

# An Rabharta Glas-Green Left: Towards a Programme for Eco-Socialism.

As of 5 June 2021.



# Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Analysis	3
The political system and economy	3
Organic crisis	4
Counter-hegemony and intersectionality	5
Class politics	6
Urbanisation	6
Approach	9
Eco-socialism	9
State power	10
Leveraging state power towards eco-socialism	11
Renewing the commons	12
Electoral politics and policy	13
Agenda	14
Conclusion	17
Notes	18

## Introduction

Currently, the idea of an economy under democratic control — which prioritises the well-being of the population over market performance — is so unimaginable to most people in Ireland that none of the major political parties have ever dared to propose it in their election manifestos.

The idea that everyone in society should have the basic securities of home, healthcare, education and income can only be considered in the abstract, because it is a truth universally acknowledged that despite the concentration of enormous wealth in the Irish economy, these basic securities are luxuries the Irish public cannot afford. The idea that improving the everyday lives of millions of people in Ireland does not require the maintenance of a tax-haven economy<sup>1</sup> is beyond the political pale. The idea that the decarbonisation of the economy is a cost that can only be borne by working people, much like austerity following the financial crash, is as inescapable as it is unsustainable.

An Rabharta Glas - Green Left (ARG-GL) exists to shatter these assumptions and to bring about a decisive shift in Irish politics that gives people control over their lives in a society where equality means a better quality of life for everyone. To achieve this, we need a new type of politics which empowers individuals and communities directly rather than merely channelling their anger or disciplining their expectations. We need ideas and strategies which can overcome the formidable hierarchies protecting the current political system against radical change. We require a transformative programme developed through an unflinching analysis of how a counter-hegemonic<sup>2</sup> eco-socialist prospectus can be advanced in Ireland. We need to leverage political power for social and environmental purposes to decisively break with the current economic model once and for all.

This document sets out ARG-GL's analysis, approach and agenda in relation to these tasks, with primary relevance to the context of the Republic of Ireland. The party will seek to develop its approach to Northern Ireland in future documents.

## Analysis

### The political system and economy

While Ireland's economy, society, geography and culture have changed dramatically in the last 30 years, the way the country's political system operates has hardly changed at all. By 'political system', we mean three things: i) the official architecture of national, regional and local government; ii) the partly transparent, public-private regulating web of governance which surrounds this system; and iii) the relations the power-brokers in both fields have with various interest-groups, platforms, lobbies and clients. Over time, the operators of this system have steadily delegated and outsourced their control over public affairs in exchange for larger slices of the economic spoils—from mobile communications to fiscal policy, from fossil fuel extraction to social care.

As control over the economy is ceded externally to giant corporations involved in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), or the vagaries of a laissez-faire-at-all-costs housing market, these power-brokers tighten their internal political control on the official apparatus of state through highly centralised power in a post-colonial<sup>3</sup> parliamentary system which privileges their interest-groups, lobbies and clients. The basic purpose of the State in this regard is to intervene only in areas of public policy which expand or impede these interests, and in the latter case only to mitigate to the minimum extent necessary (normally via market mechanisms, rather than any transformative action). This results in urgent social crises in health, housing and so on which tend to continually worsen over the long term.

Reliance on market mechanisms means repeated cycles of boom and bust, and this system is remarkably resilient in its ability to insulate itself against the losses it incurs by passing these onto others, whether through austerity, ultra-high consumer prices relative to wages, environmental destruction and so on. Frustratingly, this political system imposes such strict discipline on any political alternatives that arise because of its failings, that it is quite normal for the parties responsible for deep crises to return to power shortly after they are implicated in them. Numerous attempts to break this triple-lock have failed because they did not consider the nature of a political

system in which the only two choices for new parties are to assimilate to the hegemonic order or remain marginal to real power.

