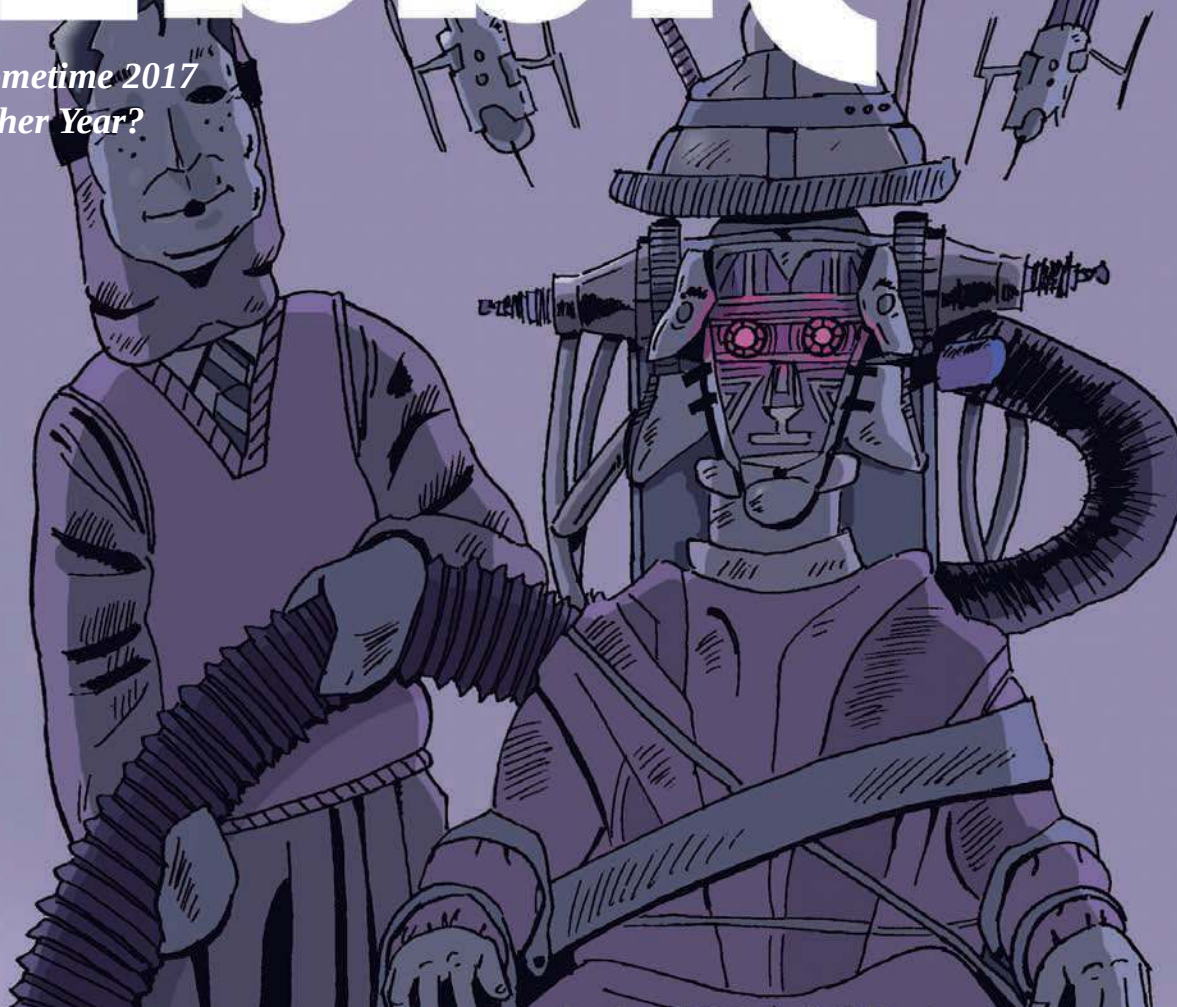


rabble

Issue #13 Sometime 2017
What's Another Year?

we are rabble
system a fraud



THE
REGENERATION
GAME IN
BALLYMUN

INSIDE

Syndicalism

Donal Fallon takes a look
at socialism in working
clothes...

RTÉ

Jaysus, we never get sick
of dissing it do we?

Comics

Our regular madbags
return and a new host of
weirdos join the gang...

Dun Talkin

Jinx Lennon talks about
using humour to break
through the darkness...



Jobpath

*Have you been allocated? We dig
deep into this new scheme...*

Property

*How Vulture Funds are making
a bloody hames of the place...*

Apollo

*Reflections on what was an epic
campaign for bed space...*



It's Us Again!

WITH A FONT SELECTION THAT WOULD MAKE THE COLLECTIVE ATTENDANCE AT OFFSET SWALLOW THEIR GOODIE BAGS AS A QUICK ROUTE TO SUICIDE AND A COLOUR SCHEMA THAT WOULD GIVE YOUR GRANNY A SEIZURE - THAT'S RIGHT THUGS, WE ARE BACK IN THE GAME YO! RABBLE 13 IS FINALLY HERE.

The reason you have another fresh and free rabble in your grubby paw is because we've found it the most effective way of keeping a REAL relationship going with our readers. It might cost us our sanity and a pretty penny, it may produce more sleepless nights than a 4 day coke bender, not to mention the pit of endless procrastination and despair it provokes. And yes, it might be as irregular as the number 11 but here it bloody well is.

There's more to this whole thing than an antiquated analog fetish for print. Facebook and the rest of the social media honey traps are to us just another version of the same old bosses press at the end of the day. With all of us all being slowly funnelled into one paddock or other for monetisation through advertising by the big brands. What happens when the plug gets pulled or the meaninglessness of 3 second video videos in your own private wall of mirrors becomes more obvious?

In an era, when every aspect of our communities will soon be unable to survive without the stamp of one brand or another, there is dire necessity to hold out islands of culture that in some way resist capitalism's constant encroachment into every part of our lives.

With this in mind we pay tribute to the late Mark Fisher (who sadly passed away earlier this year) in our centre spread. Mark Fisher was one of the most insightful music journalists of the past twenty years but also a sick cultural theorist. His writings on music were transcendental riffs and his book Capitalist Realism put into sharp relief the need for incubating actual autonomy from "blandroid" commercialism. Hence our centre spread.

rabble mightn't always lived up to your expectations, in fact it might have even let you down at times - but at least we've always been on side and tried our best.

rabble is now thirteen issues young and we feel we are just getting going. As an independent media outlet on an island where scandal follows scandal with as much regularity as the changes of weather, the effort to keep on top of it all is like pissing against the wind.

But at the same time, while we might not have always been able to keep on top of this sea of scandals, we have always been there and stood alongside the fightback. From the occupation of Apollo House back in December to the Strike4Repeal march, to the standing alongside the Tesco workers striking to preserve their working conditions in the face of a poisonous oligarchy to giving a voice to those affected by Direct Provision and

its parallels with the incarceration system of Holy Catholic Ireland. We've been there.

And want to stay here. We have looked around at others covering all of the above and realise the importance of our place within this. And we want to stay out as a space for muckracking, gombeen slaying journalism, to be the point where the ignored, marginalised, and dispossessed have a place to tell their stories.

But rabble is only as good as the input from its readers and contributors and it's this relationship that has kept us going for five years. An obligation to readers and contributors alike but also a wider understanding that if we didn't exist there would be one less alternative to the onslaught of corporate media and the individual ego suck of social media that grows stronger each day.

Rather than rabble being conjured out of thin air, it comes out of the little windows of free time that its contributors have while juggling work and other terms of wage slavery needed to pay the exorbitant bills and rent that living in our fair city requires. It is a collective creation. Five years of this hard slog takes its toll but after five years we realise the importance of the magazine and how with a little bit of your help we can make it into something that challenges power, that can begin focusing on investigative journalism and delivering more powerful video stories.

Amidst all the shite about alt-facts, alt-truths, it's clear that independent journalism is more important than ever.

We have always thought about ourselves as more than a magazine. We are a community and with our newly launched Patreon we want to build on that with you.



Mahony, Benny Profane, Tommy, Downshire, Mark Cullinane

Photos: Jess Lockhart, Bit Thompson, Ciaran Boylan, Jamie Goldrick, Odhran Soanes, Dave Manning, Ballymun Communications, Georgia Lalor, Matthew Smith and Tyler McNally

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Layout Lackies: James Redmond and Thom McDermott.

Distro Fairies: Alls y'all's. Yiz are stars.

Hostages

Oisín Fagan had his debut novel, Hostages, published towards the end of last year and it went down a treat, even

with those that don't hail from Meath. It touches on blowing up your school, death planes, the collective, and those

dreaded Feelers. It's available from New Island Books, or any good bookstore.



The Blocks

As Dublin's tower blocks are being torn down, one of the former residents of O'Devaney Gardens, Karl Parkinson, has

published "a work of proletarian literature written in the dialect of the least represented people in Irish literature."

Though it's his own story as much as it's a story of The Blocks. It's available from New Binary Press or any good bookstore.

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p15 Apollo House captured the imagination of hundreds of thousands of people across the country in a month long occupation beginning before Christmas. James Beggan and Tomas Lynch take a look at the housing network that held it all together...



p25 A feeling of being put through the ringer, harassed into dampening employment expectations and rightly pissed off that private companies have access to their data - that's the general picture emerging from a survey carried out by rabble into labour activation schemes including Jobpath. Rashers Tierney gives us the lowdown...

p32 Reports of a 26% growth in GDP have little basis in the actual productive economy of the state, and the term "Leprechaun Economics" has been coined to summate the shambles. Sean Finnan takes us through whether any of this is actually sustainable and asks what lies at the end of the FDI rainbow?



p38 The reality music of Jinx Lennon shows us that we can engage with everyday life and not go under. Influenced as much by post punk and hip hop the Dundalk man is a different breed of singer songwriter altogether. He released two albums in 2016 after a six year break. We packed Martin Leen off up to Dundalk for a chat with the lad...

p42 Well, that was pointless. To borrow a McGregorism. It should come as a surprise "to absolutely nobody" that talks intended to produce a new power-sharing executive in the North ended in failure last month. Tommy Downshire takes us through what's happening up the road...



p44 Has anyone else noticed RTÉ's attempt to kickstart a national conversation on class for the autumn? Mark Cullinane sticks on his waders and takes a look in the ideological sewers of the national broadcaster and finds a few funny smells in its recent day to day and documentary programming...



p46 Matthew Smith's Exist To Resist documents the history of activism and having it in the years before and after the infamous Criminal Justice Act of 1994...

Solidarity Matters

JUST BEFORE WE WENT TO PRINT WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE BOLDEST BOY IN THE DÁIL PAUL MURPHY FOR A CHAT ABOUT THE JOBSTOWN TRIAL AS IT WAS JUST ABOUT TO START. HERE HE TALKS MEDIA SPIN, THE CRIMINALISATION OF A COMMUNITY AND THE ONGOING WATER MOVEMENT EFFECT.

Leaving aside the rhetoric for a second, ye must be nervous facing into this? On a personal level how are people holding together? It must be a seriously disruptive experience to people's personal, working and family lives?

Yeah it's very hard for people, worrying about their families if they go to prison. But the group has come together really well. With the exception of the political activists, it's a fairly random group of people from the Jobstown area who joined the protest on the day. We have bonded under attack over now a two year period and have been meeting regularly. So there's a really good support network of people.

The charges here are kinda remarkable really aren't they? A blockade is a very ordinary piece of protest theatrics. Many Labour members have engaged in them over the years. There's a sharp political motivation here to criminalise the water movement? History will not be kind to them?

Yeah the charges are unprecedented. We've looked back over decades of protest and Ministers and Taoisigh have often had their cars delayed by sit-down protests. There has very rarely been any arrests or prosecutions for even any public order offenses arising from them - nevermind prosecutions for false imprisonment. It has simply never happened. The same seems to be the case across Europe. I met with MEPs from the left group and discussed about the case. Initially, many said, oh yes, we have public order offences in our country too, then when I explained that we were facing the charges for kidnapping, they were shocked.

We're just saying here in the rabble bunker that the water movement seems like a million years ago now. Has the energy dissipated to some degree or

are we just watching and waiting in grimace as Irish Water goes through its death throes in the Dail? Could the energy of the water movement pass into other struggles on a street level?

I think the anti-water charges movement will leave an indelible mark on Irish politics. To be honest, I think it has an ongoing impact on a range of different issues. It's a feature in workers' strikes, the number of union activists who reference the anti-water charegs movement - that it gave them the confidence to struggle. The same is true in the repeal movement. So I think while the anti-water charges movement has ebbed relative to the mass movement before, it is still present. I think what the establishment fears is that it means it can rear its head again on a very active scale.

The recent doc was a good response to the media's whole framing of this. From dawn raids to those on trial finding out they were being charged - from journalists. The mainstream media has really shown how embedded in the establishment it is here. Does any of this surprise you?

Yeah the media response to all of this, and the campaign against it is very revealing. They hide behind contempt of court laws, but interpret them in the most conservative way possible - to effectively not cover anything that's going on.

If there were protesters and an opposition MP facing false imprisonment charges in another country because of a sit-down protest, depending on the country, the media might strike a pose of outrage. Whereas, here it's often covered in passing by presuming our guilt and using the protest to illustrate the dangers of the bogeyman of 'populism'. It doesn't surprise me at all unfortunately!

Photo by Ciaran Boylan



[EYE]

Jobstown Documentary

Ever since Joan Burton declared war on an entire community by turning a defiant act of civil disobedience into an attempt to criminalise water protesters on false imprisonment charges, the various coercive political institutions of the state and media have really shown their hand. From dawn raids in an area that has been beleaguered by the violence of austerity to practically excluding all of Tallaght and anyone

that ever took issue with the water charges from sitting on the jury. There's a lot wrong here. Perfect timing so for Jobstown: A Protest on Trial to come out and start to cut across the establishment narrative. Its a twenty something minute doc that looks at the dangerous precedent of what is actually at stake in these trials which is our fundamental right to protest.

You'll find the doc on the Jobstown Not Guilty Facebook page.

Gombeen #13

STEPHEN DONNELLY EMERGED ON THE NATIONAL SCENE IN 2011 AS A WHITE-HOT BALL OF SUBURBAN MIDDLE CLASS INDIGNATION. WITH HIS SHINY SUITS AND TECHNOCRATIC, APOLITICAL STYLE, HE WON FOLLOWERS FOR HIS ABILITY TO GIVE OUR RUINOUS OLD ESTABLISHMENT A BOUGIE-COMMON SENSICAL DRESSING DOWN.

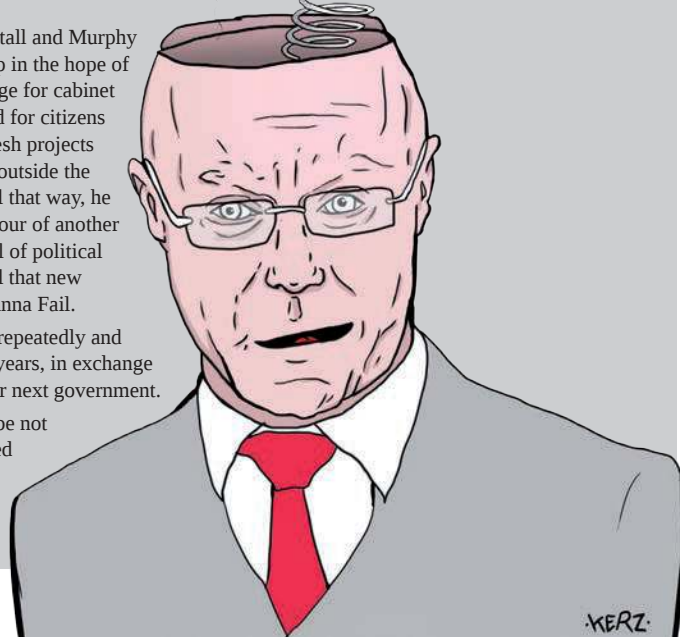
A couple of years would pass where he let his ego lap it up, before gradually the sheen started to come off. He notably voted for the Austerity Treaty and also to close the loophole stopping banks from opening the evictions floodgates we see today. It was Eamon Gilmore who first managed to cut a very public strip off him, suggesting in the Dáil in 2013 that Donnelly would be a FFer before long. Ste definitively ruled it out. He had, after all, built his entire shtick on denigrating FF as longtime bearers of "serious incompetence".

For #GE16, he clubbed with Shortall and Murphy in the new Social Democrats group in the hope of maximising their combined leverage for cabinet positions for themselves. He called for citizens to vote for a "new politics" and fresh projects with their unique ability to "think outside the box". When things didn't quite fall that way, he unceremoniously dumped it in favour of another vehicle. In among the most cynical of political ploys in recent times, he junked all that new "change" baloney and joined... Fianna Fail.

Yeah, the same shitebag party he repeatedly and publicly insulted over a period of years, in exchange for pocketing a cabinet seat in their next government.

An arrogant move no doubt, maybe not surprising for someone who fancied themselves enough to attend the "Harvard Kennedy School of Government". Donnelly

only appears to be semi-conscious that his every move is led by the nose of his own elite sense of self-entitlement, even while its increasingly plain for everyone else to see. Now he's home where he always wanted to be, a Middle Ireland gombeen in the paid service of the most old and decrepit establishment he rose in mock-opposition to. Think outside the box? You are the box Donnelly! You were the box all along!



rabble

Editorial Dogs Of War: James Beggan, Jamie Goldrick, Sean Finnan, Martin Leen, Thom McDermott and James Redmond.

Words: Tomás Lynch, Tommy Gavin, Sean Finnan, Jamie Goldrick Caitriona Devery, James Beggan, Donal Fallon, Oireachtas Refort, Shane Ragbags, Rashers Tierney, Gearóid Ó'Riada, Kerry Guinan, Rosi Leonard, Martin Leen, Eoin O

ABOUTUS.

rabble is a non-profit newspaper from the city's underground. It's collectively and independently run by volunteers. rabble aims to create a space for the passionate telling of truth, muck-raking journalism and well aimed pot-shots at illegitimate authority.

Accept No Imitations!



Ghost Town

Is Dublin feeling a bit like a ghost town? With the closure of some of the capital's clubs we took a look at why we're dancing in restaurants and what we're missing out on. Catch it over on the rabble website.

{MOB RULE}

Dublin Properties: Available for Rent vs. Available for Airbnb

Figures for Jan. 2017
Source: Daft.ie, Airbnb.com



A QUICKIE WITH...

JAMES BEGGAN CAUGHT UP WITH BRIAN MCNAMARA TO HEAR THE SHIZZLE ABOUT A NEW ONLINE RADIO STATION CALLED DEE DEE ARRRH!!!



So, a new digital radio station. Tell us how it came about?

The idea was floating around in our heads for a while I think. A few of us have been involved in different forms of radio over the years and I think we all wondered why Dublin didn't have something like this already. We were angry with the lack of coverage for certain areas of culture in Ireland so we are trying to fill that void in a small way.

We started to actually meet up and start doing stuff about it last June and it's all just fallen into place since then. Everyone we have chatted to has been really positive about it and loads of sound heads have been helping out and giving us stuff.

The name and slogan are great, is it the intention to run it in that vein, with a collective ethos?

Yeah definitely want it to be a collective thing. The way everyone has been helping out, it already has that feeling. We want to have a nice family of people doing the good shit. I suppose the name too is a recognition that we aren't a terrestrial radio station with an FM transmitter, that we are very much an online thing reliant on a little black box in the studio.

Is it purely focused on the tunes or will there be more variety in terms of shows broadcast?

No, there will be more things going on. wherethetimegoes are going to be doing a sort of roundtable discussion thing on various producers and musicians in Ireland and there are a few others on culture, history and bits like that.

Do what they say and tune your dial to dublindigitalradio.com



AH YES, TRULY WE COME TO THE TOILET WALL OF OUR WEE PROJ.ET. THE VENOMOUS SCREEDS AND POISONOUS PUT DOWNS YOU SARCZY SHOWER OF SCUTTERING GITS EMIT AS YOU POUR YOUR LITTLE ENRAGED SOULS OUT ON THE SOCIAL MEEJA MACHINES. THE REGIME TRULY TREMBLES AS YOU PAW YOUR WAY THROUGH THE ENDLESS SCROLLS OF EACH OTHERS SOULS..

On news that Michael Flatley's Lord of the Dance was to perform at Trump's inauguration.

With that much orange in one place, the universe may implode.
- James Doyle

Ah that reminds me, I missed watching Michael being interviewed by Piers Morgan on TV3 the other night. I decided against it in favour of injecting bleach directly into my parietal lobe.

- Damien Kiely

On Fine Gael Senator Paddy Burke arguing the driverless cars could save rural pubs

When? In 2027? Time the drink obsession stopped, embarrassing. Have these clowns more current and important issues to fix?

- Phillip Oh

Debating whether it's okay to punch Nazis.

My grandfather shot them so I've no problem letting them off lightly with a slap or two.

- Robert Hurley

On the impending property bubble.

It usually takes a generation before speculative bubbles are repeated.... Ireland is gonna manage it in the space of less than ten years...place is a joke....like the Bull McCabe's cows charging off the side of the fucking cliff.

- Peter Frisby

On the DPP asking the judge to ban Paul Murphy from Jobstown protests.

Why don't they just ban everyone and get the guards to beat the shit out of anyone that turns up. They could then march past Noirin doing Nazi salutes.

- Paul McDermot

On reports that District 8 were refusing to serve tap water at the Jeff Mills gig back in December.

They did that in the early nineties to make money off the water. Lots of places did it The Asylum was famous for it at one stage. At a time now where ppl are calling for drug testing in clubs. These fuck wits are refusing water! You'd think we'd have moved on, pure greed at any cost.

- Rory Stapleton

On Enda taking questions on the Garda breath test controversy in the Dáil

The scandal of the year and yet...there is about 20 people in the house.... welcome to Irish Politics

- Liam De Bhaillis

On a tiny gaff in Eastwall being bought for €135,000 in June 2015 getting upcycled and back on the market now for €525,000.

They say the emperor's new clothes is alive and kicking in Dublin.... if you ask me it's more of a naked lunch.

-Dylan Longman

Used to be an out-house, now it's an IN house.

-Dars MarsBowling

On the Irish Times report that Ireland's largest build to let apartment scheme comes complete with double bedrooms and en-suites with shower doors, baths and towel rails.

The return of property porn. I seem to recall that the role of the Irish media in enthusiastically inflating the previous bubble was discussed at the banking enquiry. Here we go again so.

-Sean Dominic Byrne

On the horrifically over priced student accommodation to come to Broadstone in Dublin 7.

Oh great, so not only is Blackpitts going to be crawling with students, it's going to be crawling with super rich, super-entitled wanker students. If they have cars the whole area is fucked.

- Carolyn Moore

On being mistook for a Gaurd..

'Was even stopped at a checkpoint the other week and the first thing the guard said to me was "you're a member yourself are ya?"' - The Gardaí certainly are members, thats for sure.

- Chris Coreline



GET IN TOUCH
info@rabble.ie
www.rabble.ie

DUBLIN Comic Jam



June-30-2016

Ken



MurderandNoir.com



Photo by Jamie Goldrick

Brick In The Wall

BROADSTONE – IOSTA NA CLOICHE LEITHNE – IS A RIGHT BRUISER OF A BUILDING THAT SITS OVER THE NO-PLACE BETWEEN THE NORTH INNER CITY AND PHIBSBOROUGH. EOIN O'MAHONY TAKES A LOOK AT HOW WE FETISHISE OLD INFRASTRUCTURE.

It's a terminus, a prayer place, a station in need of a train. Until recently there was a half legible wooden sign near the traffic lights, "Rosary Recited, Very [sic] Sun. at 3pm – statue committee". In the short number of years I have lived here, I never once saw the Marian devoted pray for their souls but Mary still stands.

Broadstone is soon to be a Luas stop and so there'll be less car traffic but the buses will pour in and out of Broadstone for years to come. The building hides a lot more than it shows: it is the best marker we have of the edge of the early 19th century city, shorn of its function twice and swallowed up by Cabra in the 1930s.

Broadstone garage hides the working headquarters for the national public bus company, Bus Éireann, in remarkably mundane offices replete with filing cabinets. The interior of the building is painted in industrial quantities of red and orange paint, notable only for the undecorated central hallway. The west facing first floor windows give great views over the developing DIT campus but this site is more about bus storage than some fanciful heritage project.

Recently some objected to the wall being built at the front as part of the construction works, comparing it during a recent demonstration to the Berlin Wall. This makes little sense when we consider that as recently as summer 2016, the children living next door didn't have a playground that had been promised for years. But I guess some prefer to glance up and reflect upon their own place in the world than have to live near one of the country's largest bus garages.

Broadstone garage makes little sense unless you see it in the context of the development of the Royal Canal and how private railway companies bet on Galway being the centre of transatlantic shipping. When the canal was finally completed in 1817, it had two branches: one called the Longford branch, the other spurring off at Phibsborough and driving south to Broadstone Harbour (opened in 1806), culverting the Bradoque River.

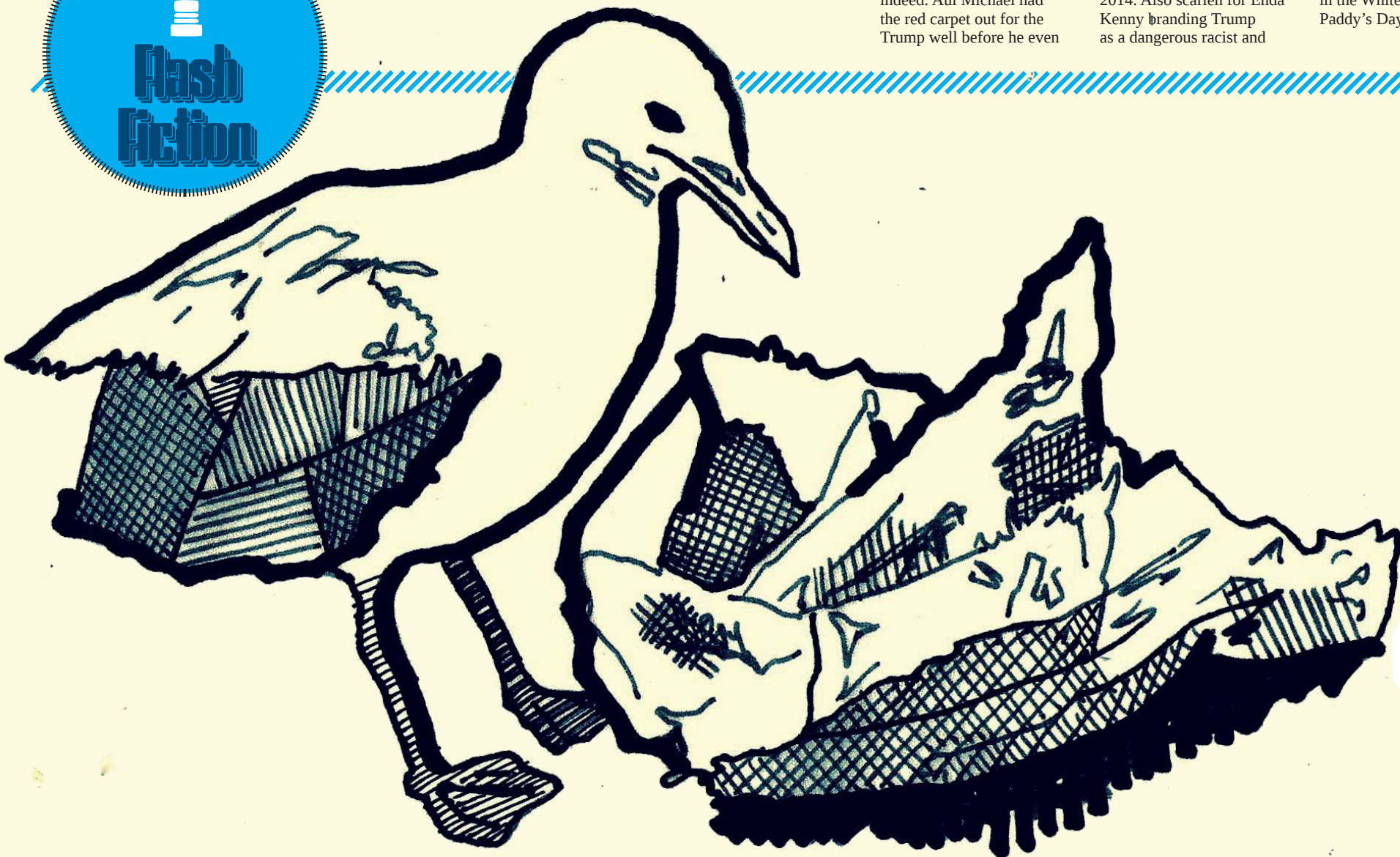
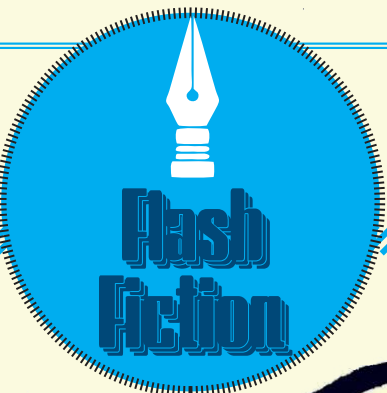
The canal spur served the commercial needs of the linen and food trades of a growing city until the Midland Great Western Railway company bought the entire canal in 1847. With massed emigration and the Great Famine came a decline in western traffic. The railways became more important than the slower canals. At Broadstone, the canal spur was carried by an aqueduct over the road which was only removed in 1951.

