


UNITY

Printed & Published by the Communist Party of Ireland

23.12.17 Vol. 29 No 46 (Print Day Wednesday) £1 (1 Euro)

People's Brexit is still the issue

THE political situation in Ireland continues to be dominated by the politics of Brexit.

A letter published in the *Irish News* and reported in last week's *Unity* has created a focal point for discussion; the letter brings forward a narrow nationalist agenda.

The signatories were even accused by businessman Tom Kelly who fronted the "Stronger In" campaign "of not reaching out to unionists who want to remain" who he says "are currently without representation."

However the letter was welcomed by Sinn Fein's Declan Kearney who said: "It represents the most powerful and significant political initiative to be taken by civic nationalism in many decades and probably since the hunger strikes of 1981."

This embracing of a nationalist agenda will deepen sectarianism within society.

Mr Kearney seems to forget that whilst the demands of the hunger strikers gained massive support, it also created massive divisions within communities and even within families.

Political parties were not welcome in the campaign if they did not support the military action of the provisional IRA.

By Lynda Walker

Similarly this campaign against Brexit is defining people as pro-human rights and anti-human rights depending on whether they supported the Remain or Leave camp.

At the CPI congress in November we pointed out that winning the referendum to withdraw from the European Union creates an opportunity to mobilise the political forces capable of changing the fundamental political arrangements.

In withdrawing from the European Union (EU) the challenge is how to unite the labour, community and trade union movement to demand a People's Brexit.

This requires a frank and calm debate within the labour movement that moves away from the dangerous idea that legitimate and long standing arguments in opposition to EU membership can be dismissed by simply labelling their proponents as supporters of narrow British nationalism and racism, developing friction between many working class people and the trade union movement.

This present debate by so called "civic nationalists" is marginalising the progressive Leave campaigners and their support for human and civil rights, the Irish language and so on, as well as creating further alienation in the Protestant section of the working class.

The right wing agenda of the Democratic Unionist Party and other Unionists existed long before Brexit: class and religious discrimination, opposition to gay and women's rights and Irish language.

Brexit and the question of a hard border is being conglomerated into a civil rights and human rights issue.

As far as the letter writers and their followers are concerned the Republic of Ireland appears to have nothing to answer on this score, for example homelessness, poor health service provision, attacks on workers' rights and threat to privatise water in the all disregard human rights. It is interesting if not predictable that women's reproductive rights do not enter into the picture.

For Communists and progressive people the challenge for politics in 2018 is to confront narrow nationalism in whatever form it comes, to oppose politics of the right and to find the policies and the organisations that can build unity of the people of Ireland north and south.

As 2017 comes to an end we reflect on the fact that in 1917 the slogans of the Great October Revolution, "Peace to the Peoples," "Bread to the Hungry," "Land to the Peasants," "Factories to the Workers," "Power to the Soviets" were ones that ordinary people across the world understood and are still relevant today.

Editorial

Unity is published each week
by the Communist Party of
Ireland.
PO Box 85, Belfast BT1 1SR.

Endemic inequalities

THREE reports in one of last week's editions of the i newspaper exposed once again the inequalities endemic in the capitalist system. All the reports featured in the Business section on facing pages, with the first one appearing under the heading, "Wages decline with growth lagging behind inflation," telling us that in the three months up to October weekly earnings grew at an annual rate of 2.5 per cent.

Data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) showed that inflation rose to 3.1 per cent for October, a near six year high, meaning an eighth consecutive month of declining real wages for workers. The figures show a decrease in real earnings of 0.2 per cent including bonuses and by 0.4 per cent excluding bonuses.

The data showed that the UK's unemployment rate fell marginally by 0.1 per cent in the three months period to 4.3 per cent compared with the previous quarter representing a joint lowest unemployment rate since 1975. However the number of people in work declined by 56,000 representing the biggest quarterly drop in more than two years.

One economist from PwC stated that the figures indicated that the "great British jobs boom of recent years may be running out of steam."He added that real pay levels continue to be squeezed and that will persist for at least the first half of 2018.

A report on the facing page stated that a survey had found that one in five workers aged in their 50s and 60s were going through a "mid-life saving crisis" in that they were unable to save anything for their retirement as every-day living put too great a strain on their finances.

This was put down to the cost of living creeping up and wages growth continuing to slow.

However spare a thought for John Ashley the brother of Sports Direct chief executive Mike Ashley, present owner of Newcastle United football club. an inquiry has found that when the company was floated in 2007 Bro John was being underpaid with the board making the point that he was "actually disadvantaged to the tune of £11 million."

However independent investors at a general meeting voted against handing him the back payment.

The Department for Business named and shamed Sports Direct in a report revealing that the company owned £167,036 to 383 workers.

*Seasons
Greetings from
all at Unity
Peace &
Progress for
2018*

*Unity is taking a 2
week break and we
will be back with you
on the
weekending
13 January 2018*



**Unity
Appeal Fund**

We hope we will continue to have the support you have so generously given us - both in donations and words of appreciation.

We still need all the help we can get so we can continue to print Ireland's working class weekly paper published by the Communist Party.

We will be happy to receive donations, no matter how small - or large !


I am sending £.....
to the Unity Appeal Fund.

Name.....

Address.....

.....

Please send all
donations to:
Unity Appeal
Fund
PO Box 85,
Belfast, BT1 1SR





Claiming Dates

**Belfast Central Branch
Meeting**

Wednesday

17 January

5.30pm

CPI Premises

Preparation for the

Northern Area Congress

Saturday April 14th



Burns Supper

7.30 pm : Saturday

27th January 2018

CPI Premises, Belfast

This year's Burn's Night will be dedicated to Comrades John Hanna and John Madden.

Comrade Keith Stottard from Glasgow will give the toast to the Lassies.

Other details to be confirmed.

Haggis served with bashed neeps and tatties; Vegetarian haggis -if sighted; For the less adventurous-sumptuous sausages. Sauce gravy, onions etc. Lashings of suitable beverages.

Kilts and sporrans optional !

People are asked to contribute with Music - Poems - Songs and Stories.



PEADAR O'DONNELL
SOCIALIST REPUBLICAN FORUM

The next Forum political gathering will take place on the 12th - 13th January in Letterkenny, Co Donegal.

Anyone living in the north-west is welcome to attend. Areas to be discussed among others, rural development and co-operatives, Irish fisheries - EU and Brexit.