann na nGaedheal, led by W.T Cosgrave, was the party that first took power in the Irish Free State, formed in the 26-counties following the War of Independence. CnaG had its origins in the remnants of the Irish Parliamentary Party, as well as in the right-wing Griffithite section of Sinn Féin. The large Irish capitalists (brewers, financiers, railway enterprises etc.) had previously been represented by the IPP, seeking greater autonomy within the Union through Home Rule, but as the independence struggle developed, their support consolidated behind Sinn Féin, despite the widespread condemnation of 1916 from the bourgeois press. After 1921, they had resolved the contradiction they faced with British rule, and so they gave full support to the political forces within Sinn Féin which would crush those fighting for not only a national revolution, but a social one as well. The first CnaG government was responsible for some of the worst atrocities against revolutionaries during the Civil War, while also overseeing a coordinated attack on the conditions of the working class following the economic crises of capitalism in the late 20s and early 30s, fully backing the capitalist class in any dispute with organised labour.

Not long after this, the first Fianna Fáil government stepped up in 1932. The policy of FF under De Valera was slightly different to its predecessor in its approach to political and economic relations with Britain. Taking a protectionist approach to trade, the FF government of 1932 sought to strengthen certain sections of the Irish bourgeoisie through a trade war with Britain. Using the pretext of the struggle over the payment of land annuities, the policy of the De Valera government sought to bolster the economic position of smaller manufacturers and mid-sized farmers. The Party used bourgeois nationalism to sow illusions among the working class as to the nature of the government and their economic policy, and distract them from the mass unemployment and stark exploitation of the time. This tactic was successful in many respects, with the government, viewed as acting in an “anti-imperialist” fashion, won over the support of some on the Irish left. This opportunist position was present in the Labour Party as well as in the Communist and Republican movements.

Since the mid 20th century, government leadership has changed hands regularly between FF and FG, occasionally taking the form of coalition governments with smaller parties, the most common orientation being FG with Labour as the junior party. These coalitions have time and time again exposed the trends of opportunism on the Left, when Labour represented not the interests of the working class, despite their slogans and phrasemongering, but instead have consistently defended the rule of capital in the face of exploitation and oppression. Social democracy makes grandiose claims about what reforms it can achieve for working people, but capitulates almost entirely to capitalist interests as soon as it enters government. This was seen through the Labour Party’s attempt to implement water charges after the 2008 financial crash. The broad base of social democracy and the leadership of opportunism on the left has now shifted to Sinn Féin, but much like with Labour, the prospect of a Sinn Féin government only offers a different instance of capitalist rule. As James Connolly said “only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland”, only an independent working class party can represent the interests of freedom in Irish society today.



Pictured: Simon Harris, Michelle O'Neill and Micheál Martin

The Rule of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael Today

The joint rule of FG and FF in coalition governments is nothing but a joint agreement to rule on behalf of the Irish capitalists. Following the full integration of the South into the EEC, and later the EU, the perceived differences between FG and FF have become less stark. Both parties stand for an Ireland which is politically, economically, and militarily aligned with the European Union and its institutions. This stance is not simply to do with some form of direct subjugation of the Irish state and people by the EU, rather it represents the best decision for Irish monopolies in the pursuit of maximising their profits. While it is of course true that the economic relationships between Ireland and those EU member states higher up in the higher up in the imperialist hierarchy are in fact unequal, it is clear that the strategy of the Irish bourgeoisie is to benefit from the access to markets, trade routes, natural resources and influence that comes with being part of the EU.

In the face of this consensus among the Irish capitalist class, FF/FG have ruled for the most part on the basis of implementing the EU's plans for austerity. The FG and Labour government through barefaced privatisation and austere measures helped mitigate the crisis on behalf of the capitalists, shifting the burden of debt on the working class through strongly anti-popular measures.

In recent times, it has also become popular within FG and FF to openly discuss the topic of unity. Since Brexit and the growth of SF, there has emerged the question for the Irish bourgeoisie of the possibility of a united Irish state. The prospects of a unified, capitalist and militarised Irish state which is integrated into NATO, represents possibly a very advantageous outcome for the country's position within the imperialist hierarchy. The vision for a united Ireland purveyed by the ruling parties and SF would merely be an extension of the current 26 county state north. This “solution” fails to address the most important issues faced by the Irish working class as a result of partition. The fact of the matter is that there is no bourgeois solution to partition which addresses the needs of the Irish working class. Only when a decisive struggle is fought on behalf of that class, which overthrows the existing social relations, can the basis of imperialism in Ireland, British or otherwise, be severed once and for all.

Since 2022, following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the Irish bourgeoisie has been hellbent on “catching up” with its European counterparts in the military sector. The plans of the FF/FG government to accelerate militarisation were reflected in the most recent budget. In the context of the shift of the European Commission from the “green economy” to that of a military focus, the 26 county government has tied itself to multiple EU projects, such as the Security Action For Europe (SAFE) act, which provides up to €150 billion in loads for “urgent defence spending” to EU member states.

In the current era of imperialism, which can be expressed in the shortest terms as the rule of monopoly capital, the rule of the Irish bourgeoisie and how it manifests cannot be separated from the inter-national situation, monopolies which control entire industries have created the ability to plan production on a global scale, hence the competition and agreements between different bourgeois elements become international, and decisively linked with the policies of entire states.

The rule of FF/FG over the next decade will develop in accordance with the situation of the global economy. The continuing trend towards a decline in the rate of profit globally and the threat of another crisis looming, there is a clear shift towards austerity and the increase of exploitation across the globe. Ireland is not unique in this vein. The rule of FG and FF has already begun to express a more barefaced antagonism to the working class than was previously visible on the surface.

The Fight against Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael and Capitalist Rule

The struggle against the rule of FG and FF must be underlined by an intensification of struggle on behalf of the Irish working class. This struggle must be waged on the following terms;

1. Intensification of the class struggle in the economic sphere, the struggle of Irish communists against the social-democratic and pro-establishment leadership of the trade union movement and the building of a militant, class-orientated trade union movement.

2. The struggle against all forms of capitalist rule. Recognition of the fact that the rule of capital does not end with ousting FG and FF from government, capitalism can-not be reformed piece by piece. The social basis for the rule of the bourgeoisie must be eliminated.

3. The emphasis on the unbroken link between unity and socialism. True unity and separation from Britain can only be achieved through the decisive victory of the class struggle.

4. Recognition of the international character of the imperialist system, through the struggle against imperialist war and Ireland's involvement within it. The struggle against NATO in the north and the encroachments towards it in the south must be intensified and made popular as the international situation intensifies.

“The struggle against the rule of FG and FF must be underlined by an intensification of struggle on behalf of the Irish working class.”

Each of these points serve to aid the Irish working class in preparation for its historic mission. The overthrow of the capitalist system and the ushering in of a socialist republic. To this end, the communist movement in Ireland must be able to rise to the task of building organic ties with the working class and expanding its ranks with the most militant elements of it. Through its experience in workers organisations such as trade unions, it must train the working class in the arena of class struggle, and demonstrate to it that organisation is its greatest weapon. The CYM, through its branches across the country, is preparing the youth in the spheres of trade union, university and school organising in the fight against capitalism. We are committed to the aims and objectives of such a militant communist movement, and continue to advocate for a better future on behalf of the Irish working youth.



Pictured: De Valera catwalks through guard of honour at Collins Barracks, Cork

A VICTORY FOR THE “LEFT”?

A Presidential Retrospective

Stiofáin Mac
an tSionnaigh

As the dust settles on Ireland’s first contested presidential election in 14 years, the candidate of the social-democratic left stands as undisputed victor. The final result landed Catherine Connolly with 63% of first preference votes, with her competitor, Fine Gael’s Heather Humphreys, sitting at 29%.

While Connolly was objectively the better candidate – with commitments to neutrality and anti-militarism – it would be a mistake to view her entry into Áras an Uachtaráin as a victory for the working class. While the Presidency is an almost entirely symbolic role, it is vital that communists analyse not only the substance of the campaign, but the character of the alliance which constituted Connolly’s support.

Connolly drew support from a wide variety of groups, such as People Before Profit, both Workers’ Parties, and the Communist Party of Ireland, but the really crucial backing came from the social democratic parties currently sitting in opposition in the Dáil – Sinn Féin, the Social Democrats, the Green Party and Connolly’s old party, the Labour Party. Without these, Connolly would never have received the nominations necessary to get herself on the ballot.

Let’s take a look at this “Left” alliance, a clear prelude to a possible electoral strategy for a “Left” government. While the nature of the presidential campaign did not necessitate any type of fleshed-out shared programme, any party that self-describes as on the left would have found a place in this alliance. In conditions of historic retreat and weakness for the workers movement, where opportunism is

dominant, the composition of this alliance was inevitably dominated by parties that fail at the first hurdle when it comes to determining whether or not they represent the interests of the working class – do they oppose the current system of exploitation and the rule of capital?

