Limerick Echoes

Figure 1. Shop window in Wickham Street 2009. Photo by Paul Tarpey.

The worldwide reception given to NWA's leap into public consciousness took various forms as youth worldwide bought into the image of the group's uncompromising anti-authority attitude. Writing on the concept of 'gangsterism' in the *Village Voice* in 1989, the Black cultural critic, Nelson George, mentioned that rap both suffers from and expresses 'generational alienation' (George, 1989). While he was referring to this agitational music sound-tracking conditions found in Los Angles, it was not necessarily confined to that city.[1]

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[1] A mention of the white LA group, House of Pain, is relevant here. Adopting an Irish 'gang' image, their 1992 song 'Jump Around' became a worldwide hip hop anthem that was accompanied by guerrilla style video in that year's New York City St Patrick Day's parade. Because of this, The Limerick City Pipe Band is visible in the video much to the pride of Limerick hip hop fans at the time.

Figure 2. Compton Cowboys. Ad Campaign for Wrangler Jeans. City centre display Limerick 2019.
Source: Paul Tarpey.

Figure 3. 'Fuck Da Shades' (Guards). Graffiti off Sarsfield Street, Limerick 2017.
Source: Paul Tarpey.

Limerick student 'intends to sell and supply' garda tracksuit

by **Ryan O'Rourke** 21 Feb 2019
Email: ryan.orourke@limerickleader.ie

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Mason Roche, aka MXSE, dons his own designed tracksuit next to a garda car on Henry Street

Figure 4. Limerick rapper makes a response to the situation of Guards chasing 'lads in tracksuits.' 2019.
Source: *Limerick Leader*, 21 February 2019.

By 1990, word of mouth, supported by the cassette culture particularly associated with hip hop, had carried the rap 'Fuck Tha Police' to Ireland. The concept of rap music as agitational was engaged by the youth who responded to it both as a signifier and resource similar to the confrontational image punk had offered a previous generation. In terms of the subcultural process of identity forming, the adoption of confrontational and nationalistic pro-Black music by White youth in America and elsewhere was not as strange as it may have seemed. It drew from established rebellious paths offered by Western popular music. Nelson George (1999, p. 66) comments that

there is an endearing part of the White American teenage mind (and occasionally, the adult one) that detests the outward manifestations of this nation's mainstream culture. To be sure, this youthful rebellion is often superficial, not politically astute and highly hypocritical – but it sells a lot of records.

In an interview with the British magazine *Soul Underground* (September 1990) Ice Cube said,

Rap has brought Black and White youth close together for the simple fact that Black kids know White history; now there is a chance for White kids to learn Black history. You get respect because you get understanding and so you relate more and cross each other's minds.[2]

Between 1988 and 1994, a Black-led cypher of anti-authoritarianism provided dramatic incidents for reference. George (1999, p. 67) mentions that expressions of anti-authoritarianism did celebrate 'Those two most American of obsessions – the gun and revenge as lifestyle – and a cartoonish misogyny that never failed to titillate teenage boys.'[3] For the direction being explored here, in a Limerick context, it should be recognised that the reception given to a political strand of Black-based popular music circa 1989 to 1992 registered the continuation of a thread begun in the 1920s where the otherness of American Jazz music was a perceived threat to Irish youth. In a pre-digital age, the music of NWA interfered with the commercial platform consumers engaged. Censorship featured but commitment remained as the curious and dedicated fan was encouraged both to engage on a surface level or to go deeper and form communities that would allow them to, as punks did, process the experience as a type of resistance led by popular culture expressed in local terms. In a digital age, the artists who seek to deliver music-led messages do so using the full gamut of the digital process from recording to promotion to honed delivery through social media. The gateways that allow this process to flow are far removed from previous decades, as are the opportunities to have one's product deemed subversive. In 2017, resistance that references the pathways of the early 1990s can now be received as components of an edgy brand comfortably consumed by 'woke' consumers.

In 1990, a Limerick hip hop fan, Cornan Nic Canna, played a cassette of 'Fuck Tha Police' outside the city's police station in Henry Street. 'We were in a group with a tape player and saw the Guards inside the station with the window open,' said Nic Canna. 'We played the track at full volume until they chased us away.'[4] Part prank, part demonstration, and part anti-

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[2] Interview with Paul Ablett, *Soul Underground*, Issue 35, September 1990.

[3] Discussing the spread of hip hop in the mid-1990s, George mentions that 'Some of the world's most heavily coded lyrics come from Ireland where Irish brogues and local slang can be as difficult for Americans to decipher as Jamaican patois.' Nelson George (1999) *Hip Hop America*. London, UK: Penguin, p. 205.

[4] As told to the author in 2016.

authoritarian statement, this act could be seen as a temporary piece of aural graffiti.[5] At this stage, parody and larger-than-life delivery were embedded in rap and hip hop as the form grew and was covered by popular media. Apart from supporting the form in a traditional fashion, audiences outside the US responded to the cultural licence promoted by hip hop and rap in ways that used its vernacular for aggravated commentary in their locality.[6]

The art form was appropriated in a manner of ways for various means. Many responded to the mix of revolutionary attitude delivered and mediated through outsider language. Hip hop and rap encouraged a new subculture that was led by (often nationalist) politics, and these encouraged acts, such as Nic Canna's, to be regarded as activist along the lines of those promoted by NWA and Public Enemy.

Another Limerick example circa 1993–1994 had a young Limerick promoter create a short-lived hip hop music club on Sundays called The Vatican.[7] Another promoter mentions that this incongruous name for a hip hop night was most possibly chosen for provocation, 'just for the chance to use his phrase "The Vatican blows up every Sunday" on promotional material and get those posters up around town' (McCurtin, 2017).

Figure 5. Image of police cordon on the road to Shannon Airport (Tarpey, 2004). Installed as part of a DJ performance based on 1990s' underground music. As performed November 2017 for EVA 40. Limerick College of Art.

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[5] The phrase eventually became a graffiti tag in Limerick occasionally seen on city centre walls up until the mid-2000s.

[6] Codes of the culture were also accessed through the success of films between 1989 and 1993, for example, *Do the Right Thing* (Lee, 1989) and *New Jack City* (Van Peeples, 1991).

[7] The club took place in McKnight's Bar in Thomas Street, Limerick City.

Figure 6. Banner proposal commemorating the visit of US president Bush in 2004.
Source: Paul Tarpey, 2015, 3ft x 12 ft.

This provocation echoed the anti-Catholic sentiment dramatically seen in the singer Sinead O'Connor's act of tearing an image of the Pope saying 'fight the real enemy' on American television in 1992. At the time, O'Connor was a singer of world renown and a vocal supporter of conscious rap. She had already collaborated with the rapper MC Lyte in the US and went on to work with Public Enemy's producer, Hank Shocklee.

Her act of tearing up the image of the Pope on TV was widely commented on at the time as being one of sacrilege, however, it can now be seen as an activist act by a musician similar to John Lennon's cultural declaration that The Beatles were bigger than Jesus. Like Lennon's use of the media in an attempt to widen the cultural perspective around popular music, O'Connor's act was an incident where a performer transgressed assigned cultural boundaries for personal and political reasons. Her act adapted the ritual of a music performance (on stage) that in part mirrored Catholic rituals (on the altar) to castigate the moral authority of the Irish Catholic Church. In light of information coming to light on the treatment of those in the care of the Church, at the time, her performance drew on her own experience of these institutions. Her uncompromising act on television contributed to the momentum building on the carceral nature of what was compounded by the Irish Church State. This short sharp shock by a musician highlighted the frustration of exposing elements of a situation still mired in a mesh of evasion particularly for herself and her fans' generation.[8] Definitive statements on this were yet to

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[8] It was in 2013 that the Taoiseach Enda Kenny finally issued an apology for the scandal of the Magdalene laundries.

come. In her essay 'The Catholic Cure for Poverty' (2016, p. 73) Sarah-Anne Buckley writes
that the Catholic Church

> acted in partnership with the state and elites creating an institutional nexus that rejected socio-
> democratic solutions to poverty and pushed back against women's liberation. Instead, the
> effects of poverty became transformed into moral issues to be solved by institutionalization – a
> process that undergirded Ireland's carceral state and profoundly impacted the treatment of
> women and children in the country.[9]

Figure 7. Image of a poster for a public meeting William Street, Limerick, May 2017. Photograph Paul Tarpey.

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[9] Sarah-Anne Buckley (2016) 'The Catholic Cure for Poverty', *Jacobin*, issue 21 Spring 2016, p. 73.

Figure 8. Image from the Repeal the 8th campaign 2018.

Figure 9. Hip Hop Karaoke night. Make A Move Festival 2013.[10]

[10] The event took place in the original location that hosted The Vatican Club in the early 1990s. On the right is Corman Nic Cannna who played the NWA tape outside the Henry Street Garda station in 1989. Nic Canna wears a Muhammad Ali jacket. The event invited Limerick hip hop fans to recite their favourite hip hop lyric as a tribute to the freestyle style events held in the 1980s. Image Paul Tarpey.