### Organic crisis

Inadequate responses to shocks and externalities such as the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrate that the Irish political system is vulnerable to organic crisis<sup>5</sup>. That is, that its lack of capacity to absorb several concurrent pressures lays bare its contradictions in such a way that it is no longer able to produce the necessary consensus in the political system to continue as before.—With COVID-19 for example, a non-universally accessible health system with no surge capacity — combined with a housing crisis and poor digital infrastructure — has created a complete lack of confidence in the State’s capacity to function ‘normally’ at all, including for the groups whose consent normally underpins the political system.

This differentiates Ireland from other EU states. While many governments in liberal democracies endure domestic criticism for their pandemic response, few are as vulnerable as Ireland to organic crisis. Because in Ireland, the idea that a more universal, better-resourced public health service should be prioritised after a major health crisis is an idea that simply cannot be realised by the political system. The pre-pandemic idea, Sláintecare, remains the “only show in town” (despite overwhelming public approval for an NHS-style system), because the financialised interests of the clients of the governing class<sup>4</sup> in maintaining the lucrative system of exclusive private healthcare override any impetus towards general improvement in quality or accessibility.

But the Irish political system has a buffer which allows it to tolerate organic crises and has precluded them from posing any kind of existential threat to Ireland’s governing class: a vacuum in organised counter-hegemony. Various attempts to generate this, such as the Right2Water campaign or the YES campaigns in the abortion referendum, have stopped short of developing into sustainable, transformative movements. In the former case a reliance on fomenting anger as a principal strategy proved unsustainable; in the latter case, after the euphoria of success, the support generated by socialists and feminists flowed in large part back to the neoliberal patriarchal parties which facilitated the referendum.

## Counter-hegemony and intersectionality

Sustainable counter-hegemonic insurgencies require roots in communities, workplaces and social organisations. They require powerful, communicable ideas which alter individual people's ways of seeing their lives and generate a sense of belongingness and solidarity. They need to be capable of more than merely establishing a presence in communities – they need to be regarded as having the capacity to empower and take back space and resources for the community.

In addition to campaigns organised by the established trade unions, a proliferation of new organisations has come into existence representing tenants, artists, sex workers, construction workers and so on. Additionally, there are campaigning organisations which have emerged in opposition to extractive industries, adding to an already existing voluntarism present in many communities. It is here that insurgencies are developing. But they are geographically dispersed, some are driven by party-political interest, and most are poorly resourced in comparison with larger, weaker organisations. Crucially, they lack a unifying intersectional<sup>6</sup> concept which draws the focus of their activities into a wider framework.

With the empowerment of individuals and communities as a core principle of the party, an intersectional approach to social change is crucial to the success of our endeavours. While some belated progress has been made in recent years on the politics of gender and sexuality in Ireland, several major aspects (historical and current) have yet to achieve full emancipation. This is particularly true in Northern Ireland. In both jurisdictions, however, race and class remain somehow less visible.

The atrocious conditions endured by asylum seekers in Direct Provision are perhaps the biggest single case of ongoing institutional racism in the Irish state, and several ethnic groups are still receiving acute discrimination in various areas of public and private life, including from a vicious and newly organised far-right. The persistent myth that Ireland is not a racist society, however, is beginning to unravel, and encouraging this development through support for ethnic minority groups and anti-racist organisations must be a priority for any eco-socialist organisation.

## Class politics

Little progress however is being made on the class<sup>7</sup> front. Class is the glaring vacuum at the core of Irish politics. Of the few political parties, trade unions and other organisations which grapple with class formation as a serious objective, none have managed to articulate and promulgate class politics to a wider audience. Several organisations which claim to represent ‘the working class’ have variously been subsumed into normative neoliberal governance or lack a strategy for a transition to socialism beyond fomenting transient anger. Outside small bubbles of activism, virtually no political discussion takes place on class formation as a substantial objective, despite the atomisation and alienation of the most disadvantaged sections of Ireland’s working class being quite obvious during the pandemic.

Whether a product of post-colonial social relations, stunted histories of industrialisation or the influx of wealth since the ‘Tiger’ period — class politics remains either taboo or the hackneyed language of a radical fringe. The notion that ‘class politics’ should appeal beyond the lowest-paid in society, or beyond a traditional constituency of urban industrial workers, is a long way from being popularly understood. The idea that almost all people who are subordinated employees, self-employed, carers or unemployed are members of a broad ‘working class’ is obscured by a carefully-sown class-blindness and media discourse hostile to the working class.