This section of Dublin city is an incarcerating landscape: workhouses, prisons and barracks dominate a colonial arc from here to the Phoenix Park. Imagine how many women and men arrived by train to Broadstone garage until the station's closure in 1950s only to be locked up in St. Brendan's for long periods.

In Ireland, and in Dublin in particular, some like to celebrate the beauty and grace of Georgian and Victorian architecture as an intrinsically good thing. Shorn of any material context, this view of Dublin's architecture denies the meaning of places like Broadstone and St. Brendan's in a community's development. Broadstone garage was, and still is, a place of work. Objections to the aesthetics of a retaining wall on the basis that it offends a largely-ignored workplace are founded on a partial view of how our city took shape.

As part of the Luas works, a number of derelict houses and a café were demolished. This was simultaneously an opportunity for fun and danger for the neighbourhood in the absence of other plays area.

The garage is hardly beautiful but it was never meant to be: fetishizing its role as part of some glorious past now makes little sense. Trains got termini, towering over people in an age when steam was the fastest mode of transport. Do we only now pay it more attention when it affects "our" infrastructure?



Scarleh

We have to give it to Michael Noonan, a true visionary indeed. Aul Michael had the red carpet out for the Trump well before he even

announced he was running for office in Shannon in 2014. Also scarleh for Enda Kenny branding Trump as a dangerous racist and

now having presented the customary bowl of Shamrocks in the White House on Paddy’s Day.



Potty Mouths

We’ve been really digging Chapo Trap House, a podcast as potty mouthed as ourselves, as they dig into Trump’s America. Make sure to check

out their interview with Angela Nagle later on in this issue.



O'CONNELL ST 7AM

BENNY PROFANE TAKES OVER THIS EDITION OF OUR REGULAR FLASH FICTION COLUMN, AND FINDS HIMSELF WANDERING AROUND IN THE SHADOW OF THE SPIRE WITH A RAGING COMEDOWN. SOUNDS FAMILIAR.

Coming-to on O’Connell Street. It’s 7a.m. on a Sunday morning in mid-March. I can’t remember at what point I left the rave. I’m in that delirious and tenuous twilight stage of inebriation; after the high and becoming more lucid but still very much in a giddy and reflective type of mood. A parade of random, non-linear thoughts march past the front of my brain and foggy memories from the night before come flashing back to me.

The party took place in the upstairs of a dingy Chinese takeaway just off Parnell St. It was cramped and loud. Mostly I remember the condensed sweat that hung in the air and gave the place a sticky-wet atmosphere; like breathing cotton-wool soaked in stale beer.

I got the shift off some bird that was stumbling about in fluorescent underwear whose tongue left a lingering after-taste of Sambuca and cigarettes; leaving behind the shadow of a sense-memory that my now fuzzy brain is incapable of eradicating.

The bright dawn is bursting across the sky with fluffy sun-drenched clouds floating under its aqua-blue dome. Errant seagulls squawk and circle overhead and on the street they fight over the strewn scraps of leftover takeaways. Their shrill

cries pierce the drum of my ear sending a seismic shock through my delicate nervous system that quickly ripples down my frame.

The street is almost empty save the birds and a few fellow hedonists – the last stragglers of a long Saturday night.

The open streets are flooded in natural light and the noticeable lack of bodies and vehicles gives me an uncommonly private view of the usually busy surroundings. The emptiness of the city on a weekend’s early morning inevitably reminds me of those scenes of Cillian Murphy walking through London in 28 Days Later – except this time I’m the zombie.

As I slowly fumble down O’Connell Street my only companion is my own restless mind as useless ruminations rattle through my head.

For me, the buildings and monuments of O’Connell Street represent the sad and conflicting forces of modern Irish history. The social idealism and angry energy of figures such as Parnell and Larkin is juxtaposed with tokens of modern capitalism like McDonalds and Burger King.

Buildings and businesses that are flanked on either side of the road seem like emblems of

Ireland’s materialist present. Buildings such as the embarrassingly gaudy Dr. Quirky’s Good Time Emporium, where desperate souls will eke away their existence feeding little coins into hungry machines while silently praying for that one lucky hit.

Huddled in the corner of the entrance is an indeterminate bundle of dirty nylon resting on flattened cardboard that will every so often shuffle about for a more comfortable position. These figures are dotted around in carefully chosen doorways as I make my way down the street.

My chemically-induced giddiness is beginning to wear off and the encroaching clouds of a stormy hangover begin to form at the front of my head. The bright blue sky is the colour of old jeans and helps in staving off this imminent headache, but my mind is still drawn to the symbolic disparity that exists between these buildings.

Past the souvenir shops, fast-food restaurants and tram works there is the General Post Office. I remember the countless tourists I’ve seen searching for the bullet marks in the pillars that stand outside the entrance; tangible reminders of the violence and struggle of our history now turned into a novel attraction for visiting tour

groups. And of course directly in front of the GPO is that monstrous and redundant phallic eye-sore; the monument that encapsulates more than any other the hubris and short-sighted pride of that much lamented period in Irish history known as The Boom Times.

This is the spike on which the Celtic Tiger was impaled before being thrown into the pungent Liffey as just another piece of urban waste.

A replacement for Nelson’s Pillar; The Spire is a brilliant physical metaphor for how this country’s leaders managed to shake off the colonial yoke only to replace it first with a snivelling reverence for the church and then, when that didn’t work out, launched it into a reckless pursuit of prosperity through a smorgasbord of shallow financial policies. And now we’re left with this – this dull and arrogant statement of our lost fortune.

By the time I reach the end of the street my head has begun to pound with a dull thump that quickly halts my ambulation. I decide to take a seat under the statue of the man who gave this street its name. The sun has ascended even higher in the morning sky and as I lie down in between the bronze angels I begin to feel the soothing solar heat buzz around my body.



Syndicalists advocated a new kind of trade unionism; instead of having hundreds of separate "craft" unions representing those working in distinct industries, they instead advocated One Big Union...

LAST NOVEMBER, A CONFERENCE IN NUIG EXPLORED THE INDUSTRIAL WORKERS OF THE WORLD UNION AND THEIR MANY CONNECTIONS TO IRELAND. THE RADICAL UNION ARGUED THAT SYNDICALISM COULD TRANSFORM THE WORLD. AS THE MEEJA WARNS US OF “HARD-LEFT AGITATORS WITHIN PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS” TODAY, DONAL FALLON LOOKS BACK ON THE FEAR OF RADICAL TRADE UNIONS IN THE EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

Today, the word ‘syndicalism’ has all but vanished from mainstream political discourse, indeed searching for it in a current affairs and news search engine returns only the occasional mocking reference.

Last year, The Guardian made a joke at the expense of those “living off homegrown vegetables in anarcho-syndicalist communes”, while both The Nation and The Huffington Post took the opportunity to refer to Bernie Sanders supporters in such terms during the Democratic Primaries in America. Jeremy Corbyn, when not condemned for his headwear or style of bicycle, was also described as a syndicalist by sections of the press on our neighbouring island.

Yet these are unusual, and very muddled, references to syndicalism today. Indeed, it is a term that would mean little to most readers of any of those publications, and very few outside of the left. One remarkable feature of political discourse in early twentieth century Ireland was the manner in which the term ‘syndicalism’ was tossed about with remarkable frequency in the contemporary press, and not just in relation to ‘Larkinism’, its uniquely Irish variant. This coverage was almost exclusively negative, as the word was used to encourage anti-socialist sentiment.

Syndicalism is a system of revolutionary industrial unionism, which as Verity Burgman noted in her important study of the IWW in Australia, “eschews parliamentary strategies and emphasises struggle at the point of production.” Syndicalists advocated a new kind of trade unionism; instead of having hundreds of separate ‘craft’ unions representing those working in distinct industries, they instead advocated ‘One Big Union’, through which capitalist power could be overthrown.

The fear of syndicalism internationally led not only to press denunciation but draconian legislation – in the United States, the Criminal Syndicalist Act of 1919, introduced in California, was not formally repealed until the early 1990s.

That act declared it “a felony, punishable by one to fourteen years in prison, to advocate or in any other way to promote violence as a means of accomplishing a change in industrial ownership or control or effecting any political changes.” Certainly, the emphasis of syndicalists was on political action and not political theory – Big Bill Haywood of the IWW would describe syndicalism as “socialism in its working clothes.” The IWW drew its strength from migrant workers, including Irish-American radicals like the young Elizabeth Gurley Flynn.

In Europe, syndicalists took hold in French trade unions in the late nineteenth century and continued to gain influence into the twentieth. All of this was watched by the Irish press, with The Irish Times warning readers in October 1910 that “the propaganda of revolutionary syndicalism...has no object save the direct annexation of the whole capital and organisation of each trade by the workers in that trade.” France, Irish readers were warned, was heading towards open class warfare.

Of course, syndicalism in every country was shaped by the unique conditions present there. In Ireland, syndicalism was

undoubtedly Larkinism, described by his biographer as a syndicalism that was “emphatically experimental and boiled down to the principle of sympathetic action, which he saw as the cutting edge of a working class code of morality.”

Larkin, like the Industrial Workers’ of the World, believed in the fundamental importance of the One Big Union. Like his contemporary James Connolly, he was an active Wobbly (name given to IWWU) when in the United States, and even gave the oration at the funeral of the famous Joe Hill, known as the ‘Singing Wobbly’, who was executed by firing squad in November 1915.

Summing up Larkinism himself, Jim Larkin stated that,

“The employers know no sectionalism. The employers give us the title of the ‘working class’. Let us be proud of the term. Let us have, then, the one union, and not, as now, 1,100 separate unions, each acting upon its own. When one union is locked out or on strike, other unions or sections are either apathetic or scab on those in dispute. A stop must be put to this organised blacklegging.”

While Larkinism shared many of the traits of the syndicalist agitation in the wider world, it was unique in some ways too. It placed a remarkable emphasis on counter-cultural endeavour and building a working class culture. The Manchester Guardian was so moved by Larkin’s project on visiting Liberty Hall, that they proclaimed “no Labour headquarters in Europe has contributed so valuably to the brightening of the lives of the hard-driven workers around it...it is a hive of social life.”

During the 1913 Lockout, the Irish Independent didn’t look to housing or employment conditions in Dublin for causes of agitation, instead they laid the blame at the door of these dangerous and exotic ideas, maintaining that “socialism and syndicalism are meaningless terms to them [Larkin’s followers], and yet they are assisting, known to themselves, in the spread of an unchristian and anti-national propaganda.” From the earliest days of the dispute, William Martin Murphy’s press empire attempted to ‘other’ syndicalism from a respectable trade unionism.

It is clear then that the powers that be regarded syndicalism in Ireland as a threat, and one with international dimensions and origins. While much of what was published on syndicalism was ill-informed or hysterical, it’s clear that syndicalism was a part of mainstream political discourse, if not understanding.

Illustration by Luke Fallon.



Whatever about Eastern Europe, in Ballymun people are now quite sceptical about a lot of those petit-bourgeois ideals that they were sold...



Money Forgets

Shell might be a bastard of a company but the early 90's were more innocent times. Check out the link below to see one of the heaviest

influencers of the anti-climate change brigade deliver a stark warning as to its existence. Head over to Youtube and look up and watch Shell's

1991 video warning of Catastrophic Climate Change.



THE REGENERATION GAME

A NEW DOCUMENTARY CALLED THE 4TH ACT LOOKS AT THE MASSIVE REGENERATION PROJECT THAT TOOK PLACE IN BALLYMUN OVER 18 YEARS. IT WILL PREMIERE AT THE DUBLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL THIS YEAR. RABBLE SENT TOMÁS LYNCH TO CATCH UP WITH BALLYMUN NATIVE AND FILM DIRECTOR TURLOUGH KELLY TO GET THE WHOLE STORY.

Can you run us through what the film is about?

It's a non-linear history of the regeneration of Ballymun, and the ideological and social connotations of what happened there. It's about the relationship between the state and local communities. Beyond that, it's about how memory is affected by power relations, how people can begin to doubt or inwardly dispute their own memories, if their perception of those memories is changed by external actors, which is what happened in Ballymun.

So would you say the regeneration has been a success so far?

You can only answer that by looking at it from the different standpoints of the actors involved. From the standpoint of Ballymun Regeneration Ltd [BRL], it was a success. The overall objective was to rehouse everyone in Ballymun within the confines of the original community, while demolishing the high-rise landscape and leaving everyone in situ.

They'd argue that they've done that. They'd argue that a lot of what was perceived by people in the community as negative byproducts – the loss of community self-organization and of forms of social solidarity that had existed for decades – they'd see that as a maturing of the community, that shift from grand political narratives to atomised, individualized, personal concerns – this idea that you'd be liquidated as a self-organized community and reborn as rational consumers, homeowners and individuals.

How did the community take that?

People were aware that they were likely to lose a lot of the bonds of solidarity that were very hard-won over decades. But they were also being sold a vision that was quite seductive to them.

It's similar to some of the processes that happened in Eastern Europe in the late 80s where people very willingly engaged in a process that they knew was designed to dissolve the social bonds that had formed around them throughout their lives because they thought they were gaining something else from it.

Whatever about Eastern Europe, in Ballymun people are now quite sceptical about a lot of those petit-bourgeois ideals that they were sold.

In the film one of the people you interview talks about 'architectural solidarity.' Can we speak about 'an architecture of the oppressed' – an urban planning that would be liberating by design?

I don't think it can be imposed. In Ballymun, as in other regeneration projects throughout the world, even in ones that were quite well-intentioned, which I don't think Ballymun was, there was a realization that you couldn't necessarily impose a modus vivendi on people. At every single juncture when local communities wishes came into conflict with the needs of the state and of developers, those won out every time.

That kind of project is never going to be hermetically sealed. It's dependent on the social structures that exist beyond it, in order to be preserved and defended. Cities are notoriously resistant to planning, even to 'Thatcherite neoliberal non-planning' planning. They tend to demand more of planners than is dreamt of in their philosophy.

At one point in the film the artist Jochen Gerz was talking about how Ballymun was going to look 'a little bit like Vienna.' Is this something Dublin working-class communities should be aiming for?

I don't think so, but it's very seductive to the people who make these decisions. You see it happening in Stoneybatter and Smithfield. It's a superficial vision of what the good life is, and it's all about consumption and play.

It's not about examining the underlying social bonds and social tensions within a community. It's all quite decorative. It's visible and that's what they like about it, but it doesn't tell you anything about the reality of what's happening in the community and what the people in the community actually want.

Ballymun gets a lot of cultural treatment, between your film and the radio play Snow Falls... by Alan O'Brien, and even before you have Adam & Paul and the RTE series Prosperity. You don't see other working-class areas getting the same

cultural treatment. Why is Ballymun such a huge thing in our collective psyche?

Ballymun was instantly recognizable. Right up until the last tower came down Love/Hate was filming out there. They shot their promo from the only vantage point where you could still have the tower in the background because the rest of it was gone. They were determined to still make use of that visual metaphor, which is what it was.

If you look at those films, none of them were explicitly set in Ballymun. It was completely denied its specificity. It was there to represent an entire stratum of working class life. There was never any serious cultural engagement. It was just the backdrop. What we're trying to do is wrestle back a little of that specificity and a little of the genuine experiences of people who lived there, rather than just making use of it as an edgy mise-en-scène.

Do you think there was a conscious government policy of neglect of communities such as Ballymun?

The drugs issue and the portrayal of that is a very powerful way, if you're going to go into a community and reshape it, of stigmatizing it from the outset. The drugs issue was massive, I grew up around it – but it was always portrayed in a very superficial way with very little focus on why this was happening here and not in Foxrock, say; and how the community had organized to combat it, often in a quite a compassionate way, not in the same confrontational way as Concerned Parents Against Drugs.

The decision not to support the community or provide services is an ideological decision that happens at the highest level. It wasn't a grand plan to run the community down and then gentrify it, but that opportunity wasn't lost on them. The conversation within the halls of power moved quickly to how can regeneration serve our ends, and not the community's ends.

The only thing that was outside the confines of "social partnership" was community organizations. They hadn't been integrated into the state in the same way. Ballymun was one of the most militant of those communities. If you could form a template from Ballymun about how to defang community resistance, that was something that was going to be beneficial to the state.

Point your webby browser to www.breadandcircus.ie to find out more about The 4th Act.

The people of Dublin let out a huge cheer last month as the city welcomed its 5000th millionaire. Estate Agent Knight Frank’s Wealth Report 2017 also

gave the fabulous prediction that there would be a further 24,800 millionaires in Ireland by 2026. Hooray for the rich!



{BABBLE}

Open Ear returns this June Bank Holiday Weekend after the glorious sun baked festivities of last year. Eomac, The Cyclist and Mike Slott head the bill. Check

out the lineup over at www.openear.ie

THE WONDER EYE: MEETINGS WITH IVOR PROFILES A PIONEERING AND RADICAL IRISH PSYCHIATRIST. IVOR BROWNE IS CELEBRATED AS SOMEONE WHO PLAYED A PUBLIC ROLE IN DESTIGMATISING MENTAL ILLNESS, ENCOURAGING ALTERNATIVES TO THE INSTITUTIONALISATION THAT CHARACTERISED IRISH SOCIETY. CAITRIONA DEVERY CAUGHT UP WITH ALAN GILSENAN TO FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE MAKING OF THE DOCUMENTARY.

You’ve made socially engaged documentaries about mental health in the past - was this in the same vein? What brought you to Ivor Browne as a subject?

It’s hard to say for certain. Generally, I work on instinct and gut rather than intellectualising things out of existence. But - as you say - I’ve made many films in the area of mental health (psychiatric care, suicide, euthanasia, depression...) so it does beg a question alright. In ways, of course, I’m drawn to the edge of our experience, the shared world where we really find ourselves, the extremes of our lives where we find ourselves. And I don’t divide those of us who may or may not “have mental health issues” - they are all our experiences in one way or another.

I’ve known Ivor for many years and admired him greatly. He - and his work - seem to reside in this shared space. The place where we are all mad. Or sane. It makes no difference really, except in our ability to manage ourselves and others in a dysfunctional world. But my first memory of Ivor was his defence of the great radical Scottish psychiatrist RD Laing during a slightly untoward attack from Gay Byrne on The Late Late Show.

People speak of him in a very reverential way, as a wise or holy man. Is that something Ivor is aware of, or even courts?

I’m not a big fan of gurus of any kind.. I love that Van Morrison line “no guru, no method, no teacher... just you and I in nature, in the garden”. Yet, even as I say this, I realise that Ivor is a teacher in so many ways and Sahaj Marg [the style of meditation that Ivor teaches] is a way of mediation that allows for the handing down of ancient wisdoms through teachers, and I do think there is much value in that. But I don’t see Ivor as some guru nor do I think he would ever see himself in that light. He is very modest by nature. And yet I totally understand that he inspires people with his warmth, insight and compassion and maybe that has a role for us all.

Do you think someone like Ivor could exist now? I mean someone with such a high profile, who was inside the system but who also speaks against the grain?

I’d like to think so. But we live in such a conservative and conformist

age. And we are all now our own spin doctors. But I think we should celebrate maverick spirits on all sides, freethinkers of all persuasions and none. Not just politically correct cheerleaders. I think Nell McCafferty is one of those. And Tommy Tiernan.

Brendan Kelly’s book says Ireland has an exceptional history not in terms of excessive mental illness but of excessive incarceration / institutionalisation. Was Ivor part of changing this? Where has been his biggest impact?

Yes, certainly. He was not alone in this, of course. But Ivor certainly led the way throughout the sixties, seventies and eighties. If anything, we have not emphasised that especially in the film because it is so well-documented in other ways. I think he humanised mental illness fundamentally, and much of the common assumptions which we take for granted today were the radical thoughts of Ivor Browne all those years ago.

Was it very intentionally a portrait of him as an individual? And on mental illness at an individual level? There’s not so much reference to how wider culture and society can impact on mental health. Can you tell me a little bit why the story was approached like that?

Yes. It was always meant to be very much a personal portrait. Ivor’s books of writings give a firm picture of his views and ideas in the public space over the years but I wanted to capture something of the man himself. And I think the public emerges from the personal in the end. If we understood more about our inner lives, our mental and emotional landscape, then the public sphere would be a safer and saner place. You only have to cast a glance over the news to see that.

Do you think - or would you have a sense of what Ivor would think - things are getting worse or better when it comes to mental health in Ireland?

Of course, there has been progress and there are many enlightened people working within the area of mental health in Ireland today. But - and it’s a hell of a “but” - you just have to open your eyes to see the state (and State) of us today: a torrent of deaths by suicide, young women wasting away with anorexia and self-harm, prescription and non-prescription drug abuse, alcohol and gambling addictions, an orgy of pornography and abuse. There is much reason to despair. And yet - for all the lip service paid to all of this by the political class, by health care and social workers and by the media - there really is nowhere for anyone to turn.

Keep em peeled for screenings of The Wonder Eye: Meetings With Ivor .

left in the cold

LAST YEAR PLAYWRIGHT ALAN O’BRIEN WON THE PJ O’CONNOR AWARD FOR BEST NEW RADIO DRAMA WITH SNOW FALLS AND SO DO WE. RABBLE SENT SEAN FINNAN ALONG TO CHAT TO ALAN ABOUT THE PLAY AND WHY HE REFUSED RTÉ PERMISSION TO BROADCAST THE DRAMA.

So I guess to start with, what’s the play about?

It was inspired by the death of Rachel Peavoy. When that happened I was amongst many that were just appalled by the whole thing. Having experienced living in Ballymun, our empirical knowledge tells us that it’s impossible to die by hypothermia once the heating is on cause the heat was so intense you used to have to have the windows open. You dried your clothes on the floor.

A guy I used to run a youth club with, Mick Dunne, he was one of the first people to move out to Ballymun and he used to go into Moore Street with him and his brother and they used to get their fruit and veg and the women used to say to them “Go back to Ballymun”, ‘how’d ya know I’m from Ballymun?’ ‘No colour in your face.’” So the heat used to have everyone bleeding drained. So it was absolutely impossible for anyone to die from hypothermia once the heat was on.

So the play’s main character is Joanne Boland. She isn’t Rachel Peavoy but she lives in Ballymun and suffers the same fate as her.

Well Joanne Boland is a cacophony of mothers and female voices from Ballymun who have resonated with me through my time living there, growing up there. It would definitely not be right for me to say that Joanne Boland has any resemblance to Rachel Peavoy’s actual life. The only concrete resemblance they have is the tragic nature of their deaths.

Rather than the play squarely directing its anger at DCC’s neglect, the play locates the neglect that led to Joanne’s death with a history of neglect that occurred on the Irish people and the refusal of power to acknowledge its culpability. In the play Joanne’s grandfather calls the famine of 1845 ‘the Great Hunger’. It is explicitly political in this language, and not natural as the word famine suggests.

Exactly. In 1840’s this was what they were saying. It’s the Irish’s fault. In the 1840’s they were going around with Reverend Malthus’ Treaty of the Population which basically said that during times of famine, that was God’s way of dealing with avarice amongst the peasantry. Now there was an English Republican called William Hazlitt who ripped the treaty to shreds.

However, Malthus’s Treaty was doing the rounds around Westminster in the 1840’s, William Hazlitt’s wasn’t. I wanted to juxtapose the attitudes of the ruling classes in Ireland of that time with the ruling classes now cause not much has changed in the way they view people, we are subhuman,

you know.

The thing about Irish literature and the Irish media more generally is that there are few Irish women’s voices, especially female working class voices coming out. This is surprising as it has been Irish working class women who have been hit hardest by austerity but also that they are the point of most resistance to austerity.

Yeah absolutely. I have issues with that myself. My character wanted to show that... she talked about not having the words. She had the words but she hasn’t got the confidence and that’s what’s wrong. Working class voices, ok. Alessandro Portelli, this orlist, said that people from non hegemonic classes use intonation and emphasis rather than vocabulary when communicating. So our accents are more complex as it takes more sensory recognition, you have to pay attention to stresses, you have to pay attention to body language, it is more complex than middle classes. What Portelli said is that hegemonic classes learned to mimic the monotone of the written word where we use expression. I like telling them that ‘cause working class accents are the natural ones, it comes from the people, from the actual land. The other one is constructed.

The actor playing Joanne Boland was superb. The voice was so engaging, almost mesmerising throughout.

Yeah, Melissa is a superb actor and a Beckettian scholar. She is involved or runs (I don’t know the extent of her responsibilities) with Mouth on Fire productions who specialise in Beckett’s work. I had seen her in numerous productions both small and big and she impressed me greatly. She asked for the script which I promptly sent her. Within an hour I had a message telling me that she will take this part. Melissa is also working class herself so knew the complexities of the natural Dublin vernacular with its expressions, intonations and emphasis. For instance the way balcony is pronounced in Ballymun was with a silent c, ‘bal’ony. Her input was utterly fructifying.

What happened with RTÉ? The play won the PJ O’Connor Award for best Irish radio drama and part of that prize was for the play to be broadcast on the station. Yet that didn’t happen. What happened there?

I don’t want to get into my experience with them. It was a really bad experience with them and it marred the whole enjoyment of winning the award. They went and made it and what they made was unrecognisable. The producer took out every single sound effect and took out some key lines and changed the ending to that she actually didn’t die.

You can listen to Snow Falls and So Do We on Soundcloud. It’s on the rabble blog too. Photographer unknown. Courtesy of Ballymun Communications



“Go back to Ballymun, ‘how’d ya know I’m from Ballymun?’ ‘No colour in your face.’” So the heat used to have everyone bleeding drained. So it was absolutely impossible for anyone to die from hypothermia once the heat was on...



THEY ARE THE PET LAMBS OF THE COMMISSIONER AND THEY FEED OFF WHAT THEY'RE GIVEN FROM THE MASTER'S TABLE, THEY GO AND DO THE MASTER'S BIDDING AND THEY ALWAYS HAVE...

Hi Clare, can you tell us of the Garda malpractices that were being reported by McCabe, Wilson and others? – It's something that might be getting lost amidst all the headlines.

Maurice McCabe raised the penalty points but the reality is that the penalty points exposé was a little like the Americans catching Al Capone on tax evasion because there was other issues that they couldn't prove.

Maurice had previously gone to the Garda hierarchy with allegations of wrongdoing, indiscipline, and An Garda Siochana not following up investigations.

He had initially gone with those cases which were in many cases more serious – murder and all the rest of it and it was ignored. He learned his lesson and made sure to have documentary evidence of everything.

He learned to be cautious and thankfully he was because we'd never have got this far if he hadn't recorded that meeting in the O'Higgins enquiry. So in terms of other Garda whistleblowers you'd have some incidents where there was allegations of Garda involvement in the drug trade, serious wrongdoing and that were being either covered up by senior guards or not acted upon.

Can you explain to me, in an ideal society, what the relationship is between the Gardai and the State, and why what is happening here is so shocking?

