

The Cryptoliberal creep/the left is dead

Anarchist Individualist critique of the left in Ireland

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“Freedom is not something that anybody can be given; Freedom is something that people take and people are as free as they want to be” — James Arthur Baldwin

“I think my basic viewpoint is that everything the left and right say about each other is true. And the reason it’s true is because they have so much in common.” — Bob Black

The so called “radical left” has been a total failure, has done nothing and has not made any “radical change”. The “radical left” has only been successful in re-creating institutions of hierarchy and dominance via its parties, unions and front groups/campaigns. Many leftists building nice careers for themselves in the process.

The “radical left” of the 60’s, 70’s, 80’s and 90’s (most notably former members of the Workers Party) are now the very people that have been pushing and implementing neoliberalism in Ireland. The old “radical” leftists have swapped their radical language and false promises for Mercedes cars, designer suits and high waged state or union positions.

There is no doubt that many modern leftist will have the same faith as their counterparts. It’s not hard to imagine. The exact same problems that existed within the left today are the very ones that were always there. These problems can be broken down into factors such as: populism, opportunism, careerism, and reformism (to name but a few).

There is no order of importance, all these factors have equally damaging effects. These factors are not specific to any one current within the left but to the whole left. These factors contribute differently but equally to the left’s failure to create any “radical change” or transformation they proclaim to want.

Let’s break it down a little:

“SOCIALISM: Discipline, discipline; obedience, obedience; slavery and ignorance, pregnant with authority. A bourgeois body grotesquely fattened by a vulgar christian creature. A medley of fetishism, sectarianism and cowardice.

ORGANIZATIONS, LEGISLATIVE BODIES AND UNIONS: Churches for the powerless. Pawnshops for the stingy and weak. Many join to live parasitically off the backs of their card-carrying simpleton colleagues. Some join to become spies. Others, the most

sincere, join to end up in jail from where they can observe the mean-spiritedness of all the rest.” — Renzo Novatore

Opportunism:

Whether as an individual activists or as a member of a party, union or some other type of organization, leftist take part and use struggles for a whole lot of reason. These struggles could be in a workplace, housing, abortion rights, even supporting struggles in other countries that are a popular, etc. In struggles leftists use political maneuvers in order to hijack, centralise, and harness the energy, power, and enthusiasm of angry people for their own political gain, aims and motivations. Leftists use campaigns and struggles as ways of gaining followers and support for their programmes, building their own power cliques and personal networks, climbing the political or union careerist ladders, or even at the least, for activist scene points.

Careerism:

Many leftists take part in struggles to use them as means to build careers. The career could be in politics, unions, academia, journalism, NGOs, etc. Some Leftists becoming “experts” or “specialists” on certain topics/struggles, using the gained knowledge to further their career.

Populism:

Populism is a curse in the fight for liberation. Populism is dangerous, populism risks losing or gaining “the party”, “the movement”, “the organization” or “the campaign” support, credibility or new members. Populism also creates a dynamic within left organisations that will determine what “the party” or “group” will support or what actions taken, projects, or campaigns they will get involved with. They will always go with the popular option, even if it is wrong. If activists in a campaign, party, or group swerve off the populist road, they are at risk of being punished and vilified by the majority. They could have their names tarnished, blackened, lies made up and spread about them. All attempts at discrediting and to remove people seen as opposition. Populism will make people tell lies to mislead others and tarnish opponents. Struggles have been destroyed and lost because of populism. These dirty tactics are used against any threats to their positions, to discredit and isolate people that are opposed to their strategies or views, to remove opposition in campaigns or projects to clear the field which will help with them hijacking, having more influence and control; making people look “bad”, “mad”, “crazy” or “troublemakers” so no one will listen to their opinion or ideas, to save or gain support.

Reformism:

A large majority of the left, whither they call themselves, socialists, marxists, leninists, trot-skyists, and even some anarchists, are in fact crypto-liberals. These liberals disguise themselves with radical language and bullshit. They do not want to overthrow or destroy the state and capitalism, although they may say they do. They want to reform it away, make it more “nicer” for people bit by bit. They naively believe this can be done peacefully and with well thought out arguments, protest marches and lobbying. The “resistance” they proclaim is of pacifism, delegation, negotiation and compromise with the state and bosses.

