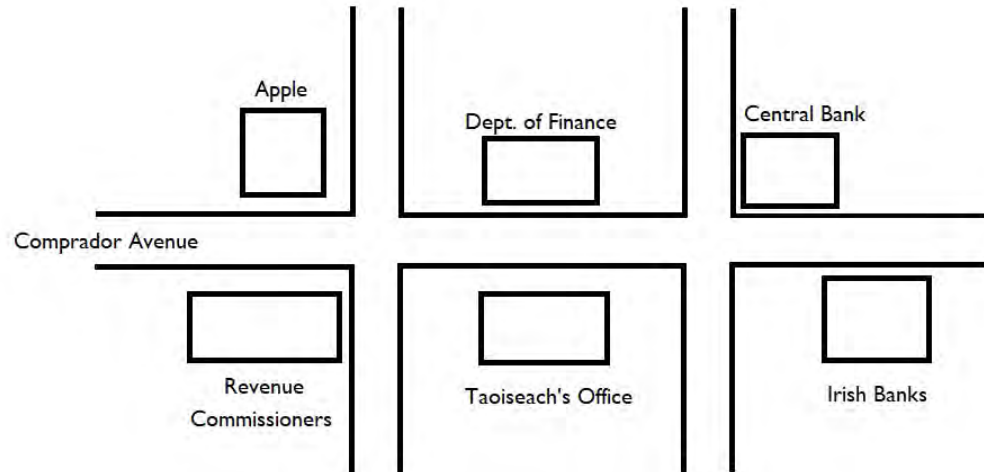
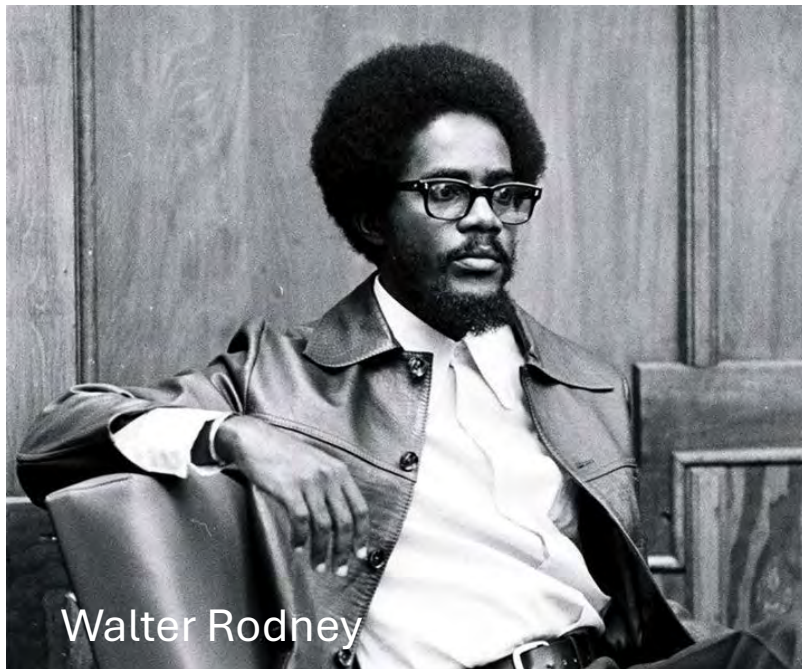
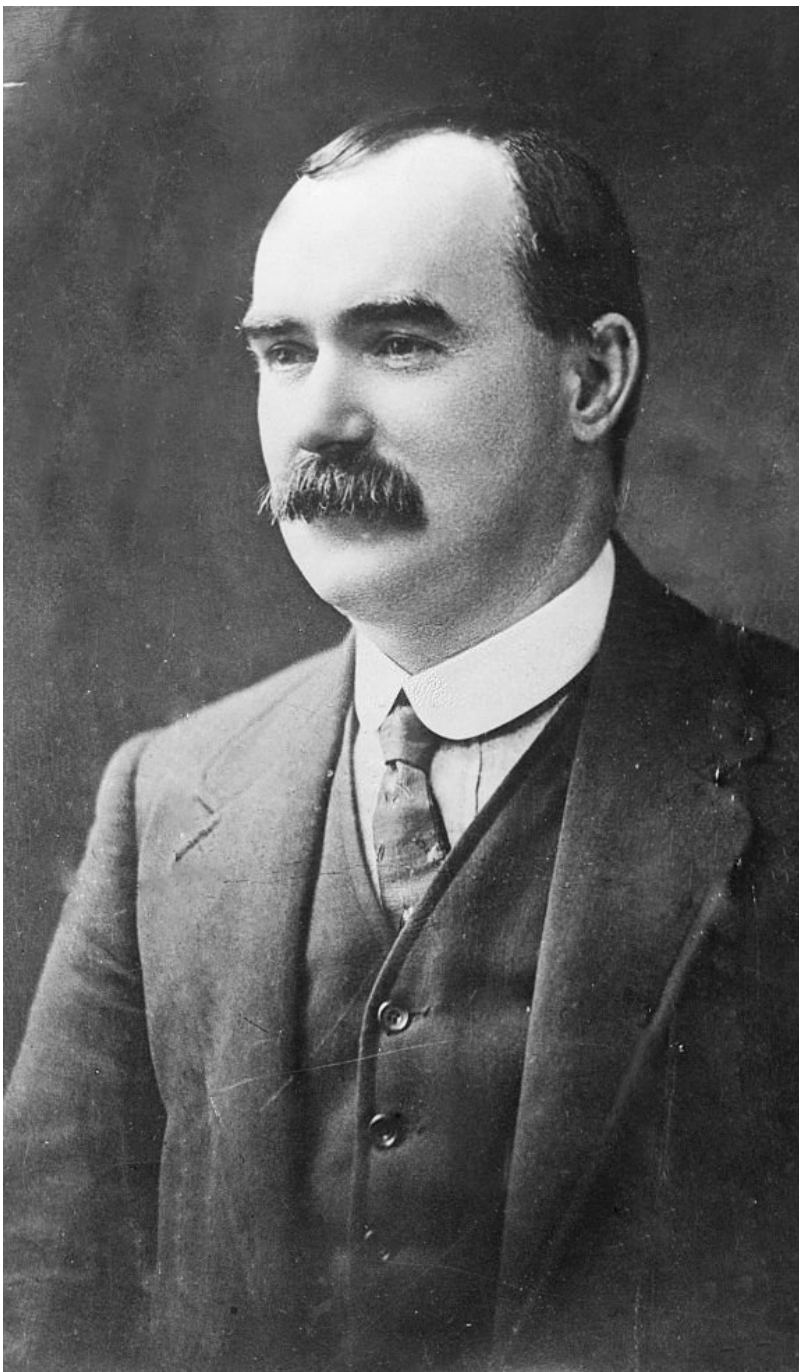




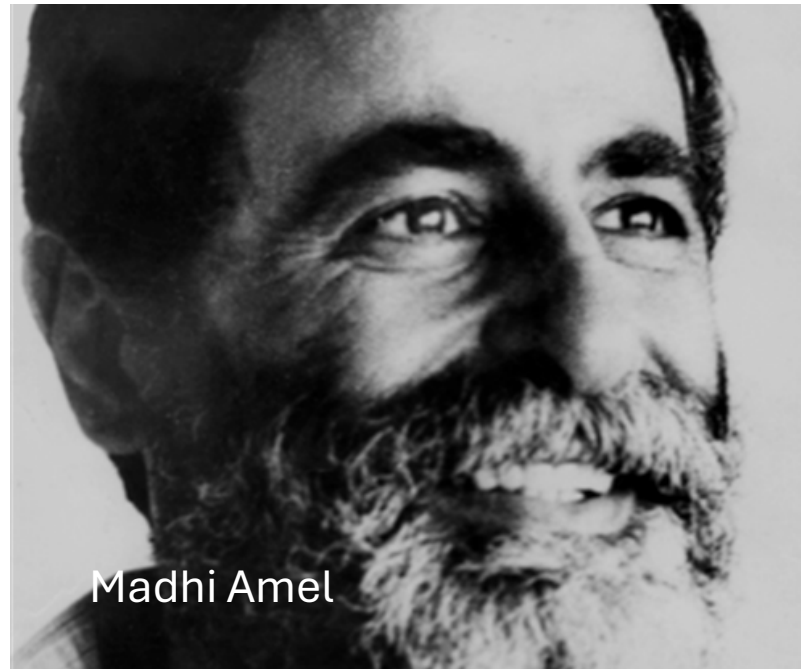
Comprador Theory and Ireland pt. 2

The Spark, Phibsboro
20 April 2026

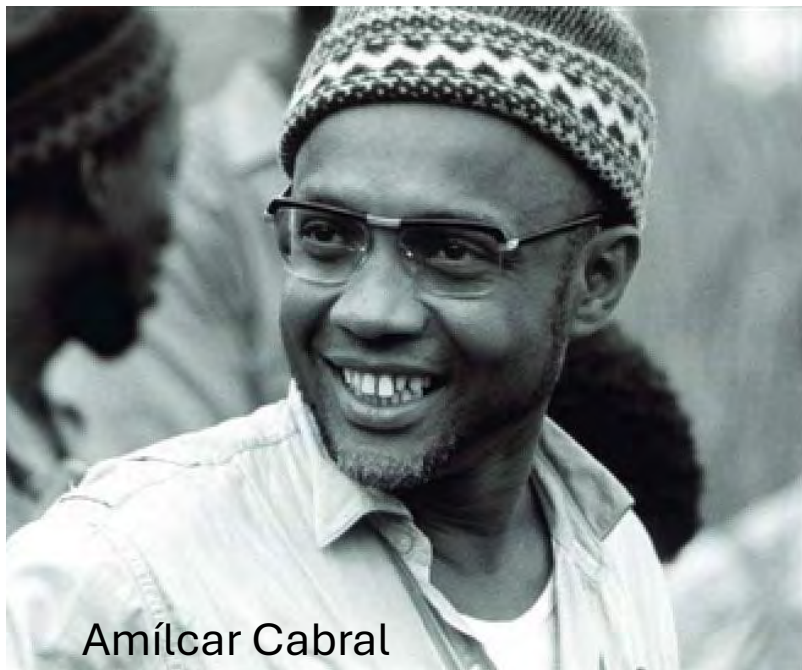




Walter Rodney



Madhi Amel



Amílcar Cabral



Jose Carlos Mariategui

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The second focuses on the relationship between a comprador bourgeoisie and transnational capital within a wider framework of dependency/underdevelopment.

The third, and most recent, looks at the relationship between a comprador system and FDI, particularly in finance and modern technologies.

ANALYSIS OF THE CLASSES IN CHINESE SOCIETY

March 1926

This article was written by Comrade Mao Tse-tung to combat two deviations then to be found in the Party. The exponents of the first deviation, represented by Chen Tu-hsiu, were concerned only with co-operation with the Kuomintang and forgot about the peasants; this was Right opportunism. The exponents of the second deviation, represented by Chang Kuo-tao, were concerned only with the labour movement, and likewise forgot about the peasants; this was "Left" opportunism. Both were aware that their own strength was inadequate, but neither of them knew where to seek reinforcements or where to obtain allies on a mass scale. Comrade Mao Tse-tung pointed out that the peasantry was the staunchest and numerically the largest ally of the Chinese proletariat, and thus solved the problem of who was the chief ally in the Chinese revolution. Moreover, he saw that the national bourgeoisie was a vacillating class and predicted that it would disintegrate during the upsurge of the revolution, with its right-wing going over to the side of imperialism. This was borne out by the events of 1927.

Who are our enemies? Who are our friends? This is a question of the first importance for the revolution. The basic reason why all previous revolutionary struggles in China achieved so little was their failure to unite with real friends in order to attack real enemies. A revolutionary party is the guide of the masses, and no revolution ever succeeds when the revolutionary party leads them astray. To ensure that we will definitely achieve success in our revolution and will not lead the masses astray, we must pay attention to uniting with our real friends in order to attack our real enemies. To distinguish real friends from real enemies, we must make a general analysis of the economic status of the various classes in Chinese society and of their respective attitudes towards the revolution.

What is the condition of each of the classes in Chinese society?