In an ideal world we should have an independent police authority with a majority lay representation of ordinary people, community groups and so on to assess policing priorities, who tell the Gardai what they want from their policing service.

So you would have them then in that scenario say: "listen lads so we don't want you wasting your time going out hounding water charges protesters or whatever, no we'd actually like you to come in and do a bit of talking to the kids, or stopping the burglaries" or that type of thing.

An independent Garda authority with the power to discipline the senior ranks and appoint a commissioner is key because a lot of this comes down to the culture and accountability. A police service which should be equality proofed, anti-racist, with a good code of ethics and all the nice jargon that they talk about.

The fact that Tusla did not seek to question McCabe raises serious questions about its own role as a child protection agency. Were they aware that this was "garda business" i.e. an attempted smear and tacitly turned a blind eye or were they just negligent in their treatment of the case?

Look, there are an awful lot of questions around Tusla. The very clear implication of the sequence of events is that a previous allegation which had been investigated and deemed to be so insignificant to not even constitute a crime... I have to be careful how I say this, was manipulated by An Garda Siochana using members of the media in order to re-enter that complaint and then suddenly that complaint was mysteriously turned

CATCHING UP AFTER

CLARE DALY HAS BEEN ONE OF THE FEW CONSISTENTLY RAISING THE CACOPHONY OF CORRUPTION IN AN GARDA SIOCHANA EVEN AS OTHERS AROUND THEM PLAYED WILLFULLY IGNORANT OR RIDICULED THEM. RABBLE SENT [SEAN FINNAN](#) ALONG FOR A CHAT WITH THE TD ABOUT A SCANDAL THE STATE JUST CAN'T SEEM TO KEEP BURIED.

into a horrendous allegation which had never been made by anybody.

The only way that could have happened was with Garda involvement.

In that sense I suppose Tusla was being manipulated by An Garda Siochana and many citizens have actually contacted us since that were put in that situation.

Journalists like Paul Williams and Paul Reynolds have been trying to silence and smear McCabe. You yourself had your own run in with RTÉ after expressing dissatisfaction with Reynold's report on McCabe last May. What have these journalists' role been in this scandal?

Let's be very clear that Paul Reynolds and Paul Williams are actively involved in the dissemination of information around the complaints including contacting the vulnerable young woman at the centre of this around the period of time when the allegations of Maurice McCabe were coming out.

They are the pet lambs of the commissioner and they feed off what they're given from the master's table and they go and do the master's bidding and they always have.

Social media has been reminding Fianna Fail of how they lauded Paul Williams when he slagged of Mick and Luke at their party conference. I mean this fella has engaged in a litany of behaviour over the years in order to self promote himself at significant human cost to individuals like Maurice McCabe but also individual victims of crime. He has an appalling track record.

Is the media sidelining your role in all of this?

It's hilarious. We googled the record and Brendan Howlin has mentioned Maurice McCabe up until this week four times in the Dáil. Four times. And that was all when he was out of government.

He sat at the top of the cabinet table, as did Alan Kelly at the height of this controversy and not just the allegations of Maurice McCabe but the allegations of Keith Harrison, of Nicky Keogh.

All of which myself and Mick repeatedly brought up over a period of two years, much of that time when Labour had been in power.

So at a time when they had something to do about it they did nothing.

Very little of this scandal has been reported in the Irish media previously. Have the media been actively negligent in reporting Garda corruption?

Even now they are. They're sensationalizing it and having a hysterical response to events which they if they took the trouble to look over the past number of years they would have played a much more constructive role in actually addressing and stopped a lot of the damage that has been done. There are obviously notable exceptions, Mick Clifford has stuck with this story,

John Bourke RTÉ radio consistently and diligently is going the role of investigative journalism, Katie Hannon are brilliant people who have played a really constructive role in this.

Noirín O'Sullivan is claiming total ignorance of the smear campaign. This is highly improbable?

That's total and utter rubbish. The fact stands that Noirín O'Sullivan has repeatedly stated that she's not aware of any campaign to undermine whistleblowers.

We've seen correspondence and repeated correspondence addressed to the commissioner which she has acknowledged where people have complained of precisely such harassment and targeting since making a protected disclosure.

She made no contact with those people and in actual fact the situation got worse. So she either signed the letter saying that she acknowledged the correspondence without reading it in which case she is incompetent and shouldn't be there or she's being economical with the truth.

We know the information that emerged from the O'Higgins enquiry. We know that John Barrett the civilian head of An Garda Siochana directed a report to the commissioner which happened to be handed over to the minister alleging similar problems as well.

We know and it's an absolute fact that two senior officers present at the O'Higgins commission were ready to give testimony that Maurice McCabe was motivated by malice and that he had told them that at the meeting.

Because he had recorded it he was able to show that they were lying. Either Noirín O'Sullivan was involved in that or she wasn't and if she wasn't then why didn't she initiate disciplinary proceedings against those two officers pointing out that they were in the tribunal and prepared to lie?

There is a need for more transparency within the Gardai. Do you see this as something that can occur, or is it just too incompatible with the culture within the Gardai?

You certainly need a clearout of the hierarchy at the top. Obviously the PSNI made the hierarchy an offer that they couldn't refuse and cleared a load of them out and hopefully the tribunal will clear out a few more of them.

There's a good few due to retire early in the year and hopefully these events will hasten their decision. You need to get rid of them and bring in fresh blood from the outside and you need to beef up the complaints and oversights mechanism with GSOC and the policing authority.

The gas thing is the minister agreed that she would bring in some changes there recently with the Justice O'Higgins report. But two years ago Mick Wallace's legislation which we moved and if she had passed then, she wouldn't have to go back and do some of this stuff now.

So again it's catching up after the event.

In the twenty-seven days of the Apollo House occupation, the Irish Housing Network as one pillar of Home Sweet Home put paid to the Government and Dublin City Council’s empty pledges and platitudes...

UNDER APOLLO

Hidden Histories

The Weiner Library in London are opening their archive of records from the United Nations War Crimes Commission. The archive contains lists of alleged

war criminals, files of charges brought against them, minutes of meetings, reports, correspondence, trial transcripts, and related documentation.



APOLLO HOUSE CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN A MONTH LONG OCCUPATION BEGINNING BEFORE CHRISTMAS. ACTIVISTS, ARTISTS AND TRADE UNIONISTS OCCUPIED A NAMA BUILDING IN DUBLIN CITY CENTRE IN A DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT. JAMES BEGGAN AND TOMAS LYNCH TAKE A LOOK AT THE HOUSING NETWORK THAT HELD IT ALL TOGETHER.

The Apollo House occupation organised thousands of volunteers, many of whom had no previous experience with activism but it was clear that there had to be some background grunt work holding the whole thing together. This behind the scenes grunt work was done by the activist pillar of the Home Sweet Home campaign, a grassroots initiative known as the Irish Housing Network.

The network was formed in 2015 but has its beginnings in some Housing Action Now workshops of 2014. One such workshop was led by the Plataforma de Afectados por la Hipoteca, or the PAH (a massive Spanish grassroots organisation which stops evictions and campaigns for housing rights), while another was for a handful of Dublin based groups who wished to share resources. Influenced by the PAH, the IHN began to develop its principles in 2015 which they kept right the way through to Apollo. IHN member Seamus Farrell tells us they “wanted to do something a bit different, something more consistent and something which centred on those affected.”

Conscious that some groups tend towards instrumentalisation and “doing flash campaigns” big on PR but dropping the issue if no immediate momentum developed, they adopted “the PAH assembly idea: those with grievances or housing problems would get to speak collectively on them. That was the basis of forming some type of response. We took from that those affected would lead and should be the centre of any housing struggle”.

From the beginning, those affected by housing issues took the lead in a bottom-up approach which was a refreshing change in a system that isolates and disempowers people. As Farrell outlines “there was homeless people supported by those groups going in and

taking over buildings”. While this was empowering and continued through to Apollo, Seamus notes “it created a different dynamic in lots of ways, a dynamic which might have pushed too fast”.

Things developed quickly with “a series of actions, loads of occupations of councils, of the Department of the Environment. Then a massive project to take over a disused hostel and run it as the Bolt Hostel in summer of 2015. That action helped people trust each other.”

Having those affected lead the campaign shaped the network’s approach to the housing crisis and its power dynamics. While there was thought given to the role of the state and capitalism as “the driver of the housing policies”, it was also infused with an analysis developed “from people who had interacted with services before” who knew how homeless people in the system were treated.

The network is also influenced by the methodology of some radical leftwing politics and trade union organisers that are critical of advocacy or shallow mobilising, instead they are committed to deep organising. In Seamus’s words, this model involves “relying on the actual links that people already have in their communities, the power they have and the care they show towards other people”.

Whether this is through regular training workshops and skillshares within the network, or a constant presence in communities through door knocking and support groups, Farrell says it’s built into the network.

“It’s built in in terms of trying to have some sort of sustained strategy and long term goals and some way to build up structures that can actually scale up and build and have a large number of people affected leading it.”

This has been the key to the whole project for Seamus, “actually believing in the empowerment of those affected in their own class.”

Support groups in particular are of much importance to how groups in the network are active. On the surface it may be popping along to have tea and discuss some of the problems you’re facing but for Seamus these spaces “are the roots under which any type of work can be done ‘cause a lot of families and people can’t, they don’t have the time to organise or do things because of the basic difficulties they have in their lives.”

The IHN is made up of constituent groups based in communities and groups active on single-issue campaigns. One of these housing groups is North Dublin Bay Housing Crisis Community, a community group which Aisling Hedderman is centrally involved in. They have a large support group and have been a driving force of the network.

“In the support group people come who have difficulty with their housing to bash it out with each other,” states Hedderman “Because other people have been in the situation and it helps the other person a lot to talk to someone who has been in it.”

A good example of how they rely on community links and collective care is seen in how NDB facilitate those who may not usually be able to participate. “In order to facilitate those who have children,” states Aisling, “the NDB have the support group in the morning,

from half ten to half twelve, so most children are at school and toddlers can come along no problem.”

Last Christmas they had a Christmas party in the Aryfield Centre for families affected by the housing crisis and families in emergency accommodation,

“We had a big Christmas party, Santy came, everything was donated from the public. The presents that were given out to people that Santy brought, the popcorn, the bouncy castle, face-painting, and shoe-boxes for the parents.”

While these local community groups are the foundations of the network, there are also campaign groups such as single parents group, anti-racism groups, and social workers. On top of this, though with no voting rights, there are also a range of teams who work on outreach, media, finance, support and cases.

Generally people have to get involved with a group in order to make a decision. The reason? As well as building in communities “it’s avoiding that kind of... structurelessness that becomes informal power and they end up driving it based on their personalities.” It’s about being accountable.

Ensuring this accountability was maintained was a difficulty in Apollo House as they faced negotiations with Housing Minister Simon Coveney,

“They wanted an immediate agreement. Normally it’s actually a good thing to be able to make calls and discuss but in the heat of the moment there is a need to have a temporary committee or temporary negotiating group that can make some calls that are trusted. So there’s no permanent committees. It’s groups making decision, teams facilitating it and when needed negotiating teams to go forward and be well briefed.”

This clear structure of decision making and teams trained up to work on different areas allowed the network to scale up so quickly for Apollo:

“It’s physically impossible for a structure that has over one thousand people involved for anyone know how everything is happening, for anyone to physically do everything. So there had to be very clear structure put in at the start and had to be followed.”

In the twenty-seven days of the Apollo House occupation, the Irish Housing Network as one pillar of Home Sweet Home put paid to the Government and Dublin City Council’s empty pledges and platitudes that they were doing their best to deal with the housing crisis. They managed to provide accommodation to ninety people with inhouse teams of professional support and medical workers. Thousands of people offered to volunteer and over five hundred donated essential supplies. Hundreds of volunteers worked together on site and ninety people received six month accommodation that was not previously available.

While Apollo House may be gone, the network’s groups continue the work in communities in Dublin, Wexford, Kildare, Galway and Cork. Aisling has new volunteers from Apollo looking to get involved in NDB and she says “there’s a few other surprises” in store.



AS THE APOLLO STORY PROGRESSED, MOST OF THE PRESS ATTENTION FOCUSED ON THE ARTISTS, AND A VERY SMALL NUMBER OF ORGANISERS. HOWEVER, THE REAL STORY OF APOLLO HOUSE IS AND ALWAYS WAS THE VOLUNTEERS, OVER 700 OF WHOM GAVE UP THEIR TIME TO MAKE IT WHAT IT WAS. A STARK REMINDER THAT THE CURRENT HOUSING SYSTEM IS BROKEN BEYOND REPAIR, AND THAT A BETTER WORLD IS POSSIBLE. THESE ARE SOME OF THEIR STORIES. [TOMMY GAVIN](#) TALKED TO MANY OF THE VOLUNTEERS AND CAME BACK WITH THEIR WORDS.

WE, THIS WAY

John, Resident (name changed).

I stayed there [in Apollo House] for six days, but it was still quite an intense space to be in. It was a nice social space, which if you've been on the streets for awhile; that really lifts you. You don't feel cut off from society, and it was having that rest and being in that good environment.

Jennifer, Support.

I was a support worker. That involved linking in with the residents, looking after their needs and making sure that they were okay. I'm a qualified social care worker, and I'm more used to working long term,

where you're starting to develop the relationship and get to know someone. This was very immediate, they could have medical needs looking after, they could need food or clothes; or you're offering an ear and a kind word and just being present and in the moment for them.

Tom, Support.

I looked after the allocation of beds. That meant making sure we never went over the capacity of forty, and that the bed was held for 48 hours for them so that they had a chance to come back, and making sure that there was an updated bed list every day as well.

Chris, Security.

I was one of the security team leads. That meant making sure that people were safe, that people were working in their positions, and making sure that there were enough people there to cover each shift. In

the weeks on either side of 2016 and 2017, a public intervention was undertaken to enter and occupy a vacant NAMA building, to fix it up to a liveable standard, and to turn it into a safe and welcoming home for rough-sleeping homeless people in Dublin.

Crystal, Admin.

I did admin for the majority of the time when Apollo was still going, which involved making sure that everybody felt useful. I was rostering them, but there were a lot of challenges as far as where people were put, and roles were constantly changing. Then I moved over to the finance team, there mainly I was keeping the books, and just collecting receipts, and making sure teams had enough petty cash.

AND NOT THE DISTANCE

Jennifer, Support

The day I turned up, Glen Hansard was up on the roof singing, and it was quite chaotic the first couple of days, and I was quite apprehensive. But then a couple of days later systems and communications lines were put in place.

Crystal, Admin.

I thought it was going to be a lot more regimented. I think this was a lot of people's first occupation, or direct action say; it was my first for sure.

Tom, Support.

I wasn't expecting it to be as well organised and as well run as it was. I think a lot of people expected that it was just beds thrown everywhere and no structures, but it was very well run and very well structured.

John, Resident.

I thought it would just be like merchant's quay just with a bed. But it wasn't, it was more laid back and more relaxed, a safer and more comfortable environment and. It felt like a big family home really. There was a big TV, there were lots of sofas around, and there was space to go and chill out on your own and have a read. Having a locker made a huge difference, because you could put your stuff in the locker and it was locked, and you felt safe. You didn't have to be watching your stuff all the time. You could go and have a hot shower every

day whenever you wanted to, there were washing machines there, and clothes as well. Where I am now, the staff are great and they're just following the rules, but the rules are that we don't have our own key. So we have to ask a staff member to unlock the door to let us in, if you go to the toilet you maybe leave your security vulnerable while you leave the door wedged to use the toilet and stuff will go missing then, and that kind of keeps you on edge.

Chris, Security.

Seeing the donations coming in was when it first started to hit home for me that this was going to be big, the first night just after the mattresses arrived, people started arriving with food.

Jennifer, Support.

It was like a bloody time warp, you went in for a couple of hours and ten hours later you were still there like. It was a very comfortable environment, everybody had a story, everybody had their own reasons for being there, and it was just like the barriers were brought down, and you saw past the labels of homelessness, and you heard their stories. It's like "well no actually I had a place and the landlord just put me out, or I lost my job." You got a real insight into a day in the life of some people.

Crystal, Admin.

I didn't encounter any racism in anyway, which is something that I expect on a daily basis in Dublin. It just felt like such an even, equal space to be. People in there may have had different outlooks, but something happened when you came in there, people realised that you had a sense of something bigger than themselves, and they just left their egos at the door.

IT IS ONLY THE FIRST STEP THAT IS DIFFICULT

Chris, Security.

I've been doing the soup runs for nearly three years, and I was working with a woman there who told me it was coming and she asked if I wanted to be involved. I said "yeah a hundred percent."

Jennifer, Support.

I saw it advertised on facebook that they were looking for qualified volunteers. I mean it was so radical, and I just wanted to be a part of it. It was the centenary of 1916 and I suppose when you look back in history and everybody today likes to think that if that was to happen today, they might be in the

GPO, you know, like they would be in the centre of it all fighting for the cause, where realistically people wouldn't be, they'd be getting on with their lives thinking "oh sure that's just them starting trouble, can they not just continue on with the way things are." I just thought that this is our rebellion, and I would like to be a part of it.

Crystal, Admin.

I thought I'd put in my application and see what happens. I actually didn't get a call back, and then there was an urgent call out for people over Christmas day, so I just called and they said yes, and I never left.

Tom, Support.

I have a big passion for homelessness, having been homeless myself. When I saw an opportunity to help I just threw in my application and that was that.



THINK ABOUT THE FUTURE

John, Resident.

I think it did have an effect, because it made all the other hostels think "oh fuck okay, this group has come together and gotten everything organised very quickly, and made everyone else look like they were just not really helping out, or going through the motions." That the rest of them should have to up their game really, compared to what Apollo House did. I think it was the best thing that ever happened. It restored my faith in life and in humanity.

Chris, Security.

I think it'll go down in history and I think the next one will be bigger and better.





MEME STREETS

FEW WRITERS HAVE SCoured THE SEWERS OF CHAN CULTURE WITH AS KEEN AN EYE AS ANGELA NAGLE. MARTIN LEEN SAT DOWN WITH THE WRITER WHO IS MAKING A NAME FOR HERSELF THE WORLD OVER AS THE DEFINITIVE VOICE ON THE INTERNET SUBCULTURES THAT HAVE GIVEN LIFE TO THE ALT-RIGHT.

You are working on a new book tentatively titled Kill All Normies: The Online Culture Wars From Tumblr to Trump. Would you be able to give us a crash in what it's all about for those of us still in the dark on these online culture wars?

Kill All Normies refers to an expression used on the online alt-right and chan culture, 'normies', and I'm also using it to refer to the breakdown of the mainstream in terms of media and politics that has created a vacuum for this kind of subcultural far-right youth politics. The book is an analysis of the culture wars that have gone on online over the last eight years or so and looking at how you can only understand the rise of the alt-right and alt-light figures like Milo by understanding also the virtue-oriented online movements that they represent an extreme reaction against. The cycle is that the right wants proof that society is falling apart due to multiculturalism and feminism and gay rights and the online tumblr liberals supply them with seeming evidence for their moral panic.

In fact neither represent anything like the real world that exists outside our front door but they exist in constant response to each other. They each get to see what they want to see - that society is either a multicultural disaster on the brink of collapse or an oppressive white cis male hetero-patriarchy. Each proves to the other that their worldview is accurate and that the need to ramp things up to appropriately respond to the other.

Why do you think that misogyny is so rampant amongst the so called beta-male of 4chan?

Some nerdish right wing forums are openly self-mocking about being betas, others obsess about overcoming their beta status through the gym and using social darwinian thinking to trick females into being sexually attracted to them. They're very confused and angry because they hate sexual freedom because of their low ranking status in the sexual social hierarchy due to female choice but also exist in a very porn fuelled culture so sometimes they express puritanical ideas about hating sluts, in the same breath they'll express their feeling of entitlement to the sexual availability of women.

The more interesting thing is that sexual choice and the breakdown of monogamy really has created a sexual hierarchy among men - they're not imagining that. Now you have this angry online army of celibate men who believe this is part of a civilisational collapse brought about by feminism, which they see themselves as the victims of. Of course in reality these changes were a product of the sexual revolution which men were very active

agents, not passive victims, of and in many ways feminism was split over factions which produced a critique of the sexual revolution and those that embraced it but wanted it to go further.

Is there anything society can do to address the insecurities that are causing this so called "crisis of masculinity"?

I think many of the concerns brought up by men's rights activists are actually quite fair. The problem is that often the men expressing them online, which is where most people are going to be introduced to new ideas for the first time, are so hateful and off putting that nobody listens to them. But for example, men's health and suicide deserve attention and a lost sense of purpose in the world that has accompanied de-industrialisation really has left many men in a bad place and a fair society should take those concerns seriously.

Certainly letting these things fester in the dark corners of the internet and calling anyone who addresses them a misogynist is not helping anyone. I try to use that word only when it very literally and clearly applies. We are living in a time of huge chaos in terms of gender roles with greater levels of celibacy among the young I think due to a kind of alienation and it's certainly not all positive.

How do you feel about criticism of Sanders and Corbyn from various online feminists as being proponents of "brocialism"?

Well it tells you everything about why irreverent troll cultures have emerged online on the right. While the cultural left is busy out-doing one another in woke righteousness and purity and constantly purging anyone on the left with a sense of humour or connection to the real world outside of tumblr politics, the far right online is allowed to look like the funny transgressive alternative.

Bernie would have been better for American women than Hillary, genitalia aside. Online feminism's more absurd turn in recent years and its involvement in witch hunting, silencing any and all dissent and online mob behaviour has benefited the right immeasurably among younger people. The jokes just write themselves really.

I have more in common with men who share my material concerns - job precarity, unaffordable rents, poor social services etc. - than with 'women' as a category. So I'll take a Berniebro (or the Irish equivalent) any day over the liberal Hillary loyalist types (and their Irish equivalents) who cooked up the agenda-driven caricature.

In terms of recent US elections and the election of Trump, how much of him getting elected was down

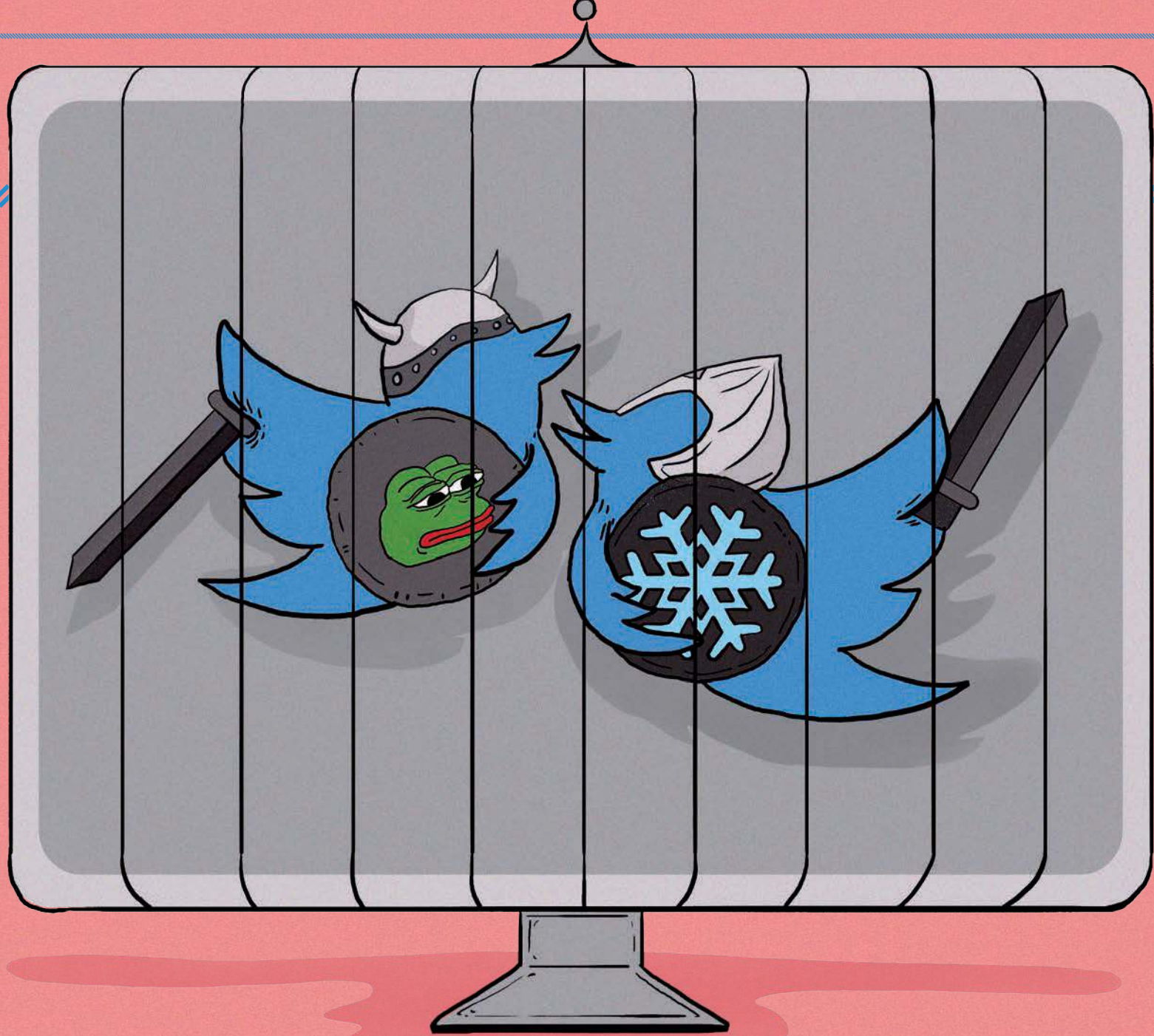
to material things such as economic issues and how much was influenced by the alt-right and the hatreds of political correctness, feminism, immigration, the welfare state and the cultural left that Trump and his campaign latched on to?

I think it was economic concerns for most people. That's what the polls suggest. And yet this isn't unconnected to the culture politics. Advanced economies are about to lose massive amounts of jobs to off-shoring and automation. And interestingly the most easily automated jobs are the male dominated ones. Trumpism is a last attempt to stem the tide of the social changes that will come from that. For young people who have grown up online then the meme culture of online right wing forums provided a language and made being on the right acceptable in a way for young people again. To them, being a Trump supporter was a way of rebelling against your liberal teachers and parents. I think adulthood brings much more material concerns to the centre of your politics, so the cultural stuff was more part of his young fan base.

When Milo Yiannopoulos was on his tour of colleges, the protests were getting lots of publicity, and speeches were being cancelled. Do you think it is time for the left and liberals and in general to give up this idea of "not giving people like him a platform" and to engage in debate and fight these ideologies with well thought-out arguments which people like Germaine Greer and Susan Sontag used to?

Absolutely. In fact, I think we could have avoided this mess if we have done that years ago. There is simply no getting around the fact that part of being political in any way is convincing people of your case. You have to do it. The left is now dangerously out of the practice of doing it because it has been, on cultural issues if not economic ones, dominant in recent years in most of the west. This cycle happens all the time in movements.

Look at the neocons for example who have been usurped by the Trump win. They rose to power because their big thinkers learned to do intellectual battle as young Jewish Trotskyists fighting with the pro-Soviet students in the rival alcove of the cafeteria of City College of New York. When they became right wing they had all this tremendous creative and intellectual energy and they rose to prominence in the US. Similarly, at the height of the Catholic church's power in Ireland all the ideas and intellectuals were on the other side and the reason they had that intellectual power is that they had to fight their case through ideas.



A key point that I take from reading your work is that maybe the thinkers on the liberal/ left have got lazy and caught up in their own bubble and took their eye off the ball, while the alt-right have sharpened their arguments and worked really hard at developing an alternative media. How can the left develop an alternative media that reaches and connects with people outside of its own bubble?

The alt-light in particular are a remarkable success story in creating alternative media. Just look at the viewing figures for Infowars, Milo's site and videos, the Rebel and so on. Look at the twitter following that its members have. They used social media, crowd funding and major focus on video over text. They really circumvented mainstream media channels completely. They were funny and irreverent and stood out as a new phenomenon with ideas many young people hadn't heard anywhere else.