Figure 10. Image of the singer Sinead O'Connor in Dublin city centre in 1988. She wears a shirt with an image of Malcolm X. The text reads 'By Any Means Necessary'.
Source: Photograph courtesy of Wally Cassidy.

A prominent factor in the spread of hip hop from the eighties onward was its promotion of an artform where resistance is an essential expression of community. Collective terms of bonding under the banner of the 'hip hop nation' used words like 'crew' and 'posse' to reclaim and or acknowledge the language of gang culture as one of empowerment. This terminology emphasised the importance of unity to process an urban dialogue of resistance. The prominence of this as being an integral factor in how it was to be received made hip hop a music-based subculture different to other outsider artforms engaged by Limerick youth since 1965. Whereas other communities, such as the Mod movement, negotiated city space after translating versions of foreign subcultures in an Irish context, the conscious era of US hip hop almost stipulated the creation of a distinct community to operate in city space from the outset.

Jean Luc Nancy's cultural commentary (1991 cited in Lind, 2010, p. 18) in his text, *The Inoperative Community*, states that 'Community cannot even be created: it is not a product of religious harmony or utilitarian trumpeting, but should be described as resistance to immanent power.' In addition to this, according to Nancy, community should be, like existence itself,

defined as non-absolute, that is relational. He also points out that community can neither be reduced to 'society' nor to 'diverse mystical associations'.[11]

Figure 11. Image of a youth in Watts, Los Angeles wearing a Malcolm X shirt. From a photo essay 'Watts Still Seething' in LIFE *magazine 1966.[12]*

In 1988, another Limerick fan, Brian Cross, had been exposed to rap's political turn after a summer visit to California. An art student, he eventually enrolled in Cal Arts in 1989 (CalArts (California Institute of the Arts) being the alma mater of the *Blueprint*'s Maurice Stein and Larry Miller). That summer he returned not just with NWA records but also with the speeches of Malcolm X on cassette that had become listening material in the wake of the controversy

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[11] Jean Luc Nancy (1991) *The Inoperative Community*, London: Iniversity of Minnesota Press. Quoted in Maria Lind (2010) 'The Collaborative Turn' in Johanna Billing, Maria Lind, & Nilsson Lars (eds) *Taking The Matter into Commom Hands*. UK: Black Dog Press, P.18.

[12] In the text with this spread, a civil rights activist, Bayard Rustin, is quoted, 'the whole point of the outbreak in Watts was that it marked the first major rebellion of Negroes against their own masochism and was carried on with the express purpose of asserting that they would no longer quietly submit to the deprivation of slum life.'

generated by a new political generation of rappers.[13] The culture of censorship proved by the Parents Music Research Centre reactivated interest in these speeches as Black commentators and other rap groups, notably Public Enemy, emphasised the reactivation of the broken lineage of Malcolm and Newton.
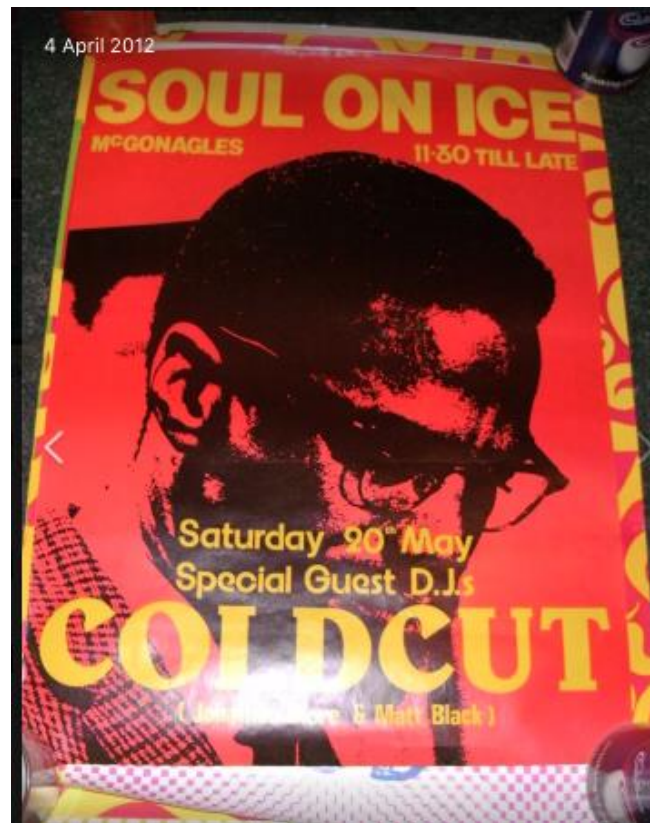

Figure 12. Image of Malcolm X used for the Dublin dance club, Soul On Ice, I988.[14]

Yet another Limerick hip hop fan features here in relation to the significance held in the Irish visit of Public Enemy to Dublin in 1987. At the time, this 'pro-Black' rap group were both feted and criticised in the music press and wider media as revolutionary practitioners who used the apparatus of popular music to promote an agenda of Black militant consciousness. There was a conscious decision by the group to stand apart from others as the genre of rap as a Black art form was gaining traction in popular culture. The core members of the group were born between 1958 and 1961 to woke Black households as the Black voice began to articulate

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[13] Cross eventually photographed an LP cover for NWA's lead rapper, Easy E.

[14] Run by Colm Carty and Martin Moore as an event that would focus on the history of black music, *Soul On Ice* was the title of a collection of essays published in 1965 by the Black Panther, Eldridge Cleaver. The thread of the collection focuses on the 'colonization' of the Black man's soul by White society. (Eldridge Cleaver (1999) *Soul On Ice*. New York, NY: Delta. p. 14).

between civil rights and socialism via the nationalism of the Black Panthers. Public Enemy's lead rapper, Carl Reidenhor (Chuck D, 1997), made it a point of describing the group as part of the lineage of the Panthers.

> My parents were young in the 1960s, and had radical ideas. My Mother wore an afro, and I remember wearing an afro myself, as well as singing the 'Free Newton' song. My crucial developmental years took place right smack-dab in the middle of the Black Power movement.[15]

In April 1987, Public Enemy was booked to perform as part of the Trinity Ball in Dublin. This is an established occasion for the prestigious college and an event associated with the upper echelons of Irish society. When the potential hypocrisy of a situation where pro-Black revolutionaries representing the lineage of the Black Panthers were to entertain privileged Irish youth was pointed out to the group by Limerick man Barry Warner (who was working at the event), the group immediately requested him to recommend a venue to accommodate those who would not get to see the group in Trinity. Their resulting early performance in McGonagle's club was themed on a quest for identity based on the nationalist similarities the group saw the Black and Irish communities having in common. On stage, the security of the first world, the group's paramilitary side group, mirrored the street moves of both the Panthers and the security of the Nation of Islam as part of the performance. In interludes between musical tracks, Chuck D and his co-performer, Flavor Flav, underlined an agenda of resistance by reminding the audience that the portrayal of one's identity in one's home environment is not a given and the act of 'knowing oneself' is essential in articulating one's political position in relation to a definition of place. The event was memorable, as the context of how it came to be became part of its experience.

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[15] Chuck D (1997) *Fight The Power: Rap Race and Reality*. Edinburgh: Payback Press.

Figure 13. Image of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X used for the song 'Renegades of Funk' by Rage Against the Machine.

Source: Posted on Facebook by Chuck D of Public Enemy, 20 October 2017.

In 1987, Public Enemy's description of themselves as functioning as a conduit for information or a 'Black CNN' was echoed by the Northern Irish band, That Petrol Emotion (TPE). Both groups shared a commonality in this period in that they saw themselves contesting censorship and representing communities whose voice was subject to repression. In an Irish context, TPE's music was intended to counteract the mishandling of the British media's reporting of the war in the North by letting their music provide an 'alternative information service'. Similar to the detailing of conditions in the North by the alternative press decades before, the group provided data on British imperialist misconduct on their record sleeves while their lyrics advocated a non-sectarian all-Ireland socialist republic. Their knowing awareness of Black rap culture even extended to an appropriation of one of the genre's earliest examples of consciousness rap, Brother D and the Collective Effort's 'How We Gonna Make The Black Nation Rise?' (1980).

The chant 'You gotta agitate / Educate / Organise' was used in their 1987 song 'Big Decision'. The subject for this successful single addressed the need for youth to remain in the North and engage politically for change (Campbell and Smyth, 2005). The act of TPE aligning themselves with radical Black culture to discuss Irish nationalism is an example of what Paul Gilroy (2005, p. 172) calls using the 'open source code' for Blackness; something that goes beyond a simple act of mimicry.