The landlord class and the comprador class.^[1] In economically backward and semi-colonial China the landlord class and the comprador class are wholly appendages of the international bourgeoisie, depending upon imperialism for their survival and growth. These classes represent the most backward and most reactionary relations of production in China and hinder the development of her productive forces. Their existence is utterly incompatible with the aims of the Chinese revolution. The big landlord and big comprador classes in particular always side with imperialism and constitute an extreme counterrevolutionary group. Their political representatives are the *Étatistes*^[2] and the right-wing of the Kuomintang.

Contradiction

Not a logical error

**It is a structural tension
built into a social system**

Prabhat Patnick, "On the Political Economy of Underdevelopment" (1973)

‘While primary accumulation destroyed the pre-capitalist modes in the colonies and semi-colonies, the subsequent development of capitalism was geographically unevenly distributed due to the existence of external economies. Thus development at one pole, the metropolis, was accompanied by underdevelopment at the other, the periphery - the latter characterised by integration into world trade as primary producers and by the existence of a "relative surplus population" which had to survive as best it could. This entire process of development-underdevelopment at an international level took place through the medium of a colonial or comprador state.’

This is where comprador analysis settles in the 1970s and 1980s.

The comprador bourgeoisie are no longer 'separated' from a national bourgeoisie in order to see where potential revolutionary allies can be found;

rather they have been incorporated into a centre-periphery analysis, one of "developed" and "underdeveloped,"

in which the comprador bourgeoisie play a role of intermediaries for transnational capital in the absence of an occupying force.



DEPENDENT
ACCUMULATION AND
UNDERDEVELOPMENT



WORLD AND DEVELOPMENT

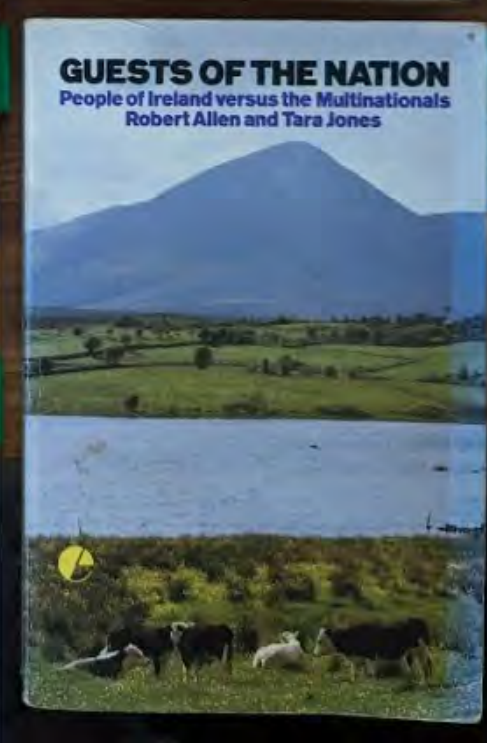
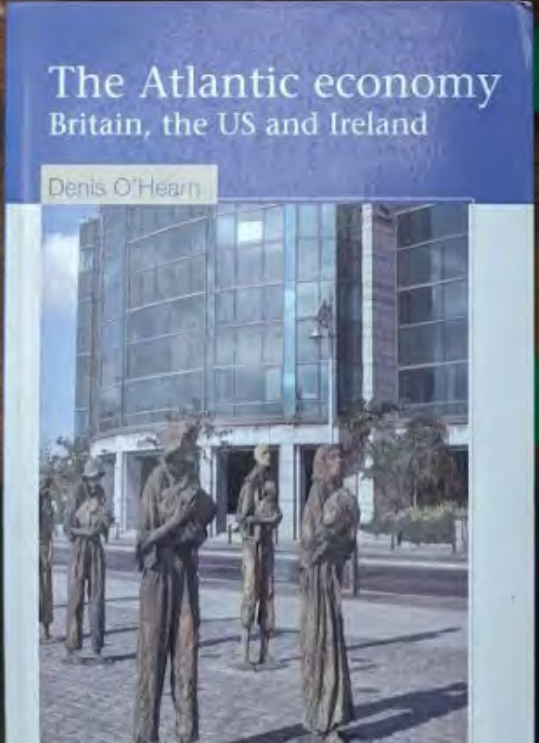
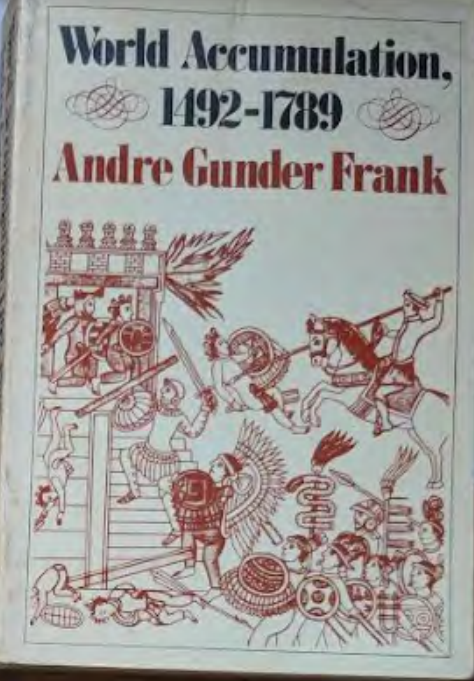
Andre Gunder Frank

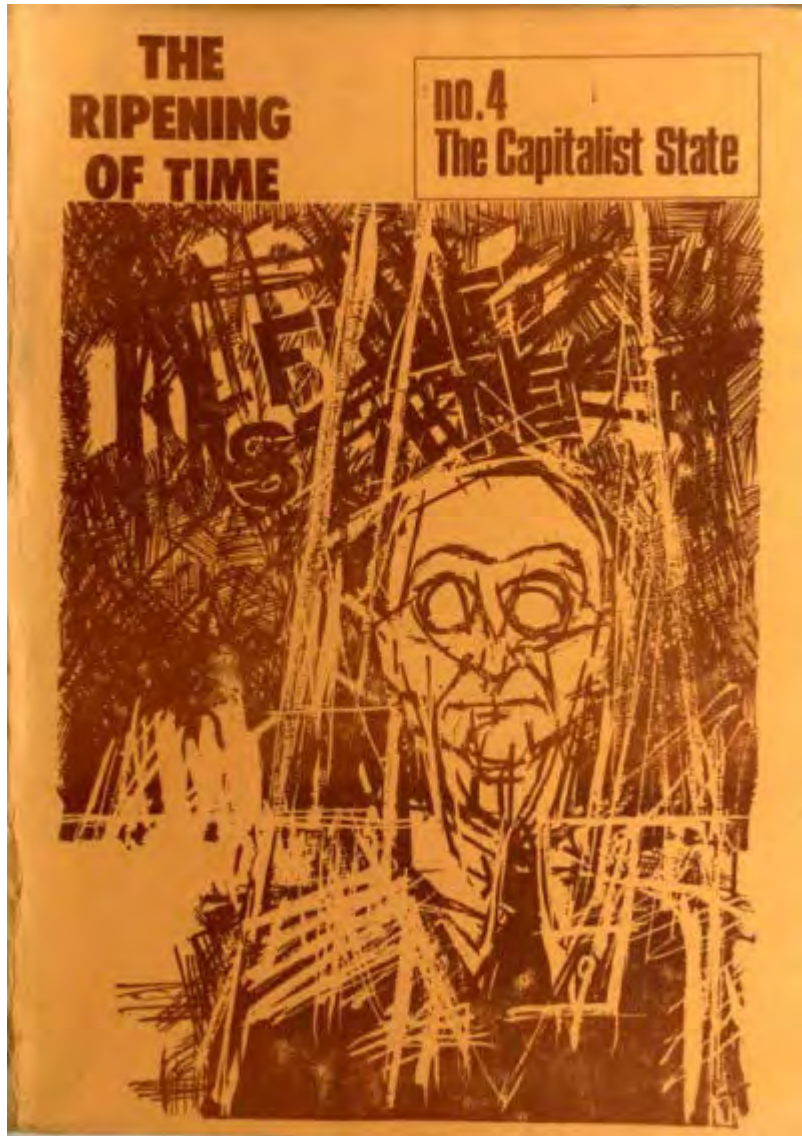
In a 2012 article, Vassilis K. Fouskas and Constantine Dimoulas apply a reading of comprador theory to Greece. 'The classic definition of comprador bourgeoisie comes from Nicos Poulantzas (via Andre Gunter Frank)' they write, saying that it is:

'...a fraction of the bourgeoisie which does not have its own base for capital accumulation, which acts in some way or other as a simple intermediary of foreign imperialist capital (which is why it is often taken to include the 'bureaucratic bourgeoisie'), and which is thus triply subordinated economically, politically, ideologically – to foreign capital.'³⁴

³³ Adolph L. Reed Jr. 'Marxism and Nationalism in AfroAmerica: Introduction: A Note on Black Intellectuals'. *Social Theory and Practice* vol. 1, 4 (Fall 1971): 26.

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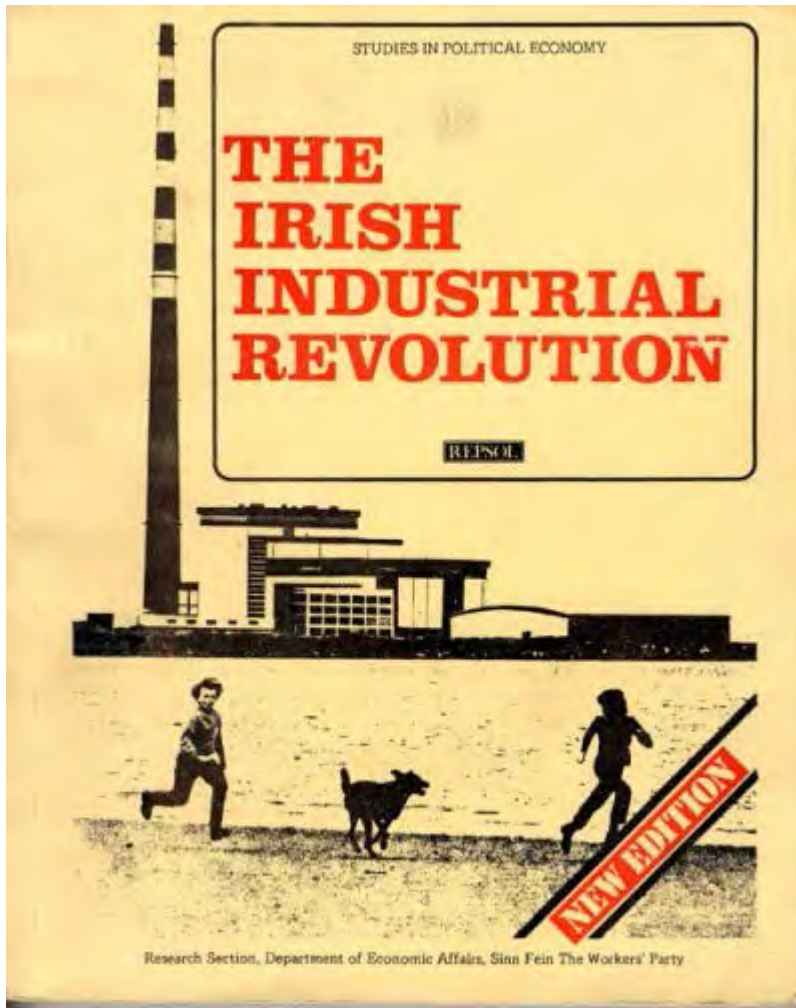


For ROTC, the comprador class starts to emerge in the 1950s with the arrival of US imperial interests in Ireland - first through the Marshall Aid Plan, then through multinational industry.