Or is there anything we can do at all given the algorithms that throw our news and culture at us, that chain us to our tastes and give us as Adorno said the "freedom to choose what is always the same"? How can we break out of these idea vacuums?

Oh this is interesting. Jason Wilson has an excellent "burst your bubble" section in the Guardian now, picking out interesting things happening in the world of ideas from conservative and libertarian media. I sense a bit of a desire to read and think more widely than before. I love the new US left spirit of things like Chapo Trap House and people like Amber A'Lee Frost, Freddie de Boer, Adolph Reed, Jacobin, Current Affairs etc.

There is a very strong sense I get that a new, more

open spirit of intellectual curiosity and irreverence toward liberal scolds who have shut down ideas for so long is happening now. I'm very excited about it. I hope it influences our discourse over here too. I've always tried to read as widely as possible. I've always found the ideological bubble so stifling and awful. It's like a voluntary lobotomy.

You've been through the Twitter wars haven't you? Trolling and massive fights have always been a part of online culture, but I recall a day when there was a degree of self-policing and internal community generated rules in forums. Now it's a wild west, of atomised profiles where the corporations like Facebook and Twitter make the rules. We've kind of let the net be taken out of our control haven't we, do you think this is romantic and relinquished self-responsibility or do you think we let a golden age escape us unbeknownst?

The problem with that is I'm not sure we can really blame the corporations for our bad behaviour on this particular issue. In many cases it's the corporations trying to keep a lid on it through de-anonymisation. It may be the case that we need to collectively re-learn basic etiquette. The level of public discourse right now is just so hateful and so degraded and nasty it's quite unbelievable. I guess any sense of the commons has to come from our collective realisation that we're all going to be wading through virtual garbage forever unless we somehow apply basic standards of human empathy online. That's all a bit vague though. I really don't know if or how it will get better.

I'll put an umbrella on before you fire a pint over

my head, but given the idea of an absence of intellect on the left, and please take this in the best spirit - then is finding a niche career as a writer following and critiquing "identity politics" and the alt-right not part and parcel of the problem, a left intelligentsia on the back foot and commenting on the sidelines at the rising right? How can criticism and theory be turned into action?

I would turn that around and say what is the point of action if we don't have the right ideas? Right now the impulse to do something active is leading to everyone flailing around just trying to 'be active' because we feel that's 'doing something'. I think we need to go back to first principles and rethink ourselves in a really fundamental way. Those of us who care about equality and our plummeting living standards need to lead ideas in the age of automation, we need to have the most open and fun and interesting culture where ideas can be thrown around, developed, rejected, adapted.

I'd like to think I'm part of that new wave of people trying to break free of the dead hand of humourless cultural politics emanating from academia and online liberal cultures that have shut down ideas for far too long now and has rightly become a bit of a laughing stock. It's bankrupt, it's boring, it's the death of all thought and you can feel it has no life left in it. Nobody who you'd ever want to be around wants anything to do with it anymore. We need something else.

Make sure to check out Angela Nagle's forthcoming book Kill All Normies: The Online Culture Wars From Tumblr to Trump when it's released by Zero Books.



IMAGINE!

GIVEN THE HUGE MOMENTUM THAT HAS BEEN BUILDING IN OPPOSITION TO OUR ANTIQUATED ABORTION LAWS, [ROSI LEONARD](#) IMAGINES A WORLD BEYOND REPEAL, A WORLD WHERE THAT ENERGY SPREADS INTO ADDRESSING OTHER ILLS ON OUR SEPTIC ISLE.

The polling stations open at 7am tomorrow. You have walked the streets of every city in the country with flyers, badges, labels, arguments, one liners, facts, leaflets, signatures, phone numbers. Your sister came with you door-knocking on your estate. Your father has a red heart in the back window and took a few more off you for work.

Your mother tells you not to get your hopes up but you found out from your aunt that it’s all she talks about when you’re not around. Your grandad was on the fence, she convinced him on Tuesday and they’re going together to the polling station. She’s proud of you; it’ll only show when she holds your aunt’s hand as she tells you if it weren’t for your mother she’d never have had the money to travel 15 years ago.

Your step-dad hasn’t told you how he’s voting. He leaves an extra plate of dinner out for you when you come back at 3am every morning after a 14 hours shift in the campaign offices and makes sure your sisters don’t touch it.

You were born the year of the X Case, when a woman who you’ve probably passed on the streets was raped and denied the right to travel by your government. She miscarried during the trial, and it took 21 years for the government to change a thing. You think about her a lot tonight. You’ve had two abortions from pills you ordered online.

In college you mostly fuffed around feeling sorry for yourself but the last few years have given you focus and ammunition. Miss Y was the final straw. You went to a protest. You cried during the speeches even though you can’t remember what was said or who was there.

You wonder is the woman secretly here. If she was, what would she think? You had three pints afterwards without dinner and punched a car window on your way home. It belonged to your local TD who voted against a bill to allow abortion in the case of suicide.

You went to a meeting. There were 70 people there and four people behind a table at the top of the room. They say things you already know. You went along with your friend who’s been at this stuff for years. She points out one of the speakers in the crowd.

“She’s in charge of outreach, I’m signing up for that training.” You say you’ll go along but you’re pretty shy. Turns out you’re a natural.

Some people are getting nervous at the doors so people pair up but there’s an uneven number. Pairs form around you and start trickling down the street and into driveways until you’re the last one left. The lad in charge of this session is inexperienced and doesn’t notice you’re on your own. You don’t really want to be trapped with him all night so fuck it, you turn around and go for it. When you get home 4 hours later you’re wide awake and sit up till 2am too buzzed for anything but staring at the wall.

Everyone was into Repeal. Everyone started pasting it and sticking it everywhere. You’re not sure, but you can’t complain because it’s better people are talking about it than not? But you just don’t trust it. Repeal. And then what?

The state has been telling women they’re useless scum for 80 years and the most you’re asking is Repeal? Fuck that. You want compensation. You’ve helped a few friends order it now online. You all plan on sending Simon Harris a bill. You’ve never spent €35 on a jumper in your life. It’s good all the same you say to yourself, there’s more people at the meetings now and there’s more meetings happening in more places.

The march is in a month. You’re leafleting dart stations when someone spits in your face. Everyone else takes one. A lot of people take more. Is it Repeal that’s working or decades of loneliness finally undoing itself. People want to talk. They’re happy when they’re talking.

The buses will be on strike the month of the march. Your group makes contact with them, a woman in the group is married to a driver and has to drop out of meetings because of her taking extra shifts. Their rent is increasing. Everyone’s rent is increasing. Three people have left the group because of emigration.

Suicide rates are rising. Suicide for fucks sake. You lost a friend to it two years ago. You can’t afford counselling even though once or twice you wished you were dead too. But things are changing. There are people around you. You are talking every day now. You are part of something you love and loves you back. You go to the

picket lines with 20 others from your local repeal group and block a scab driver from leaving the depot. 800 bus workers will come to the march under their banner.

On the day of the march 2,000 more than expected have turned up. The police have cordoned off the main street, ‘roadworks’ they say. This happens all the time lately. People are angry at the delay. Some people say the police are right, it’s not safe, we’ll go down the back roads and make a big impact when we hit the other side of town. But it’s too late for all that.

Just that week another story has come to light of a woman in Direct Provision who was arrested after the manager of the centre found abortion pills in her room. She is threatened with deportation. Someone with a megaphone shouts options at the crowd, and the decision is made. A hundred women tear the barriers off. Police hit them and push them back, but there’s 20,000 of you.

That was two years ago. 8 months ago the government fell. You surrounded the Dáil for 3 days until the new lot set a date for the referendum. You threatened a strike, a national strike, holy fuck. You know what tomorrow will bring. You’re going to win, you know you are going to win.

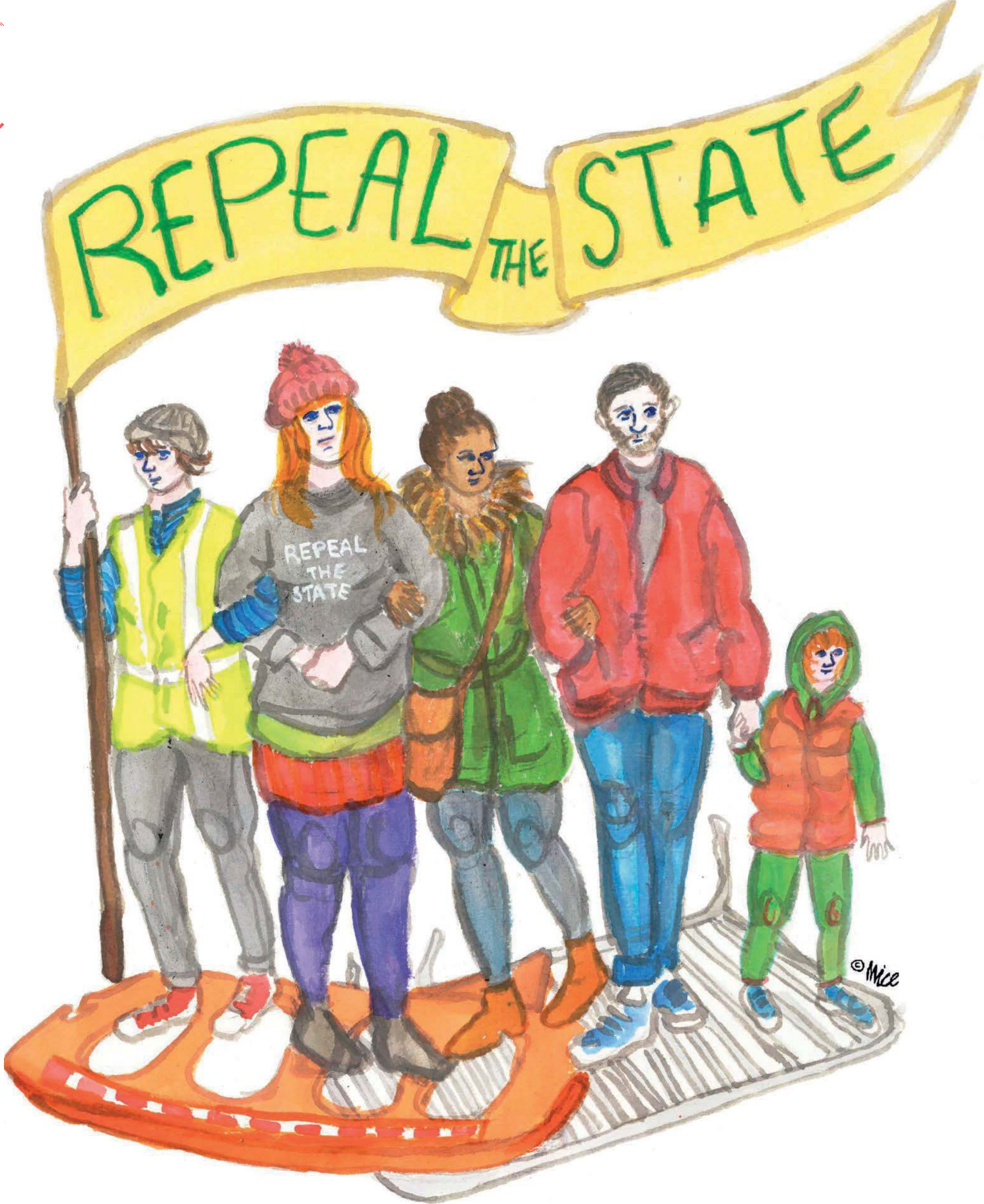
The strike will most likely go ahead; the new hospitals the government promised have not been delivered. The rent caps have not met demands. The homelessness crisis is continuing; you were evicted last month and are living back with your family. A tenants union was set up in Cork last year and stopped 30 evictions in one block, your cousin is working on one in his estate. They’re now paying €300 a month, unheard of.

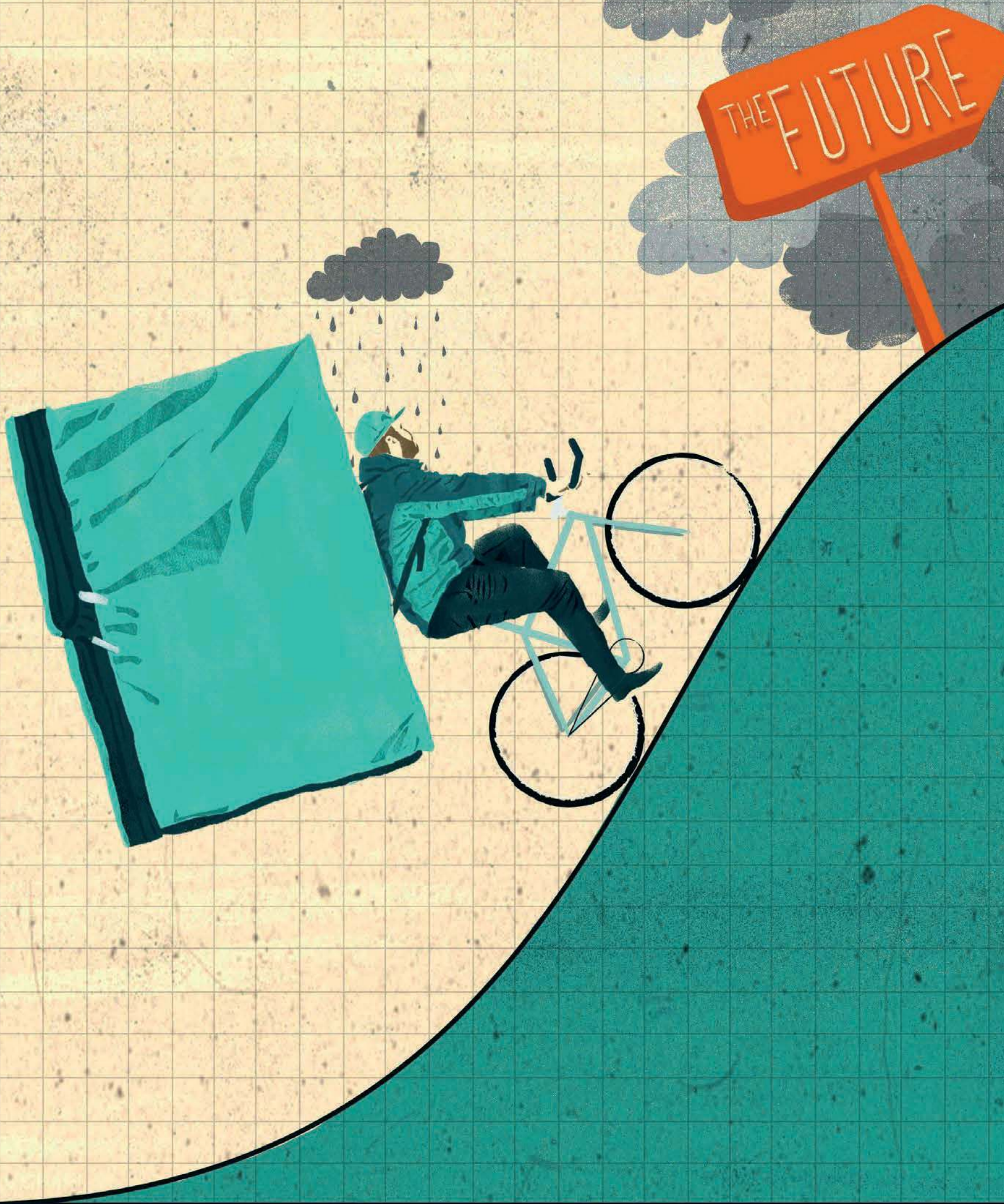
After you finish celebrating tomorrow you’re gonna meet up with him.

It’s good to keep going, it’s good to win again, and now it’s happening in public, every day.

There are no single issues.

Illustration by Mice.





Victorian Monster

With festival season coming in fast why settle for one of those disposable crap gazebos from Capel St or Argos? When you could rallying the shite out of a 5 metres high and 8 metres wide

Victorian metal monster from Irish Liquidators at 9am at Electric Picnic playing your hard house classics compilations? Only selling for € 65,000 like.



TASTE OF THE FUTURE

DELIVEROO ARRIVED TO DUBLIN IN MAY 2015. FOR THOSE OF YOU WITH YOUR HEAD FIRMLY STUCK IN THE 20TH CENTURY IT’S A SERVICE WHERE YOU CAN ORDER FOOD FROM YOUR FAVORITE RESTAURANT VIA THE MAGIC OF THE INTERNET AND HAVE IT LAND AT YOUR DOOR. JAMIE GOLDRICK CAUGHT UP WITH SOME OF THEIR SO CALLED “DELIVERY CONSULTANTS” WHO REVEALED A STREAK OF REGRESSIVE LABOUR PRACTICES.

Deliveroo, founded in 2013, now operates in 60 cities in Europe, Asia and Australia and has over 5,000 "consultants" working for them delivering food and over 300 employees.

Its Irish locations include Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Belfast. To date it has raised over \$200 million in seed capital, and as of writing is worth over \$600 million. It is embedded in the big-tech ecosystem, with backers who have interests in household names such as Facebook, Dropbox, Etsy and Skype.

Deliveroo is part of what Forbes call the "gig economy", whereby labour is performed as part of a flexible independent contract as opposed to traditional employment terms.

The business model is pretty simple. They charge restaurants commission (up to 30%) for any food ordered, the customer pays a €2.50 fee (with an additional surcharge if the order is less than €15.00). From this the delivery agent receives €4.25.

So for an order of two BBQ meals and two soft drinks at a local BBQ joint worth €33.90, with an estimate of 30% commission, this breaks down as €10.17 for Deliveroo plus a €2.50 ‘RooCharge’. This is a gross worth of €12.67 for the Deliveroo, with €4.25 going to the driver. €8.42 to Deliveroo as the platform.

These delivery agents are not strictly employed by Deliveroo as such. It is explicitly stated at the beginning of their contract that riders / drivers, or ‘RooMen’ and ‘RooWomen’ are independent ‘consultants’ and may not be treated as employees, now or at anytime in the future.

Now the terminology may appear a bit confusing. When one thinks of consultants,an image appears of overly paid researchers creaming it off the back of government quangos. The reality couldn’t be further from the truth.

As one of our anonymous consultants pointed out:

“I was working a long shift on a Saturday, 5.5 hour shift and I called control to ask to be unassigned (jobs would not show up on my screen) so I could go to the toilet. I requested 15 mins, he said that he wouldn’t approve it as that was too long, I pointed out that I needed to shit quite loudly and forcibly. Absolute joke that he was attempting to stop me from going to the bathroom”.

In the Service Level Assessment we obtained it states:

“Nothing in this agreement will make the Consultant an employee of the Company or be construed as having such effect. The Consultant shall indemnify the Company against any and all liability arising from any employment related claim or any claim based on worker status”.

These are clear cut cases of freelance consultants being treated as if they are on the clock. Employees in practice, but consultants when it comes to escaping an employer’s obligations.

Deliveroo recently changed their contracts which initially gave their consultants a minimum hourly rate with an extra €1 per delivery, to one where the hourly rate was dropped. Thereby leaving consultants to survive solely on a set delivery rate and non-guaranteed tips.

As one of our informants who was around over this transition told us:

“They said I couldn’t work anymore for them if I didn’t sign the new contract.”

€4.25 may appear like a reasonable rate per delivery, but as some of the embattled consultants informed us:

“Quite frequently, the allocations they give you are very impractical. A very recent example; I was in Ballsbridge and allocated to travel over to Stoneybatter. Drops like this usually involve cycling across the city to the restaurant, locking up my bike, waiting, receiving and packing the food, cycling to whatever address, which in some cases are in apartments, maybe ringing the customer on my phone at my own expense, waiting for the customer to come down and completing the transaction. Jobs like this can take upwards of 45 minutes, then I need to mark myself as available and cycle to wherever my pickup is going to be, hopefully close by”.

Many of the consultants we talked to gave us the details of what they made on their best days working, this generally amounted to minimum wage. The worst days usually involved earning well below the minimum wage, and in some cases getting “absolutely soaked” for their troubles.

This figure is to be considered as a gross earnings before they file their tax returns, insurance, and cover depreciation on their equipment.

This low rate of pay, can then be ‘incentivised’, with reports

When one thinks of of consultants, an image appears of overly paid researchers creaming it off the back of government quangos. The reality couldn’t be further from the truth...



When the results of the citizens assembly on abortion access revealed that 64% on the assembly would allow access to abortion without restriction, the Irish political establishment took

a little tremble and sent out David Davin Power unto RTE news stating that the committee’s task is to water down these proposals. ‘Reflect, before you react,” Kenny warned Pro-Choice

activists last year, declaring the need to wait for the assembly. Little reflection on the assembly’s recommendations here.



reports of Deliveroo irresponsibly offering €100 bonuses for their fastest delivery agents.

This begs the question, how can regressive labour practices which bypass decades of hard won labour rights, appear as ‘cool’ and progressive?

And regressive it is, at a cursory glance; consultants are excluded from minimum wage legislation, the Unfair Dismissals Act, Equality Act and Parental Leave Act. Seeing as they don’t pay PRSI they have no Jobseeker’s Benefit and of course are not eligible for Holiday Pay.

They are required by contract to possess valid insurance, yet in practice this is not enforced. While they are not required to attend any Health and Safety Induction and have no cover under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act.

Yet Deliveroo’s financial successes have reaped adulation and imitation globally. Forbes called it the next of the billion dollar startups, the Irish Independent recently released an article vaunting the success of the venture.

As one of the workers we talked to succinctly outlined:

“Deliveroo hides behind a facade of hip cool new start-up when in actual fact they are classic profit driven exploitative wankers”.

The recruitment video for Deliveroo Ireland has no emphasis on the remuneration offered to riders. Instead there is a chorus of flexible hours, staying fit when you work, and meeting lots of other cool people in the hospitality trade.

Money does not come into it, but hey it’s a free world you guys! You really don’t have to work for Deliveroo if you don’t want to. Who gives a shit

about making rent when your calves look this good, right?

Well, not quite. Our respondents were not so agreeable to this notion that Deliveroo was predominantly something that’s done on the side. The majority of those we spoke to were using Deliveroo as their prime and only source of income, and anecdotally gave a figure of about 50% of other consultants using Deliveroo as their prime earner.

What is stopping a group of workers or a local authority from setting up a system to compete against Deliveroo? One only has to look at the experience of Helsinki and their adoption of the Uber model, which they attempted to apply to public transport.

The Helsinki Regional Transport Authority developed an app called Kutsuplus which was developed as an integrated algorithmic real-time on demand public transport solution. Even after a year on year growth of 60%, the scheme was pulled as the city found it too expensive to run.

Conversely, Uber, Deliveroo and other well funded start-ups do not have this problem. Deliveroo to date has raised over \$200 million in funding, letting them saturate the market, plaster buses with ads, put branded rain-covers on bicycle seatposts where they operate, crowd out the competition, and most importantly withstand losses that local authorities, local businesses and co-operatives cannot.

In some cases, the arrival of big-tech into localities can be seen an un-democratic. Proposition F was proposed in San Francisco that would limit AirBnB rentals to 75 nights a year, affordable housing and activist groups raised \$269,000 for

their campaign in support of the proposition. AirBnB contributed \$8 million to the opposition campaign, which was spent on billboards, TV ads and community campaigning.

In the end Proposition F was voted down by 55% to 45%, a result no doubt influenced by big-techs limitless pockets and aggressive campaigning.

What went wrong along the way? Technology was supposed to liberate society, we should all be working 15 hour weeks, spending our spare time listening to poetry on audiobooks whilst segwaying off into the sunset.

Today the future has arrived and it consists of underpaid contractors cycling around town with oversized boxes on their backs.

The future is not what it used to be.

Big-tech’s foray into latent aspects of our everyday lives as epitomised by Deliveroo, AirBnB and Uber, should be subject to critique. Deliveroo no doubt utilises an extremely complex logistical software to operate, yet this innovation is used to exploitative ends. Deliveroo should be called out for what it is.

So what can be done? The failures of the Luddite movement show us the futility of lashing out against already existing technological practices. There is a need for legislation at government level to stop these practices becoming normalised.

Unlike the machines of the early industrial years, the technological cloud today cannot be broken, for it is everywhere and nowhere at the same time.

There is a small resistance brewing. The Boycott Deliveroo Facebook page is steadily growing and attempting to raise awareness in this regard. The

group set out that Deliveroo is:

“A prime example of the ugly practice of ‘race to the bottom’, deregulation and lax attitude to worker practices and rights. If this continues all jobs will be at risk”.

Rowan Clarke, a representative of the group says that so far the group has received words of support from TD’s Brid Smith and Mick Barry, councillors Paul Hand and Cieran Perry.

When contacted about Deliveroo’s flexible work arrangements, Mick Barry TD put it that:

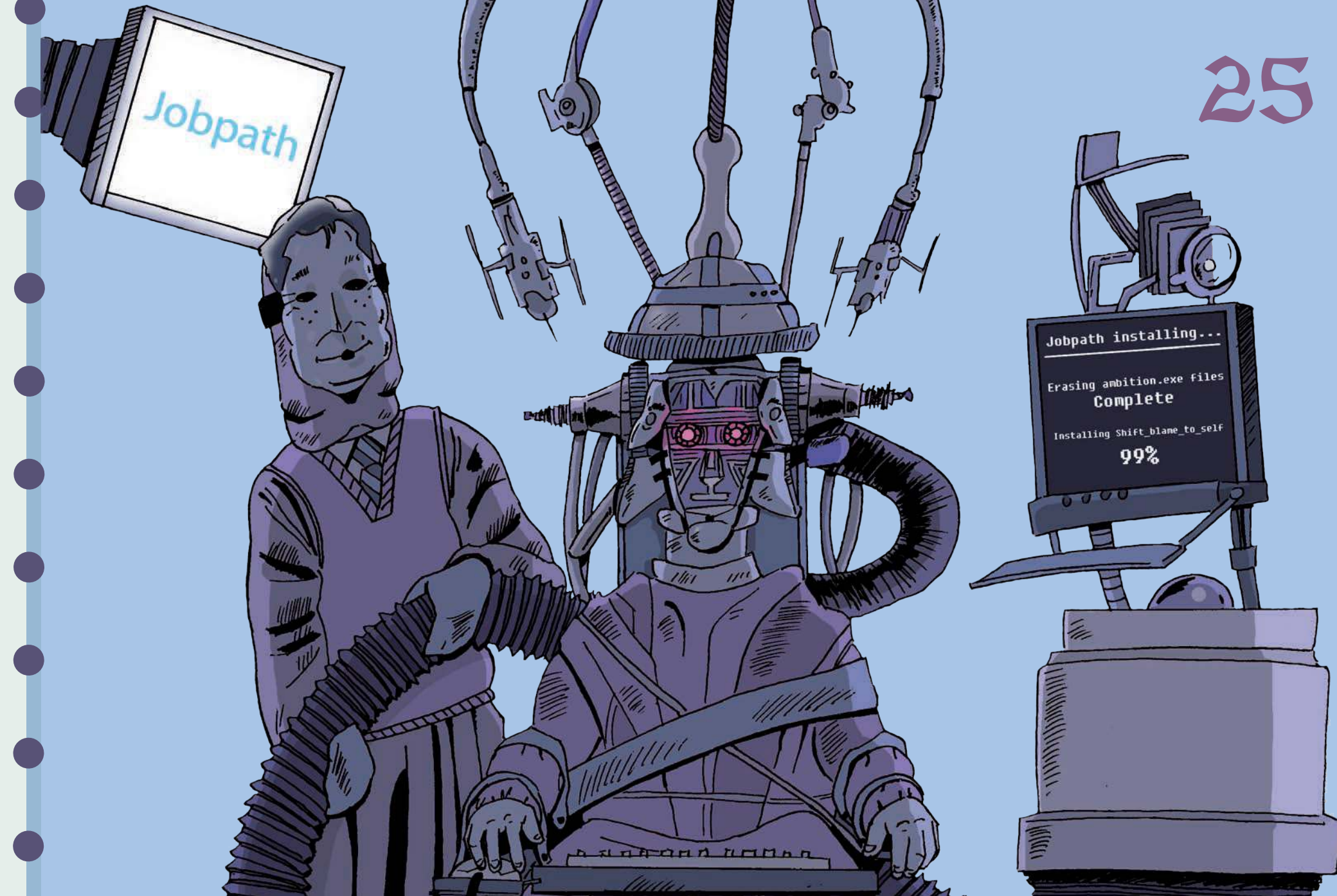
“Not satisfied with the precarious nature of zero hour contracts, we now have a generation that face an uphill battle for decent living standards as capitalism creates more inventive mechanisms to deny their employees minimum wage and basic benefits in order to boost their profit margins.