It can be said quite unequivocally that Labour, Sinn Féin, the Greens and the Social Democrats do not reach this threshold. Those parties which supported Connolly due to her positions on neutrality and militarism, by virtue of the fact that they are willingly standing side-by-side with parties that oppose their fundamental goals, are tainted by association, especially among those workers who correctly identified the inherent flaws of the presidential system, even if it is voices from the reactionary right which they are listening to.

The result is that parties which present themselves as representing the working class, who should be independent and should put the interests of the working class above everything else, find themselves subordinated to the political line of the social democrats they have entered into alliance with. Their ability to stand as independent representatives of the working class is completely undermined by their so-called allies’ unrelenting support of the interests of their enemies – the capitalist class.

These parties’ legacies in government stand for themselves, Labour and the Greens have both taken part in coalitions with Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil, as willing participants in austerity governments which have attacked the conditions of the working class.



Pictured: 10th President of the 26-county state, Catherine Connolly

Sinn Féin, as the leading party in the Stormont legislature, has performed a similar role in the North, and has gone to great lengths to prove that it will not rock the boat when it inevitably comes to power in the South. While the Social Democrats can claim a clean slate, they certainly don’t represent any departure from the traditions of social democracy.

However, it would be a mistake to overemphasise the importance of this recent presidential campaign. The media circus that has grown up around the election in the last few

This, however, came with the caveat that the majority of these schools would be in the hands of the Catholic Church, with little to no secular option offered.

This undue influence of the Catholic Church remains, yet a new issue is emerging; secondary schools in the south are increasingly unequipped to meet the academic needs of their students. Private informal education is now growing into a more concentrated industry, for instance with 'Grinds 360' company. They offer a wide range of celebrity tutors and teachers, providing hours' worth of weekly lessons on top of your typical school week, their pricing only slightly more reasonable than 'The Institute of Education', who prides itself on its "prestige", with fees to match it.

Grinds 360's active partnerships with schools demonstrate that a drive to blur the line between private and public education is also taking place, which isn't too distinct from other public services that are slowly but surely wound down through underfunding, government mismanagement and contract or agency work. Education is no different. It is ultimately the students who are the victims here, especially those from working class backgrounds, as they are expected to pay rates of at least €1000 for their more minor offers to access all offered subjects, with at least another separate instalment of €399 for books.

Aside from academic pressures being applied to students, this double punishment of economic pressure is applied to their families. Students from working class families face a financial barrier to academic success, where the key to educational achievements is not study or merit, but the financial resources of your family. All the while an industry that is now worth €60 million continues to grow, Ireland reports among the worst of European countries for academic stress.

These are among the many norms now in education in the 26 counties, which still operate under a gender-divided and non-

secular regime of education. In this, a culture of how education should operate is developed that reinforces a very regressive trend in education. We can all recall the classroom effect and how the decisions of others may even have influenced ourselves at a very influential age. It's on this basis that this industry has not only thrived but has even adopted the same marketing tactics of "hustle-culture," preying on the stress and uncertainty that does not just come from the Leaving Cert, but also more generally in that period of our personal development. The end product is that young people are unnecessarily burdened with extra work, have their free-time robbed from them and further economic burdens are placed on lower income families.

“The end product is that young people are unnecessarily burdened with extra work, have their free-time robbed from them and further economic burdens are placed on lower income families.”

Education has been shown to be in no way a priority for the bourgeois state, as even third level tuition fees are set to floor at around €2500 for September. The government has no set idea as to what they want education in Ireland to be or what experience young people should expect for second level.

A prime example of the class nature of education is the Leaving Cert economics course. The course focuses exclusively on the market as the basis of the capitalist economy, rather than the real driving force of all economic activity, labour. This narrow view glosses over the exploitative relation between labour and capital in our society and is the common view of so called "neoclassical economics".

Through this lens, attacks made on the working class by capitalists such as wage reductions or large scale lay-offs, are seen as merely the products of a fluctuating market, instead of fundamental characteristics of the whole economic system.

By making public education redundant through their own mismanagement, they are able to repeat the neo-liberal mantra of public sectors being inherently inefficient and the private sector being most efficient. A kind of weaponised incompetency of the liberal state that allows the ruling class to consolidate their power and smugly brush off any notion of socialist economic planning or even a stronger public sector.

It's for this reason that the various bourgeois approaches, of the never-ending waltz between the public and private sector with an audience of only the most desperate of our society, can never work. Any power conceded to capitalists will be the loss of future generations, if not in our present. The moment we find ourselves in is underscored by rapidly increasing encroachment of capitalist influence and privatisation of the education sector. This must be struggled against with as much energy as possible by the youth and working class. Education is a birth-right to all human beings and should therefore not be commodified.

Education in Ireland has never truly been free. Extra support for struggling students should of course be provided, but grinds should never be an integral part of all second-level education. Our work as young communists must be in line with developing our vision for an alternative education, one which accounts for the real needs of the youth, which encourages a genuine curiosity in the sciences, prepares us to contribute to the development of society in the most effective way and which is free from the constant threats of poverty faced by so many young people today. We struggle for another type of education system, which is free from the pay-to-win system cultivated by the capitalist system.

NEW TOP COP FOR AN GARDA SÍOCHÁNÁ

Micheál Ó Síodhacháin

The 26-county state has announced Justin Kelly as the new Garda Commissioner, set to replace MI5 spook Drew Harris in September. But who is Justin Kelly?

According to the bourgeois media, Kelly is “highly respected” within the force and described as “the rank and file’s man.” He was one of 14 candidates interviewed for the role, several of whom came from international or non-Garda policing backgrounds, much like his predecessor Harris, who was recruited from the PSNI. Garda morale is reportedly “significantly boosted” following the announcement.

An Irish Times profile highlights Kelly’s polished career, beginning in Clondalkin barracks and rising through the ranks with key roles in the Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau. He also served as Assistant Commissioner and completed a UN deployment in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Assistant Commissioner Kelly does seem like the perfect fit to head the protectors of property and profit in the south of our island. One aspect of Kelly’s prestigious CV that the Irish Times article conveniently glosses over is his position between 2020 and 2022, as Detective Chief Superintendent heading the Special Detective Unit, formally and commonly known as the Special Branch.



This unit is the political police force of the 26-county state, which is tasked primarily with suppressing political forces identified as threats to the security of the state. Republicans have faced the brunt of this repression since the Branch’s founding, but communists and other left-wing activists have also not escaped their politically motivated operations.

This revelation of Kelly’s Special Branch extraction will come as no surprise to Communists and Republicans. The Special Branch’s heavy-handed political policing of those that oppose capitalism and imperialism continues to this day, with special war-time legislation still in use as a typical weapon of political repression by the state and their police force. Kelly’s appointment, fresh out of the Special Branch, signals more of the same for the Gardai. Clearly, they’re still afraid of the organised working class.

At a time when reactionary right-wing violence is on the rise, it’s worth asking, how often do you see Special Branch officers taking names at far-right protests? Rather than focusing their efforts on those who threaten the vulnerable and marginalised, who ultimately pose no threat to the ruling class, the state continues to prioritise the persecution and surveillance of left-wing activists. Though Kelly is being presented in the bourgeois media as someone who will prioritise “local” and “community” policing, we know what that really means. For us Communists, there’s no illusion: his role, like those before him, will be to protect the property and profits of the capitalist class and certainly not the people.



Pictured: Minister O’Callaghan, Assistant Commissioner Kelly, Taoiseach Micheál Martin, and outgoing chief spook, Drew Harris.

NEW ECONOMIC MODEL

ICTU's "Revolutionary" Proposal for Managing Capitalism

Ebyn Girling

At the recent biennial delegate conference (BDC) of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in July, a policy document named 'The New Economic Model' (NEM) was launched. This document puts forward a number of suggestions under the umbrella of 'four pillars', namely: 1. The Productive Economy, 2. More and better jobs, 3. Economic and social security and 4. Economic Resilience. The proposals laid out create a harmful illusion that capitalism is not to blame but rather its mismanagement, and that an economic model can be created which works for the benefit of both workers and capitalists.

The first pillar, 'the productive economy', lays out proposals for increasing domestic productivity. The NEM declares that to mobilise human capital and increase productivity, 'we need to radically extend democracy to the workplace'. The suggestions for doing so include vindicating the right to collective bargaining and worker representation on boards of directors. However, the very notion of 'workplace democracy' under capitalism is flawed. It suggests that a workplace can be democratically run while the ownership of the workplace itself, its means of production and its profits, remain in private hands. As long as a workplace functions within a capitalist economy, it is ultimately subordinated to the drive for endless capital accumulation (entailing increased exploitation of its employees) if it does not wish to go out of business. Thus no amount of worker representatives on boards of directors can make it democratic.

Similarly, while the suggestion of protection of the right to collective bargaining is a positive one, it does not make a workplace 'democratic' but rather allows the workers to reduce their exploitation, with ultimate control remaining in the employer's hands.