TPE's polemical approach was the direct opposite to their contemporaries, U2, who were then becoming a major Irish musical presence worldwide. Exploring a strand of rock and roll instigated by Black performers in the fifties, U2 processed a 'fascination' with African American influences to develop an apolitical brand of 'caring rock' for a mass audience.[16] Many saw this as surface engagement and a dilution of the ethos of radicalism. This process of sound and image by a White rock band reflected on a mix of African American political struggles, particularly the civil rights movement, for commercial, not activist ends. In the main, this engagement was dictated by commercial boundaries regarding what was involved in a wider narrative of protest. Linking Irish issues with American issues of self-justice and civil rights was common to both U2 and TPE, but only the latter drew from NWA and other uncompromising strands of protest sound (McLaughlin and McLoone, 2012).

In his book, *Black and Green: The Fight for Civil Rights in Northern Ireland and Black America*, (1998) Brian Dooley charts the bond between Irish Republicans and Black Americans. He states that by the early 1990s 'links between both countries' civil rights movements were drawn with increasing frequency' (Dooley, 1998, p. 122). Dooley quotes Bernadette Devlin McAliskey describing young Republicans in nationalist Coalisland painting 'Justice for Rodney King' at the time of the notorious incident of assault by the LA Police that eventually sparked the LA Riots in 1993. She says the painters 'Didn't even know who Rodney King was' (Dooley, 1998, p. 122). In this incidence, the act of not knowing was not a sign of ignorance; instead the act signified that the traces of the bond that began with the Northern Irish civil rights movement being described as 'White Negroes' was still in place (Newsweek, 1968).

The political use of the term by *Newsweek* magazine alluded more to a shorthand reference for a joint identity forged in protest instead of what Norman Mailer defined as 'The White

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[16] Sarah Larson quotes U2 singer Bono saying that the band were 'obsessed by America at the time', he called it 'a sort of promised land for Irish people—and then, a sort of potentially broken promised land. America is an idea', he said, 'that belongs to everybody.' *The New Yorker*, 11 July 2017.

Negro'. Writing on the adoption of White beat poets in the fifties, Mailer (cited in Skinner, year) proposed that the notion of the 'Other', embodied in the Black experience, had 'Negro philosophy', one of 'the art of the primitive', based on living in the 'enormous present'.[17]

Circa 1970, when seeking support from the American left, the provisional IRA sent a Volunteer in the uniform of a black beret and combat jacket to tour the United States. As recounted by Bob Purdie (2016) in the blog, the Irish Republican History Project,[18] 'The uniform had been very effective because it resembled that of the Black Panthers and communicated the idea that Catholics in Northern Ireland suffered discrimination similar to that against Black people in the US.'

In 2000, the band, Rage against the Machine, released *RAGE*, an LP of cover versions. With an image of a dollar bill scrawled with a message to the consumer, it said, 'YOU ARE NOT A SLAVE.' For this project, the band curated protest songs from a broad generational spectrum of genres and styles. Songs by Bruce Springsteen (Americana), Cypress Hill (rap), Bob Dylan (folk), and Minor Threat (hardcore punk) all featured on *RAGE*.

On the inner spread of the CD release, an image of books that inspired the band are offered as an accompaniment. This spread of texts includes Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*, *Guerrilla Warfare* by Che Guevara, the autobiography of Malcolm X, and the writings of Marx and Engles. Prominent in the middle of the spread is *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. It is fair to say whoever organised this image was familiar with the reading that was threaded through both Newton's autobiography and Panther publications. Decades after the publication of *Revolutionary Suicide*, a rock band had reanimated the books that inspired Newton for a new generation.

One text in this display is *The Anarchist Cookbook*, written in 1971 by a 19-year-old William Powell. In the introduction, Powell writes,

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[17] Jed Skinner (2009) 'The Beats and Sixties Counterculture', *Beatdom* [online]. Available at: http://www.beatdom.com/the-beats-sixties-counterculture/ [Accessed 23 April 2019].
[18] Irishrepublicanmarxisthistoryproject (2016) 'The "I Remember" series by Bob Purdie, Complete list of these essays', *Irishrepublicanmarxisthistoryproject*, 9 August 2016 [blog]. Available at: https://irishrepublicanmarxisthistoryproject.wordpress.com/2016/08/09/the-i-remember-series-by-bob-purdie-complete-list-of-these-essays/ [Accessed 23 April 2019].

An anarchist is not necessarily a revolutionary, although it is more common than not that a person who has attempted to rid himself of exterior controls, for the purpose of developing his own philosophy, will find himself oppressed. This oppression may lead the individual to formulate ideas of insurrection and revolution.

Figure 14. Insert for RAGE.

This thinking remains universal but is often taken to extremes when hyper-politicised actions seek to rid one of exterior controls. The realisation that the nature of power determines social boundaries will continue to invite ideas of insurrection and revolution and these should gestate through cultural platforms owned, even briefly, by the youth. This remains the thinking that occupied Newton and others who continue to take Joyce's *Portrait of a Young Man* as a starting point.

In 2000, a Limerick youth who was also inspired by the journey of Stephen Dedalus, as well as being a fan of *RAGE*, transcribed the titles on the CD's inner sleeve and attempted to order the books from the county library. As a young music fan, he says he was initially shocked to see Joyce in the middle of the other books. The library accommodated his request as much as they could. Many were unavailable, but they were able to access The Anarchist Cookbook for

him. In 2017, the same youth, now a musician with a profile as a performer and social commentator, Blindboy Boatclub, was subject to controversy when be referred to the Catholic Church on Irish national television as conducting rituals with 'haunted bread'. In response to an official complaint to the broadcasting authority, the national broadcaster countered with the claim that Blindboy's comments were made 'In the language of his generation.'[19]
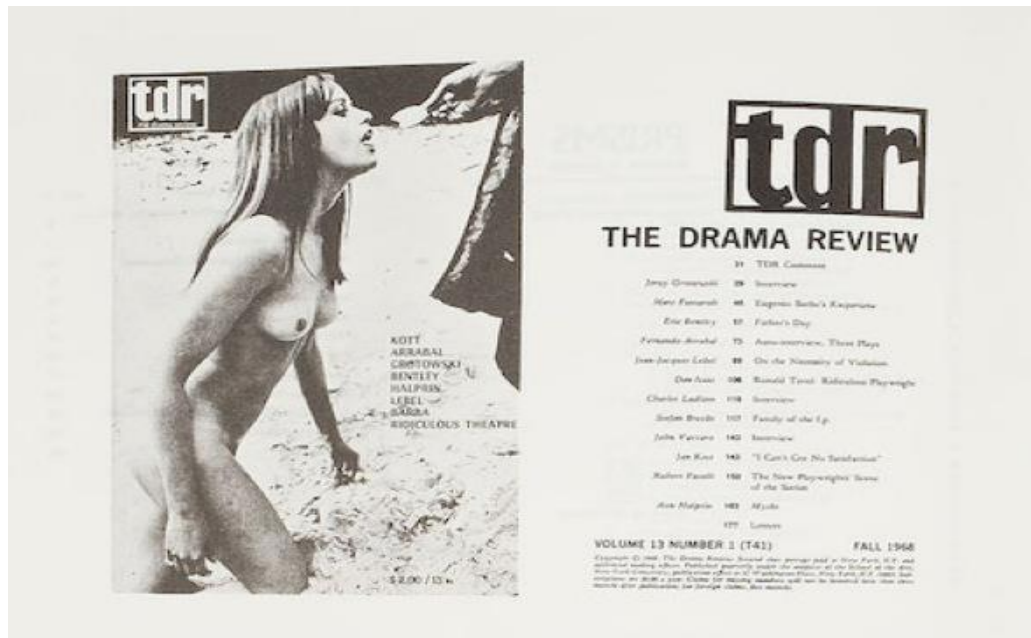

Figure 15. 'Communion'. An image from the Blueprint for Counter Revolution.
Source: Heller, S. (6th May 2016) 'An Alternative Culture Education', in *PRINT* [online]. Available at: http://www.printmag.com/dailyheller/Blueprint-for-counter-education/ [Accessed 19 April 2019].

Blindboy had previously met the rapper Ice Cube from NWA when Ice Cube performed in Ireland in 2009. To commemorate the links forged in protest between Los Angeles and Limerick through revolutionary music over generations, Blindboy presented Ice Cube with a hurley, a baton as a symbol of change.

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[19] Sean Murray (2017) 'BAI rejects complaints over Rubberbandit calling communion 'haunted bread' on *The Late Late Show*', thejournal.ie, 3 August 2017 [online]. Available at: http://www.thejournal.ie/rubberbandits-late-late-complaints-3528184-Aug2017/ [Accessed 23 April 2017].

Figure 16. Blind boy Boatclub in character on The Late Late Show *in 2016.*
Source: Still image of *The Late Late Show* 8 January 2016.

In a 2015 interview, Blindboy discussed how listening to a 1993 cassette of the Los Angles rapper Ice-T's album, *Home Invasion*, shaped the genesis of his character. A contemporary description of the illustration on its cover by *The New York Times* outlines the anxious climate of censorship and the impact of a rap record at the time.

