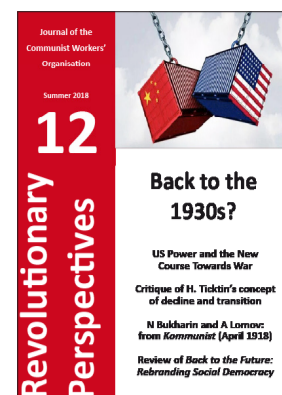


AURORA



Ireland and Brexit:

We Need a Hard Border Against Bosses' Politics!

On 12th October, the *Financial Times* called the Brexit situation an "Unpredictable Muddle". We would not disagree. In Northern Ireland the political parties are adding to the confusion by reviving long-standing strategic obsessions. None offers anything to the working class in an area where deprivation remains appallingly high. A recent (Feb. 2018) report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation confirms,

Northern Ireland has higher worklessness and lower employment than elsewhere, and the proportion of people in poverty in workless households has increased slightly over time, in contrast with the UK as a whole. There are more people with no qualifications and fewer people with higher-level qualifications in Northern Ireland than in the rest of the UK. One in ten households in the poorest fifth in Northern Ireland faces problem debt. 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 devalue capital to start a new round of accumulation, the system limps from one expediency to the next. The net result is that the ruling class have 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. Now, as the UK Government drifts to within 6 months of the agreed Brexit deadline, the convulsions in the political parties are increasing, bearing out that 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 increased funding as a price for supporting May's second government, the Democratic Unionist 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 impossibility level is increased, the DUP have reverted to their "core value" of total political and economic union with Great Britain above all else. Arlene Foster's reference to "blood red lines" echoes the approach and rhetoric of Carson and Paisley. Such language serves to galvanise their core supporters and emphasises that the DUP is still committed to its key political foundation of

nurturing cross-class support for the Union.

None of this changes our argument: workers throughout the "United Kingdom" must not be 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 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 deal was brokered by the US imperialist "godfathers" in cooperation with both the local "lesser powers", ROI and UK. With that coalition in place the two main competing parties, DUP and Sinn Fein (SF) have willingly played the democratic game, got their snouts firmly in the trough to maintain conditions for capitalists to generate profits.

The two states on the island have always seen that the chance for capitalists to profit by cross border trading is not undermined. Once the military conflicts had largely been defused the 1998 settlement built on those foundations, together with the free trade that the EU arrangements provided. The latter also involved

providing finance – part of the "Peace Dividend". Using the various EU Structural Funds, the EU directly aided firms and other bodies active in NI. During the two most recent funding rounds (2007-13 and 2014-20) a total of approximately €7 billion flowed into Northern Ireland.

6 counties or 32?

In March 1914 the then revolutionary Marxist, James Connolly, commented that plans for a new capitalist settlement based on two jurisdictions on the island of Ireland "would mean a carnival of reaction both North and South". Brexit has breathed fresh life into the old corrosive arguments for or against a united capitalist republic. Today it's overlaid with talk of hard or soft borders and now the UK Government's fantasy digital border, or the version that talks about a border down the Irish Sea.

Like any call to line up in defence of old or new state boundaries, workers need to "treat those two impostors just the same". The many dozens of redrawn boundaries in the last century have allowed local capitalist cliques to better find their place in the capitalist order. Workers have benefited not a jot, either in terms of freedom from exploitation or in building our confidence and class consciousness.

As always, we have to beware the "false friends" on the left wing of capitalism who dress up their support for nationalism in shreds of socialist sounding words. When Sinn Fein and their Republican and leftist camp followers raise their "No Border" slogan this is only a demand

for an end to partition and the creation of a 32 county capitalist state. That state would certainly implement border controls alongside all the other elements of control that all states exercise.

For a World Community Without Capitalism, Without Borders

One of the obvious changes between the current capitalist world and the future classless society is that there will be no need for states or the boundaries between them. The overthrow of capitalism and its class society will see a world where "production is for need and not profit (and is therefore sustainable), where the state, national frontiers and money have been abolished". Such a vision is in stark contrast to the experiments with "soft borders" in the EU, whether in the Schengen area or between ROI and UK. Customs Unions and Single Markets are merely a way for the capitalist class to better arrange their exploitation while maintaining the xenophobic practices of "Fortress Europe".

Bosses' arguments over how and where to exercise their powers to create borders are among the many diversions capitalism creates to confuse and distract the working class. We need to be fighting for our own interests within and against the bosses' system. That is the meaningful alternative to any of our rulers' claptrap about Canada ++, Norway models, Brexit in Name Only or People's votes.

