Ireland and Brexit:

We Need a Hard Border Against Bosses’ Politics!

O n 12th October, the Financial Times called the Brexit situation an “Unpredictable disaster” which had bedevilled the United Kingdom. For the DUP, one of the many concerns that have been drawn into any of the bosses’ camps, each one urging us to push for one of the options available to the British state. Only arguments based on our own class interests and consciousness can point the way forward for the class who produce wealth rather than the minority who own and control production. In Northern Ireland the working class is faced with particularly insidious tricks stemming from a history of ruling class factionalism and their linked ideologies.

The Good Friday Settlement 1998–2018

The Good Friday Agreement allowed the “normalisation” of conditions for capitalist exploitation in Northern Ireland. The goal was broader than just the “Irish problem” in both countries. SDLP and Sinn Fein (SF) have willingly played the democratic game, got their hands on the road to peace borders, workers’ houses has increased slightly over time, in contrast to the UK as a whole. A few programmes for those more with no qualifications and fewer people with higher qualifications in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK. One in ten households in the poorest fifth in Northern Ireland faces poverty. Nearly two-thirds of people in the poorest fifth are not paying into a pension, increasing their risk of future poverty.

The Brexit Pandora’s Box

As we’ve said before, the increasing political confusion of the UK’s ruling class is a product of their reduced room for manoeuvre in the face of a wider economic crisis that has been building over decades. Unable to divest capital to start a new round of accumulation, the system limps from one expedience to the next. The net result is that the ruling class has abandoned any long-term strategies. This has led them to wander into the Brexit minefield. In Revolutionary Perspectives 11, in “Brexit 2018: The Ruling Class Nightmare Continues” – we analysed how the British ruling class got to where they are now. Nothing has happened since to change that analysis. As we’ve said before, the UK Government, as the ruling class, has within 6 months of the agreed Brexit deadline, the convulsions in the political parties are increasing, bearing out the “circle cannot be squared”. Since the European Union (EU)’s rejection of the UK Government’s “Chequers Agreement” the thrashing about of the political parties has become even more frenzied. After accepting the £1bn funding for May’s second government, the Democratic Unionists Party (DUP) threatens to vote against the Tories’ budget proposals later in October. The DUP now demands that the UK Government achieves the virtually impossible – a “Hard Brexit” withdrawal from the European Customs Union and EU single market while avoiding border controls between the UK/Northern Ireland (NI) and the EU/Republic of Ireland (ROI). To ensure that the Irish border is not a border, the DUP have reverted to their “core value” of total political and economic union with Great Britain above all else. Arlene Foster has refused to be “bloodied” by the negotiations and is heavily worked. We know from leaks that the usual was one of the governments intent on watering it down.

The full report makes it clear that the consequences will be severe even if the 1.5°C target is met. It also states that “there is a very high probability that the 1.5°C global warming with 2°C and assessing what it would take to keep to the lower level.” The report came out in October and synthesises all the previous work done by the scientists who authored it. The final wording is the outcome of the IPCC’s deliberations. The Paris Agreement and the huge gap between words and necessary action if the world is to avoid a catastrophic climate change, we have to start rethinking our assumptions about the world we live in.

Global Warming: Capitalism Threatens the Planet

From the standpoint of a higher economic form of society, private ownership of the globe by single individuals will appear quite as absurd as private ownership of man by one another. Even a whole society, a nation, or even all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not the owners of the globe. They are only its holders, i.e. its usufructuaries, and, like boni patres familias, they must hand it down to succeeding generations in an improved condition. (Marx)

In 2015 195 countries signed up to The Paris Agreement, a non-binding treaty aiming to keep the global average temperature rise to “well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels”. The signatories commissioned the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) to produce a report comparing the probable impacts of a 1.5°C global warming with 2°C and assessing what it would take to keep to the lower level. The report came out in October and synthesises all published research up to 15th May 2018. However, the official version is not as written by the scientists who authored it. The final wording is the outcome of political negotiations and is heavily worked. We know from leaks that the US was one of the governments intent on watering it down.