There has never been a greater need now for those in precarious work to organise, fight and defend their rights and work towards a broader movement that can take on these companies who see them as an easy target after years of austerity that has disproportionately focussed on attacking their future and the idea that young people deserve a future, free of debt, exploitation and unemployment”.

On the other hand, one can sit back and do nothing, enjoy your fancy curry and just hope that the industry you work in is not going to be affected by big-techs further foray into our lives.

As Rowan Clarke of Boycott Deliveroo would have it:

“This is not just about Deliveroo, ultimately this is about what sort of society we want to live in”.



you have been allocated!

A FEELING OF BEING PUT THROUGH THE RINGER, HARASSED INTO DAMPENING EMPLOYMENT EXPECTATIONS AND RIGHTLY PISSED OFF THAT PRIVATE COMPANIES HAVE ACCESS TO THEIR DATA - THAT’S THE GENERAL PICTURE EMERGING FROM A SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY RABBLE INTO LABOUR ACTIVATION SCHEMES INCLUDING JOBPATH. RASHERS TIERNEY GIVES US THE LOWDOWN.

Pub talk with friends over the past six months unearthed a vast unwilling game of Russian roulette with folk being randomly assigned to a new scheme called Jobpath.

Curiosity got the better of us - so, using the magic of the interwebs and our social reach, we decided to send a canary down the mine to do a bigger temperature check on what’s going on.

We were interested in hearing from people on a number of initiatives that can broadly be understood as pushing people back into the workplace, through some notion of readying them for employment or through the threat of sanction - be that putting them on a work placement like Tús or Gateway for barely the minimum wage, or dragging them down the town for the CV make and do’s or the supervised online job hunting so fond of the Jobpath overlords.

Yikes.

It’s been reported that up to the end of last year, Varadkar had referred 87,000 people to this new Jobpath scheme, so it was no surprise that the vast majority of our respondents talked about it.

What makes Jobpath such an object of fascination is how it’s been farmed out to private entities like Turas Nua, a joint venture between Ireland’s FRS Recruitment and the UK’s Working Links. Seetec is another name synonymous with the delivery of the programme - an organisation that has been at the centre of some dodge reporting in the UK and gets a poor rating on Glassdoor.co.uk from former employees.

Jobpath first got mentioned in the Dáil as a new initiative back in November 2013. And if you’re looking into the origins for this stuff, then the Memorandum Of Understanding put together by the Troika drives it with a call that there be “the application of sanction mechanisms for beneficiaries not complying with jobsearch conditionality.”

This writer first stumbled upon Jobpath when a friend directed me to the garish Seetec website, full of brutal stock photography and a rolling ticker announcing “now recruiting” again and again and again. I was left with the feeling of being rick rolled, mouth open gawping at tawdry corporate genericism reeking of the blandroid evil mega-

corp in an 1980’s b-movie like Robocop. This couldn’t be real surely?

Some of this shit started to take root in the FG-Labour coalitions Pathways to Work agenda which set up Intro as a rationalised “one stop shop” for jobseekers - it expanded Tús, set-up the market focussed Springboard reskilling courses and rolled out the PR disaster that was JobBridge amongst a million other things.

The introduction of the Record of Mutual Commitments that created a new “social contract” where claimants signed a piece of paper giving them a caseworker and committing them to a promise to “take up any work placement, work experience and/or training/ personal development places notified by the Department.”

At the time the Irish National Organisation Of The Unemployed warned about the consequences of the missing word “suitable” or “relevant” here. Those of you who are quick off the mark might see where this is all going.

In order to build on the Pathways To Work model, in 2012 the Department of Social Protection brought in the Centre for



Economic and Social Inclusion (CESI) from the UK to bring expert guidance to the table in order to, in Burton’s words. “increase its activation capacity”. This report has never been published. Questions in the Dáil asking “why” are brushed off with nonsense about its contents being commercially sensitive.

Jobpath, the ideology around this was never really put before the Dáil for public scrutiny. It just kinda came into being - this new language that appeared all of a sudden - imported wholesale as it were.

Back in 2013, Joan Bruton expounded ideologically to the Dáil on this new configuration of the distribution of welfare being dependent, rather than a given social right to the Dáil:

“We will support them with income support and do everything we can to help them to get back to work, but they have a social obligation to the wider Irish society to take up reasonable offers of work. That is what the whole activation process is about.”

Then the letters started hitting the doormats.

We cast a fairly wide net posting our survey on our social media pages and including it on our mailing list. In the end something like 50 responses came back. A quick email was sent to thank all those who took part and this helped us weed out any submissions that were sent in from fake email accounts.

The feeling of just being another number in the machine is what struck us first. One post-grad in her mid-30s from the midlands who had prior experience in hospitality and was looking to move into adult education complained that:

“It was very frustrating not to be listened to, my number was pulled by the system and no amount of human interface and logical reasoning would get me out until my number was moved into the next part of the machine. In fairness the staff in there were apologetic and earnest in their attempts to help.”

This woman who had been due to start a post-grad in September was still forced to attend their in-house training days until the course kicked off eventually making her ineligible for the scheme.

There was wide frustration too with cookie cutter levels of advice and career guidance being rolled out regardless of who’s in the room. Another of our respondents, with prior experience in community work and advocacy told us that:

“I was at a group meeting with a construction worker, chef and community addiction counsellor and the facilitator was clearly using

a corporate model which just did not apply. Not every unemployed person wants to put on a suit and work in Google and as Google don’t have enough jobs anyway it’s a pointless model and humiliating for participants who have not worked in offices.”

It got a bit frothy in some of our responses when it came to information being shared with private companies. One man in his forties, who’d previously worked as a taxi driver told us he was:

“Disgusted at having private information been given to a private company WITHOUT my consent. I hated being forced to sign a contract under a threat of payments being cut off. Disgusted with the Gov for throwing me & my family (wife and four children) to the wolves. Washed their hands of me. Privatising unemployment. A new and disgusting low even for FG.”

A respondent in the South West told us a story of two members of Turas Nua staff openly discussing the details of a “client” in front of everyone in the office. He said:

“When I asked the appropriateness of this I was verbally attacked by the manager of the office. I proceeded to return with a local councilor and we took a statement from the manager which I forwarded with my complaint to an anonymous title and office in Clonmel. This was in June of this year yet I have had no further contact with them since then.”

There was another anecdote about a receptionist and staff member making fun of a person who had just rang in:

“They didn’t care who heard them. They’re so unprofessional, it’s unreal.”

With supervised job seeking being high on the list of requirements there was frustration about the pointlessness of having to travel when this was an activity that could easily be done at home. One person described how:

“They just don’t care about people’s circumstances, as I live 14 miles from centre, no transport and don’t have a car.”

Jobpath runs on a “payment by results” model. This means the third party suppliers get a registration fee each time a Personal Progression Plan is developed and then “job sustainment fees” are paid out for each 13 weeks of 30 hours per week or more employment. Such payments to these companies cost the state €26.8 million in 2016.

One woman in her late 20’s felt like she was being ground down by Jobpath into accepting anything at all. She had completed two

Jobbridge schemes since graduating in 2014 and had been called for both Gateway, Tús and was now on Jobpath.

Speaking of the programme she said it “blind-sided my skills that I’ve obtained from my Jobbridge (which I worked really hard in) and are placing me into any roles that pop up.”

The same person talked about a feeling of harassment and being “unfairly targeted”.

“If I’m unable to show up for an hour of job searching on their computer, I will be written down as ‘not engaging with the system’ and my money will be cut. I have been searching for work since my last Jobbridge finished. They have been offering me paid positions as a ‘local deli counter assistant’ and a ‘home carers’ role’ (no education required). They also ring me up quite regularly telling me about these jobs as well which is beginning to get quite annoying and I’m beginning to feel on edge now.”

Another example of this dampening of personal goals came from an out of work actor who said his advisor “burst out laughing” when he mentioned what training and employment goals he had. Then ridiculous demands were put on him like an obligation to attend one job interview every fifteen workdays.

“This is something I can’t control,” he said.

In our survey there was a persistent fear around the dole being cut or early morning meetings used to discipline as part of a pattern of punishment. One person told us she had to cancel a meeting due to illness and was next called up for a 9am Monday morning meeting. Chatting to other folks she found out that this wasn’t out of the ordinary.

“I, and they, believe that this is to deter people from cancelling, because no-one would choose to be there 9am on a Monday morning. ”

We were open to hearing about experiences on other schemes too. Some of which bore positive results for people like this musician’s account of Tús:

“My placement is in an art gallery where I help out with installations and invigilate but I am also a musician and the network I developed is fantastic. That’s down to my Tús director he didn’t want to put me into something that I would have no interest in so worked to put me on that placement in the gallery.”

There were complaints about Tús too though. Take the case of one young teacher. She had just graduated from a HDip programme and

was trying to complete an induction period of 300 hours brought in as a new requirement by the Teaching Council and was suddenly told her welfare would be cut if she didn’t take up a Tús placement that got in the way of her doing teaching hours.

“Everybody knows that new teachers do not get full time jobs without first getting a foot in the door by being available for subbing.”

She says she eventually “snapped” and ended up emigrating to London.

Those on the placement schemes reported being treated differently than others in the same workplace. One former accounts administrator in his mid-thirties who worked in charity said:

“There were only maybe 10-15 paid employees out of 60 plus staff. The rest was made up of Tús, CE & Jobsbridge and there was a pretty clear split in terms of mingling or feeling a part of the group. It was quite demoralising after a while.”

Another male of similar age from Roscommon said he found the CE schemes were “exploitative nonsense”. He had to administer the workings of one while on it himself, putting him into a quagmire of answerability, trapped between the Department of Social Protection, his boss and a local committee. He railed against the organisations that used them:

“Local ‘community’ organisations that benefit from free labour include The GAA, The FAI, Hospice, Rehab - all profit making organisations who pay their CEO’s hundreds of thousands, yet fail to employ someone to facilitate the upkeep of their facilities. There is zero value placed upon the participants in these schemes. There are no acknowledgements for doing a good job, more ‘sure what else would they be doing, when they’re on the dole’

In early April, Varadkar announced the extension of CE schemes and the reduction of the eligible age for participation to 21 from 25. Despite the above complaints that Community Employment scheme provide a scaffolding of free labour to organisations, politicians of all stripes are starting to complaining that Jobpath is gutting the backbone of the scheme.

Martin Kenny directly cited I Daniel Blake as being a carbon copy of one of his own constituent’s tales. The Sinn Fein deputy gets this writer’s award for best fiery lambast when he described how:

“Every Deputy has examples of people in a similar position to those to whom I referred and have come up against the machine

of Seetec and JobPath. It is a machine that blocks, wears down, destroys and dehumanises people.”

Back before Xmas, Varadkar was pawing off questions in the Dáil about Jobpath with news that he had commissioned a customer service survey which kicked off in September of last year. The results were positive in the extreme.

Perhaps the overwhelming positivity chiming through in this first Jobpath performance report should be tempered with that realisation that those agreeing to take part in a survey ran on behalf of the Department of Social Protection could be discerned as self selecting.

That is they are folk happy enough to take a recorded call from somebody related to the welfare where that old adage of “say as little as you can to them” still holds true in many parts.

rabble’s own survey could be equally skewed by who we can reach online. It’s worth pointing out that our responses were split nearly 50:50 on whether folks would work for their benefits - which suggests those that took the survey aren’t all subcultural rascallions adhering to a dolie lifestyle ideologically.

If the whole crisis period was used to dramatically restructure the dole system, then we’ve been on snooze mode as to what that entails. There is simply massive levels of radio silence about Jobpath.

The Journal, for all the woes of its comments section, has been covering these schemes extensively enough and even fielded a critical opinion piece by Tom Boland and Ray Griffin, two Waterford academics who weighed in against Jobpath.

Jobpath also featured on Joe Duffy on two rare occasions, both negative in the extreme. When it comes to the rest of the media brigade, it’s a certifiable nadda, zilch, fuck all.

We can illustrate just how big this radio silence is by heading over to the Irish Times and taking a poke around. The supposed paper of record’s website delivers nine results for articles dealing with Jobpath. By comparison Job Bridge returned 310 results.

To find anything you need to trawl Reddit or forums and turn yourself over to the hivemind of experiences shared in online rabbit holes like this thread on Poltics.ie.

Maynooth academic Mary Murphy has been one of the few consistent commentators on labour activation schemes here, so

naturally we turned to her for some comments on why so little was to be heard about Jobpath.

“I think the main reason for radio silence – not just on this but on the much wider range of privatisation, is the real and palpable fear amongst local providers that they may be next for commissioning/ tendering, this has a chilling effect. This alongside more direct restrictions on using statutory funds to promote advocacy, effectively means groups ‘feel’ silenced and at both national and local level are less likely to speak out”.

Having shared our results with her, Murphy warned us not to over generalise from what is a relatively small sample and pointed to several positive comments about staff operating the service to highlight there wasn’t an overwhelming rejection of it.

“It is too early and not yet clear enough to comment. I am clear it does not work in principle or in theory; I have less evidence to say what is happening in practice and it is difficult to conclude from your survey for example in relation to staff. “

She did however find something in the range of anecdotal experiences we gathered and said:

“There is a clear sense of an inappropriate imposition of time-wasting job search activity, courses and other ‘off the peg’ interventions, systems based rather than client focused as well as aggressive pushing towards a race to the bottom, lower quality employment, wages and low hours encouraged.”

As one of our Jobpath correspondents put it to us she would “probably just have to take something from them soon in order to escape it.”

It’s just been reported that the cost of running the JobPath scheme is going to double to 65 million euro this year. While, of the 1,266 long term unemployed who entered the scheme, less than 30% got work.

So, it’s not surprising then that some have noted with a cynical eye, that these schemes could be looked at as nothing more than a way of cooking the unemployment stats and knocking folk off the live register or into shit jobs.

That’s a costly exercise in political chicanery, when these are millions that could be put into proper training or educational opportunities.





**“Capital is an abstract
parasite, an insatiable
vampire and zombie maker;
but the living flesh it converts
into dead labor is ours, and
the zombies it makes are us.”**

- Mark Fisher, Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?



SHADOW ON THE GLEN

TOMÁS LYNCH TAKES A LOOK AT THE DWINDLING NUMBER OF AN OIGE HOSTELS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. ON HIS RAMBLE HE STUMBLES ACROSS ISSUES OF PRIVATISATION, A FALL IN VOLUNTEERISM AND EVOLVING HOLIDAY NEEDS.

Glenmalure Hostel lies hidden in a remote valley in the depths of the Wicklow Mountains. Inaccessible except by fording a mountain river, and without electricity or hot running water, it is a relic of older times in tourism. Originally built as a hunting lodge, it was later sold on to Countess Markiewicz, and played host to such characters as Yeats, who wrote a poem while staying there - though as Billy Duffin, the warden of the hostel puts it, “It wasn’t his style, he was a bit of a city gent.”

Synge’s play The Shadow of the Glen is set at the lodge, and other figures from the Irish revolutionary period also stayed there. Markiewicz in her turn later sold it on to Kathleen Lynn and Madeleine French-Mullen, the lesbian couple who were active in 1916 and in social struggles throughout the following decades. Lynn held onto it until her death in 1955, before giving it over to the nation, when Dev decided to give it to the youth hostelling network to keep it accessible to the public.

Like the three other hostels in the An Óige Irish hostel network, it is still run by volunteers. The group of volunteers who maintain the Glenmalure Hostel call themselves Friends of Glenmalure. Billy tells me what they do: “We maintain it ourselves, we look after it, we paint it, we clean it - we do it because we love Glenmalure. We’re doing it to keep it open for the enjoyment of people who want to see a piece of history.”

The other volunteer-run hostels in the network are Ben Lettery in Connemara and Trá na Rosann in Donegal, a listed building that was built as a private hunting lodge by Sir Edward Lutyens, architect to the Royal family and a drinking buddy of Lord Mountbatten - the British aristocrat who was later to meet his demise off the coast of Sligo at the hands of an IRA bomb (along with two children, unfortunately). The warden told us the tale of how Mountbatten and Lutyens put in the tiling themselves one night after a few jars.

These historic buildings which have traditionally provided generations of young people with access to the wilder parts of our country are becoming a rarity. Roy Murray, marketing director of An Óige tells me that in it’s heydey the network had 55 hostels, but now only 24 remain open. Among those that have vanished from the network are the hostel in Aghavannagh, an old British barracks built along the Old Military Road in Wicklow to control the rebel populace in the wake of 1798, and Traenlaur Lodge, a lordly building in Mayo. Many of these have now become private residences or holiday homes.

Billy attributes this to young people’s changing tastes. “As people became more affluent they stopped going to hostels, because they could afford to stay in a hotel or in a guesthouse.” Roy points out that changes in the way young people travelled played a part - instead of walking and hitchhiking around a network of closely-linked hostels, young people preferred to drive down and have a hub to explore from. Ryanair played a role, says Roy. “It’s so easy to go abroad, young people don’t think of staying in Ireland.”

The concept of membership has changed too - An Óige is theoretically a youth organization, but the majority of its members are elderly people who became involved during hotelling’s heydey. “Young people today are thinking ‘what’s in it for me?’ Membership in the past was something where you gave service.”

However, perhaps there is a way to keep these hostels open. I chatted to Jackie Warnock of the Benwiskin Centre, a hostel in Sligo that is also a community centre. As well as bringing tourists into the community, the centre provides basic facilities and services for the local people, including a community garden, evening classes, weekly card games, laundry facilities, basic office services such as printing, a local bulletin, and a space for social events. “We’ve had a post office close down, the

local co-op creamery closed down, a pub and a shop closed down, so we’re a resource centre for people in the local community.”

The hostel is recognized as a Green Hostel. It was opened in 2000 by the Ballinlirlick Environmental Group, a local group set up in 1992 as a response to illegal dumping in the area to organize local clean-ups, took over the building - a derelict Vocational School. “We do composting, rainwater harvesting, recycling. We won in 2008 the EU eco-label to show that we have these standards in place. Also Katherine Mack voted us Number 1 Ecohostel in Europe in an article for the National Geographic.”

Another historic hostel that I stayed in as a child was the Mountain Lodge, formerly an An Óige hostel in Tipperary that has since fallen into dereliction and abandonment. Breeda Fitzgerald of the Bumcourt Community Council, an elected local community group that organizes social events and runs services for the elderly, says that losing the hostel was a big loss to the local community. “It has been a landmark in the area for years, and it’s so architecturally important - it’s one of the few remaining Nash-designed buildings in the country.”

Now, that community is fundraising to do up the hostel and open it up again. Breeda says the state has a responsibility to keep these buildings open to the public. “I think there should be a state intervention to help preserve these buildings and to help reopen them, because they do have a purpose, even to provide a limited amount of employment in an area.”

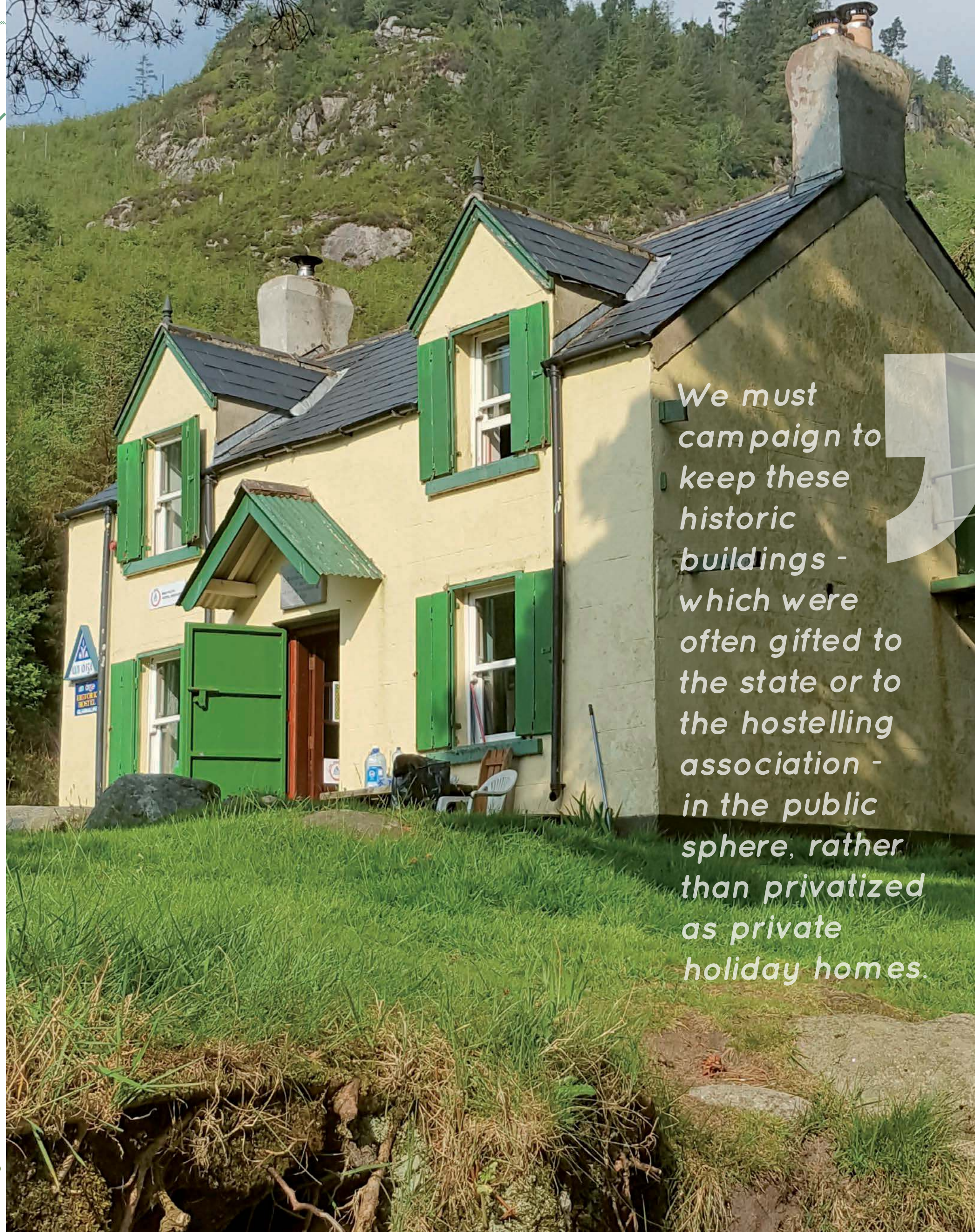
Roy rejects the suggestion that many of these hostels were sold off as a result of debt built up by the refurbishment of a few hostels during the boom. “Hostels were being sold every year before the investment in Errigal (2005) and Knockree (2007). It was because those hostels were not breaking even.”

Instead he says that with the fall-off in interest from individual travellers, An Óige has shifted

its attention to catering for youth organizations. “When An Óige originally started they were aimed at individual travellers, and as we developed our focus was mostly on youth groups, scout groups, things like that, rather than the individual traveller. A lot of the older hostels weren’t suitable for that type of market. The older hostels are beautiful and traditional, but youth groups don’t use them. So the membership decided if we were to stay focused on the youth, we have to build custom-built hostels for young people ... You get a lot of individual travellers who come to Dublin, they just want to go to Temple Bar, they want to party, and that’s not what we offer. We offer affordable accommodation as close to the outdoors as possible, and that suits youth groups much more than young individual travellers who want to party and have fun in the cities.”

We must campaign to keep these historic buildings - which were often gifted to the state or to the hostelling association - in the public sphere, rather than privatized as private holiday homes. Hostelling networks like an Óige offered people young and old access to the wild at cheap, fair prices, and now brings private and exclusive manors and lodges of the nobility into the public sphere.

When these are privatized, it’s akin to the loss felt if the National Gallery were to start privatizing its collections - the skies and the stars are as much or more our collective inheritance than the doodlings of the idle rich.



leprechaun economics in the hood

IRELAND'S CORPORATE FREE FOR ALL, OTHERWISE KNOWN AS A FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT STRATEGY MODEL HAS BEEN UNDERMINED BY THE EU COMMISSION'S DAMNING REPORT INTO APPLE. REPORTS OF A 26% GROWTH IN GDP HAVE LITTLE BASIS IN THE ACTUAL PRODUCTIVE ECONOMY OF THE STATE, AND THE TERM "LEPRECHAUN ECONOMICS" HAS BEEN COINED TO SUMMATE THE SHAMBLES. SEAN FINNAN TAKES US THROUGH WHETHER ANY OF THIS IS ACTUALLY SUSTAINABLE AND ASKS WHAT LIES AT THE END OF THE FDI RAINBOW?

The world has turned a shade darker. Rather than political authorities confronting the realities of a modern capitalist society that has made vast swathes of the population effectively redundant, it's turned the history books back a chapter to the smog filled corridors of manufacturing and nationalism. On both sides of the pond there are claims that a combination of restricting migration and a slashing of corporation taxes will reinvigorate "the rusted out factories scattered like tombstones across the landscape of our nation" as The Donald put it.

Ireland on the other hand faces a different side of the same problem. Since the 1960's, our elites have based our economic model on the premise that capital is global, and by making conditions favourable for foreign investment, native industry can be bypassed in favour of FDI and the secondary industries that grow around it.

However, with the EU Commission ruling that the Irish State gave illegal state aid to Apple, while reports of Ireland's GDP growth rates are called out both at home and abroad for being bogus, the promise of this FDI growth model is ringing hollow. It now faces an even more uncertain future as Ireland now lacks the United Kingdom in the EU defending its corner, while Trump seduces US multinationals back to the OC.

Earlier this year, Aidan Regan of the Geary Institute for Public Policy in UCD published his paper Celtic Phoenix or Leprechaun Economics? The politics of an FDI growth model in Europe. I spoke to him on the political implications here in Ireland of having an economic growth model based primarily on attracting FDI:

"Ireland has a growth model and that growth model is based on foreign direct investment. That foreign direct investment predominantly comes from US multinationals from Silicon Valley. That gives Ireland headline levels of economic growth, a headline recovery. It creates good jobs and good employment and who doesn't want to have a high wage, high growth, high skilled sector in their economy right? The problem arises because it's so narrow."

"The multinational sector in Ireland that's exporting is 90% owned by US multinationals," explains Regan. "And if you unpack that a little bit further and you look at the actual firms within that sector that are driving the recovery you are for the most part talking about ICT, the information, communications, technology and more particularly, you know, the tech sector. So the inward investment, the FDI from the tech sector and the expansion of tech firms

and the exports from those firms which are predominantly services is what's driven the Irish recovery."

"That's what's driving the recovery, these are the people that have really felt the recovery. But on average, for the most part, most people don't work in these firms, most people don't work in that sector and most people have seen their taxes increase and their pay decline and they've seen less investment in public services. 'Keep the recovery going', in hindsight it's such a ridiculous statement because for the vast part of Irish people there is no recovery because they don't feel it in their pocket."

The GDP figure published last year showed a 26% increase. GDP is supposed to be a reflection of the economy's productive activity. Yet as Regan explains, there is clear discrepancy between the figure touted and the actual reality of the situation on the ground:

"So leprechaun economics is of course a term that (Nobel Prize winning economist) Paul Krugman coined when it emerged from the national accounts in Ireland that the economy had grown, measured through Gross Domestic Product by 26%. Anybody that has any understanding of national accounts would know that it was totally nonsense. On that basis Ireland's economy would be bigger than China in less than a decade or thereabout. So it was a term that Paul Krugman used to describe effectively the tax avoidance strategies in use in Ireland."