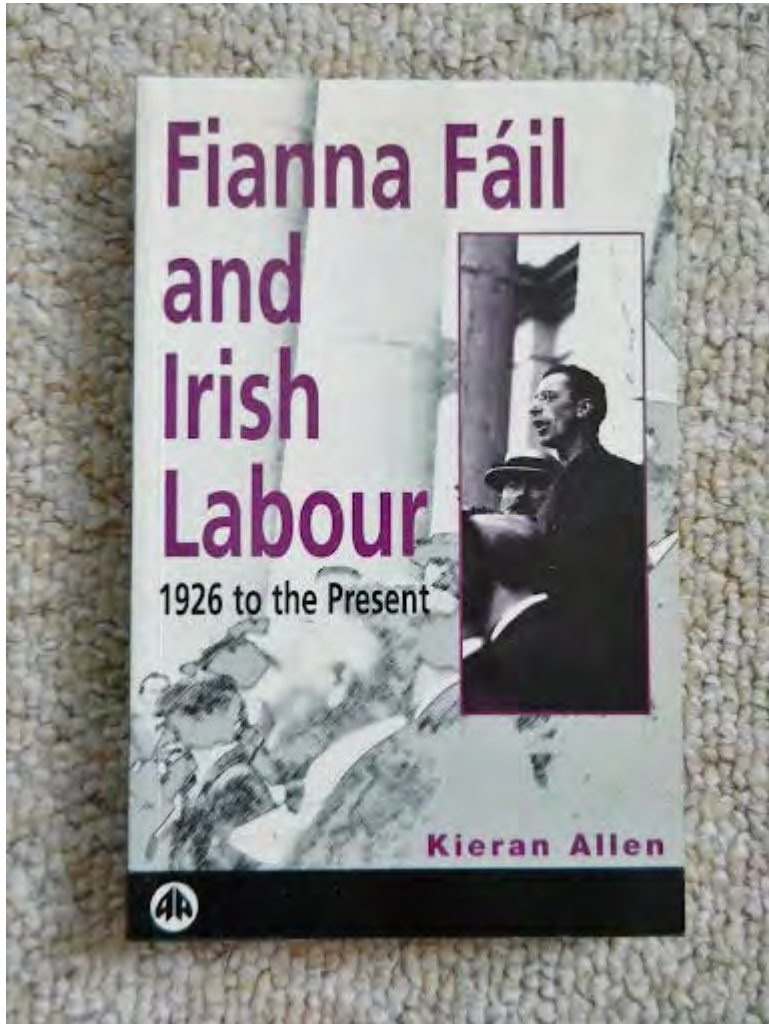
Regardless of the historical accuracy or otherwise of this claim, from a theoretical point of view, ROTC sees a comprador/middleman class as the by-product of US imperialism post-WWII.

ROTC also sketched out elements of this new bourgeois class:

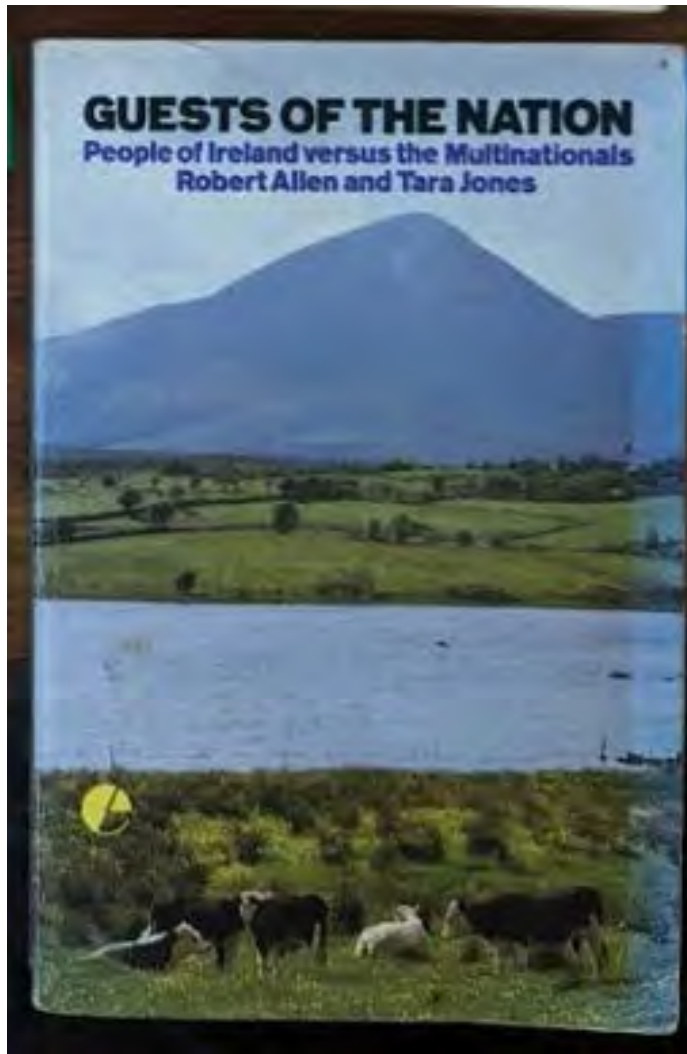
‘The Irish Management Institute, the Confederation of Irish Industry, and the Irish Exporters Association played a crucial part in organising and politically expressing the interests of capital. In particular the IMI provided a means of direct contact and exchange between state officials, US industrialists and Irish employers and managers... Clearly what was emerging at that point [1957], 12 years after the War, was a compromise and an unsteady alliance between the landed and industrial fractions of the bourgeoisie.’



‘... the 1960s saw a dramatic and historic change in the nature of class forces in Ireland. These changes left the Irish urban and industrial working class the dominant class in Ireland. This party further believes that this change took place largely under the stimulus of American monopoly capital which, in that period, replaced British imperialism as the major economic tendency in the Irish economy. For the first time in Irish history, the bulk of the gainfully employed population were wage earners and the great majority of our people lived in towns and cities.’



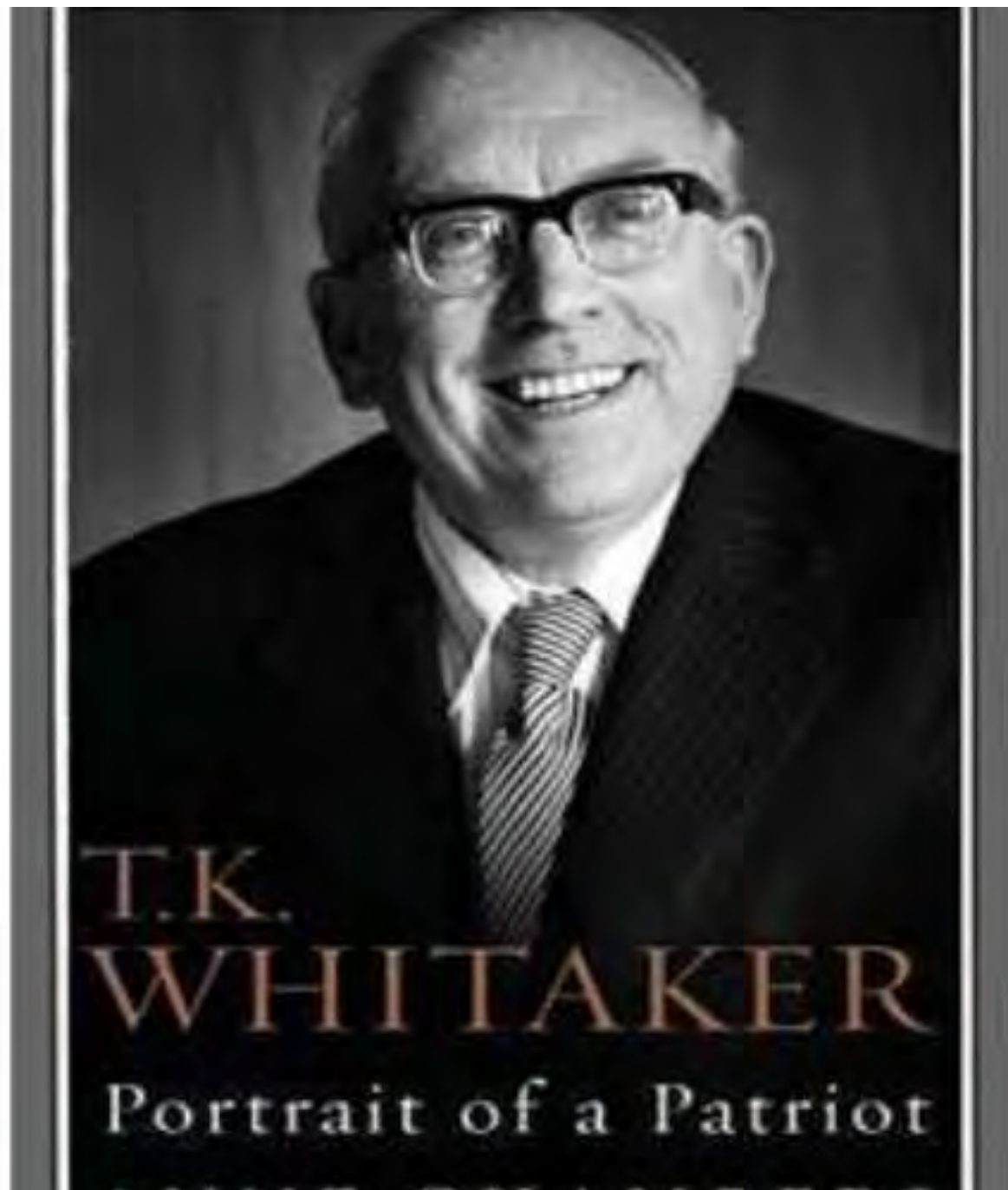
‘In reality, the 1958 turn should not be seen as an abandonment by Fianna Fáil of its original ideal, but rather as a continuation of its central project of promoting native capitalism... Protectionism was simply one strategy that had become outmoded, and the evidence suggests that Fianna Fáil were correct in their assessment that the new economic turn would benefit native capitalism.’



In some ways Ireland functioned almost as a model for export-oriented, dependent development... just as in earlier days it was the first British colony.

It shows the normal pattern associated with dependent development, including a massive public debt, an economy dominated by foreign capital and a local state and political establishment that has colluded in the country's dependent development.









NO RENT!

NO LANDLORDS' GRASSLAND

Tenant Farmers, now is the time. Now is the hour.
You proved false to the first call made upon you.
REDEEM YOUR CHARACTER NOW.

NO RENT

UNTIL THE SUSPECTS ARE RELEASED.

The man who pays Rent (whether an abatement is offered or not) while **PARNELL, DILLON &c.** are in Jail, will be looked upon as a Traitor to his Country and a disgrace to his class.

No RENT. No Compromise. No Landlords' Grassland,

Under any circumstances.

Avoid the Police, and listen not to spying and deluding Bailiffs.

NO RENT! LET THE LANDTHIEVES DO THEIR WORST!

THE LAND FOR THE PEOPLE!

is maintained on the several classes of farms, we have the following results:—

	HORSES & MULKS.		ASSES.		CATTLE.		SHEEP.		PIGS.		POULTRY.	
	Increase.	Decrease.	Increase.	Decrease.	Increase.	Decrease.	Increase.	Decrease.	Increase.	Decrease.	Increase.	Decrease.
Under 1 acre	.	28,219	.	17,405	.	67,168	.	100,678	.	323,337	.	1,850,632
Above 1 to 5	.	63,678	.	12,593	.	200,280	.	203,109	.	228,882	.	1,353,946
„ 5 to 15	.	74,225	25,234	.	.	164,555	.	213,243	.	260,881	.	982,021
„ 15 to 30	22,186	.	16,858	.	89,638	.	2,918	.	82,023	207,276	.	.
„ 30	130,222	.	22,033	.	541,622	.	600,306	.	107,687	.	1,253,575	.
	152,408	166,122	64,125	29,998	631,260	432,003	600,306	519,948	107,687	895,126	1,460,851	4,217,499
	13,714	Decrease.	34,127	Increase.	199,257	Increase.	60,358	Increase.	787,439	Decrease.	2,756,648	Decrease.

Here we have a more immediate result of the calamitous season which preceded that in which these returns were taken, by comparison with an average year such as 1841. The precise amount of change in the quantity of live stock in the possession of each class of farmers, cannot indeed be ascertained, from the causes already stated; but it is too obvious that the pigs and poultry, usually productions of the smaller holdings, exhibit a formidable decrease on those holdings, and indeed on the whole, not being compensated by the increase on the larger farms. Cattle and sheep are increased. This fact indicates a movement toward the extension of grazing, which it will be important to follow in future years. The horses and mules have decreased on the smaller farms, a change not perhaps to be regretted, while the number of asses shows an increase on those hardier and cheaper animals.

