

Ireland and the Fury of the Cancelled

Last night's chaos in Dublin was a morbid symptom of Europe's decaying technocracy.

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So they're lunatics. The protesters, rioters and looters who hit the streets of Dublin last night are 'people who are severely mentally ill', which is how my dictionary defines a lunatic. That's according to Garda commissioner Drew Harris. The violent mob that rocked Dublin yesterday in response to the [mass stabbing of four people](#), including three kids, are a:

'complete lunatic hooligan faction driven by far-right ideology', [Ireland's top cop](#) raged on TV. Stop your Googling, park your analysis, we now know why hundreds descended on central Dublin - because they're madmen and fascists.

It is striking how swiftly this thin explanation for the worst street violence in Dublin in years was embraced as gospel by Ireland's chattering class.

The kind of Trinity-educated know-all who have no doubt had HR training on why words like lunatic are outdated and offensive nodded along as the chief of police damned a mostly poor crowd as lunatics. Dublin's Sally Rooney-reading Gen Z radicals who probably agree with the writers who said the [BLM looting in the US](#) was a valiant stab at 'the heart of property, of whiteness and of the police' took to X to wail about the looting on their beloved O'Connell Street. It seems rioting in response to the police killing of an African-American is fine, but rioting in response to a knife attack on three Irish schoolkids is literal derangement.

Some of us, even as we feel deeply unsettled by the riotous scenes in Dublin, believe there has to be a better explanation than 'They're insane' or 'They're Nazis in tracksuits'.

It started with the [horrific knife attack](#) outside a school near Parnell Square. A woman and three children were assaulted. The woman and a five-year-old girl remain in a [critical condition](#). It was reported, but isn't yet confirmed, that the knifeman is [an Algerian national](#).

This news spread like wildfire and before long the republic was in the grip of its worst civil unrest in a long time.

Buses, cars and trams were set ablaze. Huge crowds clashed with guards (police). Shopfronts were smashed and stuff was looted. Some chanted 'Get 'em out', clearly a reference to certain migrant communities. These were horrible scenes. Unlike leftists like Naomi Klein, who [once described](#) 'spontaneous looting' as a species of 'resistance', I do not believe it is acceptable to desecrate and steal from your own community, however pissed off you are. Protest by all means. Burn down public trams and violate private property? No.

And yet, we cannot write off this unrest as the antics of imbeciles. To me it looks more like the fury of the cancelled. The rage of the overlooked. For years now, there has been a simmering discomfort with Ireland's immigration policy. Some in Ireland believe too many people have arrived, too quickly, and that we need a '[mature debate](#)' about it. But whenever they say something, they're branded bigots and scum. When hundreds of opponents of mass immigration marched in Dublin earlier this year, [President Michael D Higgins](#) accused them of 'sowing hate'. Is it possible that the fire and violence of the kind we saw in Dublin last night is what happens when every other avenue of expression is shut down to people?

Ireland's immigration trends are extraordinary. It seems to me that many outside Ireland do not appreciate what a staggering cultural shift has taken place. According to the 2022 census, 20 per cent of Ireland's current population was born outside of Ireland. That's one in every five people. Even Fintan O'Toole - no looter he - acknowledges '[this is an extraordinary phenomenon](#)'. He points out that in the US, between 1870 and 1930, the decades of the great American 'melting pot', between 12 and 15 per cent of the population was born outside America. So our immigrant population is 'not as large as that in the great age of immigration in the US', he says. 'It is much larger.'

And yet, says O'Toole, immigration is 'not talked about very much in official discourse'. He says there's a fear that 'drawing attention to the scale of inward migration' would feed 'nativist' prejudices and whip up 'far-right movements'. He's exactly right. Among the aloof influencers in Dublin's media and cultural elites, the great dread is that open discussion of immigration will inflame the bovine bigotries that they believe lurk in the hearts of the ill-educated and [culchies](#). So they enforce a conspiracy of silence. 'Nothing to see here', they say about the largest influx of migrants in the republic's history. 'Only racists want to talk about this', they say about a government policy which should surely be as open to democratic scrutiny as every other government policy.

Even to me - someone who favours liberal immigration policies - it's clear there are legitimate questions about the Irish elites' immigration drive. Ireland is not a rich country. Large numbers of arrivals have an impact. Consider the Ukraine crisis. Unlike most EU states, Ireland hosts Ukrainian refugees in hotels. In 2022, [37,535 hotel beds](#) were reserved for Ukrainians. That cost the taxpayer €385million and caused a [downturn in Ireland's tourism industry](#), with knock-on effects for small businesses that rely on tourism for an annual economic kick. Growing Irish scepticism towards the Ukrainian intake is not down to racism but to far more practical matters.

Worse, people sense that immigration policy is done above their heads. News reports always emphasise Ireland's 'obligations' to the EU - that is, the pressure it's under from

Brussels to accept migrants. Earlier this year, Ireland had to [pay a fine of €1.5million](#) – or a ‘financial contribution’, to use EU lingo – for failing to find suitable accommodation for 350 refugees. Some feel, not wrongly, that Ireland’s immigration policy is more about winning the flattery of faraway technocrats than serving the Irish people. More about demonstrating Ireland’s fealty to its new masters in Brussels than doing what’s right for the nation. That’s why they’re angry.

Across Europe, and in the US too, immigration is the issue through which many people most viscerally experience their own disenfranchisement. It is the issue that feels beyond their democratic reach. The issue they’re told not to talk about. The issue that is so often weaponised by their self-styled moral superiors to taunt and demean them. Witness Ireland’s well-educated upper-class youths who counter-protest marches against mass immigration with signs saying: [‘Everyone welcome – except racists.’](#) In short, why don’t you get out, lowlife bigot?

This exploitation of immigration to weaken national borders, fortify the technocratic elites and embolden the superiority complex of the rising woke establishment was always bound to backfire. It is sickening to see Irish elites who trounced democracy and demonised their own people now wring their hands over the street violence that is partly an ugly byproduct of their own behaviour. These people are meant to be clever and they don’t even know that when you cancel democracy, violence often takes its place.

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