The most notorious example of the kind of tax avoidance going on has been the EU commission's judgement that the Irish state gave illegal state aid to Apple which allowed them to avail of a corporate tax rate as low as 1% in 2003 and declining to 0.005% in 2014. The commission ruled that Apple must back pay 13 billion euro in taxes to the Irish state. Economist Conor McCabe explains this further:

"The main basis of the EU commission's case is that there had been rulings by the European Court that not all state aid is in the form of a grant. A tax deal can be seen as state aid. So what they reckon is that given the impact that there were sales being booked here that weren't part of the activity here, nor was the company taxed anywhere else, that really this is a form of state aid and it's anti-competition because other companies didn't avail of it. If every single company was able to do exactly what Apple did then it wouldn't be state aid. It's because they got a bespoke deal. Now there is three hundred of these kind of bespoke deals under investigation by the EU commission."

The Irish state is now battling this judgement, arguing that the EU is encroaching on the Irish state's sovereignty by meddling in its ability to set its own tax rates. The Irish state for the past ten years has played fast and loose with the notion of sovereignty. We hear the term pedaled about as an argument for tax avoidance, as if the supreme authority of the state is the ability to set its own tax rates. Yet it was noticeably absent in the aftermath of the bank bailout when the actual sovereign of the state, in other words the people, were inflicted with austerity and Ireland was infrastructurally ripped apart.

"There is a tax avoidance industry here. It's a very very powerful," explains McCabe. "It has very strong lobby. So if you look at any kind of FDI there is always a secondary industry built up around that FDI. If you build factories that are kind of feeder industries into that factory, that's where most of your jobs kind of come from in terms of FDI. It's in the secondary industries. If your industry is in tax avoidance then the feeder industries are accountancy and law and they're the one who benefits from this. It is a multi-billion dollar industry."

As both McCabe and Regan emphasize, it is important to distinguish the actual FDI that have a "bricks and mortar" base from the tax avoiding FDI - those that just have a broadband line and an office that funnels revenue through the government's books. Yet each successive government's argument has been that the 12.5% corporation tax rate is the golden net that attracts FDI, that without it there would be no growth in the Irish economy.

This entanglement of the productive FDI with financial tax avoidance is a smokescreen, used to dissuade any discussion of the corporation tax and the fact that so many companies are getting illegal state aid, effectively setting their own tax rates.

Regan's research reveals that it is the access to skilled labour (both domestic and EU) and not the corporation tax that is the main reason FDI is attracted to Irish shores.

"Our research would suggest that the core determinant if you wanted to identify a causal determinant, it's fundamentally the cluster effect of high skilled labour. And therefore the cluster effect of high skilled labour in this particular sector, in this tech sector, comes from the rest of the EU. 70% of people working in Google are not from Ireland. So when you have that cluster of people, these other firms want to be around the big players. So Facebook comes in, Twitter comes in and everybody wants to come in and they want to come in because they want to

take those workers, they want to have access to that supply of workers. The corporate tax thing matters to a certain extent as every multinational company with capital, and capital is global, is going to want to reduce how much taxes it pays."

With the EU now intent on cracking down on low corporation taxes, the time is running short on the Irish state using its corporation tax as the magic wand to attract FDI. With tax harmonisation on the EU's horizons, it'll be of little surprise if a populist backlash arises from the Irish elites here that cream off the tax avoidance industry, to cry wolf and scapegoat the EU for impinging on their political ability to create jobs. The corporation tax is being made a holy grail in Irish political discourse, not for its centrality in job creation but in being highly lucrative to a select few with access to the honey pot.

At a time when Trump's corporatocracy pledges to bludgeon down further domestic corporate tax rates, it is a dangerous game to think that this the only card we hold. Hold on to it until last and it may very well be a race to the bottom.

Most people don't work in that sector and most people have seen their taxes increase and their pay decline...





TIME TO REIT!

WITH MONSTROUS CRANES LEERING OVER THE DUBLIN CITYSCAPE, WE CAN HEAR THE ECHO OF "THE BOOM IS BACK" IN EVERY BACK ARSED BAR IN THE COUNTRY. AS FAR AS US RABBLERS CAN SEE IT IT, IT'S NOT SO MUCH AN ECONOMIC RECOVERY AS A FEEDING GROUND FOR SCAVENGING BASTARDS LIKE THOSE REAL ESTATE INVESTMENT TRUSTS. SO WE DECIDED TO TAKE A LOOK AT FIVE NASTY WAYS THESE VULTURE FUND PARASITES ARE TEARING THE FLESH FROM OUR BONES AND MAKING A HAMES OF THE PLACE.

1. Shit Student Ghettos

Since 2015, the planning process has been rammed with thousands of beds mooted for the North Inner city. One crowd calling itself Global Student Accommodation is set to deliver 4,000 new beds for Dublin's students by 2020 alone. Mooted rents are daft with talk of €245 per week for a Standard En-suite room to €345 per week for a Deluxe Studio room.

There are many other operations on the go too. Privatised student housing is a boom industry in Dublin right now. It's one where the poor unfortunates pay through the nose - getting themselves into spiralling debt like some sort of 21st century millennium serf with property management companies exercising contractual chicanery to deny them basic tenant rights.

If you thought that old prick of a farmer that kicked you out for being six months late on rent in 1987 was bad enough, wait til you hear about the pepped up private security dicks evicting students for daring to bring someone over for the ride.

Instead of having a chance to integrate themselves in an area through the traditional means of vomiting up Buckfast on their neighbour's door steps, they are kept ghettoised seven stories up and then flung out during the summer high season so the same vulture funds can rip off rich yanks and European types here to block up foot paths and queue for the Book Of Kells.

2. Told You Bloody So

Oh if there's one thing us Irish love, it's the sensation of fearlessly paying no heed to dire warnings from all sides and relentlessly rushing ahead like fools. And so it was, those bastards perched above our heads licking their razor sharp beaks were in fact invited vampire like across the threshold by ourselves.

As the Debt and Development Coalition point out, NAMA's top dog Brendan McDonagh, championed the fact that "NAMA's market activity and deleveraging have contributed to the strong inflows of foreign capital". While the damn Department of Finance met with vulture funds no less than 65 times in 2013 and 2014. They only met with groups advocating on behalf of mortgage holders five times!

Vulture funds managed to pay less than €20,000 tax, despite controlling assets of almost €20 billion. You'd think Noonan would be red faced at this madness. Instead he was having tea with some of the main players involved right before the loophole was closed while the the State was losing €350 million in tax for the past three years. Sure as he said himself they "carry out a very good service in the ecology. They clean up dead animals that are littered across the landscape."

It's only when the last of the marrow is sucked dry that we'll realise our elites fucked us up again despite staunch warnings along the way.

3. Shoebox Apartments

Cast your mind back to December 2015, and then Minister for Environment Alan "Power is a drug and it suits me" Kelly's introduction of a guideline of 45m2 for new apartments. When questioned on the fact that the people living in Ireland are on average 5" 7 and generally ten times larger than his action man toys, Kelly's response was that developers were not building "as it is not financially viable."

Despite the Royal Institute of Architects in Ireland arguing that such guidelines were not fit for purpose, human habitation in other words, Alan Kelly agreed with the whispers in his ear from Property Developers and Vulture Funds that the most efficient way to make profit out of space was to squeeze as many poor bastards into a place as humanly possible and call it luxury living.

No doubt as big developer capital sets down in the city it'll bring with it a colourful cast of characters like Ching Chiat Kwon - the Singaporean property developer who made his \$420m fortune hawking apartments of 25 sqm in size.

Already active in development down in the docklands SDZ, who knows what could happen if the likes of the "shoebox king" and others of his ilk started throwing his weight around and lobbying our own gommeens drunk at the steering wheel of power..

4. To Rental Hell Or To...

"Are you still in the same gaff? No, where are you now so?" We all know the answer to that, either back with the parents or eyeing anywhere within 70 million miles of the Red Cow. We can blame vulture funds for the spiraling cost of accommodation too. Take Ires Reit for instance. It's now the state's biggest landlord. This demonic entity was spawned and called into being through a stoopid legislative change that allowed the setting up of Real Estate Investment Trusts in Ireland.

With a hungry hippo approach to gobbling up housing it's reported as owning nearly 2,400 apartments and having plans to build 600 more. You can blame NAMA for losing its marbles on this one. In 2016 alone these particular bastards upped their rents by 12% in Dublin.

"I truly feel badly for the Irish people," said Bossman David Ehrlich late last year.

In their rush to satisfy investors, these entities take a drug fiend like approach to pushing up their rental roll over and sure if they can get away with it, then is it any surprise that other wanker smaller landlords don't ape them and get in on the act leading to a ripple effect in the cost of rooming up.

We're entering an era of wholesale population clearances, with the vicious Goldman Sachs-owned vulture fund Beltany Property Finance trying to evict dozens of families from Tyrrelstown in west Dublin last year. The people of Tyrrelstown may have won their battle, but the rest of us mightn't be

5. Down the Swally

After a century of standing proud at the corner of Capel Street, popular haunt Jack Nealon's served its last pint because NAMA sold on distressed loans to US private equity firm Oaktree. Nealons was that prime example of a daycent boozier, morphing over the years into something of an overspill bar for Panti - it was exactly the type of place you could pull up a chair and talk shite with folk of all stripes and predilections. Gay, straight, who gives a fuck?

The Sackville Lounge closed its doors recently too. Whatever about old pubs passing, nothing symbolizes the scorched earth approach of these vulture funds than locally held places names being wiped out in favor of ones dreamed up in the marketing departments of regeneration schemes like Sobo in the Docklands.

The future their brochures visually declare will be a brave melange of stock bearded hipsters clutching their fixie bikes, mingling with a tribe of far less individuated suits. This personality devoid "airspace" of miserable over priced flat white culture is the aesthetic choice now of rampant global capitalism.





Fair play to Coveney, the first Minister for Houses that can literally fabricate houses out of hole. Village Magazine reports that 8,000 new

houses of the 15,256 announced by the Department of Housing, are not accounted for. Coveney’s own mission to redefine the term ‘ghost

estate’.

We at rabble are really digging the latest release from Dublin’s subterranean imps Wah Wah Wino. Each release of the label has been quality so far but Davey Keogh’s Short Passing Game

has sustained us through the strainer of editing, proofing and laying out this monolith of an issue.



CULTURE VULTURES

WITH PLANS WELL UNDERWAY FOR YET ANOTHER CULTURAL QWARTTER IN PARNELL SQUARE, KERRY GUINAN WARNS US TO BE SCEPTICAL OF DUBLN CITY COUNCIL'S LOVE IN WITH VULTURE FUND KENNEDY WILSON AFTER THE “CULTURE” EVAPORATED FROM TEMPLE BAR AND SMITHFIELD SQUARE QUICKER THAN THE STEAM OF PISS BEHIND THE HARD ROCK CAFE ON FLEET STREET.



Fast initiatives warn us that culture-led development in Dublin has some dubious methods and outcomes. Experience shows that artists benefit little from such arrangements and nor do people resident in these zones. Parnell Square's creative makeover is due to be completed in 2020 in partnership with DCC, the OPW and the vulture fund Kennedy Wilson. Its proposals include a new city library, a cultural education centre, a design facility and a pedestrianised plaza on its Northern end. The square will be DCC's third attempt at the Cultural model in the city, originating with Temple Bar in 1991 and replicated in Smithfield Square from 1997. Once around with independent art spaces, Smithfield Square is looking empty as of late. In 2016 Block T were priced out of their premises there, following in the footsteps of the Complex,

the Art Tunnel and the Joinery nearby, and many other art spaces across Dublin. In fact half of Dublin's art studios have closed for reasons of rent or redevelopment since property prices began rising again in 2013. What is unusual about the Smithfield situation, however, is that these art spaces were situated in a zone supposedly earmarked to become Dublin's next cultural quarter. From 1997 onwards Smithfield was to be redeveloped as 'major civic space in Dublin for the 21st century'. The new plaza was designed for public creative use and 82,000 sq. ft. of cultural space was to be built on the west side of the square, comprising a 180-seat theatre, a workshop and conference space, and a 'Museum of Childhood'. Given these ambitions, you would expect that the organic arrival of art spaces in the area would be nurtured and protected by the Council. Failing to receive funds from central

government, however, DCC opted to offer tax incentives to the private development consortium Fusano Properties in return for these creative facilities. The consortium were optimistic about the cultural quarter vision, promising a 'unique mix of offerings, ranging from food to culture to entertainment and leisure' in Smithfield. The Smithfield Square that exists today, however, clearly shows that they were ultimately unwilling to put their money where their mouth is. Over the course of ten years Fusano Properties consistently delayed the construction of the cultural venues, arguing successfully to an Bord Pleanana that 'there are very few examples of cultural projects that have succeeded without state or local authority funding.' Remarkably, during this period a landlord from Fusano was incidentally letting their Haymarket House office block to Block T. Close by, the eviction of the Complex from their NAMA site

was approved by former owner and Fusano co-director Chris Kelly in favour of a Tesco development. Both art venues combined would have met a significant portion of Fusano's spatial requirements - yet once the market recovered they were the first to be pushed out in favour of more profitable tenants. An Bord Plenana made a similar move last year when they finally relieved the developers of their tax-incentivised agreement by permitting the development of a 24hr private gym in place of the museum - now the seventh within one kilometre of the site. Given the restrictions placed on the Smithfield horsefair and the closure of its independent art spaces, Smithfield now has even less cultural activity than before the redevelopment. Similarly the failings of the Temple Bar Cultural Quarter became crystal clear when, in 2014, Exchange Dublin was closed for reasons of 'anti-social behaviour' in the most infamously boozy corner of the city. This begs the question – what does DCC mean

when it declares 'cultural quarter' and who is its audience? Three distinct culture-led developments in the span of 20 years for a city of this size is nothing short of remarkable, so why the crisis in the supply of art spaces? The study of Smithfield's redevelopment found that people were willing to pay 0.065% more to live near Block T, articulating a clear demand for urban cultural activity which in this case was found to be twice as high as the demand to live in a house with a garden. Herein may lie the clue of DCC's intentions, however, as this demand translated into real property price increases in the Smithfield area. The turn to culture-led development in Dublin began in the early 1990s, a time when industry was overwhelmingly shifting to the service sectors, tourism flourished and international private development began to be officially encouraged through tax incentives. These conditions are all characteristic of a globalised neoliberal economy that trades on the language of innovation – a

language deeply connected to art. As the following quote from the 1996 Historical Area Rejuvenation Project illustrates, art was starting to play an important role in attracting international investment: The quality of cultural and artistic activities helps sustain the public life of cities and plays an increasingly important economic function. Cities compete internationally and investment is attracted by factors beyond the normal economic costs of labour and rent. Dublin is now renowned for the energy and vitality of its arts and cultural sector, which plays an important role in how the city is perceived abroad. Hence over the last twenty years DCC has increasingly stressed the importance of Dublin's artistic reputation. Public artworks are now a facet of all capital construction projects and recent redevelopments such as Smithfield and the Docklands place unprecedented emphasis on architectural calibre. Material conditions do

not meet the 'creative Dublin' mantra, however, with a 2016 survey finding that 76% of artists are earning less than 10,000 euros a year. Once credited for reviving Dublin's vacant spaces during the downturn, independent art spaces are similarly struggling - with little support or protection offered by the council in the face of the current market. As the Parnell Square redevelopment continues behind closed doors, it befits us to contrast the images plastered in development plans with their predictable results. The city library, music centre and educational space - if they do come to fruition on the back of private funding – would be welcome additions to Dublin's landscape, but they cannot be created in isolation. If the relatively small art organisation Block T had an impact on local property prices, what might this large scale cultural development entail? No provision has been made for social housing, despite the ongoing housing crisis and the fact

that these cultural spaces are being developed on sites originally acquired by the OPW for that very purpose. Revealingly the front page of the Parnell Square vision document glitters 'Parnell Square Cultural Quarter: a catalyst for renewal and growth among the civic spine'. It is time for artists to respond to such rhetoric: art does not exist to attract 'desirable' footfall, landlords, and international investment. Culture is important and should be accounted for but it is both too important to be left to private developers and not as important as guaranteeing a roof over everyone's head alongside it. Check out Kerry Guinan's full study *The Impact and Instrumentalisation of Art in the Dublin Property Market: Evidence from Smithfield, Dublin 1996 - 2016* over at www.academia.edu

Something that really pisses me off is seeing these really expensively dressed tourists walking past people on places like the Halfpenny Bridge as if they were a sort of an art project for the council to show how people used to live 200 years ago.

PAST
PUPIL
STAY
SANE

FREE
STATE NOVA

DUNDALK

TALKIN

THE REALITY MUSIC OF JINX LENNON SHOWS US THAT WE CAN ENGAGE WITH EVERYDAY LIFE AND NOT GO UNDER. INFLUENCED AS MUCH BY POST PUNK AND HIP HOP THE DUNDALK MAN IS A DIFFERENT BREED OF SINGER SONGWRITER ALTOGETHER. HE RELEASED TWO ALBUMS IN 2016 AFTER A SIX YEAR BREAK. WE PACKED MARTIN LEEN OFF UP TO DUNDALK FOR A CHAT WITH THE LAD.

So there has been a long hiatus of six years between National Cancer Strategy and you latest two albums. Is there any particular reason for that?

There were a few things; I suppose I wasn't that inspired by anything. With the last album I thought I had gone as far as I could into a direction that was dystopian. There was a lot of darkness in it; it was getting beyond a parody of darkness at that stage. I just felt that I can't do that anymore, the next thing needs to be more uplifting, but I had got myself into that mind-set for so long that it was hard to get my head out of that.

Why two albums?

I had a big bunch of songs. To take it somewhere else I was talking to two guys out of the Liverpool band Clinic who I met at the Liverpool Irish Festival in a club called Static and asked if they would be interested in doing something together and they were. So I recorded eight songs with them. Then when I started recording the other songs I realised that they sounded different because they were just done differently. So that's why there are two albums. The original idea was to make it a double album.

One thing that comes across in your music is your love for Dundalk, especially in songs like I Know My Town, it's kind of romantic but also realist.

Oh yeah I wouldn't be doing music otherwise, it has to be realistic like that. It's more of a sense of pride as well to be able to say things aren't exactly utopia, let's just be realistic about it. There is a sort of hardness in the music as well, because it's sort of coming out of hardness. Wanting to uplift people you have to deal with the basic truths and cut through the bullshit. I think I nailed it with that song because there is a bit of romance in that song.

Your songs capture the beauty and the ugliness of the town at the same time and they are not necessarily opposite.

I suppose a lot of my inspiration comes from people like Patrick Kavanagh and Sean O Casey being able to do that in books, to capture the feeling of a certain time and a place, the whole geography of the head and capturing the nuances of the locality. This is very important to me putting my mark on where I come from.

You accent shines through in your music, this is quite refreshing.

This is very important. Every album has to have the accent. I don't even have a typical Dundalk accent; it's more of a rural border accent. A real Dundalk accent is a real kind of boisterous thing; some of them really ham it up.

Empathy seems to be a very important part of your music, even in songs such as 10 O Clock Tea-break Bollox when it is about someone who is not very likeable to say the least.

That's very important to have the nuances. The thing that I find in a lot of political music is that you get the us and them thing. So it sort of puts you on a pedestal. This is something I don't like about a lot of political music. It's like we are

the pure political class, we are the rebels and the politicians and the business men are all bastards.

But you have to get into those people's heads as well because it's important to understand that there is a bit of everybody in every situation where you could have taken this road. It's important to understand that not everything is black and white; things get a bit greyer as you get older. So it's important to have the empathy in the songs as well because it makes them more believable and its real life.

It also means you're not preaching at people?

Exactly preaching is the enemy; there are a couple of songs that border on preaching. The songs that cut through that are the ones with the empathy. These are the ones I am proudest of myself.

Another thing that comes through in your songs is constantly reaffirming that people can uplift themselves and get out of whatever hole they are in.

It's very important. I do a bit of healing myself. I think it's great for people to have a bit of space in their lives because I work in the health service I come across a lot of people who do away with themselves. There is that thing that you can see people did not have that ability to see space around them, to give themselves a chance. Because there is nobody to look up to out there because there is so much fucking bullshit "why aren't you being happy?"

And it's moreish...I always say in my gigs "less-ish people you need "less-ish" in your life. But it's moreish, you know you have your box-sets and you're watching one season and they have the ads for the second season. Then you look at the second season you can't see what Enda Kenny is doing, you look at the third season you can't see what Denis O'Brien is doing.

So is it a conscious thing that your music is uplifting?

Yes definitely. That's why I started the Jinx Lennon thing because I wanted to uplift people. I was after coming through a bit of a bad patch and I realised that I could to get the energy out in the songs and sing about something that was real.

This was better than taking the indie-band approach that I had been taking for years. It just sort of came out unexpectedly like that. It was like discovering some new soup that you had made which tasted all right, and people were coming up to me after gigs saying things like "that gave me a tingle up my spine Jinx."

It was great to hear that because it was a total change in my life, I was always doing shitty jobs and giving them up but being able to have this in the background was great because no matter what I had I had this ability to sing my songs and reach people like that.

Christy Moore said about you that you are a man deeply in love with your country and at the same time deeply ashamed. How do you feel about that?

I am deeply ashamed of it. I went to a union meeting yesterday; I was looking at the walls it was almost like a town council building in space. I was saying to a friend of mine that there was no paraphernalia about trade unions, about people power, there was a James Connolly plaque in the corner and a big montage of James Larkin. It was so

antiseptic it wasn't about the people it was a pure neutral sterile building. It summed up where the people's fight has gone into this very bureaucratic type of place that could be anywhere

I'm deeply ashamed of the country. It's a pity the way people have been treated, the amount of people on waiting lists, the way disabled people and people with down syndrome are being neglected. There is so much waste and so much bullshit going on around. The people who have never been touched by the recession are doing even better now.

I was talking to Mannix Flynn in Dublin and he says that nobody wants anyone to get over the wall; they don't want heroin addicts to get better, because there is that much money tied up on it. It's like a big fish tank and they don't want people getting out of it because they have a whole dependency of social services on each other and nobody wants to change it because they need these people to feed off so that they can all keep their good jobs. That's what the song Sultans of Sickness is about.

What I like about Irish people is that people have their own idiosyncrasies, the oddness of people the madness of people, and the kind of strange friendliness you get in different places and the things they come out with. I love that. There is a sort of spirit in Ireland that is unbeatable apart from all the GAA and the rest.

You wrote The City of Styrofoam Cups in the early 2000s about homelessness in Dublin. It seems that things are still just as bad?

I got the idea around 1999 and when I used to go up to Dublin and go into the sex shops. At that time you'd see a lot of money around, it was just starting off, you'd see a lot of dark haired exotic looking women with expensive leather coats. I really noticed the contrast between these and the really young homeless people on the street. It used to frighten me at that time, now all this homelessness is taken for granted.

But it's worse now, it's like a Hogarth painting Dublin now, a Dickensian era painting. It's something that really pisses me off is seeing these really expensively dressed tourists walking past people on places like the Halfpenny Bridge as if they were a sort of an art project for the council to show how people used to live 200 years ago.

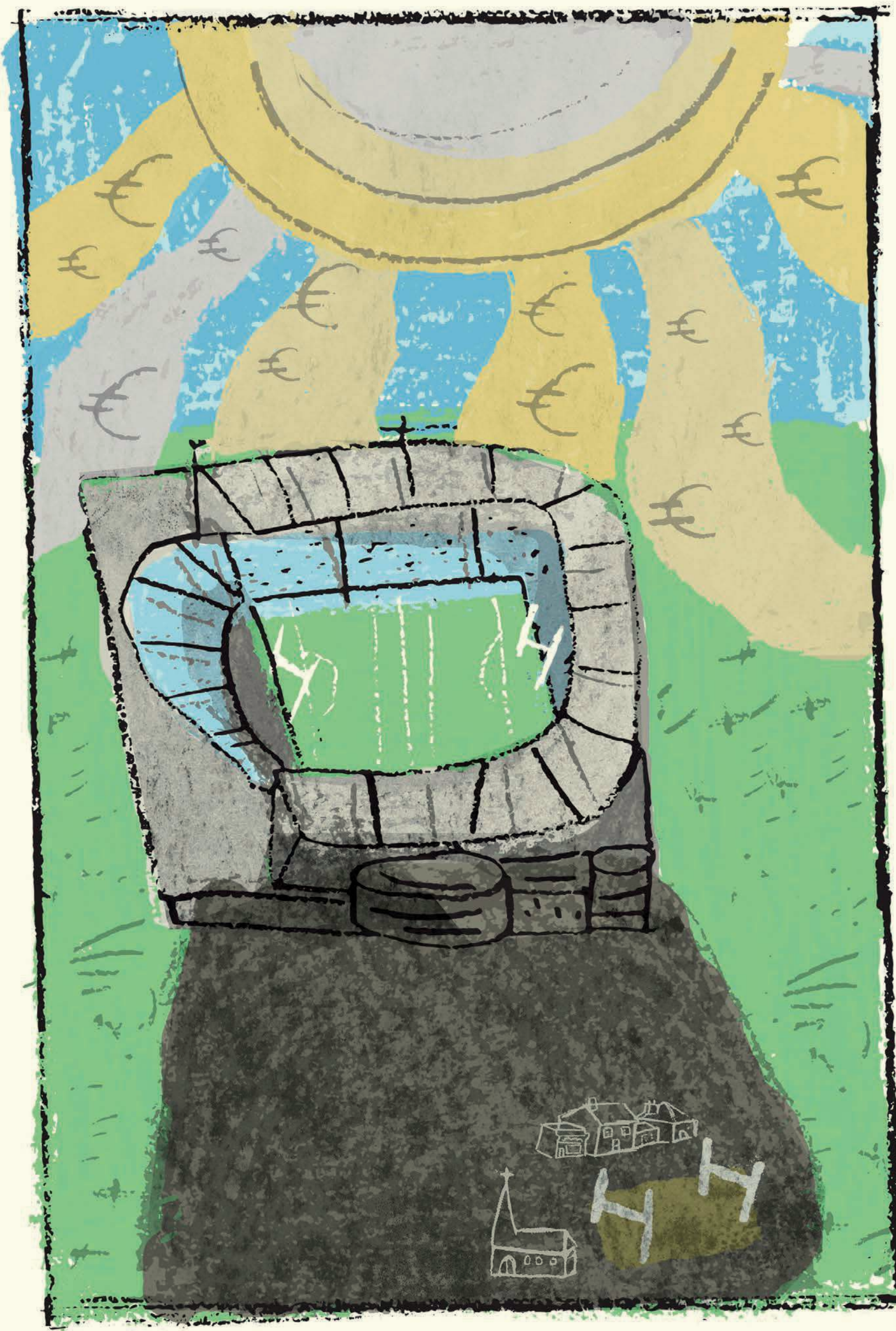
People spaced out on the bridge as if the council put them there as an art project for tourists to look at. Because people just walk past them as if this is the way that things are meant to be, but it's not the way things are supposed to be it's a fucking disgrace.

While there is a lot of rage in your music there is also so much humour?

The humour is very important. There has to be humour because if you are too serious it's like the emperor's new clothes, you are waiting for someone to point out what a prick you are. In real life no matter how dark it is, it can always be broken up with humour

The new albums Past Pupils Stay Sane and Magic Bullets of Madness to Uplift the Grief Magnets are out now on Septic Tiger Records and available at JinxLennon.com.





Welfare Cheat?

We noticed with some hilarity the obnoxious red ads ‘Welfare Cheat Cheats Us All’ campaign launched by the Department of Social

Protection last month. This coming from a state that actively facilitates tax evasion to the tune of 13billion euro and doesn’t employ a single

financial expert to tackle white collar crime. But shir look, it’s only cheating the system when you’re poor.

Paradise lost?

AFTER THE GAA’S RECENT 55 MILLION DEAL WITH SKY SPORTS, ALL IRELAND MEDAL WINNER GEARÓID Ó’RÍADA TAKES A LOOK AT HOW AN INCREASINGLY GREEDY GUTS GAA HIERARCHY IS THREATENING THE ETHOS OF VOLUNTEERISM AT THE GRASSROOTS OF THE NATIONAL INSTITUTION.

At present, there are few areas of Irish life that have not in some way been tainted by greed and self-interest, the GAA being the latest casualty of these poisonous ideologies. For me, there is something deeply troubling about this occurrence

Historically, the GAA was an organisation comprised of radical thinkers and idealists who would play a significant part in the nation’s fight for independence.

