



UNITY

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For Peace, Independence and Socialism

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No time to grieve, organise and fight on

By Mel Corry

IT'S been a tough weekend. We dared not articulate what many of us thought and we tried hard to stay positive on the eve of the election, but, we were right the media outlets could not hide their utter joy at Labour's demise as the exit polls showed we were in for a long night.

This was in stark contrast to their faces on the night of the Brexit referendum or the election in 2017 when Labour presented the 'for the many, not the few' and promised to respect the referendum result.

They set about trying to destroy the character of a decent human being, who for a while gave hope to millions.

The truth must be told, Labour lost the election in leave constituencies who felt the party had shifted to remain.

They responded to the sound bite 'get Brexit done'.

In the Brexit referendum, after years of feeling marginalised and disenfranchised the English working class people took a chance in making a simple statement and sent a clear message to the city of London, the press and the array of grandees that had taken them for granted.

Their vote was vilified as being uninformed and racist.

They certainly let us know about it on polling day.

The racists in the Brexit party didn't get the vote, the Tories got it, to give them a majority to get it done.

It wasn't a vote against Corbynism, although a difficult conversation needs to take place around the leadership it was a simple loaning of a vote that Labour can win back if they choose the right path.

The next leader will likely be a woman, let's hope it's a woman of the left of which there are many suitable candidates.

The election in the North was quite different.

The Unionist majority is hanging on by its fingernails, if we count the Alliance party as unionist.

But the DUP and Sinn Fein had mixed fortunes on the night with voters sending a clear message that they are fed up with the failure of local politicians to run affairs here.

The SDLP are back in the game winning Foyle and South Belfast whilst Sinn Fein held onto Fermanagh South Tyrone by the slimmest of majorities.

The election of John Finucane in North Belfast is however seismic. Im-

portant in real terms but also psychologically, Belfast is no longer a Unionist fortress and unionism is in trouble.

The parties will meet this week to make an effort to restore devolution.

Compromises will be made because beleaguered health workers and struggling teachers and civil servants have told them so on the hustings and on the picket lines.

This week will see further action by the health workers who remain strong and resolute in the face of a real crisis in their workplaces.

The most positive message we can give the public in the run up to the festive season is that we will commit ourselves to building a labour movement capable of delivering workers' power in Ireland.

There can be no parliamentary path alone to socialism, we need a strong democratic militant movement to give guidance and push forward our political representatives.

In the new year we will be given the opportunity to articulate our vision for a new Ireland.

It must not be wasted on vitriol or bitterness.

The drive for a new United Ireland will take on a new dimension as the UK leaves the EU.

Let's build for a new Republic, a socialist future and a planet fit for our grandchildren to inhabit.

Editorial

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PO Box 85, Belfast BT1 1SR.

Biggest factor is catastrophe

POLITICS can be a funny old game and it seems incomprehensible that a party could put forward a manifesto which in British terms was radical, receive a percentage of the vote that compared to its 1945 landslide and two years later be so comprehensively hammered. Obviously now the inquest will begin. The right-wing of the Labour Party will point to the figure of Jeremy Corbyn, someone they have never accepted, as the sole cause of its defeat. How come then that two years ago this same Jeremy Corbyn was inches away from forming a government ?

The issue of Brexit and the Labour Party's later jettisoning of its pledge to honour the 2016 referendum result thereby abandoning many of its Leave voting working-class supporters is the biggest factor in this catastrophe, instance the loss of Blyth Valley in the north-east of England. Labour since its inception, Blyth Valley voted Leave in 2016, now it is Tory albeit by 700 votes. Who would have thought the veteran left-winger Dennis Skinner would end his political days losing his seat to a Tory, again in a vote leaving area.

Corbyn will go and so will any chance of turning the Labour Party in a left direction in the near future.

In Northern Ireland the defeat of the DUP in North and South Belfast sees the end of two right wing-wing Brexiteers who certainly were no friends of working class people, Protestant or Catholic. We could not say that about the successful Sinn Fein or SDLP candidates. However their unwavering support for the European Union will limit their ability to defend working people's interests.

On another issue people may be wondering whether talks will lead to the reconvening of Stormont but only time will tell on that one.

Next year should see, hopefully, the report on the Renewable Heat Incentive inquiry. The News Letter Political Editor Sam McBride after two years of research has published a book on the issue under the title Burned.