> Using the comic-book style of a heavy-metal album cover, *Home Invasion* shows a White teenager listening to a tape, from a pile that also includes cassettes by Ice Cube and Public Enemy. Next to him are books by Malcolm X, Donald Goines and Iceberg Slim, on whom Ice-T modelled his stage name. Around the teenager are the images that his record company Time Warner reportedly objected to: men in ski masks beating a bloody older White man and tearing the clothes off a voluptuous young woman. A spiral swirl around the border of the painting and lightning bolts reaching the teenager's earphones indicate that those are the fantasies he's having as he listens. The cover ties into the title track of *Home Invasion*, in which Ice-T elaborates on the idea he thinks his antagonists find most terrifying: that rappers will steal their children's minds. 'I'm takin' your kids' brains,' Ice-T raps, 'You ain't gettin' them back.' He says he'll 'start changing the way they walk, they talk, they act.'

Inspired by the fantastical content rapped on this LP, as well as how the rhythms functioned in communicating content for a censorious environment, the middle class Blindboy (in partnership with his school friend Mr Chrome), was spurred to explore and reflect on Limerick's environment through uncompromising storytelling and humour; he released his art

initially on self-produced CDs. His raps channelled Joycean concerns on the mix of Catholic authority and republicanism that make up, in the words of R. F. Foster (2007), the 'calcified congruence' of Irishness. Practising as the Rubberbandits, Blindboy and Mr Chrome experimented with their rap-based songs using humour to deliver a unique commentary, which quickly received a wide audience nationally. With this project, the duo sought to engage with the detrimental narratives then coming together for an often hostile media to define the city. They also revelled in the inflated gang stereotypes being fostered on the city by certain media elements. H. Samy Alim (cited in PBS.org, 2005), writing from a sociolinguist perspective, explains the signified twists of language that exist as rhyme methodology in the game of rap. He explains how devotees 'devise innovative ways to slice the system with (the) syntax'.

> The black [*sic*] concept of signifying incorporates essentially a folk notion that dictionary entries for words are not always sufficient for interpreting meanings or messages, or that meaning goes beyond such interpretations. Complimentary remarks may be delivered in a left-handed fashion. A particular utterance may be an insult in one context and not in another. What pretends to be informative may intend to be persuasive. Superficially, self-abasing remarks are frequently self-praise.

(Mitchell-Kernan, 1972 cited in PBS.org, 2005)

Blackness featured as open-source code for how Rubberbandits' art and image came to be. The duo unintentionally mimicked the ski masks on the sleeve of Ice-T's LP by masking themselves in plastic bags as performance props. The danger of covering one's face with plastic combined with the association of such bags with solvent abuse was a unique take on the 'bad' image of the ski mask and preconceived ghetto tropes. However, there was considerable dramatic currency in the act of covering yourself while adopting a confrontational pose in public as Limerick was then experiencing domestic gang violence at an intense level. At the time, media coverage of feuding Limerick groups severely affected how the city was received. To the dismay of its inhabitants, the absence of a critical commentary that separated 'Gangland Limerick' from the 'real' Limerick generalised the place as a one-dimensional violent zone. A task by the city began to reclaim its language respecting Limerick's unique culture and the vernacular features in it.

One music-based response to the history of gun justice impacting on the identity of the city was made by the Rubberbandits. Their song 'Up the Ra' offered a mix of gang warfare, the glamour of the image of gangster hip hop, latent traces of seventies paramilitary republicanism, and nostalgic rebel history. All these elements were assembled for a song that presented pseudo-

republican satire. The song marshalled Limerick slang and surrealism to interrogate what Blindboy (2015, p. 131) called,

> This identity amongst lads who don't know what they are talking about but they like the idea of the 'Ra (the Irish Republican Army) having guns and being feared and the idea that they are to be a force to be reckoned with, like the Mafia. Then, somehow, the IRA gets associated with Tupac and Bob Marley within this culture of young Irish Lads…It is a very teenage rebellion. It's just a Limerick situation where a lad says, I'm independent now, I listen to Tupac, I smoke hash and I like the IRA but I don't understand any of it. The understanding of the 'Ra was so ridiculous that Meryl Streep might have as well been in the IRA. So it's taking the Flann (O'Brien)-type exaggeration and just going hard over it with a Wu Tang-style beat.

Figure 17. Graffiti on a wall in Corbally, Limerick circa 2000.
Source: Paul Tarpey.

Figure 18. Abbreviated Tupac text, Thomondgate, Limerick, 2017.
Source: Paul Tarpey 2017.

'Up the Ra' focuses the signifiers of independence and nationalism, gunplay, and the gangster ideal of gangs functioning as alternative communities claiming space for living. Twisted notions of rebellion and territory were framed through a Limerick lens by a Limerick citizen. From a pop-cultural 21st-century perspective, traces of the Black Panthers are merged with Irish nationalism mixing Black and Irish tribal rhythms into a knowing musical anthem for the city. This was an outrageous response to contest descriptions of Limerick building up in the media at the time.

The environment of Limerick City has often fused the viral glamour of 'gangsta rap' with the instances of outlaw republicanism creating a curious mix of language specific to the city. However, the vernacular nature of how this language operated in the city was open to other readings outside the city with many in the media happy to focus on the most dramatic. The Rubberbandits sifted the many varieties of this reportage aware that in the mix, the legitimate voices had to be heard.

Around the time of the peace process, Limerick was attracting media coverage for the county's hosting of the various breakaway, 'real' or 'continuity' eepublican groups and their collective lawless activity. The coverage focused on the inherent criminality of many gangs who had

fringe relationships with the traces of republicanism that remained in the city. A critical legacy in sound of this 'thug' coverage is the Rubberbandits' parody in 'Up The Ra'. It mocks the cult of the urban figure of the hard man justifying every type of unhinged behaviour and twisted reasoning as long it is tenaciously linked to 'the cause'.

> Sean South of Garryowen starved a dog in his back yard for 17 years. Him and that dog sailed over to England in a ship made of coffins. He trained that dog to make shit of the queen and punch her into the jaw…as a symbol, (pronounced 'Simm-ble') but he was caught in the car park of Buckingham Palace… He was jailed for 100 years and starved to death, like so many before him.[20]

(Rubberbandits, 2011)

These rebel songs were weekend broadsides. Sentimental angst and the echo of a lullaby ending in critical silence. In a generational gatecrash, the Bandits allude to stasis presented by extending an earlier death fantasy featuring the head of the English throne. 'If the queen ever came to this country, I'd chase her with dog shit on the end of a golf stick.'[21] Even the Bandits believed at the time they wrote the song that the Queen never would visit the 'Four Green Fields'. Now that she has, how do these rebel classics maintain currency? Are they to be decommissioned? Placed in a museum? Erased? Or will they lie dormant, to be reactivated wearing new (casual) clothes at a future date?

In Limerick, much of the recent history of troubles has been communicated orally and not just by song. To speculate, what if all you knew of a passed war in the North was posturing by a mad uncle after a few pints rambling from a faded green text? Would this have anything to do with your third cousin doing time for storing rifles for a wannabe drug gang? This was the behaviour the public was confronted with, behaviour that fed into a rolling narrative of death and commemoration. How do you discuss the strands involved with your peers? How would you formulate or express a dramatic but messed up pseudo-nationalist agenda that now has strayed into rap soundtracked drug territory? This is the dilemma solemnly addressed in 'Up da Ra'. The beat under the track repeats. The narrator's tone changes slightly before preparing the traditional coda of the sign-off, 'And for all the patriots who died before in the Irish wars?

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[20] The Rubberbandits (2011) 'Up The Ra' [YouTube] Available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGaeL22Pkps [Accessed 23 April 2019].
[21] Ibid.

I know you're up in heaven smokin a joint with Tupac and Bob Marley…CHALK IT DOWWNN. Yaah!'[22]