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 one man by 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, 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 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 redacted. We know from leaks that the US 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 likelihood that under current emission trajectories and current national pledges the Earth will warm more than 1.5 degrees above targets set in Paris ..." This was cut from the final report. Also omitted was the verdict that if countries make the cuts they say they will then the world is on course for a 3°C warming by 2100. And if they don't, global warming could go as high as 7°C!

This 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 fails 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 of Britain and Germany combined, were not even included. Meanwhile, Australia's blatant refusal to phase out coal by 2050 to keep emissions within

the Paris target highlights the absurdity of expecting each capitalist power to put the survival of the globe before its own national (profit-making) interest. The world's biggest coal exporter said it would be "irresponsible" to comply with the IPCC recommendation to stop using coal to generate electricity. Instead the government's priority is to cut domestic electricity prices, not greenhouse gas emissions, which have risen for four consecutive years! Coal generates two-thirds of Australia's electricity and earned it a record A\$61bn in exports in the 2017-18 financial year. In China, slowing 'economic growth' has led the government to withdraw emission curbs on heavy industries only recently introduced to reduce disastrous levels of air pollution. Can't let difficulty breathing affect profit-making.

2. Provide adequate support to "developing nations" for transformation

According to the International Energy Agency, transformation to a fossil-free world will require \$1,000bn per year by 2020. Around two-thirds of this, \$670bn, will need to be spent in "developing nations", requiring a significant transfer of finance from North to South. The big capitalist countries hold just 10% of the world's population but produce around 60% of the greenhouse gases currently in the atmosphere.

However, the Paris Agreement only commits to "mobilising" \$100bn per year by 2020, to cover not just emission cuts but also adaptation (see 3, below). The definition of "mobilise" is deliberately broad, to include loans, private finance, grants with strings attached, and re-allocation of aid budgets. There is even talk of calling money sent home by migrants working in richer countries a form of climate finance, and counting it in the total "mobilised" by the US, France, Germany, etc. In short, the proposed funding is totally inadequate, when it's not a complete fiction. It is totally dwarfed by the estimated \$5,300bn a year governments spend on direct and indirect subsidies to fossil fuels.

3. 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 put forward represents less than 15% of what is formally needed!

The large capitalist powers are the biggest polluters but the idea that they should make a commensurate contribution to a solution has been watered

CWO Public Meeting

Lessons of the German Revolution



17 November, 2:30pm
Calthorpe Arms, London



continued over

Lest We Forget:

Workers Stopped Capitalism's First World War

The 100th anniversary of the Armistice we are told put 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 – now almost *de rigueur* – and two minute silences in the most improbable places, there are some smashing events in store. While local volunteers polish up war memorials, craft red poppy memorabilia there are all sorts of state-sponsored celebrations, to mark the 11th hour of the eleventh day, in November 1918 when “the guns fell silent”.

You might be lucky enough to join a procession of 10,000 ‘ordinary people’ past the Cenotaph. Failing that, if you're an early bird and live in one of the chosen towns, you'll be able to enjoy the sound of a bagpipe playing the Battle's O'er – “a traditional air played by pipers after a battle” – before dawn has broken. After dark more than 1,000 beacons will be lit and “bells in 1,000 churches and cathedrals will ring out in celebration of the end of the First World War”. And if these are not your cup of tea Danny Boyle (of 2012 Olympic ceremony fame) has designed a project where we can all join in. He's come up with ‘Pages of the Sea’ where, at low tide on 11 November on multiple beaches, “giant portraits of casualties of the war will be carved by sand artists ... while members of the public will be invited to create their own silhouettes in the sand of people important to them before the tide sweeps the beaches clean again.”. Possibly going beyond his official remit, Boyle told the *Daily Telegraph* he chose beaches because they are “dramatic, unruly, democratic” places where “nobody rules but the tide”.

We may add that beaches are also prone to pollution by bilge water from vessels that have taken on more than they can handle. Anyway, let's get beyond the official bilge and set the record straight about how the war really ended.

Beyond the Myth

First, it's not true that the “guns fell silent” on the morning of November 11th 1918 while Marshall Foch negotiated the Armistice with the German High Command. For various reasons, the fighting continued on many parts of the Western Front. It's reckoned that over 10,000 men were killed, wounded or went missing on that day. A day like any other day, then, in a war which is now estimated (nobody really knows) to have mobilised about 70 million men, killing around 9-10 million of them and leaving over 35 million more wounded, imprisoned or ‘missing’.