"This is the book some powerful people don't want you to read" is one description. The report may just have a similar description.

*Seasons
Greetings from all
at Unity
Peace &
Progress for 2020*

*Unity is taking a 2 week
break and we will be
back with you on the
weekending
11th January 2019*



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

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*Unity sends thanks:
to Willie Stewart for the
weekly sale he does
consistently;
to Frank Cammock, Greg
Sachno and Barrie
Snatchfold for
Donations;
and to all comrades who
write for Unity.*

Time to rally for the fight ahead

IT was no coincidence that an upsurge in the call for a return to Stormont took place during a time of severe industrial unrest.

Fears for the future of the NHS, education and public housing had already led to an alienation of communities from the two main political parties and from the administrative failures of central government.

It is difficult to avoid the judgement that Sinn Fein and the DUP by their failure to accept the need for mutual accommodation of all parties in decision making encouraged hardliner attitudes and laid the foundation for intransigence which talks to restore devolution will not easily repair.

The pressure on Sinn Fein and the DUP for a return to power sharing was substantial in last week's general election.

This pressure for change produced a victorious election for the middle ground Alliance and SDLP parties.

The move to Westminster of the

By Pearse McKenna

leader of the SDLP, Colum Eastwood and his colleague Claire Hanna, along with Alliance Party's Stephen Farry means the experienced negotiators will be missed at Stormont.

Stephen Farry's win in North Down constituency was largely an extension of events of previous years.

Since its foundation the DUP with its links to hardliner unionists has been anathema to many middle class conventional unionists who, equally opposed to nationalism, came out in force to support the Alliance middle ground candidate.

The Alliance Party's insistence on maintaining a non-sectarian line, leaving partition as an open question, in the event of a border poll may be easier said than done.

There will be constant pressure on the party to make a stand either for or against the constitution.

The conservative machine

Post Election discussions at:

Belfast Central Branch Meeting

Wednesday 8th January 5.30pm and Saturday 11th January Northern Area Meeting 10.30am 1.00pm Break 1 to 1.30pm followed by Industrial Meeting until 2pm CPI Premises

would have no difficulties in exploiting fears about the reliability of the Alliance Party's attitude towards the constitution and their 'betrayal of the union'.

The failure to contemplate Sean Murray's warning that you may ignore the national question, but the national question will not ignore you, could prove to be the Alliance Party's Achilles' heel in a border poll.

The election saw a number of humiliations from Nigel Dodds to the defeated Liberal Democratic leader Jo Swinson who pitched herself as a potential prime minister, yet could not get elected as an MP never mind a PM.

One of the biggest disasters was the defeat of Denis Skinner one of the most diligent Labour MPs in modern times.

This however is not a reason to wallow in a sea of despair, it is a time to rally and get ready for the fight ahead.

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Action needed now

Health workers in unions, Unite, RCN, Unison, and NIPSA are all out on strike today, Wednesday 18th December in protest about pay and staffing levels which they say are leaving patients' lives in danger. Paramedics have also joined the strike,

WITH Monday's commencement of fresh inter-party talks on the restoration of a functioning Northern Ireland Executive, pressure was put on the five participating parties to commit to taking action on the growing is in the health services.

As talks took place health workers gathered at Stormont in protest and reiterated their demands on pay parity and increased staffing levels in the NHS.

Medical leaders in Northern Ireland urged political parties to "put patients first" and restore local government.

The British Medical Association (BMA) and seven royal colleges issued a joint statement addressing the healthcare crisis.

Speaking on behalf of doctors, nurses and surgeons it called for political leadership to end the current gridlock.

It said patients need to be put "back at the heart" of the healthcare system.

The statement pointed to the fact that problems in the health care system have been building for many years and we need political leadership and sustainable long-term planning with decisions being made by locally elected politicians operating from Stormont to remedy this.

"We need this now - patients cannot be forced to wait any longer for

the healthcare they need."

The medics say "additional sustained investment" is needed to reduce waiting lists and "other escalating pressures" and "a full and frank debate on budgetary priorities across our public services."

Also, speaking ahead of the talks, ICTU Assistant General Secretary Owen Reidy commented:

"Our society faces many urgent crises particularly in health, education and welfare amongst other pressing issues.

"Indeed, the unions representing health workers will be taking unprecedented industrial action this Wednesday if their claims for pay justice continue to be sidelined.