The document also calls for a strategy to reward 'Good Companies'. The characteristics of these 'Good Companies' include having workplace democracy, having 'efficiency wages' and pursuing decarbonisation. These companies would be rewarded with preferential access to public procurement contracts, grants and equity funding from the state. This strategy of seeking to gain rewards for companies in return for concessions to their workers has been adopted by many trade unions around the world, failing everywhere it has been tried.

Jane McAuley gives an example of this strategy in her 2016 book *No Shortcuts*. SEIU Local 775, a branch of the Service Employees International Union in America, set out to organise nursing home workers by promising nursing homes that they would lobby for an increase in state funding for nursing homes in return for them being neutral during the unionisation campaign. Meanwhile another branch of the same union, SEIU 1199NE, organised nursing home workers to improve their working conditions through frequent strike action. A comparison of SEIU 775 and SEIU 1199NE workers showed that workers in SEIU 1199NE had 6 more paid sick days a year than 775 workers, earned over \$3/hr more than 775 workers and had employer contributions to their pensions that 775 workers entirely lacked. More importantly from the communist perspective, through



Pictured: Owen Reidy, General Secretary of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)

their struggle for concessions, workers in 1199NE had become organised and had become experienced in the struggle against employers through strike action, where as the workers in 775 had no involvement or experience in their own 'unionisation', and many of the agreements concluded by union leaders with nursing homes directly prohibited workers from taking strike action, introducing gruelling arbitration processes to settle conflicts between the workers and their employers, and in some cases even designated certain homes as being off limits for unionisation.

The 'good companies' strategy ultimately sees organising workers as unnecessary. At a time when workers are under relentless assault from employers and without the means to defend themselves, no approach could be more dangerous than this one. This is yet another clear indication of the role that ICTU unions see for themselves, not as weapons of the working class against employers and their interests, but as 'advocates' for their members.

"The basic rule, the first commandment, of any trade union movement is not to rely on the "state" but to rely on the strength of one's own class. The state is an organisation of the ruling class."

- V.I. Lenin

The rest of the policies put forward in the document are fairly generic and reformist: increase investment in infrastructure, housing and climate transition. What they all have in common is that they do not aim to destroy the system that makes things like housing scarcity and fossil fuels profitable. Rather they explicitly aim to preserve this system. The introduction explicitly states that the NEM 'outlines those necessary reforms which are feasible in the current politic-economic order'.

A late paragraph in the document laments the low trust in government institutions, and puts forward ways to increase public institutions, as if building trust in capitalist institutions will be in any way beneficial to workers.

The ICTU vision of trade unionism, in which trade unions are merely advocates trying to win concessions from employers without the involvement of their members, is actively harmful to the working class. This type of trade unionism fosters the illusion that the working class can resist the onslaught of capital without actively struggling for their own interests.

What is needed by the Irish working class is not class collaboration and reformism, but a militant trade union movement that truly trains workers in the struggle against capitalists, a trade union movement that creates real working class power through organisation. Such a movement must above all have a class-based orientation, and fight the idea that there can be an identity of interests between workers and employers.

COMMUNISTS IN THE KINGDOM

CYM launch in Kerry Ainle Foley



Long in the background, but ever present in the minds of the Munster members of the CYM, and indeed in the whole organisation, was the launch of the CYM in the Kingdom of Kerry. After careful development of our existing Kerry members, and their hard work within their schools, workplaces and local areas advocating the cause of the international working class, a new era for southwest Munster is underway.

Whatever background we come from, all of us can recognise that the root of our strife can at its core always be traced back to the exploitative system of capitalism.

The genocide in Palestine, the housing and cost of living crises, the Healy-Rae's, Shannon LNG; all of it is due to profit, greed, and the inherent laws of capitalism.

With the help of the CYM, the young people of Kerry have begun to recognise this, people who might not have been familiar with the world-view of Marxism-Leninism, but were disparaged by the laziness, opportunism, and the ideological weakness of the bourgeois 'left' parties and organisations present in Kerry, and all over the island.

Through education, praxis, and mentorship, the CYM presence in Kerry has strengthened and attracted others. As we explored

James Connolly's 'Labour in Irish History' through our reading group or discussed the historical situations of Cuba and Palestine in our local meetings, we simultaneously protested in Killarney, ran stalls in Tralee, and door-knocks in Killorglin.

The focus of the CYM is always to develop our members into 'professional revolutionaries' as Lenin put it, who have the ability, skill and knowledge to lead the charge when the revolutionary situation arises. The very same

The very same can be said for our approach in Kerry, and our most immediate goal has been building up and educating our new comrades on the principles of Marxism-Leninism and on the organisational methods of the CYM.

After a very successful Summer of development, including the attendance of some of our members at the CYM National Summer School in County Down – where, it must be noted, the Kerry team beat the Ard Chomhairle to take first place in the National 5-a-side soccer tournament, reaffirming the Kingdom's superiority when it comes to sports and competition – members returned home as we completed preparations for our first CYM public event in Kerry, a fundraiser for our dear comrades in the Palestinian Communist Youth Union.

All members put in excellent work, as the event stood as a test of strength for our outreach within the County, and Tralee in particular. We were delighted to attract a crowd of over 75 people as we filled up our venue, the Klub. John Loughrey, the highly respected chairman for Kerry IPSC, and a lifelong political activist stood as quizmaster for us, where he did an excellent job, though he pulled no punches with his very difficult questions, which had those of us organising thankful we were simply correcting the answers as opposed to taking part. Due to the efforts of all our members and the generous patrons of the county, we had an impressive sum of spot prizes for the raffle. Despite criticism that we had left the ticket prices too low, which we were insistent on to allow all age and class ranges to attend, we raised a whopping €1,509 euros for the PCYU and their lifesaving and revolutionary work in Palestine.

This was an incredible feat, and we would once again like to extend our thanks to all the people of Tralee and beyond who attended, many of which

were committed activists for the Palestinian cause, but many fresh young faces were met with open arms too.

As we left the Summer behind us, many comrades sights were turned to college and new departures, but we are all of us still active and engaged with the progression of the CYM in Kerry, and the hunger for expansion was tangible at our Day School, which had comrades from Cork, Dublin, and Wexford travelling down to the Kerry Sports Academy in the North Campus of the MTU. Here we discussed and brainstormed over the process of building the CYM, which was led by a Wexford comrade who was more than happy to share his experience from their thriving Cumann. The fundamentals of Marxist philosophy, democratic centralism and the laws of socialist revolution were all topics that were discussed as well, all of which energised and inspired the attendees as we move forward with the organisation, and its role in Kerry.

There's a lot that lies ahead of us, and there's no shortage of issues for us to take on, be it in Killarney or Caherciveen. Though there are some representatives that give us in Kerry a bad name up in Leinster House, like Norma Foley or the Healy-Raes, we're not all gommeens and slumlords. Against all the odds, despite internal migration to the cities, or emigration thousands of miles away, despite a scattered and isolated rural population, despite it all, we see the potential in Kerry, and the need for a real revolutionary organisation of the youth and working class here in the South-West.

Though there are usually rain clouds overhead, the future of the communist movement in Kerry is looking bright. We must continue to learn, and develop ourselves and the CYM, as we strive ever onwards to a new, free and socialist Ireland.

An Ríocht Abú!



Pictured: CYM members at the recent Kerry Day School at the MTU Tralee campus



“DON'T WAIT UNTIL THINGS GET UNBEARABLE”

Building the Union in Eclective

The hospitality sector has incredibly low union density. This is for a variety of reasons, including the prevalence of precarious contracts and poor conditions, but also that a lot of the hospitality workforce is made up of immigrants and students. I work in the Stella Cinema in Rathmines, which is one of over twenty four venues owned by Eclective Hospitality groups across Ireland. Despite the high turnover of staff due to the low pay, anti-social hours, and three-hour contracts, we managed to begin organising the workplace after Christmas.

Press Up, now known as Eclective Hospitality Group, is notorious for buying local businesses in Dublin and incorporating them into their monopoly of hospitality venues. The consolidation and expansion of their share of Dublin nightlife has pushed out many other long-standing smaller venues, worsening Dublin's world-renowned hospitality in the search for higher profits. Press Up was involved in the acquisition of Clery's on O'Connell Street, which resulted in the loss of jobs for 460 retail workers. The company's intention was to develop Clery's into a site of luxury shops, a hotel, and office spaces. We see this scheme across the entirety of Press Up's ventures- an ideal model for making short-term profit, while making these venues unaffordable to their minimum-wage staff. The Workman's Club will see a similar takeover over the next year: the development of a high-end bar that further pushes young people out of Dublin's nightlife.

To give some brief context to

organising the Stella and other venues owned by Eclective, I will go through some of the original reasons for workers' dissatisfaction with their workplace conditions. The original owner of the hospitality group was taken over by a London-based private equity fund called Cheyne Capital in 2024. Cheyne Capital took over Press Up / Eclective on a debt-for-equity basis, meaning that the primary changes for the company would be selective capital investments for certain unprofitable venues, but severe cut-backs for staff. One such attack on the workers' terms and conditions was the removal of staff-benefit lunches, which were taken away just after Christmas, our busiest period. This cutback made it clear for the staff that the company did not care about them. One Stella worker reported:

“I felt like it was a slippery slope and it was just the first of many things they were planning on changing or taking away. I definitely felt like if we didn't do something about it, it would only get worse.”