But there's an even bigger gap between fact and fiction, in this annual recital of a national myth. In reality, after the February 1917 revolution in Russia soldiers on both sides on the Western front were questioning what they were fighting for. Possibly the biggest Allied mutiny was by French soldiers in mid-1917 (involving 54 divisions and raising the cry of ‘peace or revolution’). Afterwards four British cavalry divisions were installed in France for the remainder of the war, with orders to “break strikes and anti-war agitation”. But that's not part of the national myth, any more than acknowledging that, despite draconian punishments, including the death penalty, mutinies by British soldiers and sailors mounted each year to more than 13,000 in 1917.

Working Class Revolution Ends the War

By 1918 the working class on both sides had had enough. It was the political hold of the kings and emperors of the Central powers which collapsed first as the anger of mutinous troops and half-starved populations turned from demanding an end to the war to outright revolution. They were inspired by the Russian Revolution and Bolshevik calls for workers elsewhere to rise up and create a world soviet republic. Armistices had already been signed by Bulgaria, Turkey and Austria-Hungary before 11th November. It was only because the Allies wanted unambiguous surrender from Germany that the war continued. The delay only encouraged the formation of workers and soldiers councils throughout the land. ‘Kaiser Bill’ saw the writing on the wall and ran away to the Netherlands. Meanwhile the Social Democratic Party took over in Berlin and Philipp Scheidemann announced that Germany was henceforth a (parliamentary) republic before the councils could proclaim their own soviet republic. Working class uprisings had stopped the war between the ‘great powers’ before 11th November. Now the capitalists were more concerned to save their economic system based on profits produced by wage labour from communist revolution than to wage war with each other.

The Class War After the War

In April 1918 the Allies had invaded Russia in order to crush the revolution. This campaign continued after the Armistice. For them, defeating the revolutionaries threatening capitalism was now more important than the war against each other. Britain and France only withdrew from the Russian campaign in April 1919 because of the

strikes and mutinies of soldiers and sailors, many of them sympathetic to Bolshevism and who refused to fight. In January 1919 a ‘strike’ at British army bases grew into a massive mutiny of more than 20,000 troops. With the support of locals, they took control of British army headquarters in Calais. General Byng was sent to put down the mutiny but his troops refused to fire and the army was forced to concede demands for improved conditions. Like the mutinous soldiers of the French Black Sea fleet, these troops were not going anywhere near Russia.

Within Britain the same issues were in play. There were no victories for the working class to celebrate. After the Armistice tens of thousands of battle-weary soldiers found themselves stuck in filthy barracks, still subject to harsh military discipline for months on end as they waited to be de-mobbed. This was one of the biggest causes of the frequent mutinies which occurred after the war, but it was by no means the only one. (Increasingly, soldiers and sailors resisted being used to put down ‘Bolshevism’.) One of the earliest mutinies occurred in January 1919 in Folkestone – where Danny Boyle's crew will be tracing figures in the sand on 11th November – where two thousand troops refused to be herded back to France and led a procession of ten thousand or more through the town, cheered by the local population.

Lloyd George's “land fit for heroes” was a long way from reality. The soldiers-just-out-of-uniform were returning to join a malnourished, poorly-housed, over-worked working class still facing severe food shortages, price hikes and bread rationing. Increasingly many would be without a job but as yet there was a revived militancy (even the police had been on strike in 1918) and belief in a better future within the working class as the optimism generated by the Russian Revolution held sway.

But the British state was more prepared to nip any move by workers than the working class was ready for socialist revolution. Aside from the military divisions ready to combat ‘domestic unrest’ (as in Glasgow in 1919) and the plans to introduce martial law and detain “suspected troublemakers” (as Sylvia Pankhurst was in October 1920) if necessary, British capital had a relatively sophisticated political system which it could adapt to pull the wool over working class eyes. Before the war was over, parliament had passed the Representation of the People Act to provide a democratic cover for the rule of capital. For the first time all men over 21 had the right to vote. The much-lauded ‘votes for women’ only applied to women over 30 who were graduates

and/or whose husbands owned a certain amount of property. The hastily organised ‘Khaki election’ of December 1918 – long before most soldiers had returned home and after a short 3 week campaign mainly about war reparations, punishing Germany and repatriating enemy aliens – presented no social programme whatsoever.

Unsurprisingly there was a very low voter turnout, but it served Lloyd George's scheme for a Liberal/Conservative coalition government and neatly kept the new democratic political debate on the same old ground of the class that had taken Britain into the war. On this national parliamentary ground there was no room for debate about a new communist society where the working class could exercise power via a network of directly-elected councils (or soviets) and manage production directly to meet social needs. Even before the Labour Party myth that state control of industry is a step towards socialism, the extension of the right to vote enabled Lloyd George's Liberal/Conservative coalition to claim democratic legitimacy for the British capitalist state. It undermined (though did not extinguish) the natural sympathy of workers in Britain for the achievement of the Russian working class.

