



UNITY

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General election anyone?

THERE can be no doubt the British face their biggest constitutional crisis since the 1930s. The parliamentary system of government has shown its limitations and the British have shown continued contempt for Ireland and its people.

Last week we had the disgraceful remarks of the secretary of state Karen Bradley on state murder. It's not the first time she has put her foot in it but what she said last week regarding the deaths of many innocent men women and children at the hands of crown forces was unforgiveable. It does however show utter contempt for Irish people in general and more so for the victims of state violence. She may have been badly briefed, she may well have been caught off guard but she clearly showed she is not capable of the usual imperial discretion when it comes to these matters.

In any normal functioning democracy she would have resigned but this is a place apart, who would replace her, it has proven a graveyard for the ambitions of up and coming young career politicians.

The continued saga over Brexit and the Tory party's reliance on the pre-enlightenment DUP is now coming to a head. Theresa May put the same deal to parliament that had been rejected weeks ago with some legal clarifications. The clarifications didn't satisfy the attorney general and so the deal was dead before it hit the

By Mel Corry

floor. Not since Neville Chamberlain was besieged by MPs after his famous agreement with Hitler has a British Prime Minister been such a lame duck.

Steadfastly she went to the dispatch box to scold MPs for their decision and doggedly outline the procedure for the rest of the week. A vote today on whether the British should leave without a deal is likely to be rejected by parliament setting up a vote on Thursday on whether to extend or even revoke article 50.

The exasperation of the EU is clear, They would simply ask to what end would an extension work towards. Experience shows it would be pointless.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn, who is fighting his own battle for survival, has called for a general election, an astute move on his part because a new referendum on Europe would risk further alienation of Labour's grass roots heartland. The traitors led by Tom Watson would rather see the Tories in government for another generation than a Labour government that would have to stand up to the EU commission in order to realise its programme.

The parliamentary Labour party refuses to recognise that Corbyn's election as leader has seen unprece-

dent growth in its membership. There is a clear disconnect between Labour MPs and the party membership.

The only thing that makes any sense is for May to resign and call a general election. There is no doubt that Brexit would dominate such a campaign but it would allow the people a say on how it is progressed. Britain would still be divided afterwards but it would kill the call for a people's vote or a second referendum. The election would likely deliver another hung parliament and strange re-alignments would follow. The likelihood is that the Tory party would shift to the right under a new leader and further realignment would take place between Blairites and remain Tories.

For us it would allow for the DUP to answer to the people for their behaviour at Westminster (where is the 1.5 billion) also the RHI scandal and Paisley's unrelenting arrogance.

It's unlikely to produce much change in the way of seats but it would allow us to gauge the attitude of liberal or civic unionism on the question of re-unification of the island and undoubtedly bring that possibility forward. For nationalists the once ambivalent attitude towards a united Ireland which unionism relied on is dead. The people can thank the DUP, Karen Bradley and Theresa May for that.

Editorial

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A better option

KAREN Bradley's comments that killings carried out by members of the security forces "were not crimes" and were the actions of "people acting under orders and instructions, fulfilling their duties in a dignified and appropriate way," have quite rightly been condemned in the strongest of manners.

It has to be remembered that she made the comments whilst the inquiry into the 1971 Ballymurphy massacre was taking place in Belfast. Does she honestly believe that the slaughter of civilians doing nothing but going about their lives in such a normal way was carried out by people "acting under orders and instructions fulfilling their duty in a dignified and appropriate way" ?

Certainly those soldiers were "acting under orders and instruction," of that there is no doubt just as they were in Derry on Bloody Sunday and every other operation they carried out in Northern Ireland.

Bradley's attempt at an apology was as abject an apology as you can get. However she must have had Theresa May in mind when she made the comments as last year the Tory leader sparked controversy when she claimed that the process for probing Troubles related killings was patiently unfair, "to soldiers and police," a comment that would send many people into a frenzy of ironical laughter.

It has now been revealed that Bradley appeared before the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee at Westminster last November alongside Tory MP and former soldier Bob Stewart.