Hence the centrality of this problem, and its intersections with gender and race politics, to ARG-GL’s activities and deliberations: without a process of class formation to break down these myths, class consciousness (and therefore an intersectional programme) cannot be advanced.

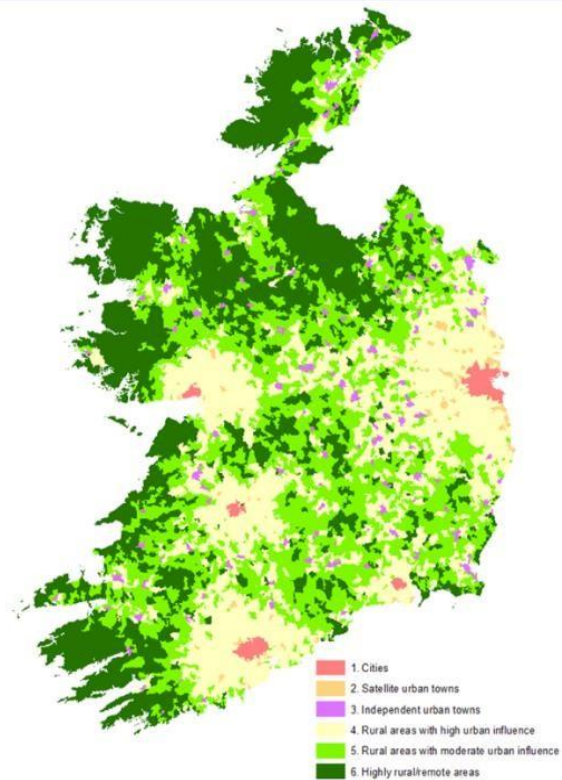
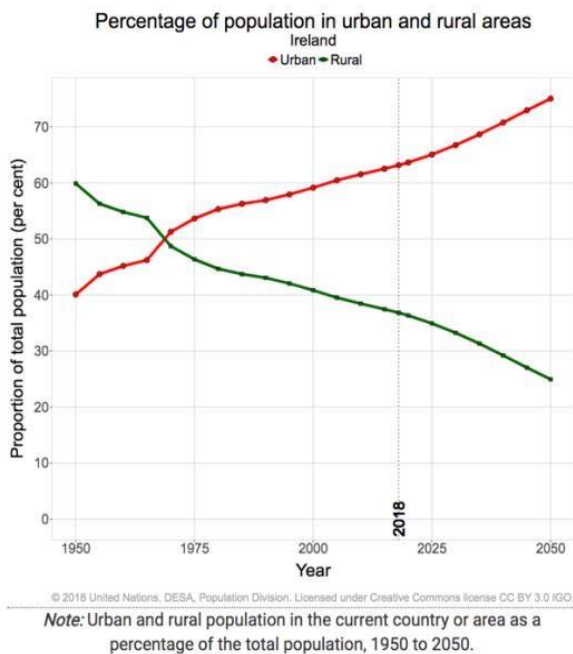
## Urbanisation

“Rural” and “urban” are no longer useful categories in Irish politics, but the urban/rural dialectic is a useful way of understanding Irish politics and society. Whether we like it or not, hundreds of thousands of Irish workers sleep in rural or semi-rural areas, work in urban areas and spend much of their free time somewhere in-between. Over time, urban areas (defined variably as towns of over 1,500 or 2,000 population) have seen population growth while rural areas experience even faster depopulation. Much of this growth is suburban, that is, in areas on the urban fringe of towns

and cities, or in often atomised settlements in ‘satellite’ towns which house people with basically ‘urban’ commuting and working lives, detached from the community in which they are situated. About 55% of the State’s population lives in the metropolitan areas of two cities: Dublin and Cork. While the proportion of rural dwellers in Ireland is currently slightly above the EU average, the trend points undeniably towards steady reduction (*see graph below*).