Figure 19. The Rubberbandits performing 'Up The Ra', Birdhill, December 2009.
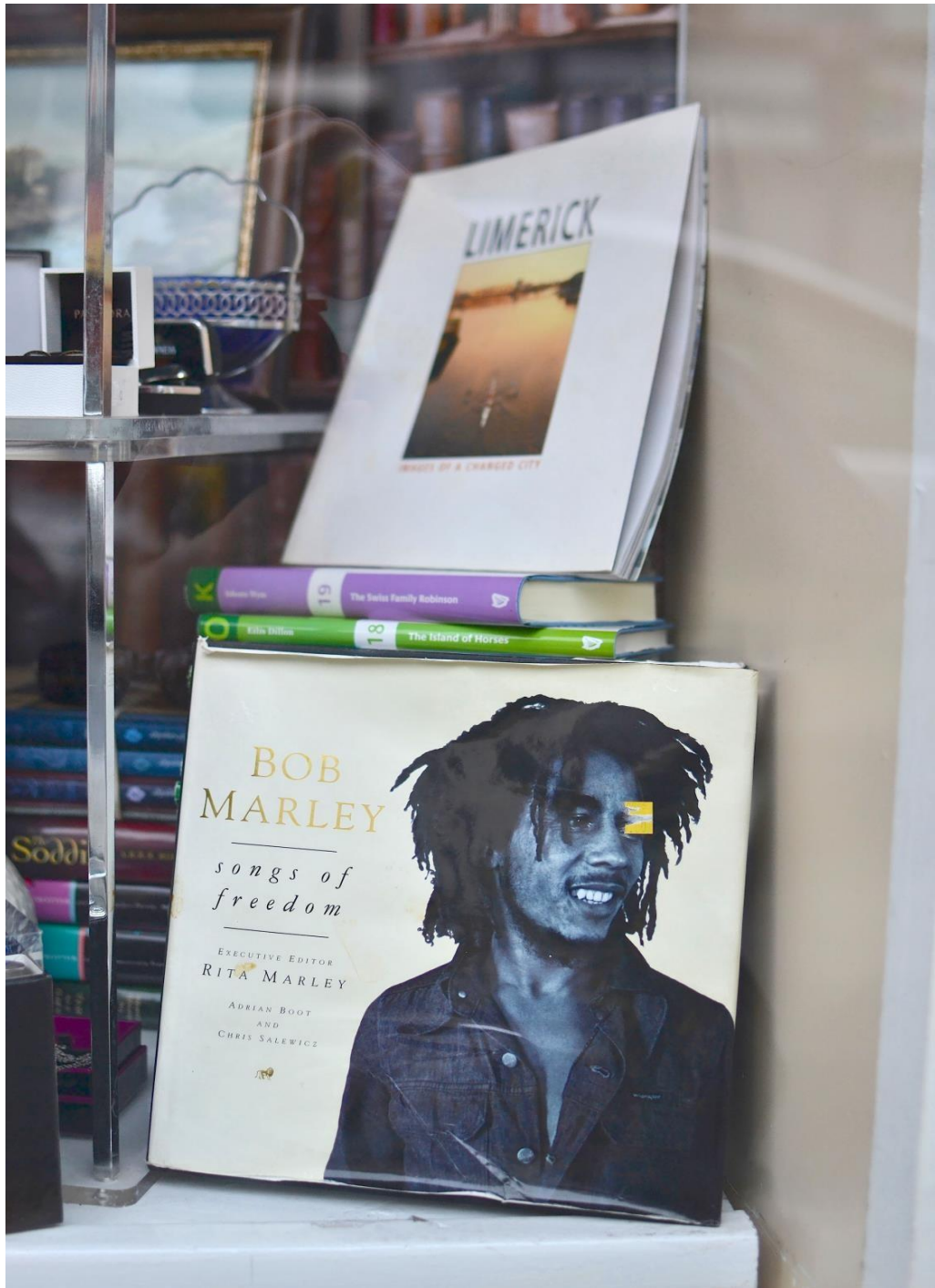Source: Paul Tarpey 2009.

[22] Ibid.

Figure 20. Charity shop window. William Street, Limerick
Source: Paul Tarpey 2015.

Figure 21. Buladh Bos. A Limerick magazine illustrating Limerick children's stories 2017.

Figure 22. 'Tupac and Bob Marley are the most popular humans in Limerick', Rabble *Magazine, December 2017.*

Speculative curiosity and counterfactual strategies will always feature for this research. However, on a practical level, a critical appreciation of how new combinations function when

assembled is what is being sought here, to give structure to how the elements came to be combined.[23]

In terms of a definition for practice that facilitates context for examples that suggest new situations based on a transgenerational perspective is given by the late artist and cultural critic Jean Fisher. In her introduction to the collection, *Re-verberations: Tactics of Resistance, Forms of Agency in Trans/cultural Practices*, (2000) she outlines tactics that can be employed for this that include reading and recycling the discarded history, the syncopes and opacities of cross-cultural identifications, alleviations and antagonisms, and the improvisatory nature of expressive languages playing with and across the codes of the traditional and the new, the vernacular, mass media, and high art.[24]

Acknowledging how Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* factored in the process of a Black militant questioning of social justice and how it can be combined with a similar awakening, decades later in Limerick, is to position that combination as an alternative historical pivot. These pivots can feature as map references for charts that illuminate the revolutionary links that exist when the Black and Irish experience overlap. Any consideration of this contributes to an exploration of the ethos through improvisation, as Fisher described 'playing with and across the codes of the traditional and the new.' The resulting language becomes one that signifies the continuation of an unfinished revolution. An appreciation of the existence of these types of pathways encourages exploration of links that may not be evident or particularly repressed.

As mapping co-incidence is subjective, particularly in support of a rationale for a continuation of the activist ethos of the period 1965 to 1975, The *Blueprint for a Counter Curriculum* remains both a support and a key in the sense of an aid for translation regarding appropriate texts and the construction of alternative discourse. On release, it held significant strength as a manual that encouraged information from diverse sources be processed in a simultaneous fashion instead of being assembled in sequences to be assimilated for rigid hierarchies or co-opted by a dominant narrative of power. Using the manual as a key advocates processing

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[23] 'Historical narration is a form of ethnographic insight. Histories are never only about facts, but also about specifically cultural ways of ordering the world and thus about the status and nature of those facts.' Carole McGranahan, (2017) 'Mao in Tibetan Disguise: History, Ethnography and Excess', *Journal of Ethnographic Theory*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 213–215.

[24] Jean Fisher and Jan Van Eyck (eds.) (2000) *Re-Verberations: Tactics of Resistance, Forms of Agency in Trans/Cultural Practices*.

subjective and objective information simultaneously in an attempt to contest the rigidity embedded in the political nature of timelines.

An activist rationale prevailed when the authors of the *Blueprint* deconstructed diverse information for subjective mapping. Foregrounding of the process of reassembling new directions as fluid came to represent activist outcomes. This type of diagramming configurations of knowledge makes a case for speculative research forming pathways of resistance by including understated elements taken from situations of resistance. Since its inception, the rationale of the *Blueprint* can be found in a range of descriptors in what has been regarded as socially-engaged practice. One example is a 2010 description of an organisation called the School of Missing Studies (SMS). This was a network for the experimental study of cities marked by or currently undergoing abrupt transition. SMS was described as building upon

> knowledge that slips through the singular disciplines and seems to flow freely in unbound
> spaces and networks. It takes a collaborative and experimental approach to scout for it rather
> than wait for it. SMS is conceived as an exchange of experience, knowledge and resources –
> and a starting point for individual projects.

> (Neelen and Dzokic, 2007, p. 61)

In 'The End of Capitalism as We Know it' J.K. Gibson Graham (1996, p. xxvi) (a pen name shared by feminist economic geographers Julie Graham and Katherine Gibson) discuss 'the language of scale' and states that the social hierarchies of power have macro forces constantly operating to constrain everyday practices. 'Change that does not address the top of this hierarchy is ultimately contained. This worldview demands that local initiatives "scale up" before they can be seen as transformative.' Resistance to how power contains discourse 'vertically' is practised by 'the intermixing of alternative discourses, shared language, embodied practices, self-cultivation, emplaced actions and global transformation' (Gibson Graham, 1996, p. xxvii). Gibson Graham's writing is led by a reading of second wave feminism that allows for a consideration of the nature of 'disarticulated places' where a politics of place explores 'ontologies of unpredictability.' [25]

In his collection of essays, *Time Travel*, the cultural critic Jon Savage (1997) references Joachim Ernst Berendt's book on music and the landscape of consciousness, Nada Brahma. Here the case is made for the contrast of public time with the 'lived' or 'subjective' time

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[25] Gibbon Graham (1996) 'Introduction', in *The End of Capitalism as We Know It*. University of Minnesota.

experienced by each individual. Savage (1997, Introduction p. 4) remarks that 'Music itself is ideally adapted to swim between these two times.' Measuring the personal between the public is a questioning of what is accepted as linear time and what can be explored in serial time. Writing on the juncture of the sixties, Savage (1997, Introduction p.5) uses the example of experimentation by The Beatles where the 'directional was replaced by circular motion, when the explicitly materialist previously modulated by commercial music was replaced by the spiritual'.[26]

In the *Blueprint For Counter Education*, a militant grasp of social theory is supported in terms of a sociology of knowledge. Meaning is sought and as a questioning of the structure of the establishment is encouraged by guiding the student through contemporary issues in solidarity with the wider issues of resistance and change. The universal bond between like-minded groups in this period usually had a commitment to radical education in common. In Holland, for example, a manifesto (circa 1965) by the Dutch Provo movement stated 'Provo regards anarchy as the inspirational source of resistance. Provo wants to revive anarchy and teach it to the young. Provo is an image.' The writer, Erik Olin Wright (2005, p. 336), puts it like this,

> What is the best way to contribute to the enhancement of our knowledge of social life? Is the most productive strategy to work within what one considers the best available paradigm, or is it better to take a more eclectic approach, avoiding any commitment to a single perspective but instead picking and choosing from different traditions as appropriate for different questions one might ask?