Trade unions like all formal organizations based on growing in membership are prone to populism and the other factors I mentioned above. At worst union officials undermine and disempower struggles, compromising with bosses, negotiating deals on what would appear to be the best outcome for workers, but realistically contribute towards keeping this society intact. At best unions are reformist that help to make improvements to conditions of exploitation making the daily toil of work a little bit more bearable. Ultimately unions are a cog in the machine of

capitalism, with the outcome of helping towards the creation of social peace between exploited and exploiters. There is no revolutionary potential from trade unions.

For the leftist politico their intentions are to run in elections which they hope to win so they can make “radical changes” to the state and therefore make life better for “the people” (as they view it anyway).

The politicians say if they do not have enough power in parliament to make “radical change” at the least they will be able to make “radical” challenges to the government.

The outcomes of such bullshit tactics are well known. If a leftist is elected into parliament they can make counter arguments to the government, this usually falls to nothing. We have seen this in the South of Ireland with socialist TD’s (elected representatives) making arguments against a variety of issues such as the use of Shannon airport by the US military, the Shell oil company plundering natural resources in Mayo, the struggle for housing, and the struggle against water privatization.

If a Leftist party wins enough seats to win power or share power with another party they end up watering down their “radical” views and implement the most right wing of policies, we have seen this in recent history with the Irish Labour party in the South of Ireland and we have seen it with Sinn Fein in the North of Ireland (not that either party had very radical views to start off with, but they gave lip service to socialism at some point), both parties completely selling out to every person that voted for them implementing neo liberalist policies.

Politicos running in elections and playing in the parliamentary circus water down their “radicalism” the more they take part in it, constantly being on the watch, making sure they don’t lose support and wanting to gain support. This inevitably makes them compromise and sell out little by little, till they finally stop preaching any type of “radicalism”.

During the struggle against water privatization we have seen the crypto-liberals use their vanguardist tactics blatantly. From when people from working class neighbourhoods defended their neighbourhoods against the installation of water meters in homes in many communities throughout Ireland. The resistance sparked off sporadically. People resisting from different neighborhoods linked up together to help each other. Politicos and union bureaucrats infiltrated different neighborhoods that were resistant, to hijack the struggle. The politicians (Parties such as Sinn Fein, Socialist Party, Socialist Workers Party, the Communist Party of Ireland, Eirigi; and unions such as Unite and Mandate) invented “Right2Water” a campaign group which plonked itself on top of the struggle attempting to claim to be the representative of the all the people resisting water privatization. The politicians used this campaign as means to bring the struggle down the road of parliamentary politics. In lots of areas the politicians were successful in their hijacking, in some neighbourhoods people were wise to them.

Every couple of months there would be a call for a “peaceful march” through the streets of Dublin with loads of bull shit boring speeches at the end, from politicians of course. Any people at the march that didn’t go by the “peaceful march” narrative were tarnished as the “bad protesters” and “trouble makers”. These so called “troublemakers” would block traffic or occupy buildings (usually banks) and blocking busy roads. These type of tactics didn’t suit the politicians because it was out of their control and did not suit their narrative. During a demonstration in a working class neighbourhood a youth threw a brick at a pig car. A Socialist Party politician (and member of parliament) that had infiltrated the water struggle, publicly condemned the youth calling for the pigs to arrest, charge and convict the youth. Others were denounced by politicians for burning vans that belonged to the company that was installing water metres.

The water struggle came to a head when the Right2Water politicians and union bureaucrats thirsty for any scrap of power, sat on “the Expert Water Commission” which was created by the government, and accepted that a private company would own the water services (ie the privatization of water). Charges for domestic use of water have been put on hold (for now). The leftist politicians and bureaucrats try to claim this as a “great victory”. To this day the Irish Water company continue to put in water meters into homes, laying the ground for in the future when it wants to implement charges for using water in homes. The politicians and bureaucrats done this without any consent, and ultimately they disempowered the struggle in the process.

These tactics are used time and time again by the crypto-liberals. It was seen in popular struggles such as: struggle against water privatisation in the late 1990’s, the anti war movement in the early 2000’s, struggle against bin charges 2000’s, struggle against property tax in the 2010’s and recently in the struggle for housing, with the same sex marriage and abortion referendums – crypto liberals maneuvering themselves into position of mediator between the state or bosses and excluded and exploited individuals. Of course all these struggles were (and some still are) hot topics and were high up on agendas for electioneering.

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