It is ironic then that one hundred years after Ireland’s most iconic moment of revolution and defiance, they should now risk becoming part of Connolly’s Irish capitalists, Yeats’ greasy till fumbler.

What has repulsed both myself and others in recent years has been the move away from democratic and communal principles at the highest levels of the GAA, where a shift towards neoliberal values and corporate greed seem to be well underway.

The organisation is now beginning to split into a grassroots faction opposed to the future commodification of the GAA and officials and corporate bodies seeking solely to profit from high profile inter-county teams and competitions. Such a split it is feared, may even lead to the eventual death of the GAA itself.

Since the economic crash in 2008, the organization in many parts of the country has suffered greatly due to the onset of emigration, an aspect of Irish life caused primarily by political ineptitude and casino economics.

Despite emigration being an enormous problem for clubs around the country, no definitive comment on the issue has ever been made by the GAA. With the widening gulf between the corporate managerial class and grassroots members, it seems that valuing such members is secondary to not offending the corporate powers within the organisation or friends in the Irish establishment.

The GAA’s actions throughout the economic crisis have not been limited to self-censorship. Earlier this year, the Impact trade union highlighted reports that the GAA had used the controversial Jobsbridge scheme to fill approximately 249 positions within the organisation over the past 5 years.

However, the clearest example of the GAA’s neoliberal turn was undoubtedly the recent Sky TV deal. Here, patronising Orwellian doublespeak informed us that the deal was undertaken for the benefit of grassroots members.

The money obtained, it was claimed, would “trickle down” to the rest of the GAA, a lie brazenly championed by numerous political establishment figures of late. Inevitably, such a “trickle down” has not taken place, much to the detriment of countless clubs in the country struggling to survive on a yearly basis.

In October of this year, the GAA announced that a new five year deal with Sky worth €55 million had been completed. Should the past few years be an indicator, then it is unlikely that many clubs will truly reap the benefits of this.

What is sadly apparent here is that in the hands of those who see the GAA solely as a product to be bought and sold, such a trend is likely to continue in the coming year and well into the future.

As my “political literacy” began to develop as a youth, it always perplexed and infuriated me that the GAA was lumped by many commentators into the same bracket as Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, the Church and other right-wing national institutions. In time I began to understand the historical context of this perception; that like other aspects of Irish life post-independence, the GAA became a useful tool for the political and religious ambitions of countless individuals and groups in Ireland.

What is also clear on close analysis, is that for decades, successive Irish governments have been particularly astute and clever in their dealings with the GAA. Knowing its cultural and cross-class weight in Irish society, elected governments have deemed it imperative to be viewed as patrons and supporters of the organisation.

At the heart of such an idea was not just ballot-box chicanery, but the fear that an underfunded, struggling and resentful GAA community would potentially create a radicalised and anti-capitalist ripple throughout the state.

Patronism and financial support from the Dáil it seems became another opiate of the people, and it is understandable then that the GAA has been mistakenly viewed by some as politically right-wing in character.

Due to this perception, the GAA for other commentators is also associated with a period of Irish cultural and social life that people no longer wish to remember, Joyce’s nightmarish history from which they are trying to awake.

For me, the use of the term “the GAA community” has always been a misleading generalisation that presumes that grassroots members, governing bodies and parasitic corporations involved in the organisation are an undivided, harmonious entity. Such an idea is akin to a Marxist analysis of society that fails to differentiate between the proletariat and the capitalists.

An absurd example perhaps, but far too many voices in Irish society view the GAA in exactly such absurd ways; that the GAA is a monocultural entity void of conflicting voices and critical thinkers, when in fact it is heavily populated by both.

The GAA I had experienced at club level with Castleisland Desmonds through to Inter-County level with Kerry was anything but antiquated and right-wing in theory or practice. In its totality, it was for me an organisation that was inclusive, communal, progressive, egalitarian, and robustly democratic.

The people involved were for the most part incredibly warm and benevolent individuals, people of great integrity who were entirely selfless in their efforts.

Such people ranged from players in the dressing room of all occupations and classes, caretakers who made our modest grounds look and feel like the Nou Camp, to volunteers who brought “post-training soup” during the coldest of winter nights.

One memory which stands out for me was when I left the field after a match, 16 years old, with my leg covered in blood. As I reached the dressing room, a caretaker inquired as to what had happened. I had torn my leg across a jagged stone near the goalmouth I explained. The next evening as I walked onto the field I saw the same area where I had received the injury; the goalmouth was completely sanded, not a stone in sight.

Trying to explain to the same man that the gesture was greatly appreciated proved to be a pointless affair, no thanks was required I learned, no praise was sought after. For such people, true value and worth it seemed, was to be found in giving and collective generosity. In their eyes, the GAA was a form of communal and social solidarity free of profiteering, political cute-hoormism and religious conformity.

Paying particular attention to “capital” here, money for the most part was a necessary evil that simply enabled clubs and county teams to survive and continue the generational cycle of this social dlúthpháirtíocht that the GAA provided for communities.

Throughout my younger years, with countless other interests and distractions in life, it was not just a sense of pride in Castleisland and Kerry, but the practical expression of “Liberté, égalité, fraternité” I

saw within the organisation that continuously inspired both myself and others to continue playing.

What I understand now is that my socialist convictions and the genuine meritocracy of the GAA meshed perfectly, and helped establish my overall belief that Irish society was capable of exemplifying such ideals in the future also.

It is troubling to think that in an era of greed and self-interest, volunteers at grassroots level may no longer see themselves as valued members of the GAA, but the victims of an exploitative system which profits from their free labour and goodwill. For those seeking to commodify Gaelic games, the nature of people who lay sand on stony fields is an unquantifiable mystery. What they fail to understand is that most grassroots members see the GAA as something passed on from generation to generation, something higher than market value that cannot be bought nor sold.

Much like Irish society in general, the GAA appears to be at a crossroads, to continue along a path of greed and commercialisation is to lead the organisation to the precipice of self-destruction. It is my hope however that in the coming years, the GAA will return to the principles and values for which it is supposed to stand.

The grassroots of the GAA must collectively act to ensure that the organisation remains a symbolic and practical example of egalitarianism and social solidarity in modern Ireland. The GAA must reflect and understand that the fruits of grassroots efforts are for the benefit of all, and not for a select few.

Those of us who have been part of the GAA world for much of our lives desire such opposition. Decades of generosity and selfless labour demand it.

The grassroots of the GAA must collectively act to ensure that the organisation remains a symbolic and practical example of egalitarianism and social solidarity in modern Ireland...

WHAT WAS THE POINT OF THAT?

WELL, THAT WAS POINTLESS. TO BORROW A MCGREGORISM. IT SHOULD COME AS A SURPRISE “TO ABSOLUTELY NOBODY” THAT TALKS INTENDED TO PRODUCE A NEW POWER-SHARING EXECUTIVE IN THE NORTH ENDED IN FAILURE LAST MONTH. TOMMY DOWNSHIRE TAKES US THROUGH WHAT’S HAPPENING UP THE ROAD.

The two largest parties, the DUP and Sinn Fein, went into the three-week-long talks period at loggerheads and emerged the same way. According to negotiators on both sides progress was impossible on a number of traditional sticking points including Irish language rights, LGBT marriage, and the ongoing legal legacy of the Troubles.

But probably the main source of contention this time around is the more mundane (by Northern Irish standards at least) dispute over the ongoing fallout from the “cash-for-ash” corruption scandal in which former First Minister (and current DUP Leader) Arlene Foster is centrally implicated.

Foster in her role as Minister for Enterprise not only oversaw the launch of the Renewable Heating

Initiative in 2012, but later intervened several times to keep it open, over and above the objections of civil servants and whistleblowers who eventually cottoned on to the fact the government was in effect handing out free money for burning fuel.

Examples of the scheme’s more egregious abuses include luxury car showrooms heated 24/7, and empty sheds with the radiators kept on full-blast with the windows open.

And, of course, several of the leaked claimants possess intimate family and business connections to senior DUP figures.

When these revelations came to light around the turn of the year Sinn Fein – despite being aware of the scheme’s troubles for over a year, with their ministers operating workshops promoting it during that time period – were forced by a wave of populist anger to issue an ultimatum to the

DUP: that Foster stand down for the duration of an independent inquiry into the affair.

This remains the major Sinn Fein ‘redline’ in negotiations, and they can cite the support (explicit or implicit) of most of the other parties in the Assembly. It was also the rallying call on which they fought the election, along with a populist cry of ‘no return to the status quo’, and they will remain aware of that mass of pressure on them from below.

Foster for her part has remained intransigent throughout, and has mischievously portrayed the criticism she has received as either a product of misogyny (ironic given her own party’s Biblical approach to gender equality), jealousy, or that mythical beast, the ‘radical republican agenda’.

It eventually fell to the late Martin McGuinness to conclusively bring an ignominious end to the previous Assembly – and in doing so trigger a new election – when he tendered his resignation in January.

As it happened Sinn Fein emerged the biggest winners from that contest – which was preceded by a reduction in the size of the Assembly from 108 to 90 seats – while the the DUP (and Unionism generally) were severely weakened.

Sinn Fein not only added 64,000 votes, they managed those votes expertly, experiencing the loss of just one seat in the reduced Assembly. With 27 MLAs, this places them almost neck-and-neck with the DUP who experienced a disastrous reduction

from 38 to 28 seats.

Those losses also (thankfully) mean the DUP have at last lost the capacity to trigger the Petition of Concern, a Stormont veto mechanism, at least on their own bat. Depending on if there is a do-over election, this should at least see some welcome progress on Equal Marriage legislation.

Meanwhile the Nationalist SDLP and middle-of-the-road liberals of the Alliance Party both made par, holding on to their tally of 12 and 10 seats respectively. However the equally disastrous showing of the DUP’s more ‘moderate’ cousins in the UUP – who lost 6 seats – means that if an Assembly is to be called prior to another election it will be the first in the history of the northern statelet to lack a Unionist majority.

The practical significance of this remains ambivalent as long as the pro-Union Alliance Party retain the balance of seats (the 2 Green MLAs could also probably be classified as soft-unionist) but it’s a clear symbolic boost to northern Irish Nationalism, as well as a historic marker considering the northern state’s basis in naked sectarian gerrymandering.

Sinn Fein’s dramatic electoral surge can be attributed mainly to the fallout from the RHI fiasco, and Foster’s disastrous handling of it, which enraged large swathes of the public already pissed off at repeated Stormont corruption scandals (Red Sky, NAMA, Research Services Ireland...), while dampening the enthusiasm of otherwise ardent



Unionists.

However Foster and her cronies proceeded to compound their dropping of an initial colossal bollock via a series of bigoted remarks and actions directed against Irish language speakers and Gaelic culture, driving otherwise apathetic or ambivalent Nationalists back into the welcoming arms of Sinn Fein.

Of course being the only party to back (the most rightwing version of) Brexit in a UK region that voted majority in favour of Remain – and that shares a land border with the EU – undoubtedly also hurt the party. However it’s probably wiser to regard this as a secondary or third order factor within a wider anti-DUP sentiment triggered by RHI and “alligator”-gate than the committed Europhilia that it’s being portrayed as by lesser-or-more clueless varieties of liberals and leftists commentators judging from afar.

Northern Ireland unfortunately remains a Royston Vasey in macro, and its political parochialism and insularity meant this was ultimately a ‘local election for local issues’, with the RHI scandal and Unionist bigotry driving a Nationalist backlash, and Brexit fears (and hysteria) more the ambient noise in which the contest was fought.

Even less convincing are suggestions from Gerry Adams among others that this was a vote in favour of a United Ireland. Even in the midst of the worst constitutional crisis the UK has faced since 1921 (or 2014), and steady Unionist demographic decline,

the numbers in favour of a United Ireland in the short-term remain shockingly low according to most polling.

Where things go from here then remains unclear, with the breakdown in talks leaving northern politics and governance in an even-deeper limbo than before. While Tory colonial viceroy James Brokenshire is now nominally back in charge, he has already declared his desire for a further extended period of negotiations – at least until after the Easter period – rather than repatriate significant decision-making powers to London.

His public declaration this week that there is a lack of public appetite for a third election in twelve months has at least nixed the prospect of yet another election in the short-term, though it remains the most likely outcome if no progress is made by Easter.

At this point that seems an almost inevitable outcome, unless the DUP’s own Iron Lady experiences either a Damascene conversion, a revolt within her own party, or serious pressure from the British Government. The Tories’ reliance on DUP votes at Westminster during this crucial period of Brexit votes and backbench revolts renders the last possibility an extremely remote one.

Nationalist calls for an ‘independent mediator’ will likewise likely fall on deaf ears, unless Slick Willy can be convinced to make a return trip on Denis O’Brien’s private jet to rescue the peace process for a second time.

Another election seems likely then, this time even more polarised along ethno-national/RHI lines as Sinn Fein aim to cannibalise the SDLP vote, while the DUP rally their troops on an explicitly sectarian flag-waving platform. In this scenario it is the latter who are the more likely to benefit from any ‘do-over’, as despite Foster’s toxic premiership, they surely can’t perform as badly as last time.

In particular the DUP could likely benefit from a formal or informal electoral pact with the newly leaderless and strategy-less UUP, with the latter’s voters last time transferring mostly to the SDLP as part of a doomed experiment in cross-community electoral relations.

In this context of polarisation, the left – in the form of People Before Profit, but also the trade union movement, and other activists (LGBT, abortion rights, environmentalists) – will likely face an even greater squeeze, with two ethnic blocs both in favour of reducing working class living standards, both with fairly centrist social views, going at it hammer and tong.

Sinn Fein in particular will promise the moon on a stick to leftist voters, only to perform the sort of U-turn a Ballymurphy joyrider would be proud of once firmly ensconced back in government, just as they did during the ‘Welfare Reform’ quote-unquote standoff in 2014-5.

Whatever the result – a restored power sharing executive or Tory Direct Rule – the material outcome won’t be pretty: welfare cuts, cuts to

public services, an NHS crisis, stagnant wages, collapsing infrastructure, are the inevitable outcome of ongoing and back-loaded cuts to the Northern Ireland block grant by two successive Tory governments.

This long term increase in human misery in what was already one of the UK’s most deprived and unequal regions will continue to play out regardless of whether a Shinner-DUP coalition swings the axe or a Tory bureaucrat in London. And despite hysteria over the cost of Brexit, Stormont-implemented cutbacks dwarf any of the former’s projected losses by several orders of magnitude.

This is the bright neoliberal future Sinn Fein-DUP have created through their meek acceptance of the ‘pragmatic reality’ of implementing Tory cuts and rebalancing the economy in favour of private investors: a land where big earners are offered tax breaks and the poor are offered food banks.

So when the sectarian kayfabe ramps up to 11 three weeks from now, with one side promising a United Ireland with unicorns and a harmonised corporation tax rate and the other a Little Britain Brexit with a B-Specials theme park, just remember: vote early, vote often.



Corbyn might not be the flavour of the month with the mainstream media at the moment due to him having some principles that are not prone

to evaporate at the first glimpse of power, but by eyeing up a string of Bank Holidays including one for Paddy’s Day is a quality bit of

trolling in an increasingly xenophobic political discourse across the water.

{MORE GUFF}

Meanwhile, in MONTROSE

HAS ANYONE ELSE NOTICED RTÉ’S ATTEMPT TO KICKSTART A NATIONAL CONVERSATION ON CLASS FOR THE AUTUMN? [MARK CULLINANE](#) STICKS ON HIS WADERS AND TAKES A LOOK IN THE IDEOLOGICAL SEWERS OF THE NATIONAL BROADCASTER AND FINDS A FEW FUNNY SMELLS IN ITS RECENT DAY TO DAY AND DOCUMENTARY PROGRAMMING.

“Are there distinct classes to which we all belong? Are they demarcated by an income bracket or a mindset? Are our futures dictated by where we’re born? Is there a new aristocracy in Ireland?”

Not my questions but those posed on the website of RTÉ’s external programme commissioning unit, who on first glance appear to have chanced upon a copy of the Communist Manifesto somewhere in Carrigstown and decided to pack in the day job of policing the airwaves for the regime.

Turns out it’s all in aid of RTÉ One’s effort to “kickstart a national conversation on class” in the Autumn, if you can wait that long. They’ve a call out for programme ideas that get to the heart of the issue, with the not-so-small provisions that they (a) come from industry professionals with the backing of megabucks production houses, (b) abide by the “no dry histories” rule and (c) can put enough bums on seats at 9.35pm on a Monday night to satisfy the advertisers.

A documentary or three later and Marx will be reentered in his grave, after which RTÉ can go back to pretending class doesn’t exist and enjoin us to focus on what really matters: disciplining our bodies for a new round of Operation Transformation.

As easy as it is to bash the numbing complacency and creeping commercialism of the national broadcaster, it is worth acknowledging that the odd decent doc does make it past the gimlet eye of the schedulers and onto the public airwaves.

Take Generation F’d, a three-part TV docu-series broadcast early this year. Offering up a sensitive and sympathetic series of stories on the deepening struggles of young people looking for work, dignity and a roof over our heads in this benighted country.

Beyond the personal stories, the contributors

spoke with confidence and passion on how the futures of a generation have been stolen from beneath our noses, with none of the usual chancers popping up to tell us that we’ve never had it so good.

Was this what RTÉ’s commissioning website meant by its advice to would-be programme-makers targeting RTÉ2 that they “need to reflect the preoccupations and obsessions of 18-35 year olds”. Looking at it this way, a show telling us that our futures have been sold down the river to vulture funds may ultimately be a pretty cynical form of demographic appeasement for RTÉ’s yoox channel. Sometimes being #woke is just good business.

Speaking of the vultures, over on RTÉ One The Great Irish Sell-Off was one of those glitzy, well-publicised documentaries on the aftermath of the economic crash that seem to go out about once a year. Its journey through the bleak economic landscape picked clean by the tax-dodging corporate vultures that Michael Noonan uncaged was grim viewing.

As with many of these kinds of glossy documentaries, their well-after-the-fact revelations conjure up a metaphor involving a horse and stable door, and you get the impression that an organisational desire to garner some street cred and to pre-empt the next accusation of group-think have something to do with it too.

No, the acid test of whether these kinds of one-off programmes signal some kind of progressive shift in the national broadcaster lies in whether a little of their vitality and urgency can penetrate the innermost sanctum of the ideological state apparatus: the Dáily grind of political programming.

But from Morning Ireland to Marian Finucane and Six-One News to Claire Byrne Live, it seems that the more the world changes outside, the more things stay the same inside. These are the arenas

of news and current affairs, where the same old voices have claimed squatter’s rights over the public airwaves for decades at a time.

Where everything is technically up for debate but where the critically deadening politics of journalistic balance and objectivity narrow the parameters of discussion as effectively as any externally-imposed censorship.

Where right-wing provocateurs are courted to bump ratings while progressive radicalism is subject to a mundane Dáily no-platforming.

Where even the most probing questioning or most damaging exposé, the powerful can count on being saved by the bell because nothing is ever too important to discuss beyond their few allotted minutes on the schedule.

Worst of all though, it is where a studios omerta is maintained on the real lines of division in our country and our world, for fear that the centre may no longer hold if we were to collectively acknowledge them. But rather than engage with, for example, the dire structural implications of Ireland Inc’s carefully-maintained place in the global economy as a haven for transnational capital, programmes splinter the interconnected whole of social, political and economic life into tiny fragments, generating reportage and discussion on a thousand controversies and scandals but connecting the dots between them is bad etiquette.

A refreshing aspect of both recent documentaries was their recurrent undertones of editorial support for the possibilities and even necessity of organised resistance to gross injustice, glimpsed in accounts of agitation by the former Clery’s workers and the anti-eviction PAH movement in Spain.

But nothing quickens pulses and reddens faces in Montrose faster or more reliably than contentious political collective action from below. From

striking workers to masses of feet on the street, the bigger the threat posed to the status quo, the more determined and disciplined the closing of ranks becomes.

The recent Apollo House occupation provided another example of the perils of putting your head above the parapet ‘round these parts.

With the tightly-run operation at Home Sweet Home giving few crumbs to tabloid journos nosing around outside for a reason to expose the commie conspiracy behind it all, outlets had to get creative with their smears.

How telling that one of the most desperate efforts came from RTÉ News itself, which had a mean-spirited and error-strewn crack at trade unionism, Home Sweet Home and Right2Water in one go. They tried to make out that the Unite union- a prominent backer of both campaigns- were guilty of a double hypocrisy by supporting the Apollo House occupation while leaving a solitary building of theirs idle in the city centre and trying to wriggle out of having to hand over part of it for social housing.

A mockery was made of this new-found concern for shared responsibility in social housing provision just weeks later when news broke that the broadcaster was moving to sell large, lucrative chunks of land on its Donnybrook campus- but for sale to the highest bidder and with RTÉ pocketing the cash, defying a Dublin City Council resolution calling for at least some of the land to be put to use for social housing.

It’s only fair to conclude that the class consciousness is strong in this one after all. So maybe instead of waiting for RTÉ to temporarily discover the c-word for a few programmes later this year, the rest of us should be thinking about a more permanent solution to bring about the public media we deserve and need so badly.



RAVE AGAINST THE MACHINE

MATTHEW SMITH'S EXIST TO RESIST DOCUMENTS THE HISTORY OF ACTIVISM AND HAVING IT IN THE YEARS BEFORE AND AFTER THE INFAMOUS CRIMINAL JUSTICE ACT OF 1994. THIS WAS A PIECE OF LEGISLATION BROUGHT IN TO WIPE OUT RAVE CULTURE IN THE UK. THE PROJECT SMASHED THROUGH ITS INITIAL ASK ON KICKSTARTER AND DOUBLED ITS TARGET. THIS ISN'T ANOTHER HUCKSTER MAKING DOLLAR OFF MEMORY. IT'S A SHARP REMINDER OF WHAT WE'VE LOST. RASHERS TIERNEY CAUGHT UP WITH MATTHEW TO TALK BRANDED PROTESTS AND THE ENCLOSURE OF COUNTER CULTURE.

Looking back these were a really powerful few years, however with my cynics hat on (and I borrowed it from a friend) could one view these years of raving and partying however as sort of a retreat from politics, like almost a defeatism really until the CJA came in and forced people to get political again? Or were the politics always there?

The way the three marches grew in size from 20,000 people on the first one to 100,000 people on the third one has always been a kind of indication of just how important this issue was to people back then and just how much the idea of resistance had taken hold of the public imagination.

I don't think politics as defined by right left and centre thinking had much to do with it. It was much more to do with how much resentment people felt about government intruding into their lives in a way that was unacceptable, overbearing and undemocratic. Free association is a notion that underpins democracy.

The same goes for cultural freedom. How can you license culture and maintain the illusion that democracy still exists? Rave was everywhere. Free parties were going on everywhere. Political leadership is based around the idea of parties, we felt we belonged to the free party. One that wasn't

allied to any to any of the failed management consultancies in Parliament who seem to think that they have a divine right to administer power, economic policy and freedom.

Freedom is an inherent right to people in a democracy. It isn't something that can be licensed back to the public in return for their complicity with government and financial legislation. Government exists because of the people, not despite them.

Or to spite them in the case of CJA.

Could you tell me about the photo I sent on with the SWP flooding the demos with placards? Two more distant notions of a revolutionary party one could not imagine perhaps?

The important thing was that there were no Kill The Bill posters on the first march. The SWP began their campaign to brand the opposition to the CJA only on the second march. When the third one happened they absolutely flooded the event with their advertising.

It was ultimately unhelpful because after the mass Police violence of the third march it gave the gutter press a great headline that made the protest seem like it was an anti Police event advocating death to the Old Bill which is a ludicrous idea. A bit like the

SWP...

DIY culture wasn't about the politics of right, left and centre. It was about housing yourself, making your own music, creating your own culture and taking some personal political responsibility in shaping the world that you wanted to live in, instead of abdicating that responsibility to someone random who represents their organisation first and the interests of the public second.

One of your videos for the book talks about how these free party and festival scenes wound their way into the massive festivals that we know today, I'm thinking of something like Boomtown in the UK perhaps from first hand experience - which owes a lot to these traditions and I'm sure there are others. How does your book view this? Is it an inevitable commercialisation or is it simply a survival methodology for people that came from these worlds, looking to carve out a niche for themselves and get some income on the go?

I think survival methodology is a great idea... mutate to survive is a great phrase.

It is one of the defining characteristics of the UK population that we like nothing better than

getting together in huge numbers and having a massive knees up. That's a testament to quality of community here and it's something that I have always felt is very life affirming about our small country and its creative industriousness.

But at the same time this community unity was threatening to government. The free trade it involved meant revenue creation that went into the pockets of ordinary people. It also meant those people could lead a mobile lifestyle without an address. It also meant that there was social networking happening that challenged the idea of the necessity of government or just simply ignored it altogether.

The CJA served to enclose an entire culture that subsequently has proved to be a product that a vast cross section of the public want to buy into every weekend of the summer. Only now ownership of that culture is mediated by government and corporate agencies who profit from it and define its very existence via the terms of its license. There are a few exceptions of course but none escape the licensing process.

You had to reduce 1200 images down to less than 300. How in God's name did you do it? Gut instinct? Cruelty? Random design?!!

It took a trip to a warehouse space in Camden from the West Country where we printed out all 1200 images and laid them on the floor of the building. It was bloody savage and really hard work because clearly I have an emotional attachment to the images that I've made and it was hard to overcome that.

I ditched over 800 images myself then called in the independent eye of my designer Patrick Fry and together we indulged in some ruthless decision making to bring the edit down enough to fit into the pages we had available. It was a question of trying to maintain the narrative while avoiding repetition and at the same time trying to keep a pace that allowed the images to breathe in

their own right if that makes sense.

I've read you talking about how you lived through an era that provided "the original subject matter" that is being recycled ad nauseum today. Was there really a sense of a potentially positive future back then? Was there a real sense of newness? Plenty of people talk these days about the notion of a suspended future - where we can't even imagine a world beyond the capitalist system. Do you share this grim view of the present or can you find a positive?

The early parties that we just went to felt like we were accessing some kind of great secret that was only shared by those people that were there. It felt like a common alliance, a creation of togetherness that was totally new.

The emphasis was always on what you could give to a situation rather than take from it. That every stranger was a potential friend and in no way a danger.

And that you could be in the middle of nowhere in a great crowd of people and feel like pretty much everybody had your back. Although clearly there were some wrong uns out there too.

In some ways the invention and marketing of terrorism as an excuse to remove liberty was the global response to DIY and rave culture.

People forget significant cultural events like Seattle and Genoa were happening. Clearly you cannot deny that the Twin Towers came down but that event is riddled with doubt, propaganda and misinformation. Only one thing is certain and that

is we the public will never know the truth. But that fact is enough for doubt to exist. In the time since then the entire structure of world politics has shifted. The UK went to war partly because of it. That in turn has caused the destabilization of Europe and the immigration crisis, without which Brexit may never have got onto the political agenda.

I was in London in 1993 close enough to hear the bang when Harrods got blown up. Only a couple of weeks back one man in a small grey Hyundai was credited with threatening the entire fabric of so called British democracy. Really?

Personally the best positive outcome for the future would be a recognition that the moral integrity of Parliament has been thoroughly compromised and that British democratic leadership should be reinvented from the ground up excluding any of the failed organisations that currently inhabit the corridors of power in the Palace of Westminster.

Okay and finally, there is something really unknown and unposed in your shots? I noticed this too in early photos from the Dublin rave scene. It's like social media has robbed people of their ability to just enjoy nights out or events, it's like they are always mediating themselves somehow. Always aware of the cameras. Have you noticed this too?

I'd agree with you wholeheartedly on that, the digital camera revolution

seems to have trained almost everyone to pose for the camera and that is a process that is ongoing in its sophistication. The other consequence of that is the overtly violent policing of the 80s and early 90s has become impossible and has caused public policing strategy to change into something far more intelligence led and passive aggressive in its nature.

ID cards were once a massive political issue that was dropped because it was so politically contentious. Now everyone's phones contain much more information about people's behaviour than any ID card ever could. It's no wonder that they just passed the Snoopers Charter allowing the covert digital mass surveillance of the public. And funnily enough access to festival and rave culture now is almost exclusively granted via a digital process. Let your readers ponder about that for a while... 5% of the population of the UK for instance applied for a Glastonbury ticket this year.