I have the honour to be,

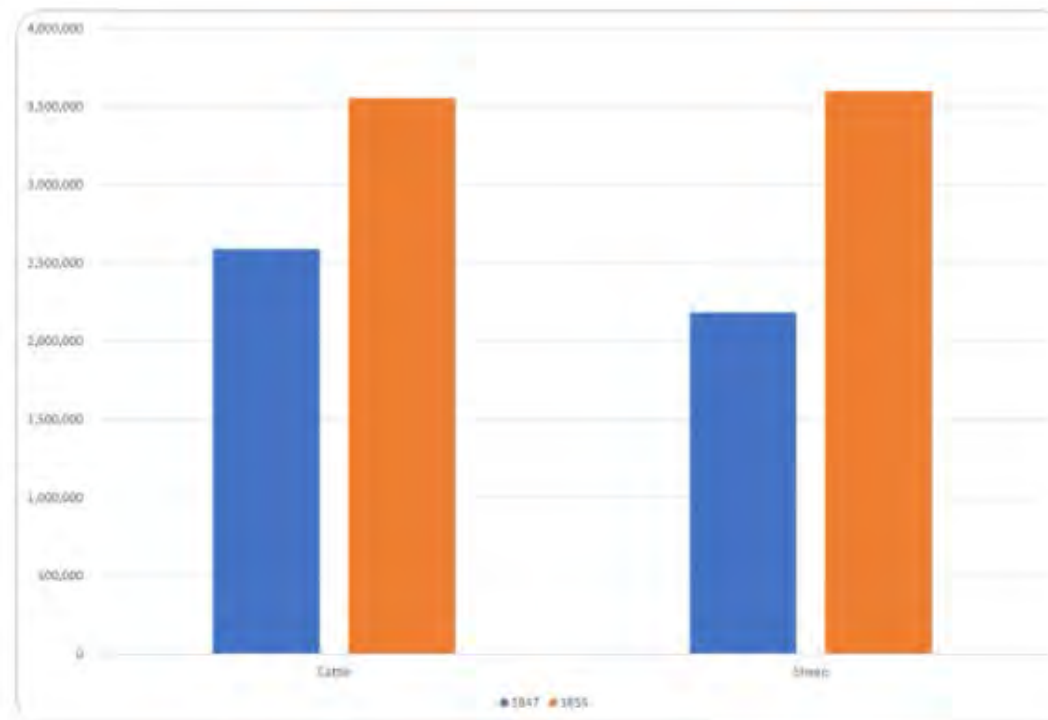
My Lord,

Your Excellency's very faithful servant,

THOS. A. LARCOM.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC WORKS, DUBLIN,

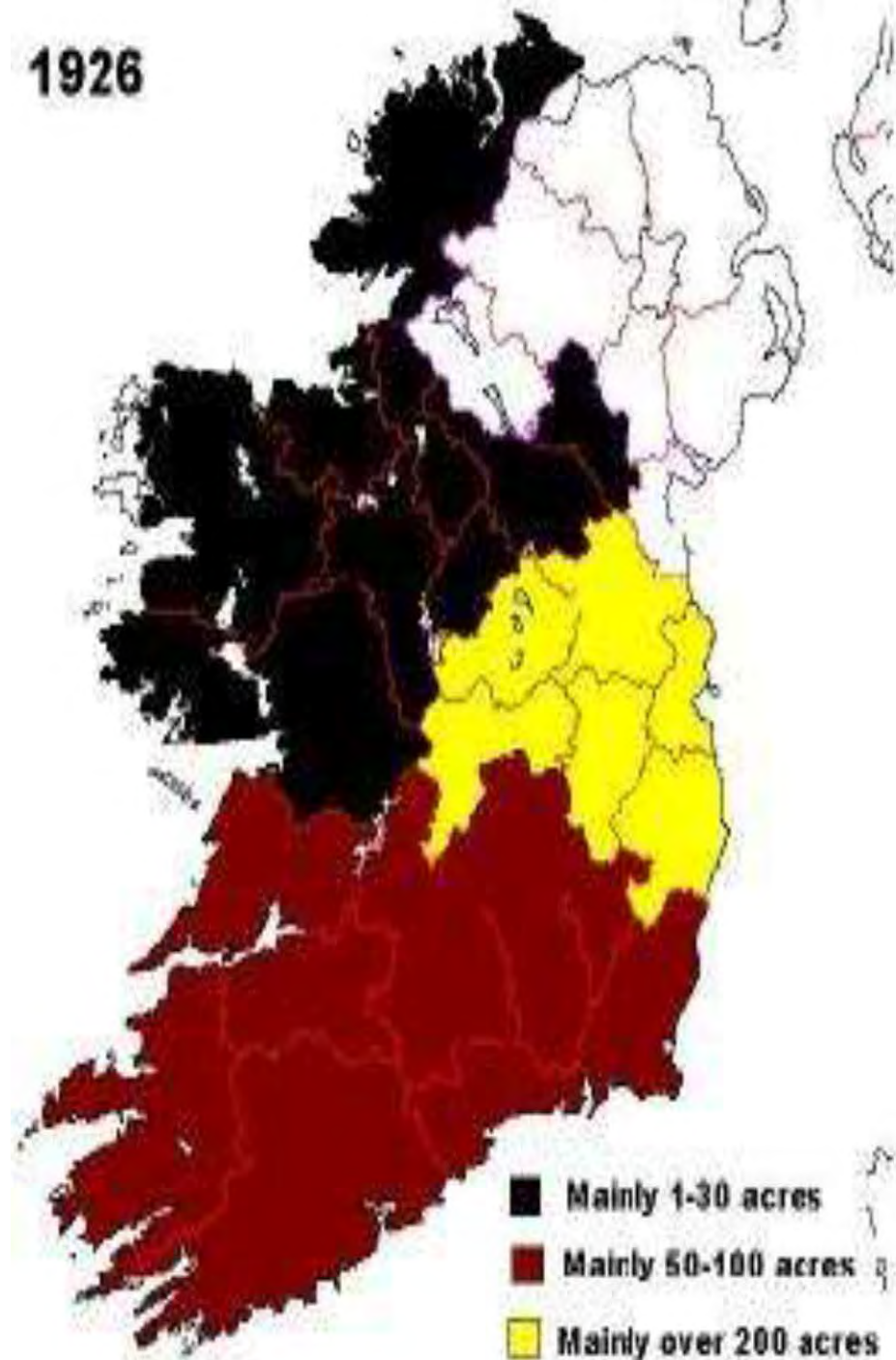
12th August, 1848.



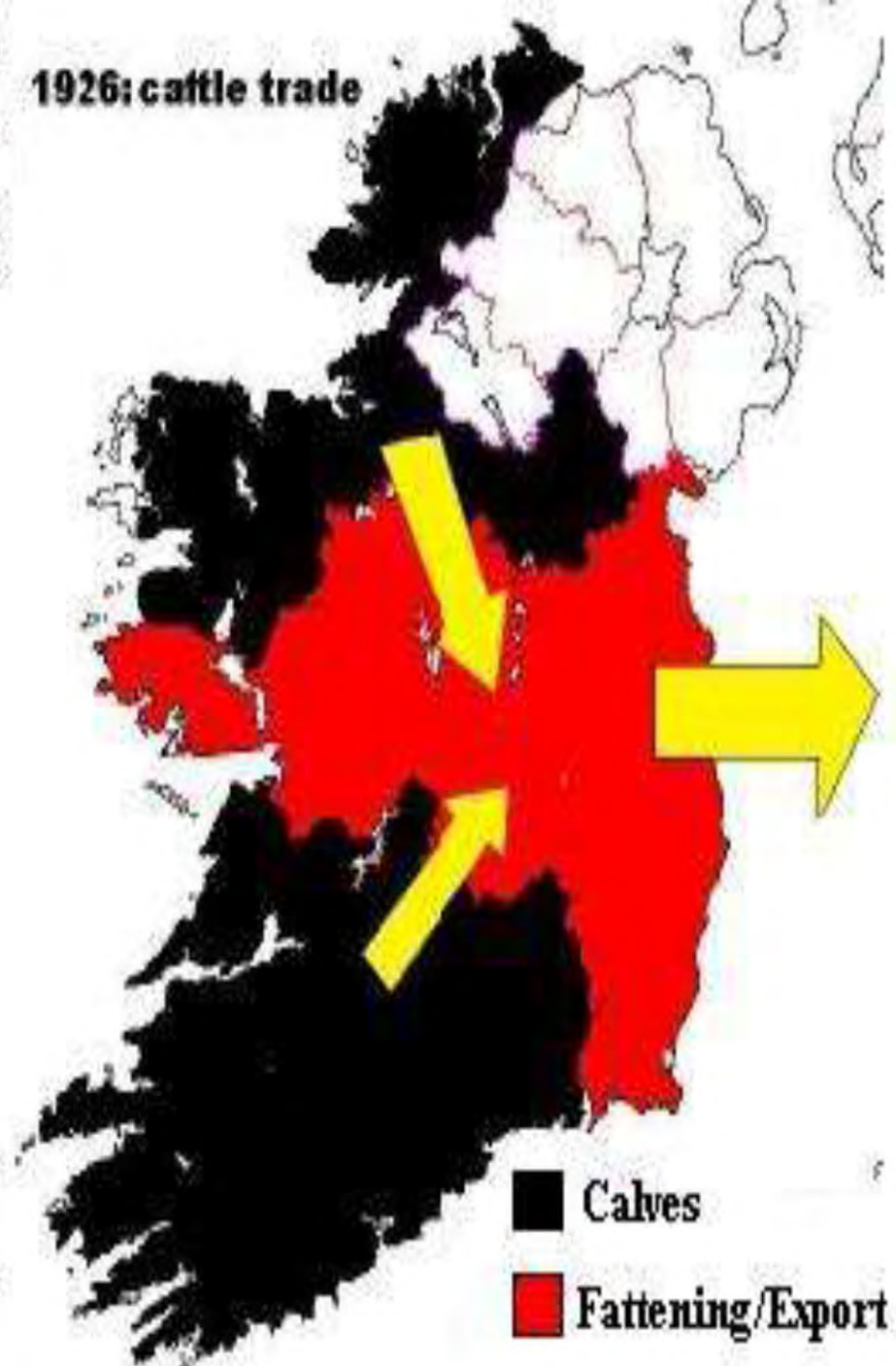
(Vol. I. p. 299).

So much for Absentees. The clamour against Middlemen is, if possible, still more unfounded.— Middlemen are indispensable to every country in the situation of Ireland. Where the great mass of the people are entirely destitute of capital, landlords must let their estates to such as have it; and none but those who are desirous of the utter extermination of a third, or most probably, a half of the cotters, can object to the middlemen, or capitalists re'etting the farms they have taken from the landlords in smaller portions. But then, we are asked, why does not the landlord himself directly let the land to the cotter, without the intervention of the middlemen? To this it is sufficient to reply, that if the landlord found such a method of managing his estate to be for his interest, it would be quite unnecessary to advise him to adopt it. He would do so of his own accord. Neither is there the vestige of truth in the assertion, that the middlemen have an interest in

1926



1926: cattle trade



In a 2012 article, Vassilis K. Fouskas and Constantine Dimoulas apply a reading of comprador theory to Greece. 'The classic definition of comprador bourgeoisie comes from Nicos Poulantzas (via Andre Gunter Frank)' they write, saying that it is:

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5

CURRENCY COMMISSION
IRISH FREE STATE

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SAORSTÁT EIREANN

5



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J. M. Elligott
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DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
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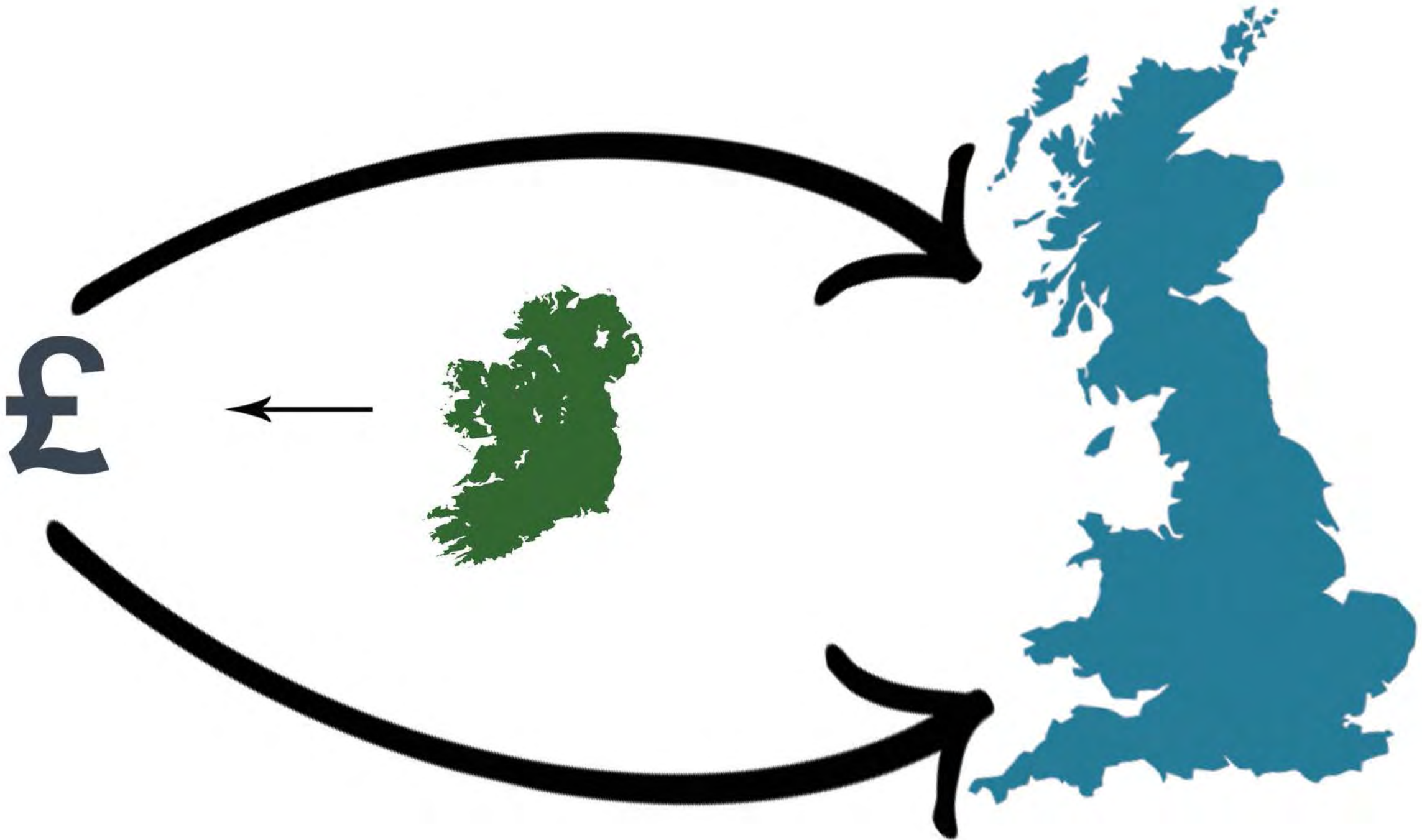




Photo from Timothy O'Grady and Steve Pyke,
I Could Read the Sky (Harvill Press, 1997)

The newly formed state needed targeted investment in social and industrial infrastructure if it was to develop as an independent state.

Furthermore, it needed banks to reinvest Irish savings in the Irish economy.

Instead, the banks effectively exported Irish savings to London where they were used to invest in the British economy instead of the Irish economy.

The state was slowly being starved of credit at a time when it needed it most.



Photo from Timothy O'Grady and Steve Pyke,
I Could Read the Sky (Harvill Press, 1997)

As a result, generations of Irish people ended up working in England on projects that were funded in part through Irish bank deposits, while back home the country was falling apart for want of credit.

As far as the state's institutions were concerned, this was all perfectly normal.

- Conor McCabe *Money* (CUP, 2018), 68

IRELAND MUST EARN MORE DOLLARS

[Irish Times, 9 Dec. 1949]

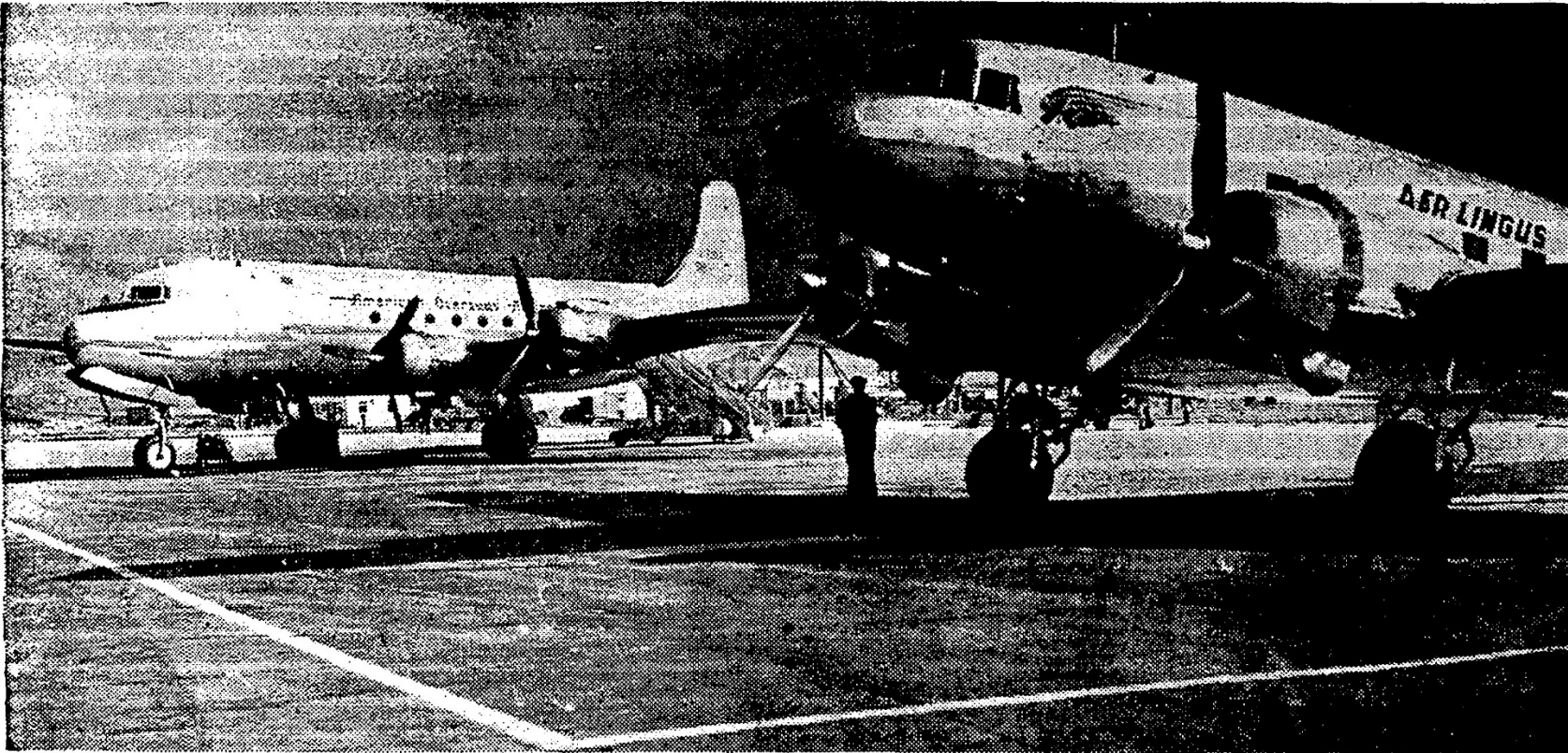
—E.C.A. Chief

STATING that Marshall Aid funds would most likely be very drastically reduced next year and the year following, Mr. J. E. Carrigan, Chief of the E.C.A. Mission to Ireland, speaking at a meeting of Dun Laoghaire Chamber of Commerce last night, stressed the great need of all elements in the Irish economy to do what was possible to earn dollars.

When the programme ended the dollars which Ireland needed for purchasing goods from the U.S., Canada and other western hemisphere nations, would have to come from some other source, he added.

Irish Times, 26 April 1947

FIRST "FREE" AIRPORT IN THE WORLD



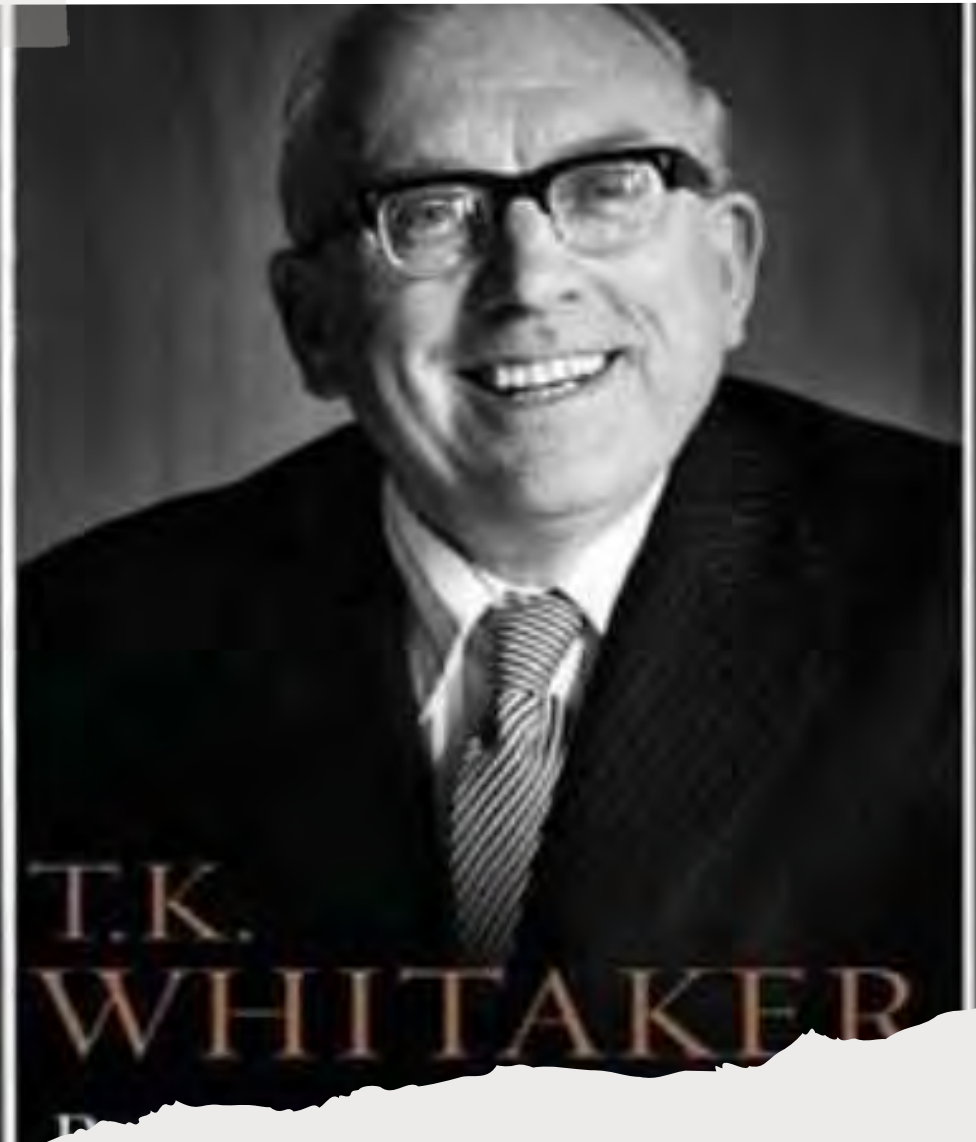
This week Shannon Airport, Rineanna, became the world's first free airport. Under a new act, goods may now pass between this country and foreign countries without the usual import and export restrictions, and passengers in transit will be free from customs examination while they remain inside the boundaries of the "free" airport. Mr. Lemass, Minister for Industry and Commerce, told the Dail recently that in a sense, a customs free airport was an Irish invention. Air travellers had always found that customs formalities took up a dis-

proportionately high percentage of the time spent on journeys. At Shannon, where the bulk of the traffic was in transit, there was a particularly strong case for eliminating such delays. Transit passengers will have their own "free" lounge in which to spend the time while their planes are refuelling, and there will be special transit sheds for the storing of goods which do not come under the normal restrictions. Above: Inside these white lines is a customs area where Aer Lingus Dublin-Shannon planes must park. Other planes park in the "free" area outside.