I began suggesting that we organise collective action around this cutback, with the help of the Independent Workers' Union (IWU). From then we conducted both internal and public petitions



Pictured: Elephant & Castle Restaurant

demanding that this basic demand be reinstated. Our internal petition was presented by 'marching on the boss'. This was met with virtually no response, apart from a meeting organised with the head of HR who explained to us that the "cost-of-living crisis" meant these cutbacks were necessary. We explained to him very clearly that the cost-of-living crisis impacts minimum wage workers on three-hour contracts much more than it does a private-equity fund.

The IWU then organised dropping cards into other Eclective venues to see how workers elsewhere were reacting to the attack on workplace conditions. We found a shared anger towards the cutbacks across a number of different venues, with a key location being the Elephant and Castle in Templebar. They had long-term staff who had witnessed all the cutbacks by management over the years. A large majority of the workers there were Brazilian migrants.

One member of staff reported:

“We decided to organise because conditions kept getting worse and management wasn’t listening to our concerns. Pay, hours, and respect on the job were constant issues. By coming together in a union, we realised we had the power to stand up for ourselves and fight for fair treatment.”

The staff in Elephant and Castle followed the Stella’s initiative by submitting a collective grievance, also to no response. However, it was at this point that we decided to ballot all IWU members across the Eclectic Group for industrial action, which came back overwhelmingly in favour.

Elephant and Castle currently has greater union density than the Stella, and so industrial action is far more likely to be seen there over the coming months.

Over the Summer, we have lost many union members in the Stella because of the huge turnover of staff, who need full-time hours that just are not guaranteed by our employer. This presents the immediate issue that new workers are not immediately aware of the attacks on our working conditions, and are less likely to join the union, especially while they are on probationary contracts. This constant turnover of staff is not accidental, but rather facilitates the company’s continuous cut-backs on staff-benefits.

The union will naturally play an important role in us organising around inevitable new cutbacks, but I doubt it will be immediate. Workers will gradually join the union, but what we need to do is create class-consciousness, and allow the staff to come to the correct conclusion themselves; that it is only through joining the union that they can be empowered to take industrial action. We will have to see how things play out in our sister venue Elephant and Castle, and the ways in which their industrial action can inspire and agitate across different venues in Dublin.

A staff member from Elephant and Castle urges:

“Don’t wait until things get unbearable. Talk to your co-workers, share your experiences, and start organising together. Alone it’s hard to make change, but when workers stand united, management has to listen.”

Over 250,000 people across the island work in hospitality, representing a huge portion of the population. Immigrants and young workers keep our pubs, restaurants and hotels running. As young communists, organising within the hospitality industry should play an integral role in our work. This is no easy task, but organising and building class consciousness among workers of all backgrounds is necessary in our goal of building a socialist republic.

This article was written by a member of the CYM working in the hospitality industry. To prevent possible employer victimisation, their name is not listed.

THE REVOLUTIONARY WORKERS GROUPS

Tomás Sheehan

Building the Communist Party

The Communist Movement in Ireland did not get off to a strong start. Despite the recent revolutionary period, marked by the Lockout, the Easter Rising, and the War of Independence, the first Communist Party was not founded until 1921, emerging from a left-ward transformation of the nearly moribund Socialist Party of Ireland. It changed its name, expelled reformists such as William O’Brien, and joined the Communist International (Comintern). But it was not to last. In 1923, Jim Larkin returned from the United States.

Despite his near ten year absence following the unions’ defeat during the 1913 Lockout, Larkin still cast a large shadow over the workers movement of Ireland.

There were initial aspirations that Larkin would join the nascent CPI, but it quickly became apparent that he had neither desire nor intention of subordinating himself to a party that was not under his immediate control, and so Larkin went about establishing the Irish Workers League (IWL). The Executive Committee of the Comintern



Picture: The Irish Workers' Voice, the weekly paper of the Revolutionary Workers Groups.

believed that Larkin would have to play a central role in building the Communist Party in Ireland, notwithstanding the fact that his union, the Workers' Union of Ireland (WUI), was at that time one of the few anglosphere trade unions affiliated to the Red International of Trade Unions (Profintern).

So the CPI was dissolved, and its members joined the newly formed IWL, which had assumed the role of Comintern affiliate for Ireland. Yet no party Congress or programme was forthcoming, nor would they materialise for another three years. Larkin resisted any attempt to formalise the party, often ignoring directions from the Comintern. While the rest of the international Communist movement was undergoing a coordinated bolshevisation, ie. building the Communist Party along Leninist lines as the highest form of political organisation of the proletariat, the IWL remained a husk of a party whose only purpose was seemingly to serve as an occasional election vehicle for Larkin.

This state of affairs reflected Larkin's wider syndicalist political strategy. Unlike the Leninist understanding of socialist revolution, his strategy did not appreciate the role of party organising, and instead prioritised and over-emphasised the specific role of the trade union in social revolution. Similarly, democratic centralism found no place in a party that was uniquely centred around the singular personality of Larkin.

Eventually however, there was a mutual falling out between Larkin and the Comintern. From the Comintern perspective, they had grown tired of the mounting requests for funds from Larkin, despite few results. While Larkin had become disillusioned when said funds didn't materialise, and did not approve when WUI members were not given preferential treatment in the newly established Russian Oil Products company in Dublin. Over time, the obvious ideological divergence of Larkin's party became increasingly too significant to ignore. While previous attempts to establish a new communist party in spite of the IWL had been rebuffed by the Comintern, when the Preparatory Committee for the Workers Revolutionary Party was formed in the late 20's, the Comintern's approach to Ireland shifted.

This organisation, briefly called the Workers Revolutionary Party, and eventually the Revolutionary Workers Groups (RWG), represented a qualitative development in the Communist movement in Ireland. Among its founding members were Jim Larkin Jnr. and Sean Murray, both of whom had studied for some years in the Lenin School in the USSR, the purpose of which was to develop ideologically and organisationally trained cadres for the advancement of national Comintern affiliates. In contrast to its predecessor, the RWG readily adopted a bolshevised organisational structure. In fact, the name change from WR Party to RW Groups, reflected a shift in

the party's base organisations from geographic configurations to workplace cells, which, while in line with Comintern strategy at the time, demonstrated a recognition of the fundamental role of the party in workplace organising. Cells were established in workplaces such as Jacobs, Inchicore Railway Works, Guinness, and the Castlecomer coal mines in Co. Kilkenny.

The RWG, whose membership was predominantly situated in Dublin and Belfast, emerged during a period of intensified capitalist crises, which saw widespread wage cuts and rapidly growing unemployment. In the South, Fianna Fáil came to power for the first time, defeating Cumann na nGaedheal in the 1932 election following a campaign that had the backing of much of the republican and some of the workers movement. However, in a break from previous strategy, the RWG took a critical stance not only towards the outwardly reactionary Cumann na nGaedhal, but also Fianna Fáil and the Labour Party, correctly analysing that each party sought, in their own manner, to maintain the rule of capital in Ireland.

Their strategy reflected that of the Communist Movement at the time, characterised by a militant "class vs. class" approach, which took the form of rank and file organising within workplaces and among the trade unions, in direct opposition to the conciliatory position of the trade union leadership. The RWG understood the necessary and historic role of the working class

their aim of a “Workers and Small Farmers Republic”.

While the significance of the national element within the social revolution was upheld by the RWG, the Party formed a new analysis of the South which reflected the developing character of the new state. Sean Murray wrote in 1930, “The Irish bourgeoisie are no longer ‘oppressed’ by British imperialism, but are ruling Ireland, North and South, in alliance with British capitalism [...] They have abandoned the struggle for a Republic [...] Not a single move can now be made for independence without a struggle to overthrow the Irish capitalist class [...] [which] means, obviously the establishment of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat [...] This means the old slogans [...] of ‘Ireland against England’, ‘Independence’, ‘Republic’, must now be replaced by the slogan of class against class.” In this, the RWG sought to analyse the development that was ongoing in the 26 county state, that while there remained an unequal economic interdependency between it and Britain, the emergent Irish capitalist class, which now ruled the state, exploited the working class no differently than their British counter-parts, and that they too sought to exert their interests internationally, as demonstrated through the economic war.

Their unrelenting drive to embed themselves within the Irish working class led to the RWG assuming leading roles in several important industrial disputes. One such example was the Belfast Outdoor Relief strike of 1932,

which united, albeit temporarily, catholic and protestant relief workers under the unified demands for higher pay and better conditions, as unemployment, poverty and hunger rampaged the city in the wake of the ongoing capitalist crisis. Unemployment in the city had reached nearly 40%, and the only form of social-welfare available other than entering a poor-house, was ‘outdoor relief’ - working on public employment schemes such as digging up and paving roads. However, the wages from this work were meagre and only means-tested, married men were eligible for the relief.