Map 1.1: Population distribution by six-way urban/rural classification using Census 2016 results



Source: CSO Ireland

Sources: UN, 2018; CSO (Ireland), 2016.

New eco-socialist politics needs to grapple with the increasing urbanisation of Irish society, including the impact it has on rural areas. Rural Ireland has a huge number of political parties vying for stewardship of increasingly corporatised agricultural interests which exert huge influence over the national political structure, interests that are completely ill-equipped for (and disinterested in) addressing the day-to-day material affairs of the working population of rural and semi-rural areas. The labour profile of regional towns and their rural hinterland have always been a diverse mosaic



of trades, services, retail, manufacturing, agriculture and the public sector — and these continue to urbanise. “Urban politics” in Ireland is meantime a minority sport, a rhetorical cultural device to separate “true” city-dwellers from new arrivals. Between them, these political fronts fail to address the lion’s share of Ireland’s working class who are dispersed throughout these various geographical settings and are diversifying in profile.

One highly effective device used to maintain this state of affairs, which serves the custodians of Ireland’s political system, is the illusory class mobility represented by property ownership. More affluent workers who have secured a mortgage on an expensive property in a semi-rural commuting village may not regard themselves as working-class, despite enduring a comparable financial precarity to tenant workers. Often, their claim to middle-class property-owning life is secured only by their ability to continually sell their labour at a certain rate for many years.

Conversely, the phenomenon of ‘working-class’ landlords with ‘middle-class’ tenants (often in houses originally constructed as social housing) serves to demonstrate the contradictory divisions the financialisation of housing in Ireland has created. These illusions and contradictory divisions serve to prevent community- and class-formation and therefore strengthen the control of the governing class over the political system.

The crux here is that through such a class analysis, eco-socialists can speak to urbanites and rural dwellers, and those who fit somewhere in-between. Workers in Ireland’s agricultural sector are increasingly urban dwellers too, as abattoirs and food production plants dominate the employment profiles of towns across the country. It is in these places that urban and rural overlap; where an industrialised working class is growing without access to supposedly “urban politics” and is actively impoverished by the combined stewardship of Fianna Fáil (FF) and Fine Gael (FG) in the Republic — and Sinn Féin (SF), the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and others in Northern Ireland.

## Approach

While Ireland's social topography is both unique and tough terrain for eco-socialist organising, it is neither incomparable with other movements in other places nor barren ground for a class-based programme. There are relevant examples of a successfully operationalised class politics of eco-socialism in tough circumstances in both the Democratic Socialists of America and in Podemos in Spain.

Both organisations have succeeded in different ways of articulating a nuanced class-political programme, generating expectations among a more engaged section of their working classes and taking on an established hegemonic order. On the other hand, we see the pitfalls of eschewing class politics in Germany with die Linke and in Greece with SYRIZA. In the former case, an electorally-oriented 'left formation' has struggled to establish social roots in de-industrialising urban and rural areas, and its focus on parliamentarism and official 'politics' left a gap in class-based organising capitalised upon by the far-right AfD. Die Linke currently polls only 8% nationally, with no signs of growth, and risks becoming at best an established but tolerated fringe. In Greece, the pyrrhic horse-trading of working-class mobilisation during the EU 'bailout' for technocratic management of austerity echoes that of the Irish Labour Party, and serves as a depressing lesson for Left parties to resist assimilation to assumed modes of organisation, the narrow contours of official 'politics' and 'policy', and flawed assumptions of the (ir)relevance of class to political and social change.