The Lesson For Workers Today

Britain in 2018 may seem a far cry from 1918, but on November 11th – when the last post has sounded, the beacons are lit and the sand drawings have been washed away – we would do well to remember that the war was an inter-imperialist one for aims that had nothing to do with the working class. It was the first in this epoch of global capitalism: when the cyclical economic crisis can only be resolved by the fight of the major powers to destroy each other's economic base. In 1918 the United States benefited from the weakening of British imperialism. In 1945 the US emerged from another world war as the world's supreme economic power. Today, as world capitalism faces yet another unsolvable crisis and the US is positioning to face off the competition from rising China, the prospect of trade wars eventually turning into real wars is again a reality. The last thing workers need to be doing is commemorate the slaughter of previous generations in what one first world war veteran – Harry Patch – poignantly described as no more than “organised murder”. More than ever, the only civilised prospect for humanity is for an end to capitalism and its class-divided society. As a starting point, we can only repeat, more than ever today: **The only war worth fighting is the class war.**

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down at the behest of the US and others. The Paris deal just says that “developed countries” should “take the lead” on providing finance, as part of a “shared effort” by all parties.

4. Focus on genuine, effective action rather than false solutions

The Paris agreement aims to reduce anthropogenic emissions by the second half of this century, yet a 1.5° target requires a definitive end to fossil fuel use by 2050! Plus, the deal allows for continued fossil-fuel burning “offset” by “removals” via dubious carbon capture, geo-engineering or forestry schemes. Regulations to rein in destructive industries, halt deforestation and stop mining fossil fuels are not even hinted at. And the agreement has no precedence over existing or new trade agreements, allowing firms to overturn environmental regulations when profits are threatened. In short, it is more a PR exercise than a serious plan to reduce emissions. When Trump withdrew the United States from the ‘deal’ just over a year ago, it was of little consequence. Its goals are far too little too late.

Capitalism is killing the planet. Even where a price might be put on it, the cost of cleaning up the environment is greater than the value of economic growth as measured by GDP. (Hence the agreement's blurring over how to pay for its feeble recommendations.) The disappearance of species, toxins in food, water, air, land, indicate capitalism's ravaging of the planet. The profits capitalism makes from exploiting the working class would be negated if they had to include environmental cost in their production. No amount of climate accords, spurious recycling schemes, or whatever can reconcile capitalism's pursuit of profit with Marx's insight on the need to hand the globe down to succeeding generations in an improved condition. The answer should be staring every environmentalist in the face: get rid of capitalism!

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 frontiers and money have been abolished, where collective power is exercised through class-wide organisations like workers councils. This has to mean the active, daily participation of the majority aiming for the interests of all. Only then can the world be rid of the capitalist offspring of poverty, hunger, oppression and war: We call it communism but this vision has nothing in common with Stalinist state capitalism and the old USSR.

In order to get there we are working 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 by no means 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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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 our website) The group has been inspired by the work of the Nuevo Curso blog collective from which they have sprung. They are part of a growing movement of a new generation aiming to draw the political lessons from the history of our class. As they make clear in their founding statement, the comrades of Emancipación have no intention of limiting themselves to study or historical enquiry:

Amongst a welter of progressive and nationalist organisations, our mission is clear, to present an internationalist and revolutionary alternative, a genuine communist alternative. “Emancipación” will also seek to push forward the struggles and demands of the working class that we are convinced have only begun to rise.

We look forward to working and exchanging ideas and news with them as they develop. Meanwhile we present a translation of one of the leaflets they distributed during a recent strike by transport workers.

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 for by the workers.

The bosses have the nerve to ask us to get behind the company, which really means seeing our living standards worsen in order to pay more dividends. They have the nerve to tell us that our pay levels and working conditions depend on the profits they make and that if they can't pay their shareholders dividends, then our needs are not “fair” but “selfish”.

What is worse, some of the profits are turned into more capital which also must produce a return. A return on this reinvested capital leaves even less for the workers who actually produce the goods and services. A society like this, which increasingly exploits and oppresses the producers of everything that is consumed in society is a world turned upside down. And this is the world in which we live. Out of this come all the wars around the world, the destruction of the planet, the marginalisation of hundreds of millions of people ... And the only way to change things is to put human need before profit.

When workers defend their living standards in a strike, in a company, they reveal that a new and just world is not only possible but necessary; a world organised to satisfy human needs and not for producing profits to pay the bosses and shareholders. A society organised around the idea of “from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs, is what is called “communism”. It is the opposite of totalitarian dictatorships, militarism and nationalism. It is for this society, the only one that can offer us a real future, that “Emancipación” is fighting.

Liga Emancipación/Emancipation League
21 September 2018