A painter at work marking out the line which separates the "free" area from the section which is subject to customs regulations.

This brief review of economic growth in Europe since the war has been conducted exclusively in terms of aggregate economic indicators such as total output, investment, and savings. To a considerable extent, however, analysis at this level of aggregation must remain incomplete for some of the most important of Europe's growth problems are structural in nature and thus cannot be dealt with in the absence of an examination of the components of the above-mentioned aggregates, especially the composition of output and investment. The reason is that neither Europe nor individual European countries are self-contained. Even though the relative importance of their external economic relations may have declined from their pre-World War I level, European countries still live by trade. Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Netherlands and Norway export goods and services in amounts which, in 1952, ranged from 31% to 54% of their gross national products. Austria, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the United Kingdom, though less highly export-oriented than this first group of countries, also have relatively high export-ratios which range from 13% to 25%; and with small margins of variation, imports into these countries are of comparable orders of magnitude. Thus, though output has increased rapidly during the postwar period, and a considerable proportion of the resources available to the area has been ploughed back into the maintenance and expansion of the stock of capital, the ability to sustain this growth will depend on the extent to which current allocations of resources facilitate the continuing adaptation of European economies to each other and to changes in the structure



Dublin Opinion

IRELAND'S HUMOROUS MAGAZINE
THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR

September, 1957

Sixpence



“Get to work! They're saying I've no future.”

'Two months earlier, in September 1957, the humourous magazine *Dublin Opinion* published a cartoon on its cover depicting Ireland as a woman asking a fortune teller if she had any future.

Responding some years later to an interviewer's question as to when he first conceived the need for economic planning, Whitaker replied, 'As far as I can remember, the immediate stimulus was seeing a cover of *Dublin Opinion*.'

From John F. McCarthy. *Planning Ireland's Future: The Legacy of T.K. Whitaker*. Dublin: Glendale Press, 1990: 46. The interview in question was published in *Business and Finance*, 7 March 1969

The Irish Press

26

C Do Cum Glóire Dé agus Onóra na hÉireann

The Truth in the News.

Vol. XXVII. No. 146.

THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 1957.

PRICE 3d.

MUNICH LAGER
 Iced Spatenbrau Lager at Davy Byrne and Doran's Cocktail Bars Dublin.
ON DRAUGHT



VARIANS BRUSHES
 FOR Perfect Service



TELLS OF LEAKAGES

employee papers

employee was the person of the Leaving Certificate leaving Certificate pass Geometry, Algebra and in the Dáil yesterday by Mr. Jack Lynch.

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200,000 left in past 5 years

NET emigration from the Twenty-Six Counties in the five years, 1951-56, totalled 200,394 persons, the Central Statistics Office stated yesterday. For the previous five years the total was 119,568.

The net emigration from 1951 till 1956 averaged 13.7 per 1,000 population yearly. This was the highest rate since 1881-91 when it was 16.3 per 1,000 population.

The counties with the highest rates of net emigration from 1951 till 1956 were Leitrim (with 23.2 per 1,000 population yearly); Donegal (20.2); Monaghan (20.0); Mayo (19.2); Wicklow (19.0); Cavan (18.2).



Archbishop Makarios says 317 tortured

OEEC experts here for Free Trade talks

The O.E.E.C. party photographed at Dublin Airport with Government officials. (From left): Mr. W. P. Fay, Irish Ambassador to France; Signor Giuseppe Cosinelli; Mr. J. C. B. McCarthy, Sec., Dept. of Industry and Commerce; M. Rene Sergent; M. Jean Scheurer; Mr. John Fay and Mr. Ernest Parsons.

Train ripped

To CAPITALISM



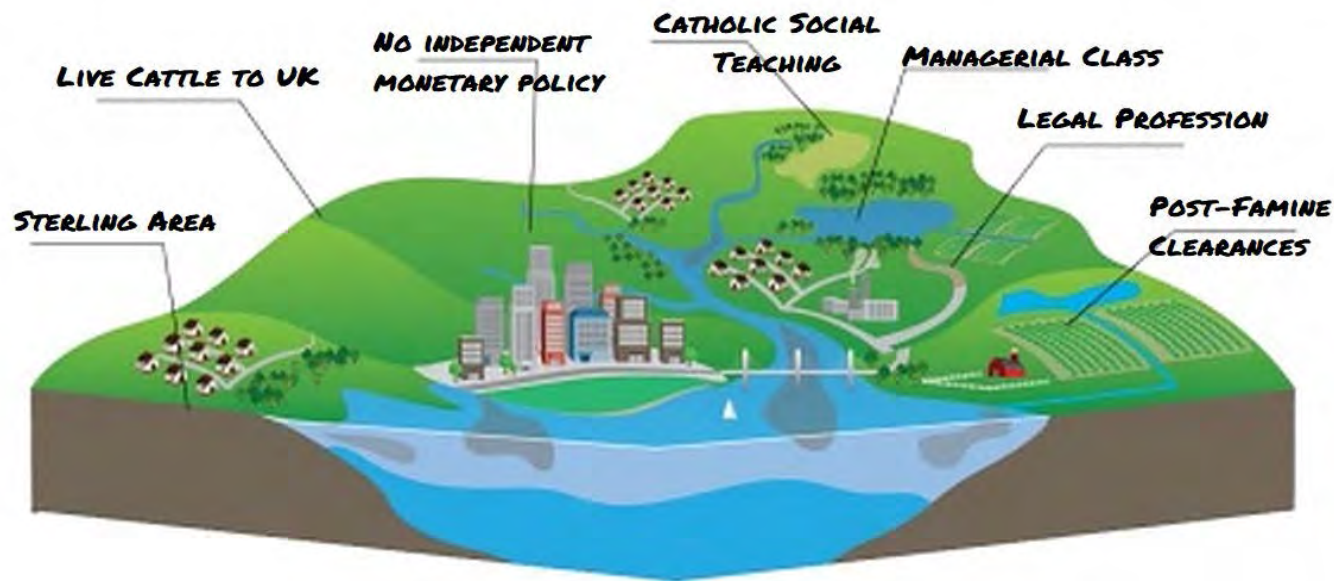
THE CAUSE OF-AND SOLUTION TO-ALL OF LIFE'S PROBLEMS





History as a finding of underlying structures in the world that are not immediately evident in experience.



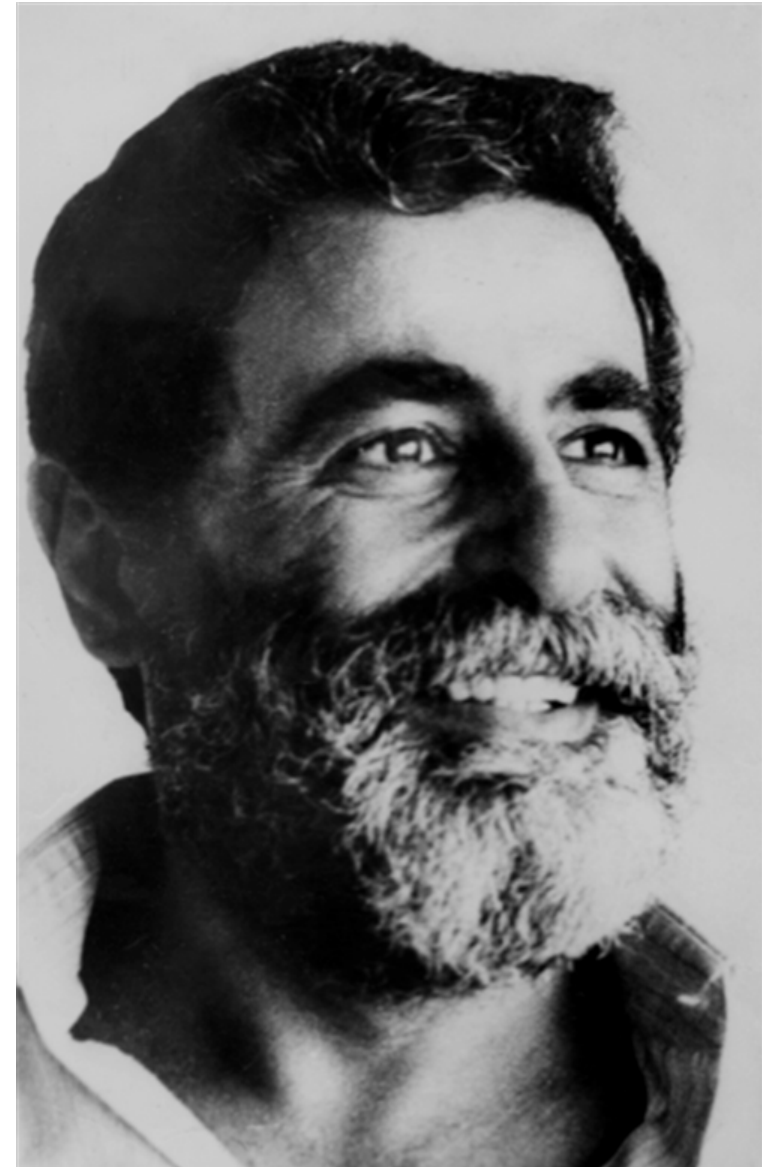
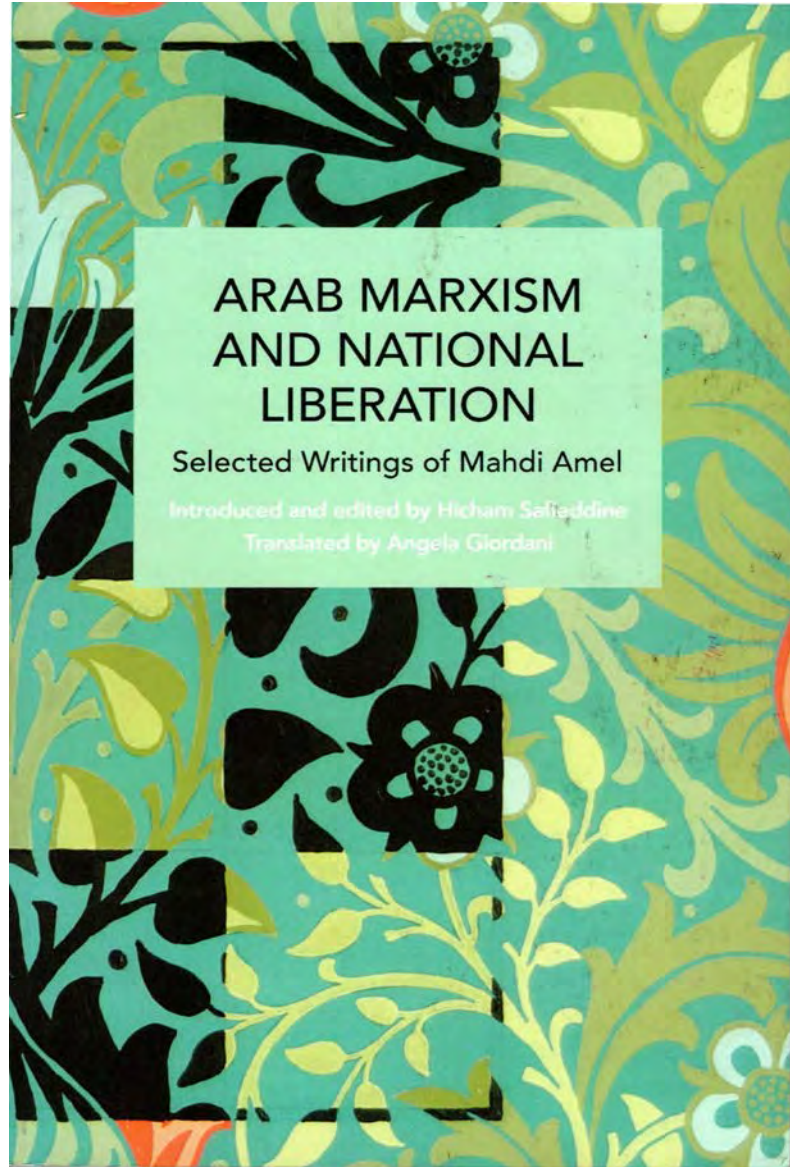


the creation of the National Asset Management Agency.

