



UNITY

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Sham Negotiations

FOLLOWING his meeting last week in Dublin with Tory Prime Minister May, Fine Gael Taoiseach Varadkar said it was "not a day for negotiations" but it was an opportunity to "share perspectives".

And share perspectives they certainly do. After its last National Executive meeting the Communist Party made clear the sham nature of all of May's negotiations over the UK leaving the neo-liberal institutions of the European Union.

"The 'backstop' has little or nothing to do with the needs and interests of the Irish people or the peoples of Britain. But it is in effect a blocking mechanism to prevent a full meaningful exit from the EU... It is European monopoly capital providing solidarity with the dominant element within the British ruling class and the British State who want to remain within the EU, who needs the protection and cooperation of the EU to protect their own class interests."

The statement also made clear that: "The Irish government is a willing collaborator in this shared tactic, further exposing its dependency and parasitic relationship with both imperialist groupings."

A position aided and abetted by so called 'civic nationalism', with the Sinn Fein leadership to the fore pursuing its goal of unity without sovereignty.

By John Pinkerton

Pursuing her delaying tactic in Westminster earlier this week, May promised a final, decisive parliamentary vote on her 'Brexit' but she needed "some time" to get the changes she believes MPs want.

wittingly plays into this delaying, 'There Is Now No Alternative', strategy.

But faced with this latest call for more time, Labour leader Corbyn, expressing what is becoming an increasingly held view in Parliament, accused May of "running down the clock" in an effort to "blackmail" MPs into backing her deal.

"The prime minister is playing for time and playing with people's jobs, our economic security and the future of our industry.

This week Parliament should set a clear deadline for the government to come forward with its revised deal or give MPs the chance to decide what happens next."



She claimed she was discussing a number of options with the EU to secure legally-binding changes to the backstop. Replacing it with "alternative arrangements" putting a time limit on it or a unilateral exit clause so that the UK can leave whenever it wants.

She also claimed she wanted to give Parliament its say as soon as she could. But she warned that getting the time she needed might require her to break the existing 21-day delay before a vote can take place on an international treaty – opening the way to her delaying the final Brexit vote until just days before the UK leaves the EU on the 29th of March.

Labour's attempt last week to offer constructive, whilst critical engagement, with the Tory government un-

And what must happen next is not the so called People's (actually Remainers') Referendum but a general election.

As a recent editorial in Britain's daily newspaper of the left, the Morning Star succinctly put it:

"Until a general election changes the game, Brexit is not Labour's to negotiate. On the other hand, articulating a positive and ambitious vision of our future outside the EU, and how Labour would approach that differently from the Conservatives, is essential both to general election success and to transforming an economy broken by neoliberalism and austerity."

"Labour needs to be bolder about that vision, and its supporters more proactive in fighting for the election that will make it possible."

Editorial

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Giving succour to imperialism

IN an interview published in the Morning Star, a representative of the Venezuelan Communist Party made reference to the claim by the European Union that somehow the presidential election in 2018 was illegitimate.

He pointed out that in actual fact the turnout was higher than in the last three EU elections. He also made the point that Nicolas Maduro won 68 per cent of the vote against two right-wing candidates, that sixteen right-wing parties participated and that it was the ultra right who boycotted it.

He also stated that former US president Jimmy Carter congratulated Venezuela on having one of the fairest and most transparent electoral systems in the world.

As we know Sinn Fein leaders attended the inauguration of President Maduro so they must obviously find themselves in a dilemma being fervent supporters of the EU which has fallen in with the US in demanding “free” elections and recognising the reactionary Juan Guaido as interim president.

The SDLP also finds itself in a similar position but of the double whammy type being also a fervent supporter of the EU and an affiliate of the Socialist International which to its eternal shame has followed the line of EU and US imperialism.

It is reported that the party Guaido leads, Popular Will, is also an affiliate, a point made by some right-wing Labour MPs in a parliamentary debate in which they supported the line of the Socialist International.

However the stance of Labour Shadow Foreign Secretary Emily Thornberry is cause for concern. She said that the party supported “international pressure” being put on Venezuela to hold new elections. She also accused the Venezuelan government of betraying socialist ideals, being responsible for human rights abuses and the economic situation they find themselves in.