One of the pics that didn't make it into the book has Mark Stone in it keeping an eye on the Reclaim The Streets in Trafalgar Square. He was just one of the undercover cops who coerced women into relationships and children as part of his job.

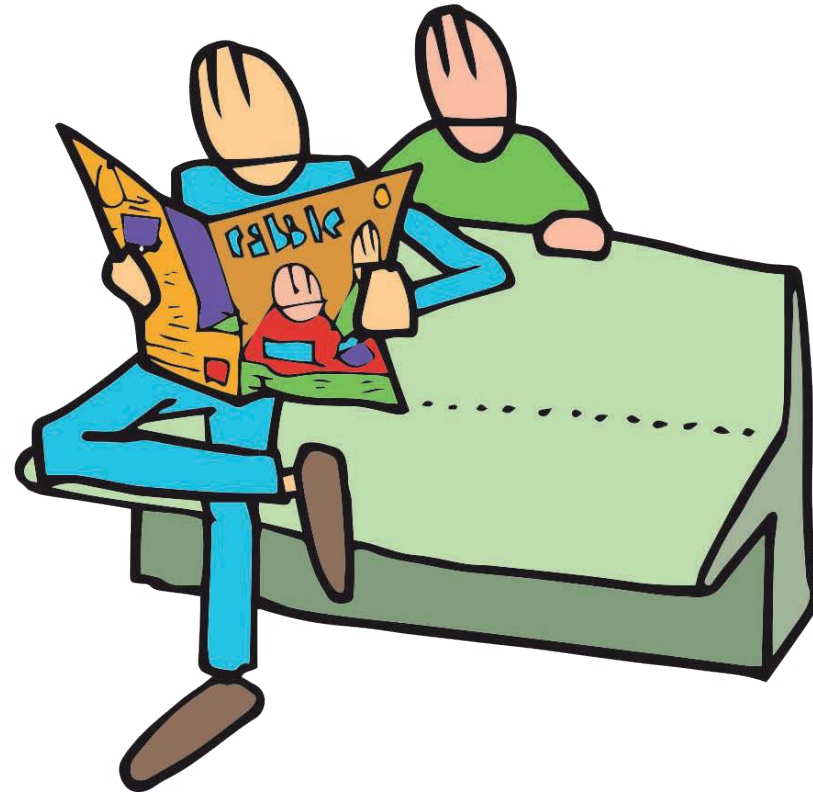
I always have wanted to highlight the fact that if government is responsible for this strategy what other contempt have they shown people in opposition?

Exist To Resist By Matthew Smith is available for order on www.youthclubarchive.com

The CJA served to enclose an entire culture that subsequently proved to be a product that a vast cross section of the public want to buy into every weekend of the summer...



EVOLVE OR DIE?



rabble has been a fixture of alternative media in Ireland now for over 5 years. During that time we have put out 13 deadly print issues distributed well over 100,000 free papers across this septic isle and beyond. We've done plenty more on our website, and used our huge online following to spike current affairs and lent our social reach to dozens of grassroots campaigns and events. Most recently we've stepped into high impact video content.

rabble is now at a stage where we need to evolve or die. For a long time, we've been a razor toothed minnow in the broader swamp of what passes as media on this septic isle. We're punch proud of carving out a space for ourselves with a dogged tenacity and if our recent survey told us anything, it's that you lot really, REALLY value what we do and want us to keep her lit.

Yet on the inside, the project's hit an impasse. We want to maintain ground gained, bring new people on board and up our game as media makers - we want the freedom to take on new challenges. And fundamentally, that means reshaping how alternative media is made here.

Making our project financially sustainable in the long run is a start. With an eye on models elsewhere, we see turning rabble into a worker cooperative that is self sustaining, rewards effort and punches well above our weight.

Rather than daydreaming about vast vats of funding falling into our lap from philanthropic millionaires or begging for dosh off the unions to up the alternative media ante - we are looking to you the reader, as we've always done.

We ran a successful Fundit campaign in the past, and since then we've only survived due to two long summers in the festival trenches slopping out pints with our comrades in the Workers Beer Company.


We need to cover our costs in a regular and structured fashion without having to resort to big fundraising drives or putting our existence in the hands of the funding application gods, which see us pissing against the wind and putting projects on hold for months on end.

We're putting a plan together to make this whole thing sustainable in the long run, so it can do two things (1) survive financially and (2) reproduce itself with a new generation of rabble rousers, editors, contributors and graphics heads.

If our Patreon succeeds we'll be able to put our shoulder to the wheel to put out regular editions of rabble as well as more online content and sick videos. Together we'll turn rabble into a stable Ireland's Own for all you madbags and sinister fringers out there.

So you in?

WWW.PATREON.COM/WEARERABBLE




REPEAL AISGHAIR

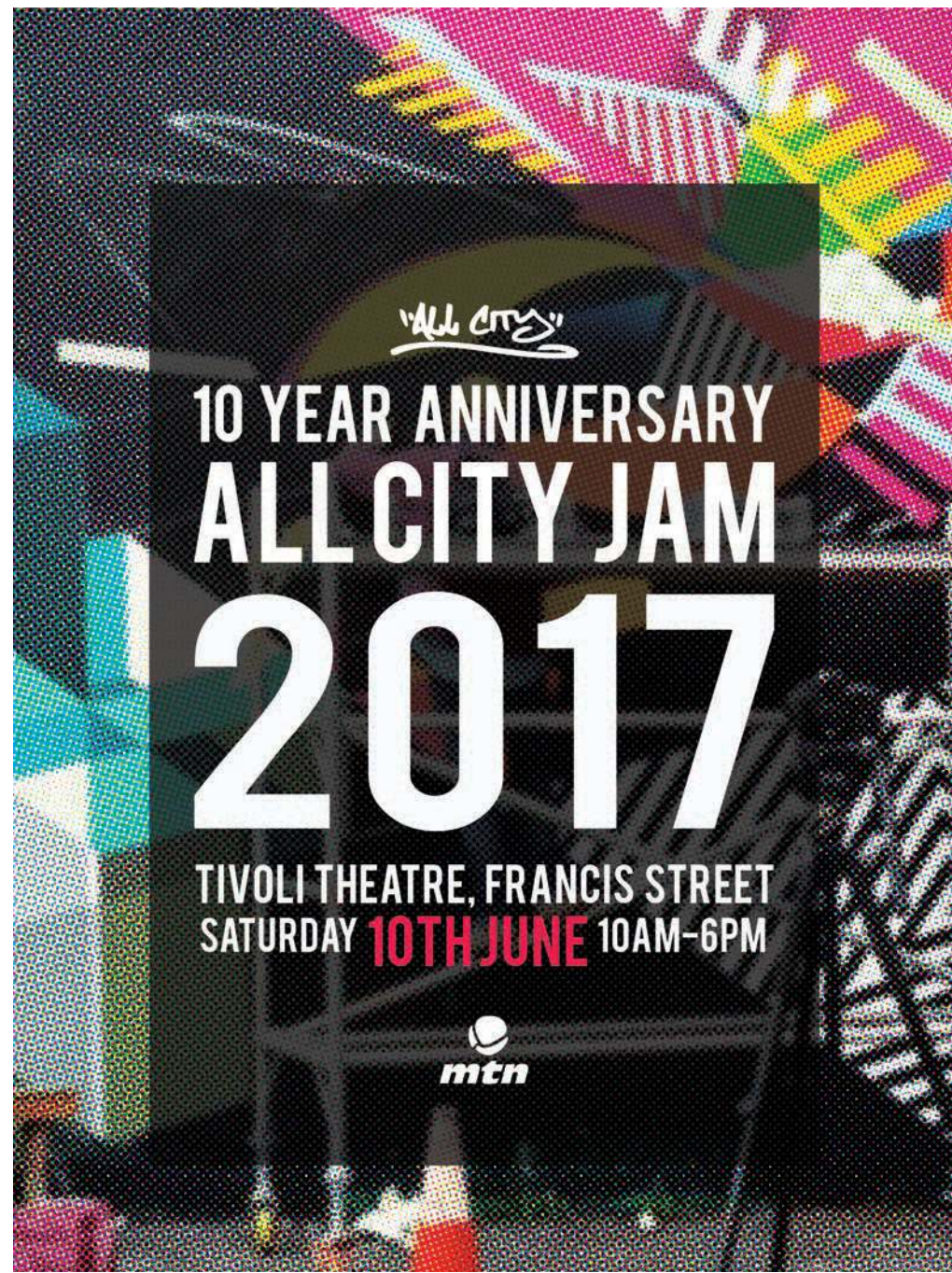
Hey Repealers,

The Citizen's Assembly will report shortly and we should hopefully be preparing for a referendum to repeal the 8th amendment to the constitution. While groups and parties have different views on what should happen post-repeal we need now to unite around this simple, single message - we must win this referendum and we must repeal the eight amendment.

UNITE TO WIN....UNITE FOR REPEAL

Louise O'Reilly TD
Sinn Féin spokesperson on health






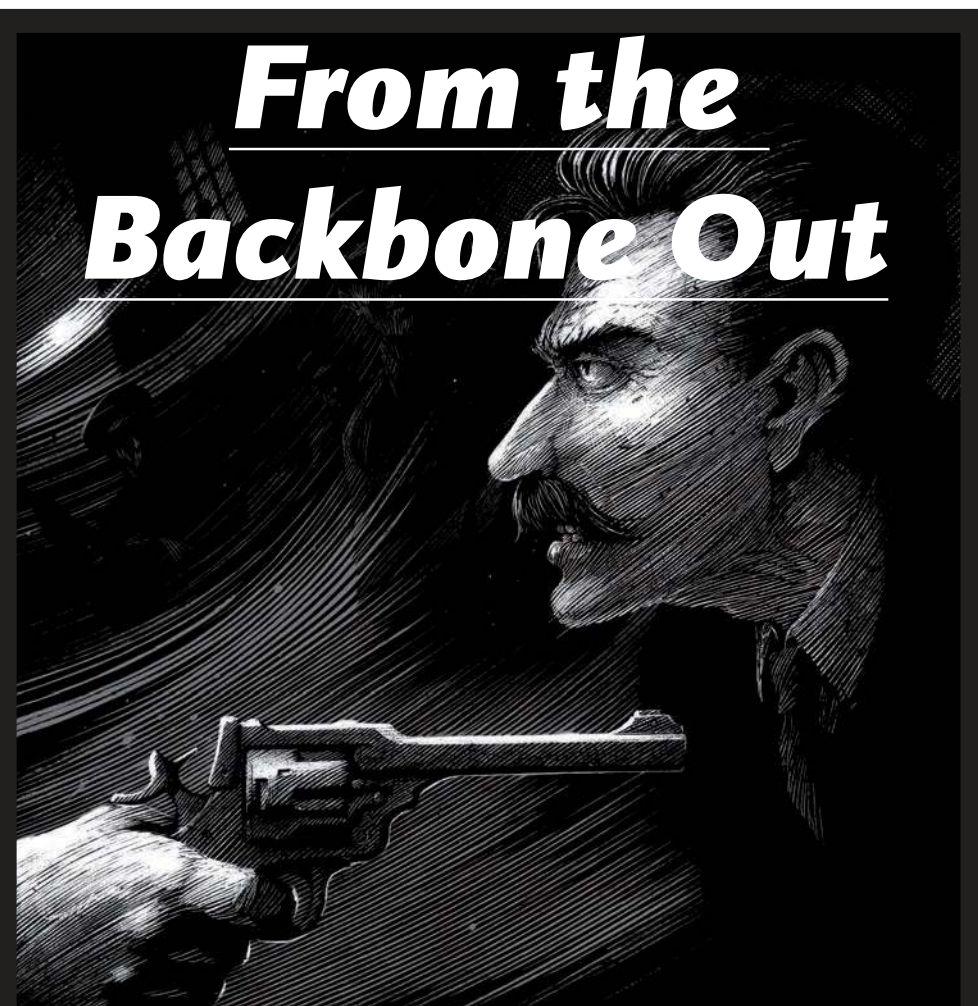
'ALL CITY'

10 YEAR ANNIVERSARY ALL CITY JAM 2017

TIVOLI THEATRE, FRANCIS STREET
SATURDAY 10TH JUNE 10AM-6PM



From the Backbone Out



By Alan O'Brien and Patrick Ferris. Featuring Owen O'Gorman, Tara Power and Frank Melia.

Performed in Liberty Hall for the
May Day Festival 3rd and 4th of May 2017



CHOOSE FOOTBALL. CHOOSE A CLUB. CHOOSE PREMIUM TV SUBSCRIPTIONS, COMFY SOFAS AND A BIG TELEVISION. CHOOSE HIGHLIGHTS FROM MULTIPLE ANGLES. CHOOSE BILLIONAIRE OWNERS. CHOOSE 50 MILLION QUID STRIKERS WHO EARN MORE IN A DAY THAN YOU DO IN A YEAR. CHOOSE ONCE A SEASON TRIPS. **BUT WHY WOULD YOU WANT TO DO A THING LIKE THAT?** CHOOSE YOUR FUTURE. CHOOSE DUBLIN'S OLDEST. CHOOSE MEMBERS OWNED. CHOOSE NO SHAREHOLDERS OR STOCK EXCHANGE. CHOOSE LIVE. CHOOSE DUBLIN. CHOOSE IRELAND. CHOOSE THE HOME OF IRISH FOOTBALL. **CHOOSE BOHEMIANS.** 127 YEARS OF FOOTBALL IN DUBLIN CITY.



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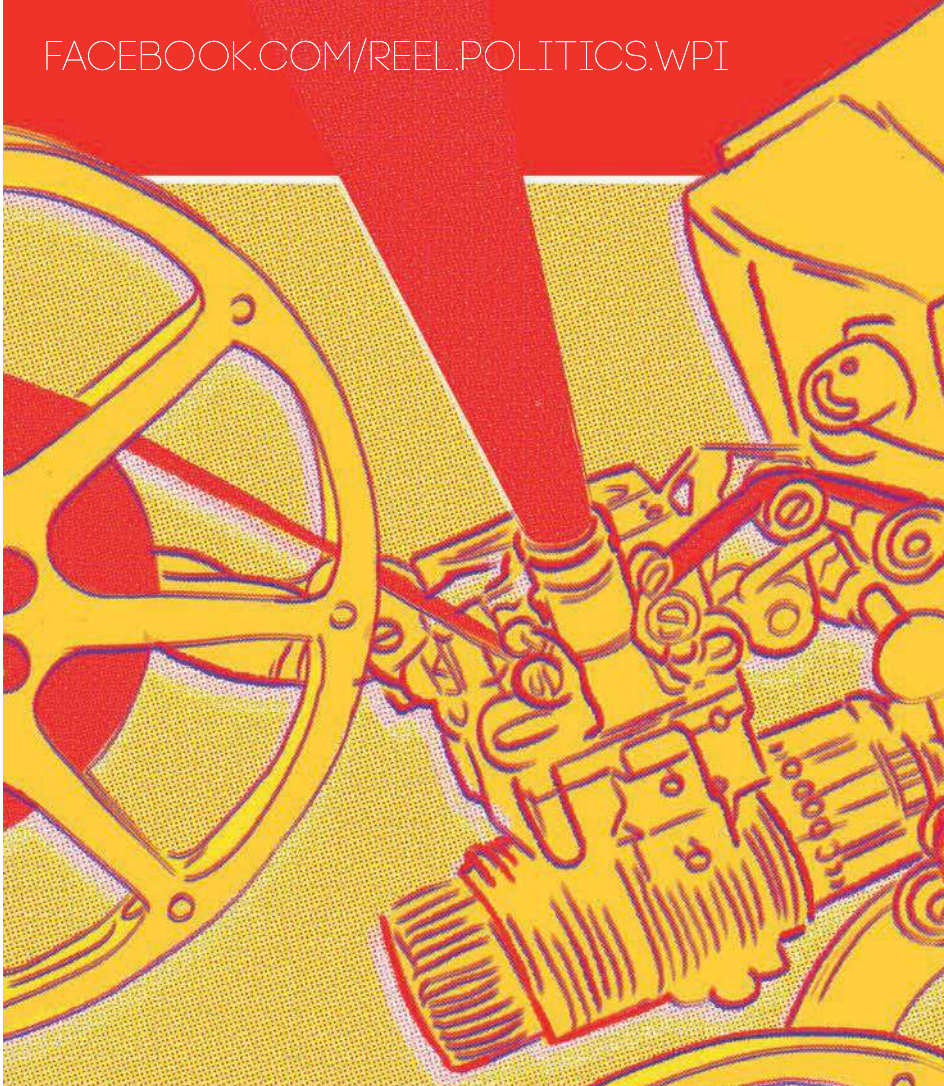
REEL POLITICS

1900 (NOVECENTO)
12TH MAY

THE SPOOK WHO SAT
BY THE DOOR
9TH JUNE

THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS
21ST JULY

FACEBOOK.COM/REEL.POLITICS.WPI



JOIN THE WORKERS' PARTY FOR OUR MONTHLY
SOCIALIST AND RADICAL FILM NIGHT, HOSTED
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SUGGESTED DONATION: €5 / €3 UNWAGED,
ALL SHOWINGS 7.30PM.
DRINKS AVAILABLE



Yo, check out our online shop! Loads a
back issues, tote bags, badge packs &
random old tshirts....







WWW.RABBLE.IE



**SUPPORT
LOCAL**

   bangbangd7

HARRY HANGOVER !!

AND THE STERN HAND OF THOTH...

OUR HERO, AFTER BEING SOMEWHAT KID-
NAPPED BY A MEGALOMANIACAL BUDGET
AIRLINE OWNER, FINDS HIMSELF SPEEDING
ACROSS DUBLIN CITY...



WE SPEAK IN CODE

PADDY LYNCH . COM



Paddy Lynch 2017

The Session Pixies



THE SESSION PIXIES ARE BACK FROM THEIR ANNUAL WINTER SOJOURN IN THE GULAGS OF D1 TO DELIVER YOU SOME RESPITE FROM YOUR WOES. WHETHER IT'S QUESTIONING THE DEPTHS OF YOUR MASCULINITY OR JUST SEEKING AN ALTERNATIVE TO A GOOD OL' TUMBLR WHINGE, THE SESSIONS PIXIES HAVE YOUR EAR.

Dear Session Pixies,

I've been ordering a load of black squidgy hash on the darknet from India, deadly buzz off it. Thing is the last couple of ounces arrived in packages with Mother Theresa stamps on them. Me crazy Granny who lives with us has opened the packages up convinced she is gonna find the third secret of Fatima. She won't give me the gear back and is now bringing her new fancy new Marmite that "she got from the priests in India" with her to Bingo for all her mates to try. Help, what to do!

Aisling

Dear Aisling,

You are onto a winner there, you are thinking about this the wrong way around. This should not be seen as a loss, but an opportunity, creating new markets where none previously existed. Cop yourself on.

Dear Session Pixies,

Before you say anything I know I'm a sucker but the €127 tv license fee just to see Des Cahill doing the flamenco with some sliver of a thing has me shaking in my maloshes. The cheek of herself then to say I'm keeping her from her Emmerdale... The lads in the local told me it's not something she could ever understand, the voice of GAA in spandex doing a pirouette for the lads. How do I get her to see 'Dancing in the Stars' for what I see it, the last breakdown of shame for Irish masculinity?

Yours,

Samuel.

Dear Samuel,

We believe you're intellectualising this whole situation too much. There's not much to intellectualise over in Montrose. We seen Des in spandex and the other fella and the liberal caking of orange on the fella. Respect is not the word. RTE have just caught on on capitalising on shame. Bless.

Mark

Dear Mark,

You've dodged a bullet there Mark. If you can't find love in the Tesco's reduced to clear section, romance is dead.

HORRORSCOPES

TRAGIC TERRY AND THE MAGIC COWBOY HAVE TEAMED UP WITH THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF NUMEROLOGISTS, KINESTHETIC & ESOTERIC RUMECASTERS AND SOOTHSAVERS FOR ANOTHER RUNDOWN OF THE CELESTIAL PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE FIXTURES. LOOKS LIKE TAURUS HAS BEEN RELEGATED AGAIN. LIKE A SUPERSTELLAR SUNDERLAND...



ARIES MAR 21-APR 19

No news is good news Aries, so best to keep drama at arm's length. A blast from the past follows through this month, dribbling down your leg and leaving you in a state of shock. A punched Nazi brings glad tidings, as does the news of a dying frenemy. Keep the fucking details to yourself though. Shithead.



TAURUS APR 20-MAY 20

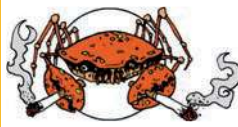
Venus hasn't been the only golden globe eclipsed by drama recently, Taurus. Avoid reading other people's horoscopes this month, as they all appear to be infinitely superior to yours.

Consider looking to the future instead. A kindly stranger will despise you, just like your own mother. A clattered Fascist brings luck.



GEMINI MAY 21-JUN 20

The beers are on you Gemini. Literally. As professional horoscope writers and astrologers to the Czars, we thought we'd seen - or foreseen - it all, but what's about to happen to you is sure to astound even the most hardened and heartless astromancer. I'm just not sure what it is yet... I see a cat... No, it's your grandmother. Does the name Lionel mean anything to you?



CHANCER JUN 21-JUL 22

Your latent homophobia and homosexuality have been at odds again, leaving nobody bi-curious as to your intentions. Consider striking an authoritarian, as it may prove to be somewhat decent meme-fodder, and may even serve to impress those weirdos on that forum you love so much. 4.6692 is your lucky number.



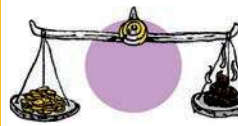
LEO JUL 23-AUG 22

A recent wank has left you in a tizzy. A water based lubricant brings some topical relief, though your emotional chaffing may take a lot longer to ease. A thumped totalitarian may see your fortunes change however, as a reach-around at a fun fair leaves you high as a kite.



VIRGO AUG 23-SEP 22

Money matters are just as bad as this time last year, Virgo, and your family is down a member or two. Try not to dwell on the past however, as there are positives to be found at every turn. You don't have to share the remote for example, and there's much more hot water. A wallopped autocrat brings prosperity.



LIBRA SEP 23-OCT 22

The small dog you saw at Barack Obama Plaza in Moneygall recently was actually

a messenger from the future. Sadly you missed the message and are now fated to a life of mediocrity and little reward. On the upside, a smashed Hitler fetishist brings some short lived relief. Bye bye!

SCORPIO OCT 23-NOV 21

Baked beans are on special in Tesco this month. That's about all it really. Try snorkeling or assailing a goose-stepper. Suicide may help too.



SAGITTARIUS DEC 22-JAN 19

Yellow will be of no importance to you this moon cycle, Sagittarius, but don't avoid it either. If you do have to engage with something yellow oradorn yourself with that ghastly green and garish yellow paisley scarf at the insistence of your well meaning but mental mother, then do it. Anything to avoid a fuss. As Elton John always says, It's no sacrifice, no sacrifice at all.



CAPRICORN DEC 22-JAN 19

Did you hear about the election up north? Of course you did! You haven't stopped rabbiting on about it on every social media platform available to your strange, pale, stubby, sweaty little fingers all month. Your moribund, middle of the road, morose, mediocre, maudlin, meagre, mangy take on modern politics and culture has left you a pariah at every turn. Fuhrer fucker-uppers bring prosperity.



AQUARIUS JAN 20-FEB 18

Have you seen that new TV show Aquarius, Aquarius? It's really quite good... not unlike you, really! The same goes for that drink Aquarius, Aquarius. You have the patience of a saint. "Don't I know it," says you!!! Nice shoes by the way. Bop a blueshirt.



PISCES FEB 19-MAR 20

As Orion's carpet whizzes past the waltzers, it's time to put family matters first. Consider planting the seeds of doubt in your mother's mind about other family members. This kind of long term thinking will hold you in good stead in later years. A clout in the mouth is worth two in the face for an anti-immigration nut.



More Of The Same

OIREACHTAS RETORT SHADOWS THE ALLEYS OF KILDARE STREET, SCOURING THE SLURRY PITS OF DÁIL EIREANN AND THE VARIOUS CARRY ONS THAT OUR PUBLIC REPRESENTATIVES GET UP TO IN THE NAME OF PUBLIC SERVICE.

Campaigners for sex worker safety over at UglyMugs.ie recently revealed that there have been 70 complaints of offenses committed by Gardaí since 2010. The FOI release from GSOC includes a range of allegations including assault of minors. To date only a single case has made it past the DPP and given the circumstances we can assume this figure captures fraction.

While most will be aware of instances surrounding the church or care industry, even now we are unlikely to see any meaningful attention devoted to what is identical if not greater scope for abuse of authority by the police. Factors like the above are scarcely considered in polite society and certainly not in 2011 amid obfuscation and denial when recording emerged of gardaí threatening to assault two women arrested protesting Shell in Mayo.

All this is crucial when considering the latest chapter in what has been years of continuous scandals in An Garda Síochána. Cops and state agencies working in tandem to smear troublemakers is hardly a once off.

Having lost six elections and failed to secure nomination for the Seanad Lorraine Higgins has finally found a home working for lobby group Retail Excellence Ireland. Higgins says her role is to “work with Government to ensure their policies are shaped with retail interests in mind”.

This organisation attacked workers in the press during Dublin Bus and Luas strikes, blamed water protests for the closure of Cleary’s and vehemently oppose any improvement in working conditions.

Their submission to the Low Pay Commission claims that “the concept of a ‘Living Wage’ (€11.45ph) and the wide commentary it has generated has resulted in unfair expectations being generated among employees”.

Highlights from her first press releases in the job include suggestion that the Bus Éireann strike is a “national embarrassment” and that “continued threats of industrial unrest could very well lead to many of our international retailers rethinking their investment strategy for Ireland”. Legislation to curb zero hour contracts is apparently, “a move that is out of sync with employment trends in the industry” because we’re told “addressing employment issues should not mean changing the complete fundamentals of the relationship between employees and employer”. Ahem.

This person was a Labour Party senator twelve months ago, who is no longer a member so that she may “concentrate impartially on this new role”. Indeed.

Amid news that both District 8 and Hangar are to be bulldozed into hotels, our weekend remain precarious.

Publication of the Dáil Programme for Spring/Summer brought now routine news that legislation surrounding modernisation of licensing laws remains on the long finger. Our only indication of the Bill’s status is the tantalising claim that “work is underway”.

Without proper organising on the issue, we shouldn’t expect much in lifetime of this government and even less if Fianna Fáil return in their place.

The National College of Art and Design (NCAD) recently announced recipients of the Clancy Quay Residency for 2017. Now in its third year, four students are awarded nine months studio space as one part of an access programme that “offers support for entry and progression into third

level for those who due to social and economic disadvantage may not have the opportunity to go to college”.

The award is in ‘partnership’ with vulture fund Kennedy Wilson who hold €673 million worth of Irish property - which thanks to Michael Noonan is exempt from tax. Regrettably Joan Burton was unable officiate proceedings this year as she did at the launch in 2015.

Trump’s decision to drop an unprecedented bomb in Afghanistan is an appalling and deeply performative crime but as with any big American event it can’t be long before someone breathlessly finds an Irish angle. Development, construction and deployment of these weapons easily runs to billions and we can expect several Irish firms falling over themselves to get in on the action.

While the government is usually first out the door with announcements of jobs and growth, they have repeatedly failed to publish annual figures on military exports. Instead, we must work backwards from US Federal Procurement and Irish departmental licences for a glimpse of contractors.

There we find Irish business plays a major role in industrialised slaughter around the world. Cheques have been cut with the US Army, Navy and CIA. Irish engineering can be found everywhere from drones over Yemen to Abu Ghraib torture prison in Baghdad. Away from glossy Web Summits and Silicon Docks, Irish software powers death machines and ‘cyber warfare’. And of course the sleeveens in finance and law are on hand with the usual services ensuring tax amounts to the same concern as human life.

Photo by Ciaran Boylan



RTE'S BEST EVER PRESENTERS

Poster

A wee nod to the memory of Mark Fisher and his thoughts on parasites...



THE REST ARE ALL JUST MUPPETS

TUD