As history is constantly shaped by the establishment to support specific agendas of power, one way of questioning the spectacle that results from power being maintained as such in public time is to present a map of ideas foregrounding serial time. Such design as manifesto re-animates unfinished revolutionary conversations while contesting any act of power that seeks to sublimate or detune periods of resistance as transient. Mapping, using the transgenerational opportunity of subjective time, now registers historical links as active points for new conversations on a map. These points recognise a host of different floating strands and are always cognizant of the role of music reflecting a subcultural process as a vehicle for communication.[27]

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[26] By the early seventies it is worth mentioning for context linking examples here that both Lennon and McCartney took on board the situation in Northern Ireland as a basis for individual songs.

[27] At this juncture, see an addition that expounds on this text titled *Actors Of Intent in Watts 1965*. This is a situationist example that complements the conditions of possibility then embodied in the *Blueprint for Counter Education*.
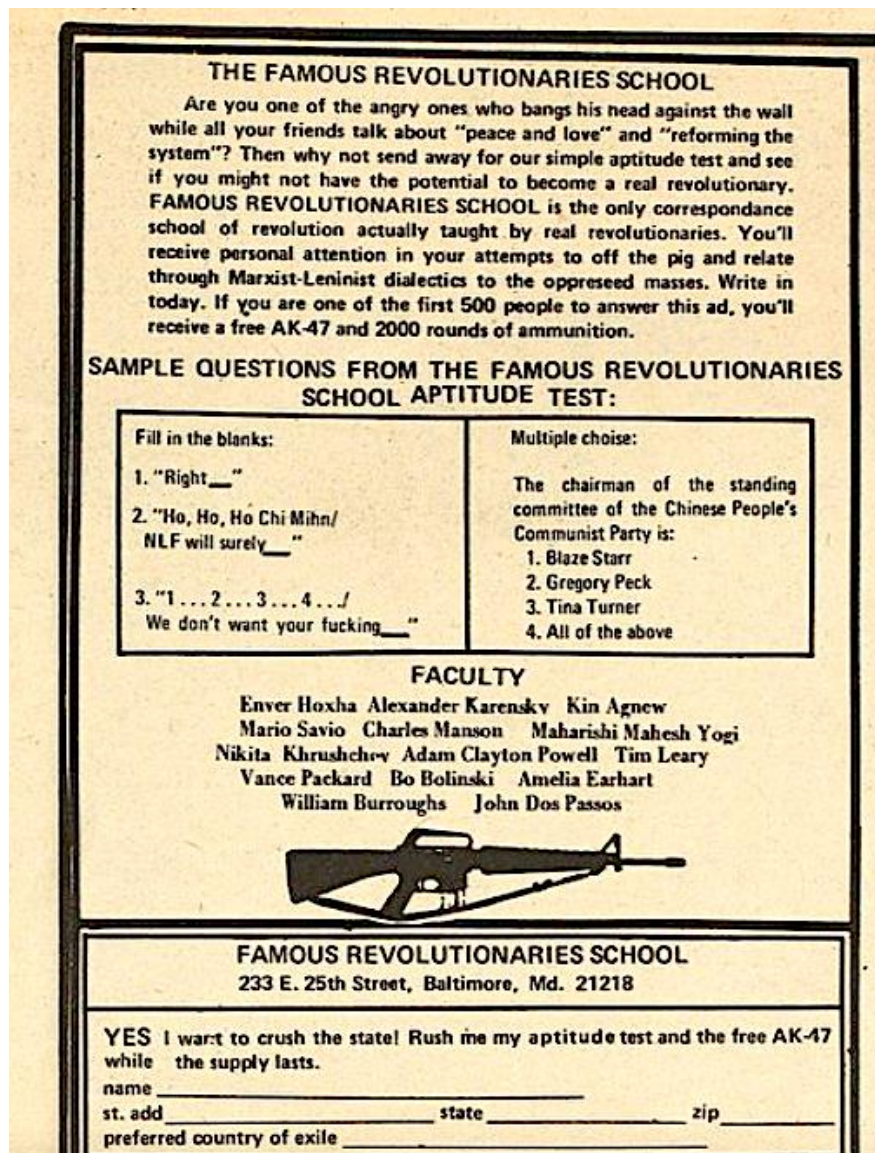
Figure 23. Parody of a school for revolutionaries. International Times, *vol. 1, issue 105, June 1971, p.11.*

Examples of reactivated image and text channelling in the *Blueprint* can be found online daily. Here, understated histories from the period 1965–1973 are regularly excavated for new audiences as visual 'bites' in the form of memes. Certain memes, in the spirit of the *Blueprint*, appear to 'swim between times'. By their nature, memes, and the design of their imagery do not recognise the time boundaries traditionally associated with image making. Photography, an essential element of the meme according to the critic David Campany (2003, p. 27), is 'time-bound' in two senses.

It has specific temporal relations to the world that results from its indexicality and its speeds, and it comes into existence within the temporal upheavals we associate with modernity. Its relation to the everyday is a product of the two but it isn't a particularly stable or simple one.

In channelling the immediate for the online environment, memes disregard any responsibility regarding authenticity. Nor do they or acknowledge time-bound boundaries; there are pros and cons to this. Polemical opportunity in the digital age arises when a meme is unrestricted by the ideological determination of documentary and fixed photographic meaning. As activist, visual artists, the British duo kennardphillipps commented on the youth activity that influenced the 2017 British election. Previously, activist photomontage using traditional formats by Peter Kennard produced memorable images of protest notably around the Iraq war in the 1990s. Now with digital opportunities everywhere, Kennard (quoted in Smyth, 2015, para. 10) says,

This manifest outpouring of DIY content across social media and on the streets during the build-up to this election was concrete evidence of a crashing wave of political activity. The ability of youth to harness the democratic powers to be found in the new technologies is a fantastic show of strength. Through putting together an image – either digitally and/or with scissors and paste, with or without text – people get to feel a sense of empowerment, an empowerment that communicates to the viewer, be it via a placard, a street poster, or an image on social media. The act of reusing existing images and re-presenting them through juxtaposition is inherently subversive, and showed up in the countless images of the Prime Minister Theresa May that came thick and fast in direct response to the official election campaigning day-to-day.

These opportunities contribute to network building for those who are engaged in oppositional politics but not directly connected in the traditional sense of the community. Sharing ethos supported by meme culture gives individuals 'a strong footprint of individuality and rationalism and capacity to act' (Mason, 2015, para. 18).

Much of the practice of communication involved in meme culture is an accelerated form of what was practised by the Situationists. The repurposing of images from the mass media remains a political act, because as Guy Debord famously stated in his 1967 book, *The Society of the Spectacle*, 'the spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation amongst people, mediated by images' (p. 10). Interventions with repurposed imagery serve to act as a 'jolt' in the every day and make visible the fallacy of normalisation demanded by the spectacle. Media culture has always obscured social relations through the sophisticated use of imagery to represent an ideal that one is encouraged to buy into (Herd, 2014).

To return to the task of inserting Irish experience, here is an example of a meme functioning as an activated form of viewership to focus the transgenerational context under discussion. The concept of open-source Blackness features as well as the subject of the reactivation of Muhammad Ali's 'oppressor' speech from 1967. This illustrates how Black urban consciousness, referencing the era 1965–1973, is applied as an online commentary in an open-sourced poster fashion. Transmitted as memes, they confirm how the radical Black consciousness that developed between 1965 and 1973 continues to resonate as a radical pan-racial resource for universal ends.

On 5 June 2017, an excerpt of a speech relating to Ali's refusing to be drafted circulated online. The meme featured an image of Ali seemingly being brutalised by two policemen. Knowingly undated for impact, in this fashion, the meme dramatically echoed ongoing issues of police targeting Black youth in 2017 in Trump's America. No historical reference is given for the black and white image and the archival look of the meme is deceptive. In reality, the image is staged, and the police are Irish Gardaí. The photograph was taken in Ireland on the occasion of Ali's fight with Al Lewis in July 1972.[28] In an Irish TV interview at the time, Ali brought his environment and read a poem he wrote about the Attica prison riot that had occurred the year previously.

In 1988, a newsletter from the Irish Republican Socialist Committees of North America suggested that,

> Irish and African people, spread throughout the world by their colonial oppressors, must look to the struggles being waged in the land of their ancestors, with the understanding that their continued oppression and degradation is made possible in part through maintaining their homelands as 'Third World'.

(cited in Dooley, 1988, p. 122)

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[28] Ali returned to Ireland in 2009 to visit the home of his great-grandfather, Abe Grady, in Ennis, Co. Clare. He was granted the title of an honorary freeman of Ennis. A previous visit in 2003 was with the US Special Olympics team.

"I ain't draft dodging. I ain't burning no flag. I ain't running to Canada. I'm staying right here.
You want to send me to jail? Fine, you go right ahead. I've been in jail for 400 years. I could be there for 4 or 5 more, but I ain't going no 10,000 miles to help murder and kill other poor people. If I want to die, I'll die right here, right now, fighting you, if I want to die.
You my enemy, not no Chinese, no vietcong, no Japanese. You my opposer when I want freedom. You my opposer when I want justice."
-Muhammad Ali

Figure 24. Staged photo of Ali and Irish Gardaí 1972.