“While there remained an unequal economic interdependency between it and Britain, the emergent Irish capitalist class, which now ruled the state, exploited the working class no differently than their British counter-parts, and that they too sought to exert their interests internationally”

In June 1932, the RWG established the Outdoor Relief Workers Committee, and set out their demands for better wages and conditions, the end to payments

in kind, and the extension of relief to single-men. They campaigned for several months, until finally in 1932, the Belfast relief workers went on strike. The strike action saw demonstrations and mass meetings, with 20,000 marching through the city centre on the first evening of the strike. As it continued, the workers experienced significant state repression, with the RUC attempting to prevent

gatherings through physical altercations, murdering two workers during the course of the dispute and injuring many others.

Under increasing pressure from their membership, the Trades Council backed the relief workers and threatened a general strike. This forced the government to the table, conceding to many of the demands. Pay was to be increased, but relief would not be extended to single men. While this was hailed as a victory and the deal was accepted by the workers, it represented the peak of RWG influence among the Belfast working class, as the Trades Council would go on to create their own Outdoor Relief Worker organisation, while singlemen would form another, disparaged with having been left in the cold with the deal. Nevertheless, this dispute demonstrated the power of class politics in overcoming sectarianism within the working class, and established a base of Party members among the Protestant working class.

It was not just in the North that the RWG experienced state repression. In 1931, embroiled in a wave of anti-communism, Cumann na nGaedheal passed the Public Safety Act, to little opposition from Fianna Fáil or the Labour Party. This act imbued the state with emergency powers and allowed for the proscribing of 12 communist and republican organisations, including the RWG. While few members faced arrests and the publication of the ‘Irish Workers Voice’ was largely unimpacted, the act created an increasingly difficult environment for political work. While the bill was being proposed to the Dáil, the government also met with several bishops of the Catholic church, coordinating the release of consistent anti-communist encyclicals, which were read from pulpits across the country.

The consequences of this were substantial. Workers were inhibited from joining the RWG out of fear of excommunication from the church and ostracisation from their communities. The trade unions adopted a fiercer anti-communist orientation.



Pictured: Banner of the Castlecomer RWG

Organised violence against communists also increased, with RWG member, Jimmy Gralton, from Leitrim, being deported by the state in 1933 for his political work after a campaign of violence against him by local reactionaries, the first instance of political deportation in the 26 county state. In the same year, the RWG head office in Dublin was attacked and burned by a violent mob after a particularly vitriolic sermon at St. Mary's Pro-Cathedral.

The Catholic Church likewise had no qualms with intervening in industrial disputes on the side of the capitalist class. In the Castlecomer coal mines, the RWG managed to build a strong base of members among the coal miners, or colliers as they were called. As the ITGWU, which had previously organised workers in the mines, had become inactive and held no interest in advancing the workers interests, the RWG oversaw the organisation of a new union called the Irish Mines, Quarries and Allied Workers Union (IMQAWU), with the RWG's Nicholas Boran as its secretary.

The RWG and the Union were highly successful in organising the mine workers, despite continued intimidation and house-raids from the Gardai. They managed to elect Boran as check-

weighman for the mine, a highly influential position which determined payments for the colliers, and also won a significant pay rise after leading the workers on strike, despite the union not having enough funds to cover strike pay, and receiving little solidarity support from other unions. However, on the invitation of the mine-owners after the conclusion of the strike, the local Catholic bishop visited the workers, and threatened that should they not return to membership of the ITGWU, they would face formal excommunication. With this direct threat and intimidation, many workers left the Union, which was eventually forced to merge with the ITGWU.

While the RWG was instrumental in the organising of some of the most influential industrial disputes in Ireland after the War of Independence, it ultimately failed to embed itself within the working class in the long-term. There are a multitude of reasons why this happened; intense state repression, outmanoeuvring by opportunist forces, widespread anti-communism. However, there were also strategic and tactical mistakes; the RWG failed to secure a united front from below among the working class and

small farmers, which would have been essential in order to capitalise on the momentum achieved during industrial disputes and achieve further cooperation within the trade unions and workers movement. The Party, which would in 1933 become the Communist Party of Ireland, also suffered from inconsistent analysis of the Irish situation, caused in part by shifting Comintern strategy.

Yet it would be a mistake to disregard this period in the history of the communist movement in Ireland. Despite its failures, the RWG was possibly the most ambitious form the Communist Party has ever taken in Ireland. In contrast to previous efforts by communists to organise the Irish working class, it did not subordinate its work to the trade union struggle, and understood the vital role of the Party. The position of prestige and leadership the RWG held within the working class, and the extent of its organisational work, was never again replicated by the Irish Communist Movement.

Nevertheless, in this period of renewed antagonisms against the working class, there is still much that can be learned from the experience of the RWG for the communists of today.

100% FASCIST ERADICATION Danu Ní Chathasaigh

An Alternative to Incorrect Anti-Fascism

Isn't it curious that the fascists first came for the communists in the famous poem by Martin Niemöller's? Let's come back to this quote later.

Fascism as understood by communists, such as Rajani Palme Dutt, is an outgrowth of imperialism. Out from the murky depths of the formation of monopolies by the capitalist class, the tendrils of fascism begin to emerge to maintain the rule of those monopolies Lenin

calls imperialism. The ultimate goal of fascism is the maintenance of imperialism through halting the growth of socialist development out of capitalism by sowing division in the proletariat and attacking workers who fascists have failed to divide. Anti-fascism has existed in reaction to fascism in different forms. Some of these forms are very ineffective in practice and are typically pushed by liberal, social democratic and opportunist-





Pictured: CATU All-Ireland Housing Demo, July 2025

-ist forces trying to stem fascism without challenging the rule of imperialism. This leads to ineffective anti-fascist practice and at times paves the way for fascists to take root in the state. The alternative to this approach is the communist one: by preparing for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, through the application of Marxist-Leninist theory.

There are different errors that anti-fascist campaigns make in Ireland:

1. Incorrect conceptions which inform practice leading to groups spreading 'anti-fascist' ideas, without advancing the material interests of the working class, resulting in failure to counteract fascist organising.
2. Class collaborationist fronts or coalitions being used to counter fascism as "stepping stones" towards socialism.

Some of the main self described "anti-fascist" groups in Ireland are socialist/trotskyist parties. Trotskyist parties fail to organise around the objective interests of the working class as they misunderstand the role of demands for reforms within the strategy for the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, and are thus unable to embed themselves within the working class. This misunderstanding is expressed in their common strategies against fascism: spreading their political ideas without appreciating the current position of the working class. A good example of this is the practice of the counter-protest. The purpose of the counter protest is two-fold according to these groups: to show ordinary working class

people (non-activists) that there is an alternative to fascism and to make minorities feel safe while the fascists march and rally. On the first point, opportunities to raise consciousness are absent at counter protests, as anti-capitalist groups across the board do not prioritise organising the working class around their material needs, thus are not embedded in the working class and from this position cannot influence them. The second justification for the counter protest is that they are to make minorities feel "safe". How can a party claim to protect the interests of working class minority groups if you do not organise with them to end racism and fascism where it appears most prevalently in Irish society.

An anti-capitalist group trying to organise and embed itself in the working class of Ireland is the Community Action Tenants Union (CATU). Here you can see by facilitating the tenants who are members of CATU in achieving the goal of safe, comfortable, affordable housing. CATU arms the working class with the structure of a democratic anti-landlord group and the militant tools of collective direct action. When tenants are engaged in the union, they begin to understand that their issue is one that is shared and can be improved alongside many others outside of the boundaries of state and judicial institutions. Suddenly, the opportunity to convince these tenants that their interests are actually in contradiction with the economic system of imperialism appears. Once the opportunity is taken correctly, a crack in bourgeois ideology is chiselled. In

CATU, they can organise to smash one of, if not the most racist sections of the Southern state, International Protection Accommodation Service (IPAS).

These organisations should also encourage their members to be active within the Independent Workers Union (IWU): to do the day to day work of a union that is one of, if not the only staunchly anti-racist, anti-fascist militant unions organised on a class basis, contributing to the march toward socialism rather than maintaining capitalist relations of exploitation through social partnership. Each trade union in Ireland has an important role to play in combating fascism, but the majority of the Irish workers are not in trade unions and the trade union movement must be rebuilt. In the conditions of a weak and disorganised working class, the role which the IWU plays in this process is necessary as a union which is organised on strictly militant and class lines.

“Achieving this bourgeois management will only further demoralise the working class when they realise the 'alternative' parties, such as Sinn Féin, represent a different cheek of the same bourgeois arse.”

It is these organisations, which should be the organising priority in the creation of structures within the working class to combat the rise of fascism. However, these trends follow a decades-long theme of trotskyist parties using incorrect conceptions to try to unify the proletariat, using baseless fronts instead of building organisations which are embedded within our class. It is idealist to believe you can explain and convince the proletariat of your anti-fascist, anti-racist politics without at the same time organising and facilitating the advancement of

their material interests. This work is long and complicated, but absolutely unavoidable.