## Eco-socialism

Based on this analysis, we seek to offer a demonstratively new prospectus: we are not offering "green" capitalism like the Green Party, nor "green" socialism like the smaller Left parties, but eco-socialism. Eco-socialism symbiotically and inextricably unites the twin objectives of decarbonising human activity and transitioning from a capitalist society to a socialist one. While individual definitions for either of these objectives vary, perhaps **the most important role of ARG-GL is to establish the frame for developing eco-socialism in Ireland within the limited time frame permitted by climate emergency.** The reason we have arrived at the point of launching a new party is because we are depressingly aware of the barriers to achieving anything like this either

with parties embedded in the particular Irish version of (neo)liberal democracy (whether ‘Green’, social-democratic or ‘republican’), or through any of the established Left parties driven by narrow ‘revolutionary’ determinism. ARG-GL regards eco-socialism as being necessary for a sustainable and just society, and as such is incompatible with a capitalist economic system, based as it is on the exploitation of people and heedless extraction from the environment, with the only consistent goal being that of private profit. The shift required is therefore to an eco-socialist economic system based on emancipated labour, and a society organised around co-operation, mutual aid, and public endeavour rather than around competition and profit.

ARG – GL, like any Left organisation, comes up against an inescapable historical reality of human existence articulated by Marx and Engels, and later Connolly with direct reference to Ireland: major transformations in society are the products of conflict between classes. A shift to an eco-socialist society requires such a major transformation that it is only possible through the **establishment of a progressive working class** to replace the dominant, governing class hegemony in Ireland’s mainstream politics and economy. Again, definitions and understandings of these categories vary from person to person; but the only way to address the enormity of societal change necessary is to develop a political programme which has its convictions structurally formed against this backdrop of class politics and through its dialectics.

## State power

Political parties’ approaches to state power in Ireland fall into two main categories: those which conform to the normative assumptions of the role and conditions of the State as it currently exists, and those which oppose the State and wish to install an alternative system.

Various ostensibly ‘left-wing’ parties take the political system (which we dissected earlier) and the limited avenues for change for granted. Revolutionary parties reject on principle any entanglement with the State beyond oppositional stances and seek to overthrow it via forces from outside the political system. Both of these approaches have fundamental flaws, and there is very little discussion about how the State can be instrumentalised towards eco-socialist ends. This gap in political discourse suits the parties of the governing class, which between them monopolise the

system with no real concessions when parliamentary arithmetic requires the support of smaller parties.

A major problem in using state power in a highly centralised polity such as Ireland, where the national political system dominates over local government and only theoretically-existing regional governance, is that the external web of relations in which the State is embedded globally — and the internal mechanisms of State agencies — resists the power of the State being used to make any fundamental changes to the status quo. As we discussed earlier, the ceding of control over public affairs to external private power-brokers means that although there is huge public anger towards United States (US) tech firms swindling billions through tax loopholes, this anger never produces any change to the corporate taxation regime. Even parties that claim to wish for a break with this neoliberal rule outwardly accept the tax-haven arrangement, despite agitating against it rhetorically. Similarly, the State's purported efforts to address a housing crisis through the new Land Development Agency (LDA) are not designed to change anything fundamentally, but to ensure the expansion of a lucrative rental and mortgage market. Their purpose is to maintain rising property-prices in a buoyant private sector to ensure that whatever changes occur are ones which can be absorbed by the interests and clients of the governing class. Local government, which in other contexts has addressed such issues, has been continually disempowered by the centralising and outsourcing logics of the national state. Governance reforms, such as the 2014 Local Government Reform Act, routinely repackage these powers without ever increasing their scope, e.g. increased scope would give towns and cities direct control over areas of public policy such as transport and housing.

### Leveraging state power towards eco-socialism

Faced with such limitations, it is clear that for an eco-socialist programme of transformation to succeed, it needs to not merely plan to inhabit the State's institutions and agencies, but to replace the normative neoliberal culture within and around them, transforming them towards an eco-socialist agenda. ARG-GL's approach to this can be characterised as a constructive dismantling of the repressive organs of the State alongside a generative enfranchisement of new State capacities which empower individuals and communities at a scale and extent that amounts to an overall

energising of a progressive working class. In short, the *raison d'être* of the State needs to break with serving extractive clientelist interests and fundamentally shift towards the material well-being of an emergent working class.