Figure 25. Images of the rapper Tupac and Ali together in a Limerick Shop, 2013.
Source: Paul Tarpey, 2013.

Figure 26. Image of a painting of Tupac and Bob Marley playing handball 'agin' a wall (possibly sited in Dublin).
Posted on social media 21 June 2017.
Source: Lesser Spotted Cockerel Facebook page, 2017.

Another meme circulated again in June 2017 and showed a cropped image of young Republican activist Bernadette Devlin McAliskey with her fist raised. The text reads,

Those who were supposed to be 'my people', the Irish Americans who knew about English misrule and the Famine and supported the civil rights movement at home, and knew that partition and England were the cause of the problem…they said exactly the same things about blacks [*sic*] that the loyalists said about us at home.

'My People'–the people who knew about oppression, discrimination, prejudice, poverty and the frustration and despair that they produce were not Irish Americans. They were black [*sic*], Puerto Ricans, Chicanos. In New York I was given the key to the city by the mayor, an honor not to be sneezed at. I gave it to the Black Panthers.[29,30]
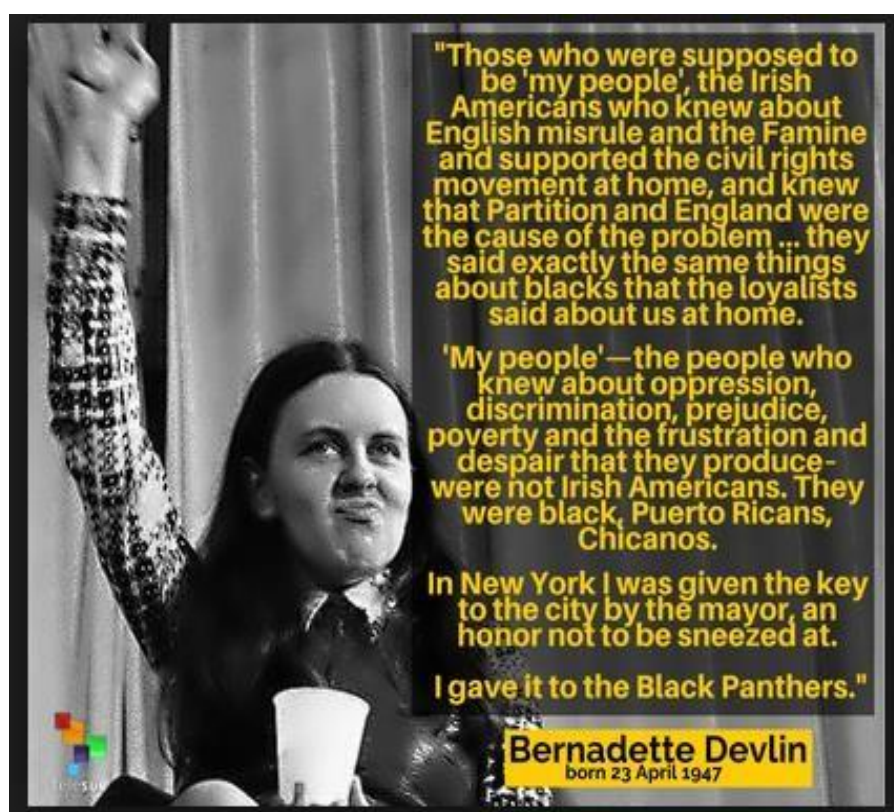

Figure 27. Meme, June 2017.

[29] *The New York Times* archive (2019) 'Irish Give Key to city to Panthers as Symbol' March 3, 1970 [online]. Available at: http://www.nytimes.com/1970/03/03/archives/irish-give-key-to-city-to-panthers-as-symbol.html Accessed 23 April 2019].

[30] See Bosi, L. and Prince, S. (2009) 'Writing the Sixties into Northern Ireland and Northern Ireland into the Sixties', *The Sixties*, vol. 2, issue 2, pp. 145–161. Available at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232877363_Writing_the_Sixties_into_Northern_Ireland_and_Northern_Ireland_into_the_Sixties> [accessed 11 August 2017].

The strategy of assigning polemical text in conjunction with an appropriated image of a 20th-century history takes in Russian modernism, John Heartfield's anti-fascist collages, and situationism. Memes continue this tradition of high impact delivery to respond to how information is processed particularly through the platform offered by social media. On occasion, artists who were active in the period 1965–1973 have re-engaged with previous subject matter to update protest material for outcomes that take advantage of this platform. An example being the repurposing of the iconic image of Che Guevara as an open-sourced digital share in support of the Palestinian cause in 2014 by the artist who created it, Jim Fitzpatrick. The original graphic rendering of Guevara in red and black by the artist has its antecedents in the style of propagandist imagery from the Russian and Chinese revolutions.

Of mention here is the subject of how the Black Panthers featured for Fitzpatrick in 1972. As a freelance illustrator, he was commissioned by Phil Lynott of the Dublin rock band Thin Lizzy to illustrate their LP, *Nightlife*. Lynott wanted a sign of support with the Panthers to be part of the design and Fitzpatrick complied with a painting of a powerful cat (a panther) overlooking a city at night. The artist remembers that this remained a secret between the two of them after it was published as it was feared the Lynott's record company, Phonogram, would censor the concept.

Figure 28. Che, *by Jim Fitzpatrick, 2016.*

Figure 29. Panther logo, Jim Fitzpatrick, 1972

Figure 30. Left: the open-sourced image of Che produced as a paper handkerchief and sold in a Limerick pound shop 2015. Right: image of a postcard by the artist Sean Lynch reproducing the report of Che's visit to Limerick in 1965 from the Limerick Leader.

Figure 31. Image of Che and the Starry Plough, 6 August 2017.
Source: Connolly Youth Movement – Cork Branch Facebook page.

Figure 32. Christmas, December 2017, Limerick City Centre.
Source: Paul Tarpey.

Of mention here is another image by Fitzpatrick from October 1970. It is a short-lived Irish American magazine called *Ireland Today* rarely seen since. Illustrations of Mao and the IRA feature side by side for a report on Irish political parties compiled by Proinsias Mac Aonghusa (1970).

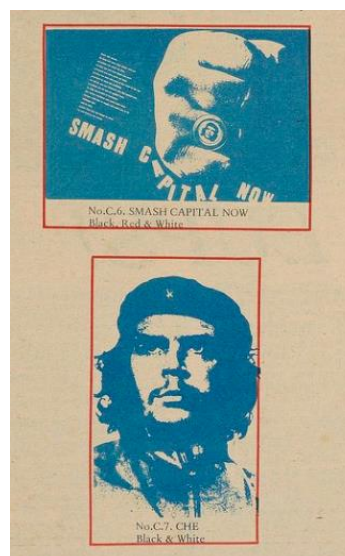*Figure 33. Screenshot of an Instagram post by Jim Fitzpatrick. 24ʰ June 2017.*

Figure 34. Detail of the use of Che in a magazine ad for posters from the company Effective Communication Arts Limited. Offered at a discount to readers of the International Times *in 1968.*
Source: *International Times*, vol. 1, issue 57, August 1968, p. 20.[31]

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[31] *International Times* Archive (2019) [online] Available at:
http://www.internationaltimes.it/archive/index.php?year=1968&volume=IT-Volume-1&issue=38&item=IT_1968-08-23_B-IT-Volume-1_Iss-38_002 [Accessed 23 April 2019].

Figure 35. The Irish Times, *7 October 2017.*

Figure 36. Facebook post by Jim FitzPatrick. 1969 illustration for the Selma march.

Figure 37. The original version of the Che poster, a 1969 issue of new Spotlight *magazine (Irl) shows Irish country music star Big Tom McBride being interviewed by Pat Egan.*

Significant for a consideration of a transgenerational context for ongoing conversation is a review of the proto/pre-digital meme-like images that can be found in the archive of *The Black Panther* magazine. In 1968, the magazine featured a striking image of an armed White family. Reprinted as a 'tear' from an unaccredited newspaper or magazine, the Panthers repurposed it with new text. The new configuration has the White family not defending themselves but preparing to attack. An encounter with the image in its reconditioned state placed forever online continues to shock. One cannot but link it to ongoing issues of racial tension confirming the long-term impact of the 1968 edit; it appears meme-ready. Others would have a similar impact, and a case could be made for a reactivation of these images to underline parallels between the issues originally confronted by the Panthers and what is being experienced once again. The channels and the reception established by meme culture now provide an opportunity for this.

in white america

WHITE CITIZENS ARE ARMING THEMSELVES all over the country and organizing their communities not for self-defense, but for the outright slaughter of innocent black citizens.