During a discussion on a statute of limitations, which would protect British soldiers from prosecution, Stewart commented, "I think we have got to find a way of getting our soldiers off the hook." Bradley totally agreed with his sentiments.

In 2010 following the Bloody Sunday report, David Cameron said that what happened was both unjustified and unjustifiable," but Bradley's comments have contradicted that stance.

There have been justified calls for her resignation, a better option would be to get rid of all of the rotten bunch.



Trade Union Left Forum public meeting, followed by a discussion and workshops on anti trade union legislation and how it affects the workers north and south.

Speakers Dave Gibney, Mandate

Mel Corry, Trademark Belfast .

Saturday 23 March, 12:00 noon

Connect (6 Gardiner Row),

Rise of Right Wing Populism and the Far Right

Mel Corry, Trademark, will lead and facilitate the discussion.

10.30 am, on Saturday 30th March 2019

In the ICTU offices, 45 – 47 Donegall Street, Belfast, BT1 2FG

Organised by the Trades Consultative Consultative Committee

Belfast Central Branch Meeting

Wednesday

20th March

5.30pm

CPJ Premises

ON the 7th of March this year at the Communist Party of Ireland's International Women's Day event in Belfast, imperialist warfare was exposed in contrast to the spending on welfare.

Chairing the meeting Laura Duggan CPI from Dublin, introduced Thea Valetina Gardellin from Italy and Clare Daly TD from Dublin speaking about the might of imperialist countries.

Thea Valentina was speaking about Vicenza, the town where she lives which has seven US bases, (nearly 10% of the 68 US bases in Italy) and an EU Gendarmerie/NATO base.

Clare Daly spoke about how Irish neutrality has ceased to exist, the protest action at Shannon airport where US military planes touchdown, and the duplicitous role of the EU regarding Venezuela.

Both women are political activists. Clare is just back from Venezuela and Thea Valentina has worked with children in refugee camps in Palestine as well as anti-war protests in Italy.

Both of them spoke in Dublin recently at the conference *No to US Bases and NO to NATO Bases*.

Opening the meeting Lynda Walker paid tribute to Rosa Luxemburg murdered by fascists in 1919. She reported that about a hundred thousand people were at the Rosa's centenary march in Berlin in January. This is an annual march but it is invisible to the capitalist media.

Lynda reiterated what she had written in the IWD *Unity Supplement* when she said: "it is apt that we should dedicate this year's event to Rosa Luxemburg on the centenary of her death.

Rosa along with her comrades in Germany was an anti-war activist during the 1914-1918 War and in 1916 she was imprisoned for two and a half years for this action".

Belfast: International Women's Day

The profits of warfare are counted in billions.

Indeed the quote in *Marxism Nationality and War* (Ed Donna Torr 1941) could have been written today: "The intensive rivalries of the great Powers in the epoch of imperialism increases the competitive growth of armaments. Arms production, the most lucrative branch of heavy industry, becomes a national and international force in itself and acts as an incentive to war ("war", said Lenin, is terribly profitable".)

Women Rise Up !

And they did rise to the occasion last Saturday 9th March when they marched through Belfast City Centre.

Northern women appreciated the reciprocal solidarity that women's or-



scribed the day: "The sun shone, the mood was positive and there was a great feeling of camaraderie and female solidarity as we all marched together through Belfast.

"The bands added to the atmosphere, the music (and hula hoops!) created a brilliant carnival atmosphere as across the generations.

"We all gathered together to celebrate what it is to be a woman in Northern Ireland today but also acknowledging the gender issues that we continue to face and fight against."

The incredible speakers at Belfast City Hall were motivating, articulate and passionate.

They represented women of all backgrounds and ages, as they raised awareness of issues like the gender pay gap, women's health and reproductive rights, period poverty, equal marriage rights, the cost of child care, Women's pension inequalities, International female Solidarity, domestic violence and sexual harassment to name just a few!"

LW



ganisations in the Republic gave coming to Belfast for the International Women Day 2019.

Organised by Reclaim the Agenda it was a great success with banners from women's centres, trade unions, Alliance for Choice, Women's Aid, Doctors for Choice, and a whole lot more.