By constructive dismantling, we mean an approach that for example would address Direct Provision not just by closing it as it exists but establish in its place a legislative framework which accords refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in general the rights and protections they seek. Its orientation as a justicial programme of custody and security, in which vast sums of rent are paid to hoteliers providing disgraceful service, would be inverted to make more robust the public services and community resources required by such a change. Generative enfranchisement, on the other hand, would for example involve the process of empowering local government to take control of urban land to address housing shortages, and make available the resources currently held centrally to advance programmes such as retrofitting and infrastructural improvements.

### Renewing the commons

An approach which aims to leverage state power to energise a progressive working class cannot simply nationalise what has been privatised, or centralise what has been outsourced. Collective ownership and control of these resources, assets, services and public goods needs to be demonstrably held in and by communities and workplaces. An explicit benefit of this approach is its communicability in terms of a renewal and expansion of the commons in several areas of life in Ireland.

This would place our programme as a polar opposite to the hollowing out of public services, community assets, infrastructural utilities and natural resources normalised under decades of neoliberal rule. Speaking in the language of the renewal of the commons illuminates the extent to which individuals' needs are currently exploited through marketisation<sup>8</sup>, and how many of these needs can be more comprehensively and effectively met with universal services. Looking at the soaring bills faced by people for the basic services upon which their livelihoods currently depend (from digital services to car insurance), it is clear that there is scope to make the case for a renewal of universal services to replace market mechanisms not merely in pursuit of cost-efficiency for individuals, but primarily as a means of returning control over people's lives to them and their

communities through investment in collectively-owned resources. This approach has relevance across the piste of public policy, from the ostensible inability of local authorities to afford market prices for enclosed urban land and construction materials for public housing to the gap between the State's preferential fiscal treatment of digital platforms as against poor provision of digital services through cartel-type markets. The material effect of speaking the language of the commons begets consciousness of the needs of the community, and therefore has discursive power in overcoming historic barriers to class-consciousness.

### Electoral politics and policy

Operationalising these ideas requires an approach which exploits fully the electoral possibilities presented by the current system at all legislative levels and uses any electoral gains to progress the party's political programme. Of course, ARG-GL elected representatives will have individual responsibilities within the normative frame of constituency representation and participation in the system of governance, but these activities will neither be towards obedient conformance nor demonstrative opposition: instead they will have the project of building and empowering individuals and communities in their interfaces with the political system. This will significantly differentiate ARG-GL representatives from those of other parties; such an approach shifts the normative assumptions of what political representatives and political parties actually do. For example, should the party's Teachtaí Dála (TDs) become relevant to government formation, the identified aspects of the party's programme which are to be advanced will need to be fully accepted by coalition partners, who will also have to accept responsibilities to also use their offices to dismantle/enfranchise the relevant parts of the political system. This shift in power-dynamic is only possible through a popularisation of the main points of the party's programme, which are used to generate electoral expectations and pressure on the governing class. The party rejects both the purely oppositional approach of some Left parties and the consensus-based compromise tendency of those parties who vie for state power as junior partners in coalitions. Simply put, any government in which ARG-GL will be involved will be carrying out parts of a political programme which is well understood by voter, parliamentarian, civil servant and worker alike, and which serves to break with repressive neoliberal rule, not sustain it. Its programme should be encapsulated clearly in straightforward proposals supported by solid analysis and substantial discourse.

## Agenda

The political programme referred to here is a departure from the standard practice of Irish political parties, and represents the tight package of reforms which unlock the possibility of advancing a fuller eco-socialist agenda. Taken together, this political programme, if largely enacted, represents the viable rupture needed to reorient the Irish political system decisively towards the needs and material well-being of workers.

Mainstream political parties in Ireland are used to presenting a comprehensive manifesto covering all the current functions of government, presented in such a way as to present a party ‘fit for government’, with the requisite costings and legislative planning carried out to be compatible with the political system. Some of these parties place great emphasis on evidence-based policy-making, on the assumption that working out the best ideas with the most transparently conclusive evidence are convincing to voters and reliable prospects if the party were in power. On the other hand, several Left parties present what are referred to as ‘programmes’, but which are more accurately lists of oppositional statements which generally avoid legislative proposals or substantial engagement with State.