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The latest IPCC report only confirms the complete inadequacy of the Paris Agreement and the huge gap between words and necessary action if the planet is going to be able to sustain human civilisation or any life at all. That Agreement falls on all four counts that scientists and environmental groups agree need to be met, namely:

1. Catalyse immediate, urgent and drastic emission reductions

These cuts, or “Intended Nationally Determined Contributions” (INDCs) were drawn up by governments, based on what they were prepared to deliver, not on what scientists think is needed. They go nowhere near far enough. For instance, aviation and shipping emissions, which are as large as the emissions from the transport and food sectors, are excluded.

2. Deliver justice for impacted people

According to the UN Environment Programme, on top of an annual $670bn needed for emissions cuts by 2020, vulnerable countries will need another $150bn per year for adaptation measures to protect them from the worst impact of climate change. The UN’s $100 billion per year faces represent less than 15% of what is formally needed!

3. Capitalist planners are the biggest polluters but the idea that they should make a commensurate contribution to a solution has been watered
The Armistice and the Paris Peace Conference

The 100th anniversary of the Armistice we are told out a stop to the first world war happens to coincide with remembrance Sunday, or Poppy Day. So we're in for a treat. On top of poppy-wearing, remembrance parades and city centre vigils in silence, there may also be a few fireworks in the mix. It is the most appropriate way to remember those who fell silent.

In Paris, on November 11th 1918, the High Command of the opposing sides, the Central Powers and the Allies, signed the armistice that ended the first world war. It is the anniversary of this event, which is known as Armistice Day, that is being commemorated worldwide today. The terms of the armistice were signed in the railway carriage known as the ‘Train of Peace’ in the town of Compiegne.

It is a time to reflect on the reality of the Armistice, to ask why it happened and to consider what it means for us today. It is also a time to remember those who lost their lives in the war and to think about the consequences of war.

The Armistice and the Paris Peace Conference

The armistice brought an end to the first world war, but it did not bring an end to the war itself. The fighting continued for several days after the Armistice was signed, and there were many disputes over the terms of the agreement. The Paris Peace Conference, which was held in Paris in 1919, was an attempt to resolve these disputes and to negotiate a lasting peace. It was a major event in the history of the world, and it had a profound impact on the course of events.

The armistice and the Paris Peace Conference are important events in the history of the world. They helped to shape the course of events in the 20th century, and they continue to be relevant today. It is important to remember the lessons of the past and to learn from them if we are to build a better future for all.

Welcome to Liga Emancipación

In June we were very pleased to welcome the formation of Liga Emancipación, a new group of young internationalist communists based in the south of Spain. (See profile) The group has been inspired by the work of the Nuevo Curso blog and by the comrades of Emancipación. The group has been inspired by the work of the Nuevo Curso blog and by the comrades of Emancipación. They present a translation of one of the leaflets they distributed during a recent strike by transport workers.

Proletarian dignity returns.

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What the Communist Workers Organisation Stands For

We stand for a global society where production is for need and not profit, where the state, national front and money have been abolished, where collective power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers councils. This has to mean both the right to strike and the right to participate in making the decisions that aim for the interests of all. Only then can the world be rid of the capitalist offsporing of poverty, hunger, oppression and war. We call it communism but this has nothing in common with Stalinist state capitalism and the old USSR.

In 1917, when a movement to create a world proletarian political organisation: a party for want of a better word: Not a government in waiting but a guide in the struggle for a new world. We have no means to claim to be that party but we do aim to be one of the elements which will need to come together in its formation. As the working class faces the consequences of a crumbling capitalist system it will have to unite and confront capitalist power.

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Why is the Metro Granada strike not a “selfish” struggle?

When we workers examine our position in the company in which we work, we face two opposing forces. We struggle to receive adequate payment for our everyday necessities of life. Whatever the bosses say, these are not “selfish demands”they are basic needs – such as decent working conditions and a living wage – basic needs that we would like to see given to all working people. But companies are more interested in paying dividends to shareholders – dividends that are paid by the workers.

We need to change the system. The only way to do this is to change the ownership of the means of production, the only way to do this is to establish a socialist society where the working class could exercise power via a network of directly-elected workers’ councils and manage production directly.

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