Deborah Yapicioz of Unison de-



Bread and Roses!

Local Textile Workers active on International Women's Day
2019

THE courageous and successful strikes by textile workers in the shirt factories of Manhattan and Massachusetts during 1908 and 1909 were the first ever strikes organised by women and for women's demands such as equal pay.

They are seen as the start of women becoming active for their rights in all corners of the globe.

In 1910 the second "World Conference of Socialist Women" was held in Copenhagen/Denmark.

It passed a motion by German activists Clara Zetkin and Käthe Dunker to mark and celebrate the struggle of the American mill-workers with a world-wide women's day on March 8th – International Women's Day was born.

The song "Bread and Roses", now famous and sung all over the world in many languages originates from Lawrence / Massachusetts where it was first written down in 1912 - the beautiful tradition of presenting women at work with a flower certainly originates from that.

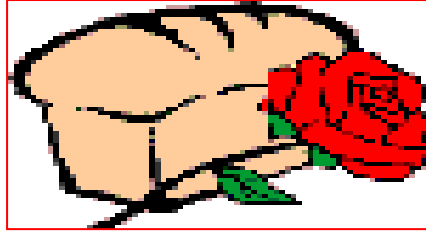
In Dungiven textile – workers have been keeping the tradition alive for several years now and this year was no exception.

Linen weaver Marion Baur and members of her small team were out on March 8th to visit women at work and present them with a red carnation.

The owner of County Derry's only active linen-weaving mill was delighted to actually be on the streets herself this time.

"During the past three years I was always asked to speak at a large women's day event in Berlin – this year I made sure I was here to visit working women on the day," says Marion who has been involved in activities around March 8th for many years.

"There is absolutely no reason to ease the struggle for women's rights in 2019. In many corners of the



world and indeed here in Europe women bear the brunt of economic crisis, suffer from cuts, especially the barbaric lack of money for health-care, are underpaid and find it hard to make the ends meet.

Not only are the roses scarce, the bread is hard come-by for many as well."

Marion's team welcomed Bronagh Skett for the first time this year. Born in Draperstown, she went to live in New Zealand and was trained as a weaver there. She is now back in the home – place, has her own weaving loom going and does part-time work at Flax Mill.

Marion: "Great to welcome Bronagh, not just at work but active on International Women's Day as well."

This year the CPI's public meeting commemorated the centenary of the murder of Rosa Luxemburg in Berlin (January 15th 1919).

The Member of Parliament and women's rights activist was brutally killed by a group of German elite-soldiers and thrown into the "Landwehr Kanal." Her killers were known to the authorities but never charged.

Marion Baur: "It's good and right to remember Rosa and her struggle for working people's- and especially women's rights, we can learn a lot from it for our lives today."

Marion and her colleagues visited about 10 places where women work.

They are proud to be part of a huge and growing number of activities all over the world around the 8th of March.

There is no country known now where International Women's Day is

Alliance for Choice welcomes CEDAW report

ALLIANCE for Choice are buoyed by the UN Committee on Eliminating Discrimination and Violence Against Women's concluding observations (published March 11th) after the oral and written evidence presented by the UK government and the shadow report over the last few months.

"Once again we see that using devolution as a barrier to making legislative change with regard to the issue of abortion in Northern Ireland (and many other cross-cutting issues of gender equality including childcare and domestic violence), is no longer a sustainable excuse for inaction from Westminster," said a spokesperson from the organisation.

Demands for Theresa May

Emma Campbell, Co-Chair said: We call upon Theresa May to treat the interests of women and pregnant people in Northern Ireland as the emergency situation it really is.

- End the disgraceful inaction on providing abortion healthcare in Northern Ireland.

- Ensure the scope of the Women and Equalities Committee Inquiry includes these observations.

- Allow the extent of the Domestic Violence Bill to include NI and OAPA.

- End the threat of prosecution to medical staff and abortion seekers when involved in the treatment of or access to online abortion pills.

- Inline with the report, repeal 58/59 of the OAPA to allow for free, safe, legal and local access to abortion healthcare for all women and pregnant people in NI.