Our method of producing such a political programme serves not only to communicate our proposals to voters, workers and other political/State actors—but it serves as a succinct encapsulation of what steps could be taken to break with the current political and economic systems and get on the path to eco-socialism. Its main points are summarised on the table below, and will be elaborated democratically by party members through the party’s policy development processes:

Area	Proposal	Effect
Agriculture and food production	State supports for small-scale sustainable farming. Decorporatisation <sup>9</sup> and decarbonisation of food processing companies.	A revitalisation of de-corporatised small scale agriculture allowing farmers to earn a living from the land and the prioritisation of high-quality affordable organic food for the domestic market.
Climate and Environment	De-carbonise in line with % of global emissions through regulation of industry and business. Expand national parks. Reduce energy consumption by 40% by 2050.	Fully phase out fossil fuels by 2030. Renew wilderness and wildlife by vastly expanding national parks. Fulfil obligations to help prevent catastrophic climate breakdown.
Work	Labour law reforms; an emphasis on co-operatives, democratised workplaces and improving commuting.	Shorter working week, urgent protection of most precarious workers, democratised workplaces and growing sector of worker-cooperatives. Reduce and improve commuting. Secure, equitable pensions for everyone; expanded support for carers.
Housing	Public housing programme; property price and rent controls; state-led development; security of tenure. Rolling back of real estate market's role in economy.	Homelessness eradicated, rents controlled, landlordism and speculative purchase significantly curtailed, full rollout of retrofit and new-build housing. Security of tenure for renters. Decommodification of housing.
Healthcare	Subsumption of private health and social care into public sector; universal healthcare access.	Vastly expanded and reformed HSE with full budget for comprehensive healthcare services; universal access without insurance.
Equality	Reform of justice system and revision of discriminatory laws.	Gardaí, criminal justice system, immigration and asylum policy completely reoriented. Full recognition of rights to marginalised ethnic and gender groups.
Economy	New role for the state in the economy. Ending tax-haven status; investment in infrastructure and GND; reversing imposition of Eurozone fiscal discipline.	Reorientation towards a sustainably productive economy; end to extractive growth model; fuller control of budgetary authority. Market failures in e.g. insurance, telecommunications reversed through universal common services.
Transport	Publicly-owned companies to expand intercity and rural bus, rail and ferry services.	Reverse primacy of car-use through urban and regional planning and substantially increase public transport in all settings.
Infrastructure	Energy, transport, water industries democratised, decarbonised and expanded in public hands.	New publicly-owned companies controlling utilities and transport; decarbonised industry and logistics.
Political system	Expand remit and capacity of local government and public services; democratise institutions.	Rebalanced national-local system of government; expanded public services; corporate lobbying controlled and curtailed.



ARG-GL's contention is that these proposals: a) would find favour with a majority of the Irish population; b) are impeded only by the external and domestic clientelist interests in the current political system; c) are within the budgetary, legislative and operational capacities of the State; and d) if realised as the basis of a coherent political programme would engender the requisite class-consciousness to render viable the subsequent transition to a post-capitalist, eco-socialist economy and society.

Rather than conform to or merely oppose the current political system, ARG-GL's express purpose is to supplant and transform it towards these ends. ARG-GL's approach to policy — based on constructive dismantling and generative enfranchisement — is to develop comprehensive proposals primarily in these identified aspects which set out in each case the operational detail and financial structure alongside the legislative and political pathways to implementation. That is to say that detailed policies will be developed according to these priorities which will form a package. This will be the crux of our electoral offer and institutional engagements, alongside complementary policies addressing other issues of public policy and societal relevance. Cognisant of widely held distrust in the political system's integrity and capacity, the party must demonstrate that transformative political change is a question of struggle — a struggle which our agenda and intersectional approach can consequentially advance through the State.

