

AFFAIRS OF THE NATION



NEW-RIGHT RIFTS

FOLLOWING THE recent elections there has been feverish speculation about how Ireland's new right could have a significant impact on the Irish political landscape if it could just find a common vehicle or platform.

But the simplistic mathematics of adding together votes received by the Irish Freedom Party (IFP), National Party (NP), Ireland First (IF) and Independent Ireland (II), along with those received by various right-wing Independents, papers over significant differences in the politics of these formations.

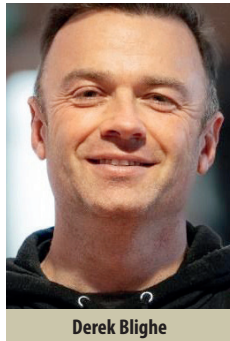
John McGuirk of *Gript Media* has written extensively about how this right-wing vote was so disparate that, all things considered, it should be seen as "a most disappointing election for those of us who'd like to see Irish politics take a step rightward. Baby steps are not enough."

On *Gript's* weekly podcast, *The Week That Really Was*, McGuirk also speculated with co-host Sarah Ryan, director of elections for the II's Niall Boylan, on how divided the right-wing scene is and how things could be different.

On the show McGuirk lionised Derek Blighe, IF candidate in the South constituency in the European election: "I said that Derek Blighe would surprise people. He did. You know 3.6% of the vote ain't going to win you any seats but for a candidate in his first time out, who was derided by the media... He's a working-class guy who perhaps sometimes speaks plainly but he did remarkably well."

McGuirk makes no mention of the fact that Blighe has shared dozens of posts from British far-right figure Tommy Robinson and has also repeatedly shared posts by Mark Collett, who is currently the leader of British fascist party Patriotic Alternative, having in the past been active in the National Front and leader of the youth wing of the British National Party.

Blighe also shared a post from Britain



Derek Blighe

First, with a video and the following text: "The Pope kissing the feet of black people. This Pope doesn't think Europe is suffering with immigration. He's an imposter and a fake Christian."

Blighe is the leader of IF and Philip Dwyer was that party's candidate for the Dublin constituency in the European election.

In response to speculation about right-wing unity, Dwyer posted a screenshot of a tweet from McGuirk and stated: "John McGuirk saying that Nigerians can be as Irish as you. Any politician who does not explicitly state that being Irish means being of Irish ethnicity is an enemy, worse than the left as not only will they flood the country with immigrants. They will take the patriotic votes."

Days earlier Dwyer had been ejected from the count centre in Tallaght. Afterwards he put up a 12-minute video in which he railed against the "degenerate communists" and "regime operatives", and how by being in the count centre with left-wing activists "you are in the presence of evil".

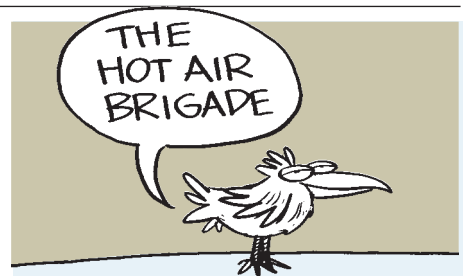
There had been a confrontation in the centre after Dwyer shouted abuse at both People Before Profit and Sinn Féin activists. Dwyer himself described how he "went down to Paul Murphy as well, to let him know that I'm here, to look him in the eye" and that after a confrontation with PBP TD Gino Kenny, "I put him on the ground".

The election results also led to some soul searching for putative National Party leader James Reynolds. He had stood in the EU Midlands North-West constituency but was dispirited by the 3,201 first-preference votes he received. The fact that his rival claimant to the NP leadership, Justin Barrett, polled 4,086 obviously added salt to the wound.

At the count centre Reynolds said: "You'll never see James Reynolds running for election under the heading of the National Party [again] because the National Party brand is a toxic brand. It's a brand that you cannot sell."

Later in the count Reynolds and NP local election candidate Ross Culligan were caught on camera enthusiastically celebrating the election of II's Ciaran Mullooly to the European Parliament.

A clearly angry Barrett responded online, describing Mullooly as an "RTÉ propagandist and system stooge".



To travel by train is to see a textbook case of neoliberal capitalism's endgame.

Football hack Ken Early's, er, interesting take on at Euro 2024 in Germany, Irish Times

Like Jonathan [Anderson],

Guinness has always seen the world differently, moving beyond life's limitations and expectations to make a brighter world. **Stephen O'Kelly, Guinness global brand director on its collaboration with the designer, Irish Tatler**

Having first emerged onto the national stage as quite the media darling, the parallels between him [Mick Wallace] and Donald Trump go further than the bare facts that both men are property developers-turned-politicians with some ignominious financial histories. **Justine McCarthy, Irish Times**

I was in east London this morning and I saw a young guy walking down the street dressed as a granny. There's a real freedom of expression there and it attracts creative people. **Tribe Digital CEO Eoin McKenna, Irish Independent**

The unbearable lightness of being Taylor Swift. **RTÉ Guide headline**

If there is a limit of grief I can feel about leaving Ireland I plan on using every cubic centimetre of it. If it was a carry-on Ryanair bag limit I would be wearing three layers of lament and remorse under my coat. **Brianna Parkins, Irish Times, submitted by reader**

To see the players of today talking to each other with their hands covering their mouths is to witness an ancient code: these men are not in the business of full disclosure. **Declan Lynch on football pundits, Irish Independent**

Eamon Ryan, their departing leader, had neither the longevity nor the breath of influence of Seán Lemass but in one respect has exceeded him. **Gerard Howlin, Irish Times**

Two hundred years ago, we expected public utilities like drinking water pumps to be elegant and pleasing. It's been ugliness all the way down since. **Terry Prone on her local public toilets, Irish Examiner**

Saturday is The King's Official Birthday. We mark this every year by hosting a garden party, this time for around 600 guests: actors and activists, CEOs and celebrities; politicians and pop stars: everyone from Ahern to Zamparelli. **British ambassador Paul Johnston, Business Post**

The Irish invented immigration, invented the immigrant, and went through every single form of the immigrant experience. **David Puttnam, Irish Times**

Please send suitable contributions to: The Hot Air Brigade, The Phoenix, 44 Lr Baggot St, Dublin 2 or email: hotair@thephoenix.ie