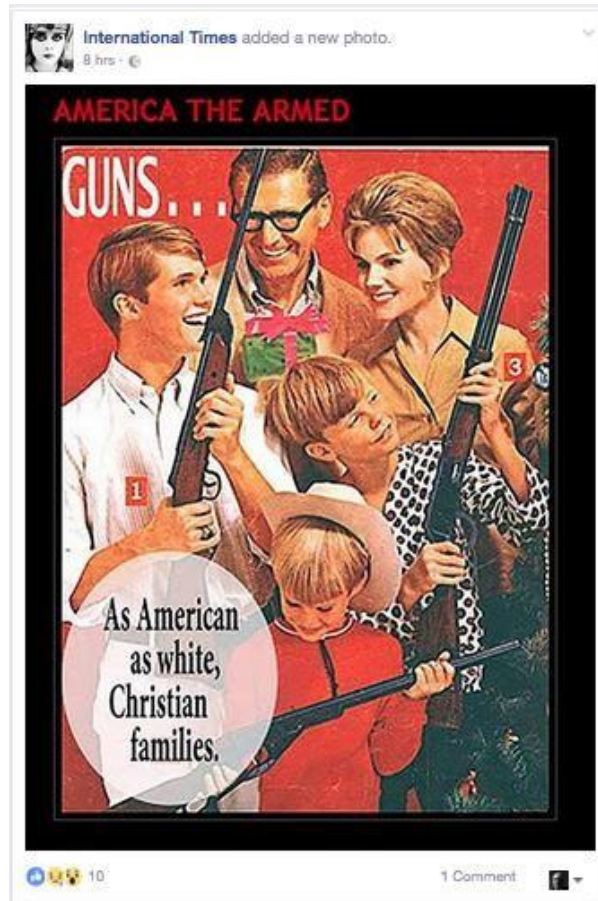*Figure 38.* The Black Panther *magazine, 1968.*

Figure 39. A meme shared on 19 June 2017 by the International Times *' Facebook page.*

In 1968, in a manifesto printed in the *International Times*, the profile activist and educator, Joseph Berke (1968, p. 21) said,

> The fundamental difference between previous attempts at changing society and the current scene is that revolution is no longer imprisoned in itself as a single static event. It asserts itself as continuous conflict. It asserts itself in the tearing down of old and reified structures both in the external world and as internalised in the individual. These are the first steps in our liberation. These are the means by which we can deal with our lives – right now – concretely – here. We take back whatever we have given THEM or have been loaned from us, all the bits and pieces, all the projects, fragments, of our own strengths. WE take back control of our lives. We strip THEM bare.
>
> WE DESTROY THEIR POWER SIMPLY – DIRECTLY – BY NOT LETTING THEM HAVE IT. THIS AND WHAT FOLLOWS FROM IT IS THE REVOLUTION.

Memes referenced in context here are those that present unaltered historical texts without irony or 'in joke', 'humour', or extremism. These are designed for plausibility and, in part, continue

the tradition of how the political cartoon operated as an entry point for political issues. As self-repeating units of culture presented as short commentary, memes allow people to both consider politics at a distance and instantly engage with a subject. Most notable is how the accessibility of the process negotiates the landscape of the established media. By making content on their own terms, authors, in a sense, have in Marxist terms seized the means of production. Addressing the subject in this era of the attention economy, Professor P. David Marshall of Deakin University states that the change in the way information moves has registered this time as a transitional space where meme making will become a personalised, structured business. He (Marshall, 2016, para. 7) says 'The memes could be connected to that moment of not knowing what you should believe or where you should belong and how you should relate to something that is so strange.'[32]

The process of sharing or creating memes conveys a personal connection with an issue, but it is always from a removed point of view due to the nature of the process.

Sites such as Crunchy Continental Memes,[33] a leftist philosophy meme generator, and Sassy Socialist Memes[34] (both 2017) see this process as reinforcing leftist practice by introducing a new audience to revolutionary philosophy and making political theory accessible. In a piece for Vice Media (posted online in April 2017), Hannah Ballantyne states memes are also undeniably accessible and democratic: memers make content on their terms, and in doing so seize ' the means of production'.

 A meme posted on Facebook on 1 August by the group, Being a Socialist, shows an image possibly from the introduction of an edition of *Revolutionary Suicide* or the party newspaper. The Black Panther chairman Fred Hampton (1969)[35] states,

> You might murder a freedom fighter, but you can't murder Freedom Fightin' and if you do, you'll have answers that don't answer, explanations that don't explain, conclusions that don't conclude, and you'll be having a bunch of People you thought would be acting like Pigs acting like People, and moving on some Pigs, and that's what we've got to do.

This is a usual example of how contemporary groups reclaim dialogue on contesting the

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[32] Professor P. David Marshall (2016) 'Have memes become the new political cartoons? [Media Release] Deakin University. Available at: http://www.deakin.edu.au/about-deakin/media-releases/articles/have-memes-become-the-new-political-cartoons [Accessed 10 August 2018].
[33] https://www.facebook.com/cruncon/
[34] https://www.facebook.com/sassysocialistmemes/
[35] Fred Hampton (1969) 'The Murder of Fred Hampton' [audio file], *Making Contact: Radio Stories and Voices to Take Action* [online]. Available at: https://www.radioproject.org/2016/11/the-murder-of-fred-hampton/ [Accessed 24 April 2019].

hierarches of power for new conversations on social media platforms by digitally offering content close to its original format. Apart from the content in this stripped back form, it suggests breathing space when encountered in the stream of 'busy' pop-cultural memes that may be susceptible to fact checks. As seen in the 2016 US elections, in a post-truth age, memes can become weaponised when adopted by particular groups with extreme political agendas. Simple memes of image and text also serve to contest elements of radical chic that became associated with the strong image delivered physically by the Black Panthers. These memes have another resonance with the period of Newton and the Panthers in that there is an acceptance that online communities for global change exist and function outside national boundaries. Describing the intellectual progress of the Panthers from a nationalist party to an organisation of 'intercommualists', Newton said after seeking to unite with the peoples of the world, the Panthers found everything is in a state of transformation requiring them to acknowledge that 'Nations have been transformed into communities of the world' (Kelly, 1966, p. 17).[36]

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[36] Robin D.G. Kelly (1966) *Race Rebels: Culture, Politics and the Black Working Class*. New York: Free Press.
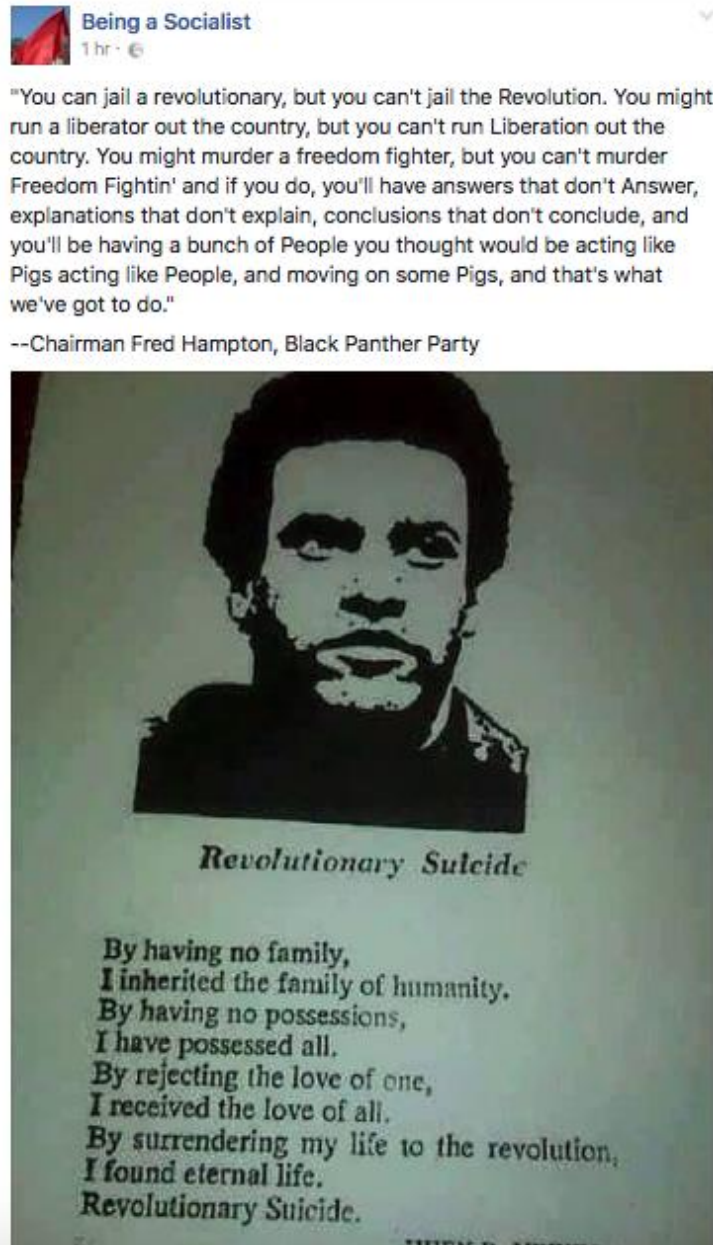
Figure 40. Facebook post from Being a Socialist. August 2017.

Figure 41. Various memes on social media using 'Black Power' imagery and text. June 2017.

Figure 42. Irish print ad for Marley Plumbing circa 1972.