Although Irish trotskyst parties claim they are working toward a United Front to get into government, fight against fascism and secure socialism, in reality they are working toward a reformist 'Left Government' with Sinn Féin and other bourgeois parties. Irish trotskyst parties fail to see that the class collaboration of their 'Popular Front' strategy with bourgeois organisations such as Sinn Féin will disarm and drive them toward reactionary tendencies. Sinn Féin has enabled the immiseration of the Irish working class by driving austerity through the transfer of publicly owned land to private companies in West Belfast and sweetening up to foreign investors to enrich the imperialists of the North. Why would this behaviour not be repeated once they are in power in a 'Left Government' in the South? Achieving this bourgeois management will only further demoralise the working class when they realise the 'alternative' parties, such as Sinn Féin, represent a different cheek of the same bourgeois arse.

Fascist organisers will have more ammunition to convince the proletariat that their country's leaders and their "left supporters" prioritise immigrant workers over "native" workers, obfuscating the fact that the only minority the proletariat should battle is the bourgeoisie. We have seen opportunist parties in the South betray the proletariat before with Labour and the Greens, so why do the trotskysts believe Sinn Féin, a bourgeois party happily representing imperialists in the North, will be any different. How on earth can Sinn Féin bring us closer to socialism? Outside of the parliaments of Ireland, class collaborationist anti-fascist organisations have been set up such as Le Chéile with the "[...] aim of making Ireland a country where all can live without the fear of harassment or persecution because of their ethnicity, beliefs, ability, gender, sexuality or identity." Le Chéile quickly became a defunct organisation as it was entirely disconnected from

the working class. It is an example of the ineffective class collaborationist approach where bourgeois and opportunist parties, trotskyst parties as well as community groups funded by the bourgeois state fail to take on the only effective anti-fascist approach: preparing for socialist revolution. Instead these groups actively work at maintaining capitalism in Ireland, while "rooting out the bad individuals".

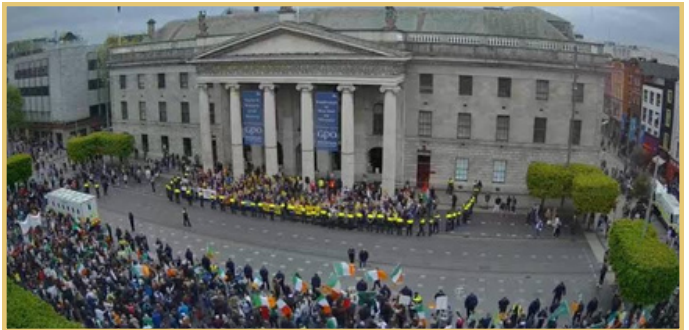
In summary, fascism cannot be defeated in Ireland with class-collaboration inside or outside bourgeois structures. The correct approach to anti-fascism involves following a communist line, which involves combining scientifically correct theory with organising and unifying the proletariat around their shared objective interests. What this looks like in practice is:

1. Combatting the social democratic leadership of the ICTU trade unions in favour of principled communist leaders by organising the working class within the structure of the workplace as well as any other structure they are to be found in large numbers along anti-capitalist and anti-monopolist lines.
2. Organise the proletariat within militant, democratic mass organisations such as but not limited to trade and tenants unions, to provide an alternative to class collaborationist endeavours and directly challenge the state.

3. Develop the vanguard of a revolutionary party to organise the most advanced elements of the proletariat in preparation of a revolutionary moment.

An area that this article did not approach is that, historically and to this day, there has also been a relationship between fascism and the reactionary ideology of loyalism. This is an important consideration for communists in our approach to the North, and how to approach fascism in that specific context, and needs much more analysis and investigation. We will return to it in much greater detail in a future article.

At the start of the article we referenced Niemöller, "First they came for the communists". It is clear why the fascists did so, the communists' revolutionary approach has always been the most effective form of anti-fascism. We cannot continue to shout our ideas at those organised by the fascists as well as the isolated ordinary working class person and expect it to transfer by osmosis. We must build trust and long lasting ties within our class by guiding them toward improving their conditions en masse. The proletariat's material interests must be addressed before an opportunity to persuade them that the ideology of imperialism they are engulfed by is ultimately contrary to the pursuit of those interests. Then, with the iron fist of socialist revolution, the rotten, reactionary ideology of fascism and its basis in the capitalist system can be eradicated.



Pictured: Outnumbered counter-protest in 2024

BROKEN & BLEEDING

Syria under al-Jolani

Alice Ní Thuama

Syria has been an important pillar in the regional opposition to the Zionist project. Syrian soldiers have directly fought against the IOF in 1948, 1962, 1967, 1973, and in Lebanon in the 1980s. Many of the Palestinian resistance factions have had headquarters in Damascus, and there has been close cooperation between the Syrian Arab Republic and Hezbollah.

Now, in 2025, the new Syrian regime has gone cap in hand to Israel, seeking normalisation. It has been met with bombing, invasion, and balkanisation that the state is helpless to resist. How did this transformation happen? In the 1980s/1990s Syria began to move away from a state-led, albeit not socialist, Ba'athist economic model. When Bashar al-Assad took over in 2000, he accelerated this process with what he called a "social market economy". This term was never properly defined, but in practice what it meant was austerity; pushing many Syrians into poverty. He oversaw a decline in the trade unions, peasant associations, and state capacity, leading to the emergence of a stronger Syrian bourgeoisie tied closely to the state, and the degeneration of the previous social base of the Ba'ath party, particularly in rural areas where the reforms were felt most keenly.

Protests first broke out in March 2011 after the arrest and reported torture of a group of teenagers for anti government graffiti. As the Summer wore on, these protests escalated, and grew more violent. By the end of the Summer, hundreds were dead, and within a year fighting had spread, splitting the country between the government and opposition forces.

In the predominantly Kurdish areas in the North and around Sheikh Maqsud in Aleppo, government forces withdrew and the YPG/J took over. The civil war wouldn't end until the lightning fast advance of Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) in 2024, 14 years later.

Al-Jolani, leader of HTS, was born in 1982 with the name Ahmed al-Sharaa. He grew up in Damascus, to a family of refugees who had fled the Golan Heights after the Zionist invasion in 1967. This is where he got the nom-de-guerre "al-Jolani". Two weeks before the American invasion of Iraq, at the age of 21, he moved to Baghdad, where he would soon join the insurgency led by Zarqawi, the future leader of Al-Qaeda in Iraq. Al-Jolani rose to leadership in his cell, until his arrest and imprisonment by the American occupation. He spent 5 years in Camp Buca, where he wrote a 50 page research paper about taking jihad to Syria. After his release, he became a commander of Al-Qaeda in Mosul.

As the civil war began in Syria, al-Jolani sent his research paper to al-Baghdadi, who would go on to be the leader of ISIS. Clearly impressed, al-Baghdadi agreed to a meeting with him, where he pledged "\$50,000 - \$60,000 a month" to start an al-Qaeda franchise in Syria. Here he formed a front group called Jabhat al-Nusra, to obscure the connection with al-Qaeda out of fear it would alienate the people of Syria. This group would be supported by the Gulf States, Turkey, and ultimately, the USA.

They quickly proved to be one of the most effective opposition groups in Syria. They made extensive use of suicide bombings, kidnappings, and torture. They stoked hatred of both Alawites (the sect the Assad



Pictured: Ahmad al-Sharaa, AKA al-Jolani

family belong to) and Christians, with one statement reading: "The blessed operations will continue until the land of Syria is purified from the filth of the nusayris (a slur for Alawites) and the Sunnis are relieved of their oppression".

There was an uneasy stalemate between the government and the HTS opposition in Idlib following the Turkish Operation 'Spring Shield', when Turkey launched drone strikes against government forces and stationed troops between the two. The government was in control of most of the rest of the country and its major cities, but was under a brutal sanction regime known as the "Caesar sanctions", and became increasingly dependent on trade with Iran and Russia. This left the state significantly weakened and increasingly unable to respond to the devastating effects of the war on the Syrian people and the country's infrastructure.

The process of balkanisation was by then well underway. The "Autonomous Administration of North and East Syria" (AANES) held most of the country's oil fields, while in the desert in the East a US army base controlled

the area around the Conoco oil field. In the North, Turkey had established a buffer zone along sections of the border.

Geopolitically, Syria was an important part of the so-called “Axis of Resistance”, serving as the supply route linking Hezbollah in Lebanon with Iran and the Popular Mobilisation Forces in Iraq. Now however, the imperialist forces that had decisively intervened before were becoming increasingly committed elsewhere. Russia was locked into its invasion of Ukraine, Iran was busy preparing for their confrontation with Israel, while Iran’s Lebanese allies, Hezbollah, were already fighting a devastating Israeli invasion. The imperialist bloc that had saved Assad before would not do so again.

