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Hayes's disgrace was not his hypocrisy, but his lies

AS HE drank in the full breadth of Eoin Hayes's betrayal of their mutual left-wing ideals, Richard Boyd Barrett allowed himself a sharp intake of breath before effectively declaring that, while he was rarely shocked in politics, this travesty had knocked him for six.

But I beg to disagree. I'm sure the People Before Profit deputy said he was shocked to the core at the Oireachtas hearings on the Cervical Check scandal. As far I recall his mind was also blown by the Ryan Tubridy payments scandal and if memory serves, at Putin's invasion of Ukraine and the tragedy in Gaza.

In fact, if I was a betting woman I'd say there has never been a convulsion or scandal in political life where the Dun Laoghaire deputy has not been astounded and astonished by the moral lapses of others.

In fairness this is the default shared by Boyd Barrett and other members of the permanent Opposition who never have to take responsibility for tough Government decisions and enjoy the luxury of moralising from the sidelines.

E OIN Hayes's fall from grace was caused by his pre-politics career, his work for Palantir, a company that sells software to intelligence agencies and which, since the Hamas invasion, has been dancing with the devil in dealing with the Israeli army.

We who live in the real world know that Hayes can't be blamed for Palantir's unsavoury client list or for how his shares soared in value as the Israeli war intensified and the casualties piled up. He was long gone from the company by then.

If our consciences are troubled by aspects of our work, most of us must get another job or else learn to live with murky contradictions and sticky compromises. It's only permanent opposition parties or the far reaches of the public ser-



Blue Ivy should be allowed to be a child

JAY-Z says the worst thing about allegations he raped a 13-year-old girl at an MTV after party is that he had to discuss it with daughter Blue Ivy, 12. 'I mourn yet another loss of

innocence,' he says. 'Children should not have to endure such at their young age.' Jay Z's protestations about childhood innocence would be more convincing if the latest red-

carpet photographs of Blue Ivy, above with Jay-Z and Beyoncé, didn't show her dressed like a leading lady in a gold bustier gown and full make-up, far older than her tender years.

» *DESPITE his billions Elon Musk hasn't owned a house in over ten years. 'I would just rotate through friends' places', he explains. 'If they had a spare room, I'd stay there. If they don't, I'd sleep on the couch, which is also a great way to catch up with friends.' No wonder Elon seemed to overstay his welcome at Mar-a-Lago. Its lavish accommodations must trump (sorry) any spare room or sofa bed – as would those at Trump Towers and the White House. The Trumps may be saddled with this house guest for some time.*

vice that can afford ideologically pure absolutist positions and the self-serving conceit about humans being infallible.

Hayes hedged his bets about cashing in his shares because he didn't want to lose a chunk of change for no reason. That shows that however much he paid lip

service to Gaza, in his heart he lacked his party's crusading idealism on that score. But does that matter? Gaza was never really an election issue on the doorsteps.

For voters fretting about housing and health, the Social Democrats' position on Gaza may have seemed more like empty virtue signalling, particularly with the Dáil unanimously in sympathy with the Palestinian cause.

Hayes's real disgrace was not hypocrisy or profiteering from probable genocide but his barefaced lie about when he sold his shares. Asked on 23 separate occasions at a press conference about the precise timing, he

waffled and dissembled and then lied about selling them before entering politics.

Hayes later came clean about having 'misspoken', admitting the sale took place this July, one month after he was elected a councillor.

In this, he joins Brian Lenihan senior who used the euphemism 'mature recollection' and Bertie Ahern who suffered amnesia at the planning tribunal rather than admit to lying. The difference though is that while Ahern and Lenihan were political veterans, Hayes had hardly got his feet under the political table.

Dishonesty from a political neophyte sounds the alarm about the calibre of young politicians. It also shatters trust in the political system. As does the fact that for all their manufactured outrage at the Palantir shares, the ever-righteous Richard Boyd Barrett and Ruth Coppinger seemed entirely unbothered by Eoin Hayes's brazen lie.

Might the polio jab be a sticking point for Trump?

WORLD Health Organization chief Mike Ryan, a familiar face from the pandemic, can't be accused of playing it safe when he predicts that disinformation about science and vaccine hesitancy will get only worse.

He blames social media's power to amplify pseudo-science and conspiracy theories as well as the rise of distrust and scepticism in authority figures and elites. He didn't specifically mention the malign influence of President Trump and his wretched MAGA movement.

After toying with Robert Kennedy during his first Presidency, Trump picked the unscrupulous anti-vaxxer as his next Health Secretary, promising to let him 'go wild in health'.

Even though the link between the childhood vaccine MMR and autism has been comprehensively debunked, Kennedy continues to peddle the dangerous theory while Trump seems open to persuasion and even to drastically reform the US's sacrosanct childhood vaccination programme should his new vaccine czar deem it necessary.

But Trump makes an exception for one vaccine – the polio vaccine which protects millions from a virus that can cause paralysis or death.

'The polio vaccine is the greatest thing. If someone told me "get rid of the polio vaccine", they're going to have to work really hard to convince me', says Trump, displaying his usual flair for scientific literacy and facts.

Yet Trump might be interested to learn that Kennedy's advisor and specialist in vaccine lawsuits, Aaron Siri has the polio vaccine in his crosshairs and has asked the FDA to remove approval for it.

Could this act of treachery kill off the Kennedy-Trump bromance before it has really begun? For the sake of the lives that stand to be saved from the ravages of measles, whopping cough, polio and more, we can only hope.



» *LEO VARADKAR says many politicians don't understand basic mathematical concepts like percentages because generally they are better at languages and English than numbers. I don't know about that. It seems to me politicians have a flair for claiming expenses and every last allowance due them from the Leinster House gravy train.*