



UNITY

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Unity of the left

By Lynda Walker

of the public interest, and of successive administrations' betrayal and abandonment of the people."

Emmanuel Macron has been repeatedly described by the media as a "centrist", an up and coming young politician committed to the European Union. His entry into formal politics came in 2006 when he joined the Socialist Party (PS).

As an investment banker his credentials were ideal for him to become the Minister of Industry, Economy and Digital Affairs. When it became clear that Hollande would not be re-elected Macron bought himself out of Government to set up a new party for the purpose of the presidential election.

It was under Francois Hollande's government that he was to support the introduction of "El Khomri law", a piece of legislation that was designed to revise France's employment laws with the aim of making the country's labour more "flexible".

The law makes it easier for companies to lay off workers, reduce overtime for hours worked beyond France's 35 hour work week and reduces severance payments that workers are entitled to if their companies make them redundant. This "centrist" has also called for a 60 billion euro cut in public spending and the elimi-

nation of 120,000 civil service positions.

It was these laws and proposed changes that caused the French workers to come out on the streets protesting last year, when the British Trade union movement were concentrating their efforts to stay in Europe. At that time the EU referendum put paid to international solidarity.

Following Macron's election hundreds of people led by the CGT trade union marched in protest against the planned labour reforms. Over a 140 people were arrested in the protest.

Now all eyes are on the June elections, Macron has renamed his party "Republic On the Move" and Le Penn expects to rename the National Front when putting forward the opposition campaign.

On the 11th of May the French Communist Party national secretary Pierre Laurent will launch their national campaign during a major rally at the Japy gymnasium in Paris.

Their goal is to "*Bring the people into the Assembly*". The Communist – Left Front candidates whom we support are from the France of working people from the public and private sectors, from all trades and professions" Only unity of the left can provide an answer.

IT is an anomaly to see some people feel relief when a neo-liberal is elected in France, but when it is at the expense of a Front Nationale candidate the inconsistency is explained.

The fact that a large percentage of the French electorate refused to vote for fascist Le Penn is positive. The fact that the winning candidate is a pro-capitalist neo-liberal gives an indication of the politics involved.

In reference to the election results the French Communist Party said "*we are not in the mood to celebrate. Our country is living through dark days. This second round sounds a serious alarm. Marine Le Pen obtained a score of 35 %, which is 14 % more than her first-round score.*"

The turnout was just under 75 per cent, the lowest in 48 years. Some 12 million people did not vote, three million cast blank ballots and another million spoilt their ballots in protest.

In fact many of the electorate refused to vote, stating "*ni facho, ni banquier*" no fascist, no banker

The CP statement continued: "*This is the result of the "normalisation" of extreme right ideas; we are more determined than ever to fight them. This is also the result of decades of complacent political alternation to the detriment*

Editorial

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Dysfunctional EU

THERE is no doubt that over the last few months we have witnessed from the pro-EU lobby some absolute nonsense being said about the so-called benefits of remaining within the EU imperialist structure.

Our media page this week refers to a comment by Irish News columnist Brian Feeney in which he talks about people opting for a “modern, outward-looking European-wide society with human rights and equality for all guaranteed by law.”

Unfortunately for him and others who think like him, this description does not resonate with millions of people within the EU, especially those who have been at the bitter end of its austerity policies.

Interesting then that one of the French presidential candidates, Emmanuel Macron, also sees things a little differently from Feeney. He has said that the EU must be reformed or it could face the prospect of “Frexit,” the possibility of a French withdrawal as there is a growing anti-EU feeling within the country. He added that the people are extremely angry and impatient and that the “dysfunction” of the EU is no more sustainable and that to allow it to continue to function as it was would be a “betrayal.”

However as we have said in Unity many times, the EU is not reformable and it certainly does not function in the interests of working people. There is ample evidence of that and it certainly is not a modern, outward-looking European-wide society as Feeney and others would have us believe.

He also made reference to “Little England” which as we know is how those opposed to leaving the EU describe those who voted leave.

The origin of the term “Little Englander” goes back to the 19th century and was given to an element in the Liberal Party who opposed the expansion of the Empire and Britain's military adventures, especially the second Boer War.

So the present day little Englanders are seemingly in good company whilst Mr Feeney and others don't seem to mind using a term coined by imperialist reactionaries.

**Belfast Central
Branch
Meeting
Wednesday
24 May
5.30pm
CPJ Premises**

**Unity
Appeal Fund**

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