Syria had gone from a constant threat to the Israeli occupation in its own right, to now being a fragile yet vital link in a wider coalition, while market reforms prevented them from rebuilding. After 14 years of civil war, on 27th November 2024 HTS launched a surprise offensive, quickly seizing Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and, on 8th December, Damascus itself, ending the war within two weeks. Immediately afterwards Israel invaded, expanding their occupation past the Golan Heights, and bombing and destroying military equipment left behind by the Assad government.

It remains in dispute whether or not the Syrian opposition actually used the phrase “Christians to Beirut, Alawites to the grave”. Either way, since coming to power al-Jolani (now once again going by al-Sharaa) and HTS have committed or facilitated numerous atrocities against religious minorities in Syria. In March and April, massacres were carried out against the Alawites in Latakia, with reports that men were made to crawl on their hands and knees and bark before being executed.

On the 22nd June, 25 people were killed in a suicide bombing of a church in Damascus. Clashes have broken out between the Druze, supported by Israel, local Arab tribes, and HTS government

forces around the city of Suweida. This should not be understood as an organised, top down dictum of al-Sharaa or the new HTS government. Nor should what is now HTS be understood as a single organisation, rather it is a coalition of extremist groups around a kernel of forces loyal to al-Sharaa. Even if al-Sharaa was willing, he is incapable of stopping this coalition from committing atrocities, not that there is much evidence his new woke jihadi image is sincere.

“Turkey’s goals now are to strengthen the new government to protect an extremely profitable export market for its capital.”

It is impossible to talk about Syria without examining the role of Turkey, and their dual goal of suppressing Kurdish forces and installing a loyal government in Damascus. They conducted several invasions, mainly aimed at weakening the Kurdish led AANES, launched strikes against government forces, even stationing troops in Idlib to protect HTS territory. This territory lies on the border with Turkey, allowing a steady stream of supplies from Ankara. Turkey’s goals now are to

strengthen the new government to protect an extremely profitable export market for its capital.

Turning South, when al-Sharaa went to Israel to try and negotiate normalisation, what had been for decades one of the most important geopolitical goals of the Zionist project, he was turned down. Israel instead opted to launch another invasion, in the attempt to establish a Druze buffer state between the occupied Golan and the rest of Syria. What is Israel’s goal if not normalisation? This becomes obvious when we look at the outcome of the dirty war. In the North and East, a Kurdish led state is completely dependent on US military protection from Turkey and Damascus, and controls the majority of Syria’s oil. Turkey remains in control of a strip of land along the border. The US still occupies the Conoco oil fields in the East around its military base. The Alawite homeland in Latakia on the coast is under nominal HTS control, with reports of an ongoing Alawite insurgency. In the South the Suweyda Druze factions control the area around the city, and Israel occupies an expanded Golan heights. HTS only has nominal control over the rest of the country. Since HTS took power and “ended” the Civil War, 10,000 people have been killed in fighting.



Communists in Syria have experienced severe repression under the new government.

Syria has been balkanised, and no longer poses a threat to the genocidal Zionist project. The imperial designs of the US are similar. On the one hand they have provided HTS with significant support and diplomatic cover throughout the conflict, they have lifted the sanctions, and have removed HTS from their terror list. On the other hand they have stood by passively and allowed Israel to carry out its balkanisation mission in the country. In this new balkanised Syria every statelet is in no position to interfere with the interests of US monopoly capital. The US, therefore, seeks to prop them up, and keep them stable enough to protect US investments and their local geo-strategic

interests. It does not matter how many have to die in aid of this goal.

This has always been the goal of the Western imperialist bloc. They were never interested in “bringing democracy to Syria”. This is why they poured so much funding, so much money, and so many weapons into groups like HTS and their ilk, groups that would never actually be able to govern a country as religiously diverse as Syria. They have succeeded. Syria stands as yet another victim of competition within the imperialist system, in the constant struggle for supremacy between imperialist blocs. Syria lies broken, bleeding, and helpless.

1:7 + YOU

Armaan Solkar

Oftentimes my darling,
I feel quite sick.
With my body bruised,
And my mind drained,
I spend my days waiting to live.

Riley said, I love music!
I work here to cover the costs.
While I save up for a new amp,
You man the tills,
And I'll step out for a smoke.

I don't know what I work for,
I don't know what I am.

Then,
I come back home,
And you are right there –
Lying on my bed.
I fall into you,
My head on your chest;
Your heartbeat slows me down.

How strange it is;
Our bodies fit so perfectly together.



CMAT'S EURO-COUNTRY

Ireland and Capitalist Crises Asha Woodhouse

CMAT's latest single EURO-COUNTRY tells the story of the 2008 financial crash and the resulting crisis of capitalism in a way that has struck a chord with many young Irish people growing up in Ireland during this time period. The lyrics at the bridge of the song in particular paint a picture of the harrowing consequences of this crash:

**"All the big boys, all the Berties
All the envelopes, yeah, they hurt me
I was twelve when the das started
killing themselves all around
me (all around me)
And it was normal, building houses
That stay empty even now, yeah
And no one says it out loud but I
know we could be better if we
found it"**

Of course, CMAT is referring to Bertie Ahern, a Fianna Fáil politician who served as Taoiseach from 1997 to 2008, and as Leader of Fianna Fáil from 1994 to 2008, until he resigned from his position in April 2008 following controversy exposed by the Mahon Tribunal. This investigated political corruption pertaining to rezoning and planning for commercial and other developments. It was before this Tribunal that Ahern famously gave evidence "that he did not personally operate any bank account" between the years 1987 and 1993, during which time he was Minister for Labour and subsequently Minister for Finance.

The Tribunal further found that the explanations given by Ahern regarding the source of a number of large lump sum lodgements into his bank accounts from 1993 onwards to be untrue. While for many, Ahern has been the poster boy for cor-



Pictured: From the cover of CMAT's album of the same name.

rupt politicians during the period of time known as the "Celtic Tiger", he was not the only one. Some of the less well known "big boys" investigated by the Mahon Tribunal being Fianna Fáil TDs Ray Burke, Frank Dunlop, Pádraig Flynn, Liam Lawlor, and Ray MacSharry, in addition to former Dublin Corporation assistant manager George Redmond, were found to have taken bribes from developers such as Tom Gilmartin, the Bailey Brothers, Owen O'Callaghan, and Jim Kennedy, to name a few.

Ahern was succeeded by Fianna Fáil TD and then Táiniste Brian Cowan, who assumed office as Taoiseach in May 2008. All the while in the backdrop of this controversy, the Economic and Social Research Institute in early 2007 forecast that Ireland's economy would slow down in 2008, expressing concern in one report that "40% of all new houses built between 2002 and 2006" were vacant. By September 2008, Ireland became the first country in the eurozone to declare it was in a recession. Ireland was not alone however, and by November

2008 the International Monetary Fund predicted a worldwide recession by 2009, with the year 2008 becoming known as the "Global Financial Crisis" or the "Panic of 2008". And its impacts were devastating for the working class, as CMAT alludes to with her reference to male suicide in Ireland, which by the end of 2012 was 57% higher than pre-recession. These are the very real and violent consequences of the capitalist system, which fundamentally can never place the interests of the working class above the interests of profit and accumulation.

As communists, we understand that this crisis was not a unique event simply caused by the corruption and brown envelopes of a few "big boys", but rather as an inevitable result of the natural laws of capitalist production, its internal contradictions, and the anarchy and crisis of overproduction it creates. In the case of the 2008 financial crash, it was what is known in economic terms as "subprime mortgage lending" which played a significant role in

facilitating this crisis of overproduction. Subprime mortgage lending involves banks and financial institutions offering loans, generally to individuals with poor credit histories or low borrowing capacity, based on an adjustable-rate mortgage. In plainer terms, this means that the banks were handing out attractive, low interest loans to anyone with a pulse, regardless of their "bad credit" or low capacity to repay loans, and once locked in to a 20-30 year loan, they would hike up the interest rates, justifying the move because the borrower was considered to be at higher risk of defaulting on their repayments. This sounds like a recipe for disaster right? At face value, the answer is yes, but this is exactly what is necessitated by the laws of capitalist production in order to create the most profit.