The power to do that did not develop overnight. In order to find the reason why that class was able to wield such influence at such short notice, we are going to have to dig. This book sets out a historical analysis of the events of September 2008 in order to achieve that objective.

History provides a canvas wide and deep enough to enable us to see the economic and political mechanisms, the machine itself, in motion. By looking at the way the Irish economy actually works – the deep structures and investment strategies – the government's response to the banking crisis, despite its inherent insanity, starts to make sense. The logic behind it reveals itself. It is still deeply shocking, but it was not the result of a few bad apples.

The plan of the book is, hopefully, straightforward enough. There are four chapters dealing with the development of the Irish economy, and two chapters on the crisis itself. It starts with housing, as the subject is saturated with so many myths and half-truths that it demands a factual analysis. There is no Irish property-owning gene. It is not part of our DNA. Home ownership outside of rural areas is a relatively new phenom-



ARAB MARXISM AND NATIONAL LIBERATION

Selected Writings of Mahdi Amel

Introduced and edited by Hicham Safieddine

Translated by Angela Giordani

making the mode of production in these countries the standard for assessing them structurally and historically. Yet, by referring to a country as developing, on a developmental path, or underdeveloped, one occludes or masks the mode of production within it. Indeed, there is a danger in revealing these countries' mode of production to those attempting to hide it. All of these terms are similarly misleading because they veil the real, structural, and historical reasons for why 'growth' in colonial countries is slow or non-existent. Our choice of the term 'colonial production' was born out of a rational, scientific aim to bring the reasons for 'underdevelopment' to light and to define the dimensions of its development. Our term draws attention to the historical dimensions (i.e. the structural framework) of the full formation of this production.

In colonised countries, the colonial relation constituted the historical framework for the development of the forces of production. Colonialism introduced new relations of production into these countries in a very violent manner.⁸ These new relations of production developed and shaped the forces of production. The insertion of new relations of production in colonised countries proceeded through the internal destruction of the pre-existing development structure, i.e. through a radical change in the historical logic of these countries' development. Unlike the capitalist relations of production that emerged through the historical development of feudalism in Europe, the relations of production that emerged in colonised countries were not a necessary outcome of the internal development of the mode of production which preceded colonialism. Because they formed under the aegis of the colonial relation and direct colonial rule, we have labelled them colonial relations of production. It was only by destroying the pre-existing structure of development that colonial-

4 LABOUR IN IRISH HISTORY

administrator of the tribal affairs of his people, while the land or territory of the clan was entirely removed from his private jurisdiction. In the parts of Ireland where for 400 years after the first conquest (so-called) the English governors could not penetrate except at the head of a powerful army, the social order which prevailed in England—feudalism—was unknown, and as this comprised the greater portion of the country, it gradually came to be understood that the war against the foreign oppressor was also a war against private property in land. But with the forcible break up of the clan system in 1649, the social aspect of the Irish struggle sank out of sight, its place being usurped by the mere political expressions of the fight for freedom. Such an event was, of course, inevitable in any case. Communal ownership of land would, undoubtedly, have given way to the privately owned system of capitalist-landlordism, even if Ireland had remained an independent country, but coming as it did in obedience to the pressure of armed force from without, instead of by the operation of economic forces within, the change has been bitterly and justly resented by the vast mass of the Irish people, many of whom still mix with their dreams of liberty longings for a return to the ancient system of land tenure—now organically impossible. The dispersion of the clans, of course, put an end to the leadership of the chiefs, and in consequence, the Irish aristocracy *being all*

4 LABOUR IN IRISH HISTORY

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making the mode of production in these countries the standard for assessing them structurally and historically. Yet, by referring to a country as developing, on a developmental path, or underdeveloped, one occludes or masks the mode of production within it. Indeed, there is a danger in revealing these countries' mode of production to those attempting to hide it. All of these terms are similarly misleading because they veil the real, structural, and historical reasons for why 'growth' in colonial countries is slow or non-existent. Our choice of the term 'colonial production' was born out of a rational, scientific aim to bring the reasons for 'underdevelopment' to light and to define the dimensions of its development. Our term draws attention to the historical dimensions (i.e. the structural framework) of the full formation of this production.

In colonised countries, the colonial relation constituted the historical framework for the development of the forces of production. Colonialism introduced new relations of production into these countries in a very violent manner.⁸ These new relations of production developed and shaped the forces of production. The insertion of new relations of production in colonised countries proceeded through the internal destruction of the pre-existing development structure, i.e. through a radical change in the historical logic of these countries' development. Unlike the capitalist relations of production that emerged through the historical development of feudalism in Europe, the relations of production that emerged in colonised countries were not a necessary outcome of the internal development of the mode of production which preceded colonialism. Because they formed under the aegis of the colonial relation and direct colonial rule, we have labelled them colonial relations of production. It was only by destroying the pre-existing structure of development that colonial-

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firing squad. The paper then urged Irish youth to "atone for the crime," by enlisting for Flanders.

Connolly was arguably the finest political thinker of that tragic Irish generation and an unrepentant nationalist. Yet he was, for all that, no misty-eyed nostalgist: his use of the past was strictly strategic, for he recast it in terms of his desired future, by this means converting history into science fiction. So in *Labour in Irish History* he managed to convince himself that socialism would simply be a return to the old Gaelic system, whereby a chief held lands in the name of the entire people (except that under socialism the state would take the place of the chieftain).

This version of an archaic avant-garde proved catching. By a similar kind of logic, Patrick Pearse presented the Montessori educational method as a return to the Gaelic fosterage system, and James Joyce contrived to encase the subversive modern narrative of *Ulysses* in the framework of one of Europe's oldest stories, Homer's *Odyssey*. All were aware of the fact that in order to secure a hearing in a traditional

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Jose Carlos Mariategui

Seven Interpretative Essays on Peruvian Reality

Essay One: Outline of the Economic Evolution

The Colonial Economy

The degree to which the history of Peru was severed by the conquest can be seen better on an economic than on any other level. Here the conquest most clearly appears to be a break in continuity. Until the conquest, an economy developed in Peru that sprang spontaneously and freely from the Peruvian soil and people. The most interesting aspect of the empire of the Incas, which was a grouping of agricultural and sedentary communities, was its economy. All historical evidence agrees that the Inca people—industrious, disciplined, pantheist, and simple—lived in material comfort. With abundant food their population increased. The Malthusian problem was completely unknown to the empire. Although the collectivist organization directed by the Incas had weakened the Indians' individual initiative, it had instilled in them the habit of a humble and religious obedience to social duty, which benefitted the economic system. The Incas derived as much social utility as possible from this trait. They improved the vast Inca territory by constructing roads, canals, et cetera, and they extended its borders by conquering nearby tribes. Collective work and common effort were employed fruitfully for social purposes.

The Spanish conquistadors destroyed this impressive productive machine without being able to replace it. The indigenous society and the Inca economy were wholly disrupted and annihilated by the shock of the conquest. Once the bonds that had united it were broken, the nation dissolved into scattered communities. Indigenous labor ceased to function as a concerted and integrated effort. The conquistadors were mainly concerned with distributing and wrangling over their rich booty. They plundered the treasures of temples and palaces; they allotted land and men with no thought of their future use as forces and means of production.

REPLY TO MR. PAUL ERNST

London, October 1, 1890

First published in the *Berliner Volksblatt*,
No. 232, October 5, 1890

for worse, with my “Ernst”^d correspondence.

On May 31 this year Mr. Ernst wrote to me from Görbersdorf that Mr. Hermann Bahr was reproaching him in the *Freie Bühne* for wrongly applying the Marxist method of viewing history with regard to the Scandinavian women’s movement,^a and would I please

“say in a few lines whether my view corresponds with Marx’s or not, and furthermore permit me to use the letter against Bahr”.

“As regards your attempt to handle the matter in a materialist way, I should say first of all that the materialist method turns into its opposite if, in an historical study, it is used not as a guide but rather as a ready-made pattern in accordance with which one tailors the historical facts. And if Mr. Bahr believes he has caught you out in this respect, it seems to me that he may not be altogether unjustified.

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Paul Ernst

German writer

[Ask the Chatbot a Question](#)[More Actions](#)*Also known as:* Paul Karl Friedrich ErnstWritten and fact-checked by [The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica](#)Last Updated: Mar 3, 2025 • [Article History](#)

Paul Ernst

Quick Facts**In full:** Paul Karl Friedrich Ernst**Born:** March 7, 1866, Elbingerode, Saxony [Germany]**Died:** May 13, 1933, Sankt Georgen, Austria (aged 67)**Notable Works:** “Ariadne auf Naxos” • “Der Weg zur Form” • “Der Zusammenbruch des Marxismus”**Subjects Of Study:** Neoclassical art[See all related content](#)

Paul Ernst (born March 7, 1866, Elbingerode, Saxony [Germany]—died May 13, 1933, Sankt Georgen, Austria) was a German writer known particularly for his short stories and for essays on philosophical, economic, and literary problems.

Ernst studied for the ministry but quickly became disillusioned with theology. He became a militant Marxist and the editor of the *Berliner Volkstribüne*. He severed his Marxist connections at the turn of the century, however, and repudiated the doctrine in *Der*

Zusammenbruch des Marxismus (1919; “The Collapse of Marxism”). He had already expressed his antagonism toward naturalism in art and called for a return to classicism in his [essay](#) *Der Weg zur Form* (1906; “The Road to Form”). His search for eternal truths led him through German idealist philosophy back to a form of Christianity that he dramatized in what he called redemption [drama](#), best exemplified by *Ariadne auf Naxos* (1912).

“You subsume the whole of Norway and everything that happens there under one category, philistinism, and then unhesitatingly and erroneously apply to that Norwegian philistinism your opinion of German philistinism. But here there are two facts which present an insuperable obstacle.

“And in so doing you will probably find that a very important distinction emerges. In Germany philistinism was born of a failed revolution, a development that was interrupted and repressed. Its idiosyncratic, abnormally pronounced character made up of cowardice, bigotry, ineptitude, and a total lack of initiative,

“In Norway, on the other hand, the class of small peasants and the lower middle class with a slight admixture of middle class elements—as it existed, say, in England and France in the seventeenth century—have, for several centuries, constituted the normal state of society. Here there is no question of an archaic state of affairs having been forcibly imposed upon them by the failure of a great movement or by a Thirty Years’ War. The country has been retarded by its isolation and by its natural literary revival.

“The Norwegian peasant was never a serf, so that the whole process takes place against an entirely different background, as in Castile. The lower middle class Norwegian is the son of a free peasant and, such being the case, is a *man* compared with the degenerate German philistine. And whatever the failings of, for

Marxism",^a in which he appropriates without hesitation the odd assertion of the metaphysicist Dühring—as if, according to Marx, history makes itself quite automatically, without the cooperation of human beings (who after all are making it!), and as if these human beings were simply played like mere chessmen by the economic conditions (which are the work of men themselves!). A man who is capable of confusing the distortion of Marxist theory by an opponent such as Dühring with this theory itself must turn elsewhere for help—I give up.