A couple of days before a Labour spokesman stated that they opposed interference in Venezuela and that the future of Venezuela is a matter for them. It should be pointed out to Thornberry that the call for “new” elections is interference and only gives succour to EU and US imperialism.

Communist Party of Ireland International Working Women's Day events



**Welfare, not Warfare,
Thursday 7 March, 7 p.m**
Dedicated to Rosa Luxemburg
on the centenary of her death.
Speakers: Lynda Walker, Thea
Valentina Gardellin, Clare Daly
TD, Kerry Fleck.
Chairperson: Laura Duggan.
Central Hall,
Rosemary Street, Belfast



The lives and struggles of working women Saturday 9 March

Film screenings and panel
discussions Pearse Centre (27
Pearse Street), Dublin
Screening of Solar Mama from
2pm
Screening of La Voz Dormida -
The Sleeping Voice from 5pm
Organised by CPI Women's
Group

Free Events All Welcome



EU dictates Irish foreign policy on Venezuela

Statement from Peace and Neutrality Alliance

THE Minister for Foreign Affairs Simon Coveney TD stated that, along with other EU countries he supports Mr Guaido, president of the National Assembly, "in order for him to call for free, fair and democratic presidential elections".

Minister Coveney ignores several facts; Juan Guaido was not even a candidate in the 2018 elections and that the system of government in Venezuela is a French type Presidential system.

The position of speaker of the National Assembly held by Juan Guaido (from a constitutional standpoint) is identical to that of the Speaker of the US House of Representatives. It would be like Seán Ó Fearghail the Ceann Comhairle of Dail Eireann dismissing Michael D Higgins as Irish President and declaring himself interim president.

More than 300 international representatives/monitors were present for Venezuela's May 20 presidential vote, and their voting system has been classified as one of, if not the most, secure and transparent in the world according to former United States president Jimmy Carter.

The US and EU/NATO have a long history of illegal wars and of overthrowing sovereign governments around the world following a similar strategy of demonising the leaders of the target countries under the guise or pretext of concern about human rights.

PANA would like to correct just two points often omitted from most media reports.

Economic sanctions against Venezuela began under President Bush in 2004 and this strategy continues to have an ongoing devastating impact on their economy and on escalating social divisions.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Venezuela has the fewest volunteer migrants in the continent.

Divisions over Venezuela emerged at the recent informal meeting of EU foreign ministers in Bucharest, with a noticeable split in NATO members, most pushing to recognise Guaido, whilst Italy and Greece demanded a more cautious line.

Foreign policy positions require the unanimous support of all 28 EU countries, so Italy's veto upset German conservative Manfred Weber who believes the EU response to or fudge on Venezuela is 'a tragedy'.

Weber was nominated last November as the European People's Party's (EPP) candidate to replace Jean-Claude Juncker as European Commission president.

He has stated his opposition to the current unanimity system on foreign policy and wants this changed to a majority vote system.

Roger Cole of PANA believes that Fine Gael MEPs, who are members of the EPP support this change in allowing the EU to dictate foreign policy, and should the Irish electorate raise concerns about Irish neutrality or plans for a European Army, they can just blame Brussels, or that we are just going along with those other EU countries.

US government shutdown looms as talks fail to break deadlock

THE spectre of another US government shutdown was raised again on Monday after bipartisan US congressional talks over border security hit an impasse.

The 17 Republican and Democratic negotiators from the Senate and the House had hoped to reach an agreement to give Congress time to pass legislation by Friday, when the federal funding agreement runs out.

However they failed to strike a deal over President Donald Trump's demand for funding of a wall on the Mexican border and remained divided over the detention of undocumented migrants.

It raises the prospect of another federal government shutdown this Friday. The last shutdown was the longest in US history lasting 35 days and saw at least 800,000 federal workers without pay during December and January. It is believed to have cost the US economy an estimated \$11 billion (£8.5bn).

Republican negotiator Senator Richard Shelby said: "I'll say 50-50 we get a deal ... The spectre of a shutdown is always out there."

Mr Trump agreed a three-week spending deal on January 25 to allow Congress to reach an agreement, however funding will run out at midnight on Friday.