Let's peel it back further and consider what loans are exactly. To put it as simply as possible, loans are a type of "fictitious capital", meaning that they create speculative financial assets, as opposed to physical assets which are created by "real capital" (i.e. labour, machinery, tools, etc.). Borrowing and lending money has become the particular business of banks. As such, a bank represents a centralisation of interest-bearing capital, or money-capital, of the lenders, on the one hand, and on the other a centralisation of the borrowers. Its profit is generally made by borrowing at a lower rate of interest than it receives in loaning. Money-capital is not the same as fictitious capital – in simple terms, money-capital is where a capitalist invests their money into something which will make a profit return for the capitalist based on interest over a specified period of time. In order to ensure that the capitalists money-capital makes a profit, the bank must loan out his money. This money remains money-capital if the bank loans it out only once, and the borrower pays the money back plus the interest, and this money- or interest-bearing capital is then circulated back to the capitalist. However, as banks become confident in their ability to loan

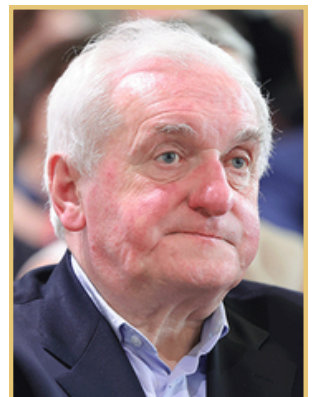
money and collect interest repayments, they begin to hand out multiple loans based on the same one pot of money-capital. This money-capital then becomes fictitious capital. For example, a capitalist gives the bank €1 million that he wants to make an interest based profit from. The bank then loans out 10 €1 millions, each of which have equal claim to the €1 million the capitalist deposited with the bank. This means that 9 of the 10 €1 millions cannot be converted into a use-value, and as such are fictitious capital.

“In this instance, the State bares its true nature in plain sight, as the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie it willingly bails out the banks and foots the bill on the backs of the working people through the roll out of austerity measures.”

The proliferation of such fictitious capital over the last 200 years is the inevitable outcome of the anarchy of capitalism, its endless drive towards over-production and accumulation. By breaking away from the physical limits of production and creating speculative financial assets, it in turn artificially boosts the value of commodities. Then, when a period of contraction occurs, defaults, bankruptcies, closures, share prices fall, and the smoke and mirrors of fictitious capital collapses in an instant.

In the lead up to the 2008 financial crisis, fictitious capital facilitated a property bubble where the number of people buying houses became saturated and as such houses were over valued through subprime mortgage lending. As the market was now saturated, there were fewer people looking to buy housing, while others were forced to try sell their over valued houses

once their interest rates were hiked and they could no longer afford their mortgage repayments. This caused the real estate bubble to pop, triggering a global downturn in the rate of profit for finance capital. And what do the capitalists and bourgeoisie do in the face of economic downturn? They shift the burden to the working class in order to protect their pockets and financial institutions. In this instance, the State bares its true nature in plain sight, as the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie it willingly bails out the banks and foots the bill on the backs of the working people through the roll out of austerity measures. One need only look at Ireland, where in 2007, Anglo Irish Bank was considered to be the best performing bank in the world by "experts" Oliver Wyman and the World Economic Forum. Just months later, following September 2008, the Irish Government announced an austerity budget that proposed cuts to medical cards and jobseeker payments, and introduced fees for third level education, among other measures. All the while, the bailout of all Irish banks following the 2008 crash cost Irish workers €64.1 billion, with Anglo Irish Bank considered to have been the most egregious in its flagrant lending and bailout cost to the taxpayer. To add salt to the wound, it was



Pictured: Former Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern

later uncovered that senior Anglo Irish Bank officials purposely underplayed the anticipated cost of the bailout knowing that the Bank would never be able to pay the money back to the State. It should come as no surprise that the Taoiseach described both the austerity measures rolled out in the 2009 Budget and the bailout of the banks as “necessary”. And in his budget speech of 2009, then Fianna Fáil Minister for Finance Brian Lenihan announced with confidence: “Our plan is working. We have turned the corner.” Which raises the question, working for who? The reality was that Irish workers continued to suffer for a number of years following the 2008 financial crash, and as the economy failed to recover the Irish government brought in successive austerity policies culminating with a four-year austerity plan published by the Government in 2011. Here, the State again clearly demonstrates its true nature, representing the interests of the capitalist class to the bitter end.

These events are also not frozen in time, the effects of the 2008 financial crash has had long term effects on Irish society and those of us who were children

during this time. According to the Nevin Economic Research Institute, nearly half a million people, including Irish-born and non-Irish workers, left Ireland in the six years after April 2008. Many families struggled to maintain relationships with loved ones, fathers, siblings and others who had emigrated. The ‘Growing Up in Ireland’ Report found that unemployment and financial strain experienced by families following the 2008 crash led to worsened parental mental health, having a knock on effect on family relationships, the emotional development of children, and future education and employment opportunities for children.

CMAT speaks to her own experience as a young teen growing up in Ireland following the financial crash in EURO COUNTRY, with her reference to “mooching ‘round shops, and the lack of identity”. Here, she is referring to the construction of large scale retail shopping centres which were characteristic of the commercial development boom in Ireland during the Celtic Tiger. Many young Irish people can relate to growing up without access to community services or extra curricular activities due to cost barriers, leaving them with

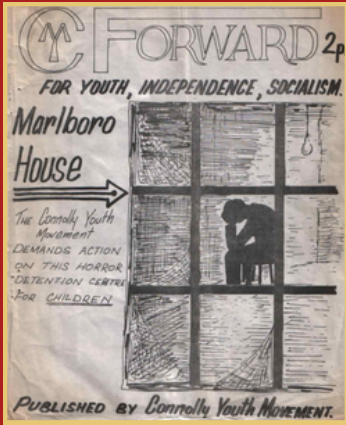
little to do other than hang around these shopping centres which offered some of the only “public” or “open” space that teenagers could exist in for free. Illustrated most explicitly on the album cover and in the music video for *EURO-COUNTRY*, the symbolism of these shopping centres as deserts of capitalist production and exchange is stark to the viewer. And regarding our identity, or lack thereof, CMAT has openly criticised the hyper romanticism of Ireland internationally, a role that us Irish willingly play into. She is correct to criticise this, and young Irish people must understand that despite our history and the continued occupation of the 6 counties, we have an indigenous capitalist class that is part of the global imperialist system. These Irish capitalists are no better nor different than the capitalists across the pond, in the UK, across the EU, or across the globe. They are one and the same, and the Capitalists States internationally will continue to represent the interests of their class until the working classes unite, overthrow the Dictatorship of the Bourgeoisie and begin to build a new Socialist future.



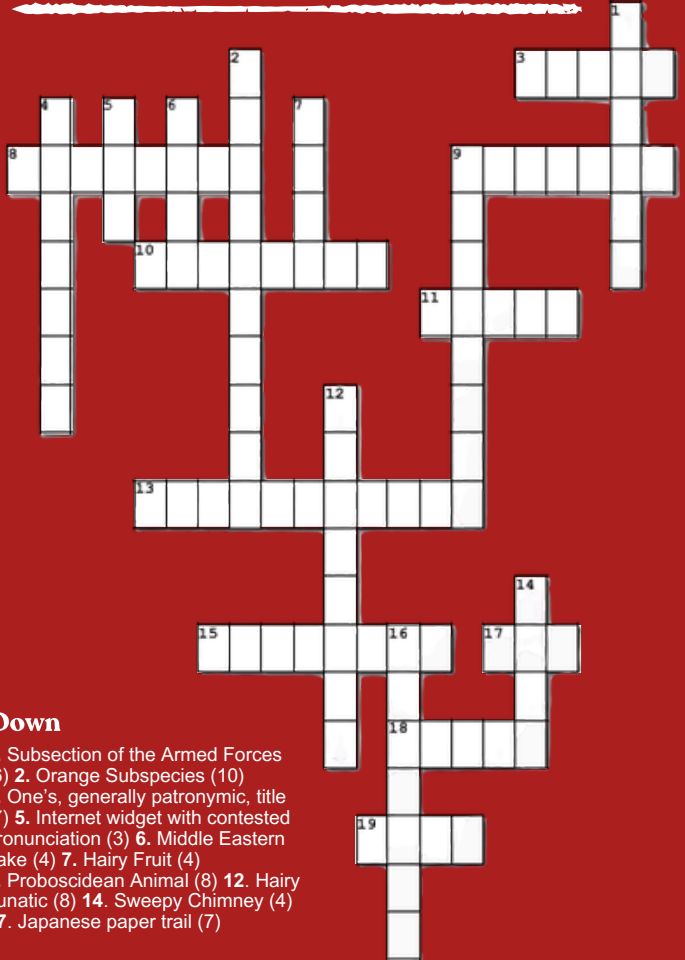
Pictured: Workers protesting the bailout in 2009

Cluichí

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Pictured: Forward has been published by the CYM since 1970



Across

3. Hand-to-Hand combat (5) 8. Dutch Caribbean country (8) 9. !!!! (7)
 10. Poem, City (8) 11. Instrument of 14 (4) 13. 70's horror, band here (3,8)
 15. Schrödinger's word (8) 17. Tall fantasy species (3) 18. Hemispherical Inuit Unit (5) 19. Strong Winds (4)

Down

1. Subsection of the Armed Forces (6) 2. Orange Subspecies (10)
 4. One's, generally patronymic, title (7) 5. Internet widget with contested pronunciation (3) 6. Middle Eastern Lake (4) 7. Hairy Fruit (4)
 9. Proboscidean Animal (8) 12. Hairy Lunatic (8) 14. Sweepy Chimney (4)
 17. Japanese paper trail (7)



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