There is, however, one thing which I can divulge to Mr. Paul Ernst by way of conclusion: there is something that is far more dangerous to the party than a petty-bourgeois group which can be consigned to the lumber-room at the next elections. I am referring to a clique of loud-mouthed men of letters and students, particularly when they are incapable of seeing the simplest things with their own eyes and of impartially weighing up the relative importance of the available facts or the strength of the forces involved when assessing an economic or political situation, and hence seek to force on the party tactics that are utterly insane, as gentlemen such as Bruno Wille and Teistler in particular, and to a

BUILDING FOR FREEDOM

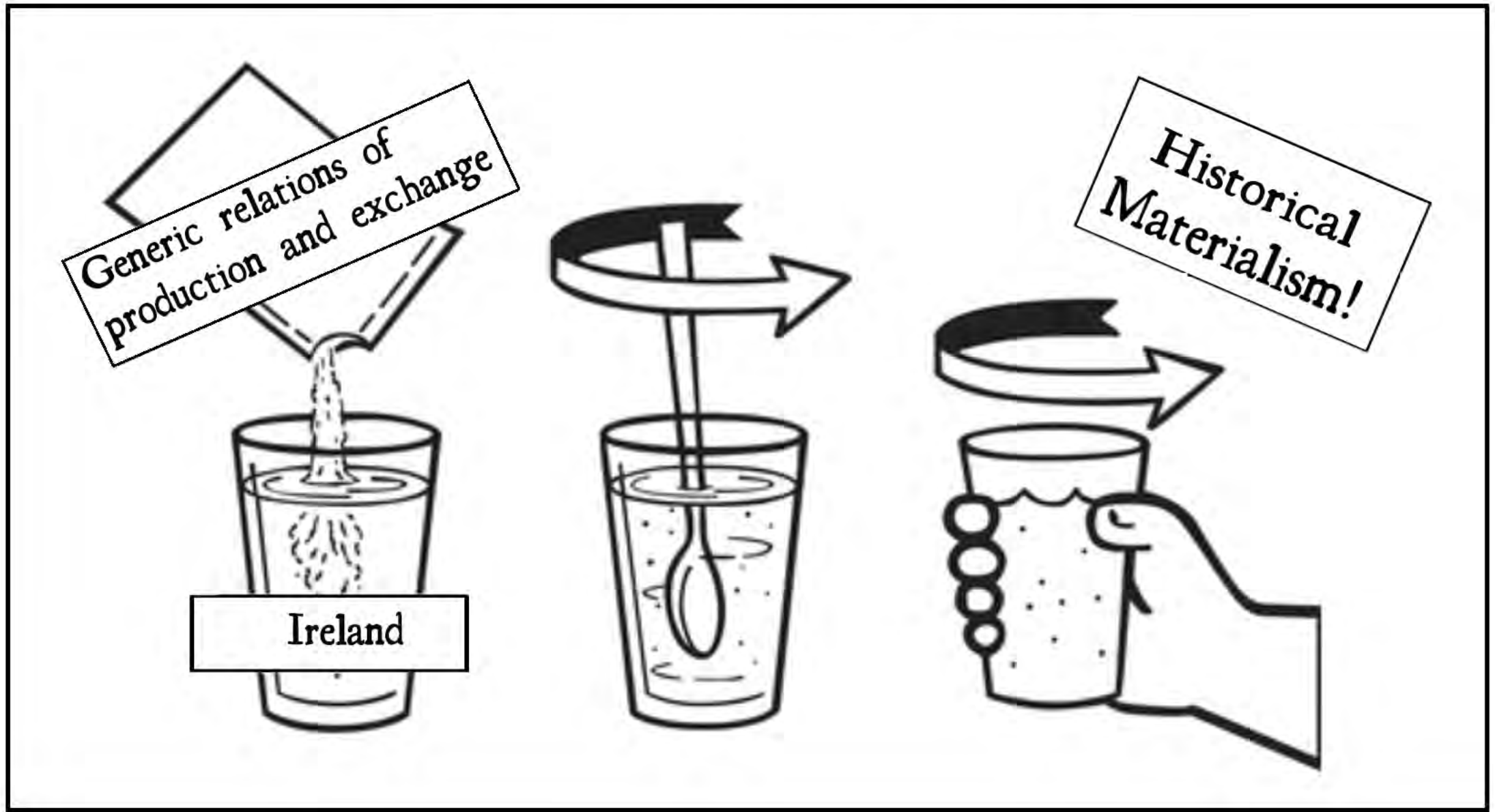
The Trade Unions and the Volunteers

By PEADAR O'DONNELL

In the first set of thoughts on mass organisation let us face the fact that any movement on the 1919 basis must end in betrayal. If we so organise that we accept the idea of co-operation with capitalism we must co-operate with Imperialism. Any organisation that is not anti-capitalist in its nature must simply yield a new set of officials to administer old institutions. Any movement that reaches offices without being organised in conflict with capitalism will make this country a puppet of British Imperialism.

It is a custom to say airily that when we get power things will be different. Let us understand clearly that things will be what our organisations are. A "Free Ireland" that is got by the rise of a Labour Government that imposes on the trades union movement arbitration schemes and conciliation boards to solve "labour unrest" in a capitalist Ireland must be the puppet of Imperial Britain. A Republican Government that will adjust Ireland's claims to freedom with the necessary safeguards for British Imperial security must co-operate with Imperialism, strengthen it and become its puppet. Freedom for Ireland is only promised when it is in the very nature of the organisation striving for it, that they cannot reconcile themselves with capitalism.

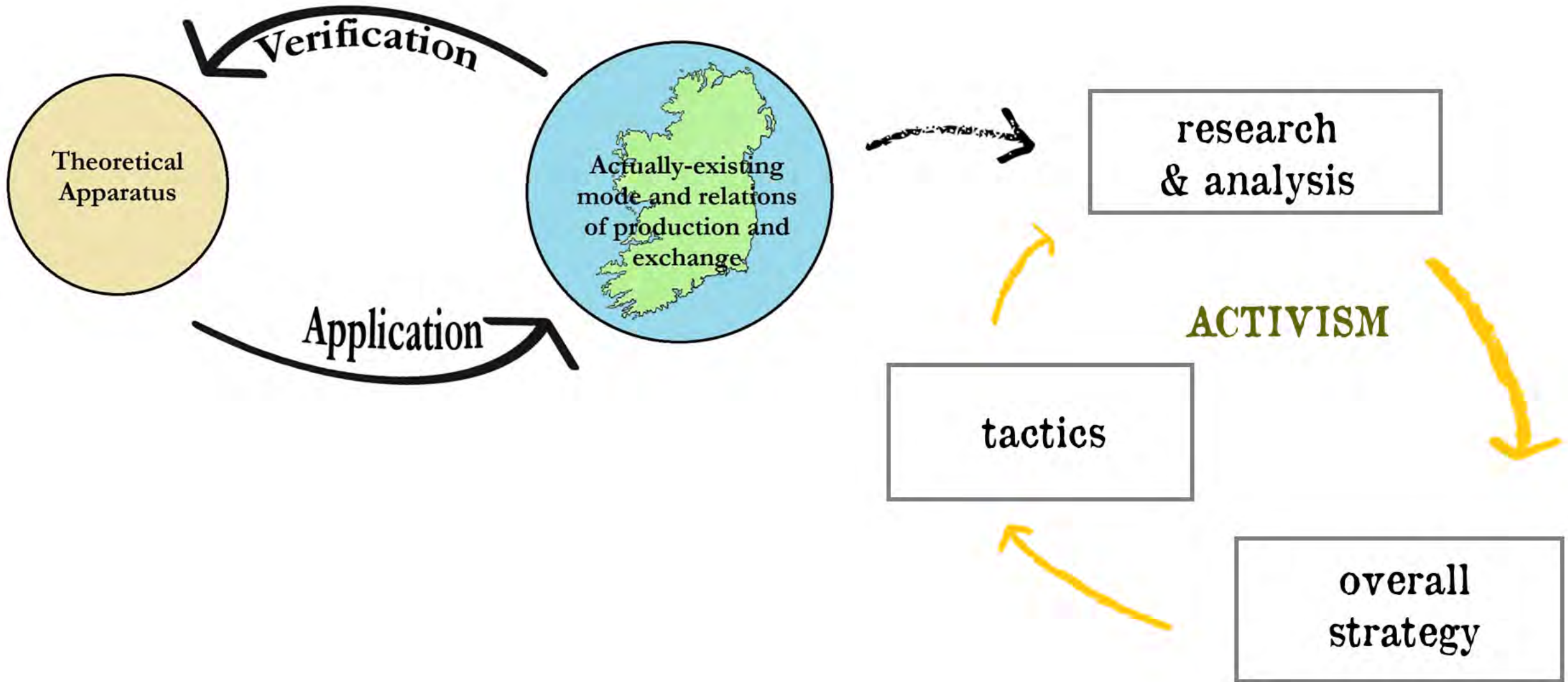
ADD MARXISM AND STIR...



Contradiction

Not a logical error

**It is a structural tension
built into a social system**



Verification

Theoretical Apparatus

Actually-existing mode and relations of production and exchange

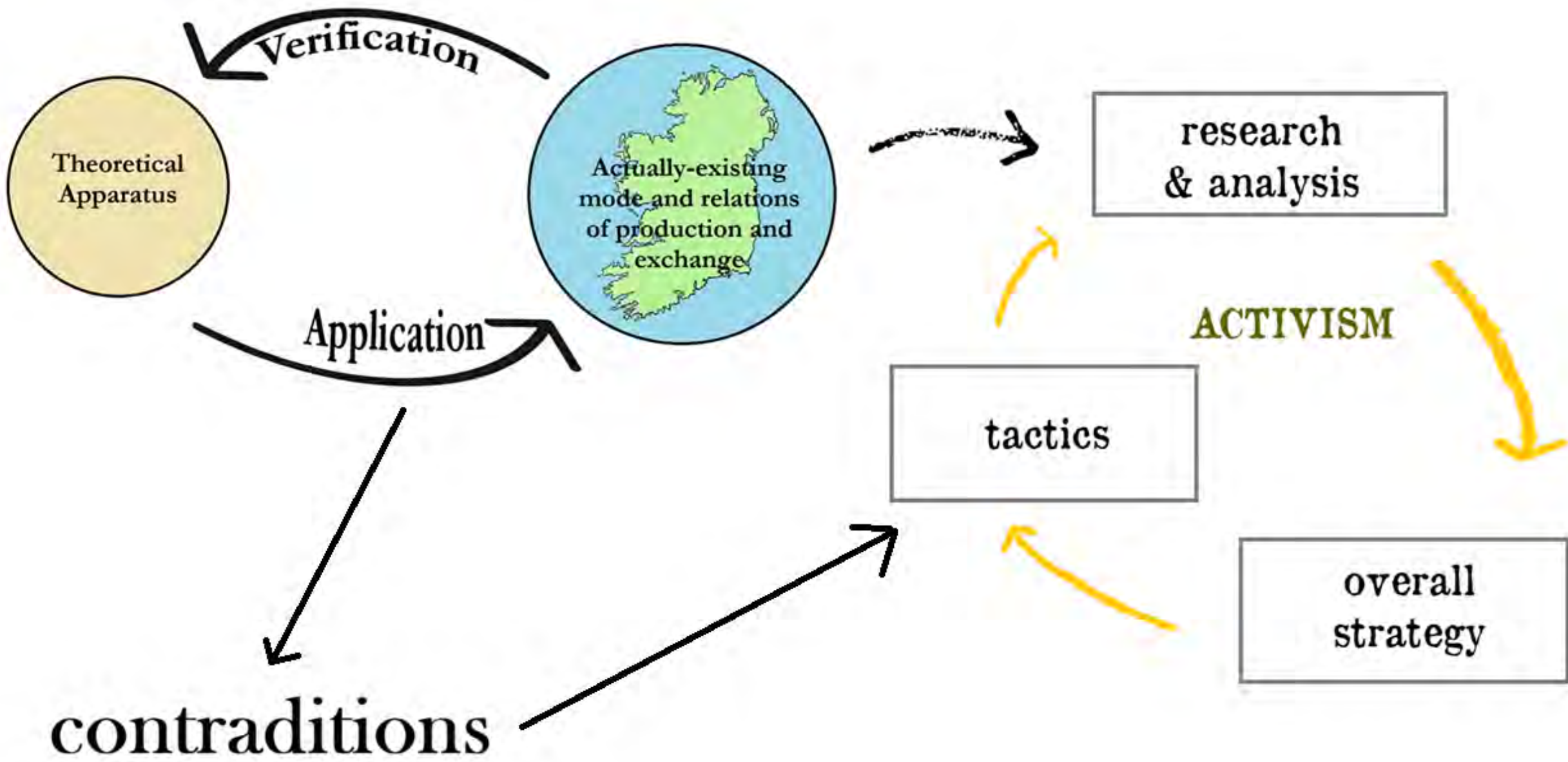
Application

research & analysis

ACTIVISM

tactics

overall strategy



contradictions

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