It needs to be underlined that discussion of this 'programme' so far only refers only to the interface ARG-GL wants to open up with the State. For it to be advanced, other substantial engagements need to be underway. The elaboration of the programme needs to reflect substantive discourse with as many constituent elements as possible of the progressive working class it seeks to generate. This is ARG-GL's responsibility, not that of e.g., marginalised groups with whom the party wishes to engage. ARG-GL needs to find avenues at all levels to interact with these groups in a way which promulgates intersectionality and palpably offers the prospect of a unifying force across gender and sexuality, race and class. Whereas other parties privilege 'expert' voices over those whom they purport to represent, ARG-GL's will amplify the priorities directly asserted by the relevant communities/organisations themselves, and use engagement as a means of promulgating the party's programme for eco-socialism.

## Conclusion

The analysis, approach and agenda set out here comprise only the first urgent steps in the creation of an eco-socialist future on this island. This document grapples with the immediate obstacles which must be overcome, the entanglements and struggles which represent the steps towards altering the unalterable present, and proposes the ideas and actions required to effect consequential change. In so doing, it offers only an implicit glimpse of the type of world which these proposals aim to bring about.

Relating our vision of eco-socialism to the everyday lives of working people is a task which ARG-GL takes as being of equal priority to the mechanics of advancing our political programme. This means inverting the lens on the spatial and social order of villages, towns and cities, workplaces, homes and communities to demonstrate that not only can working people be in control of their lives and the spaces in which they live them, but they must be if people and planet are to survive in the coming decades. Offering a prospectus based neither on designed utopias nor wishful thinking, but on the momentum and space produced through and by popular struggle, has the power to reverse the truism so that it is easier to imagine the end of capitalism than to imagine the end of the world.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Tørsløv & Ludvig S. Wier & Gabriel Zucman, 2018. "The Missing Profits of Nations," NBER Working Papers 24701, National Bureau of Economic Research, Inc.

<sup>2</sup> By counter-hegemony, we understand an eco-socialist programme oriented in opposition to the current system of extractive capitalism, whose logic and effect has spread throughout society to become an unquestionable status quo.

<sup>3</sup> Whatever of the emancipatory intentions of the founders of Dáil Éireann, the Irish parliamentary and legal system was nonetheless created in the image of Westminster, a body set up historically set up to defend the interests of the propertied classes - and so it remains.

<sup>4</sup> In the context of the health system, 'governing class' would refer to those who profit from ownership of its functions. This view can be easily applied to other sectors.

<sup>5</sup> Antonio Gramsci's term for social and political crises where the legitimacy of the hegemonic order is undermined by pressures which it cannot resolve. For wider context, see:

<https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/4141-capitalism-s-organic-crisis>

<sup>6</sup> Expanding on Kimberlé Crenshaw's original definition of intersectionality as an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege, we apply this to the Irish context with the objective of generating eco-socialist politics relevant across delineations of gender, race and social class.

<sup>7</sup> By 'class' in this instance, we refer to a group of people united by the material similarity of their relationship to the means of production in the economic system.

<sup>8</sup> Here marketisation specifically refers to the mediation of the provision of necessary services to people through profit-taking mediators, and the moralistic logic which derives from and reinforces this process.

<sup>9</sup> We see 'de-corporatisation' in this context as a process involving a re-mutualisation of larger conglomerates especially in the dairy and meat sector, and democratisation of the workplaces involved (both farm and factory) to become worker-cooperatives held jointly by farmers and workers.



**Title:** Towards a Programme for Eco-Socialism

**Organisation:** An Rabharta Glas - Green Left

**Date:** 2021

Downloaded from the Irish Left Archive.

Visit [www.leftarchive.ie](http://www.leftarchive.ie)

*The Irish Left Archive is provided as a non-commercial historical resource, open to all, and has reproduced this document as an accessible digital reference. Copyright remains with its original authors. If used on other sites, we would appreciate a link back and reference to the Irish Left Archive, in addition to the original creators. For re-publication, commercial, or other uses, please contact the original owners. If documents provided to the Irish Left Archive have been created for or added to other online archives, please inform us so sources can be credited.*