"Serious direct engagement, understanding the other side and compromising where necessary and appropriate, are all essential parts of any successful negotiation process.....

"It should be remembered, however, that a return of power sharing will not be a panacea to all our problems overnight.

"Any new government must be accompanied by an increase in targeted funding from Westminster in our areas of most need including health, education, infrastructure amongst other issues." If the Regional government is not restored Julian Smith is legally obliged to call elections in 2020,

Communists call for Post Election Resistance

THE Communist Party of Ireland anticipated that whatever the outcome of the British general election, it would create a new and more complex terrain of struggle for the working class in both Britain and Ireland.

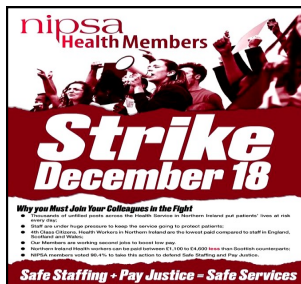
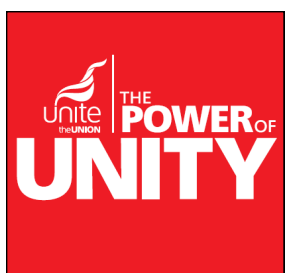
The smoke screen of 'Get Brexit Done' has allowed the return of a Tory Government wedded to advancing fundamentally the same policies as the European Union - advancing the interests of the few at the expense of the many.

The re-establishment of the Northern Ireland Assembly must be one outcome of the general election. But a return to the same institutions that created the conditions for the cash for ash scandal, the undermining of health and social care services and the frustration of marriage equality, abortion reform and the Irish Language Act will not do.

In the face of deepening economic and political divisions under the last Tory government, there has been growing resistance and a growing confidence amongst those prepared to fight back across a broad range of issues – to defend the public sector, to advance wages and conditions, to win women's abortion rights, to prevent environmental degradation.

Those struggles, the victories they win, the lessons they teach, the confidence they bring, must and will continue to develop and grow.

The Communist Party of Ireland calls for a radically reformed Executive and Assembly that can become a focal point for that growing resistance against the impending intensified attacks of the Johnson Tory regime.



By Paul Doran

The EU and workers' rights

THE constant narrative in the Brexit debate, be it in Ireland or Britain, from politicians, especially those elected who are supposedly of a progressive slant, is how they are opposed to Brexit because "the EU protects workers' rights."

These views are also expressed by leading figures in the NGO sector.

This is incorrect, as the "four pillars" of the EU Treaty are: (1) freedom of movement of capital, (2) freedom of movement of labour, (3) freedom for a business in one EU country to establish in another country, and (4) freedom for a business in one EU country to provide services in another.

In 2007 the EU Court of Justice, in the Viking and Laval cases, held that the third and fourth pillars - freedom of establishment and freedom to provide services - have *superiority* (subject to certain conditions) over the fundamental trade union rights to collectively bargain and to strike.

In the 26-county state, as usual, the Government at the time was well ahead of EU laws regarding repressive legislation against the proletariat.

The anti-worker Industrial Relation Act (1990), brought in with the support of the major "social partners," including most of the trade union movement, saw some of the most draconian laws enacted within the EU and Europe.

The case proposed at a packed fringe meeting hosted by the Trade Union Left Forum during the ICTU biennial conference in July 2019 for the 1990 act to be abolished was enthusiastically welcomed by all at that meeting; and many trade union activists

since the July meeting have joined the TULF.

I would encourage all progressives to assist the TULF in breaking the social-democratic ideology that has made the wider union movement apathetic until recently.

There are encouraging signs that this is changing; and at a public meeting in Wynn's Hotel in Dublin in late October concerning low pay in the hospitality and retail sector that was clear to all.

Young people, mainly women, are not willing to sit back and be abused, mentally or physically, by employers, and I commend them for their strength.

Today trade unionists need to consider how to highlight the undemocratic and one-sided character of the EU.

Are there lessons to be learnt from the various people's struggles over the last decade or so? I refer to the water charges campaign and the constant battles being fought by parents for better educational facilities, new schools, and local sports facilities, and the many other local battles taking place, which the media fail to highlight.

We have seen how the EU has ratified the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) with Canada, which gives



Burns Supper
Saturday 25th
January 2020
 CPI Premises, Belfast
 More Details Later

major companies the right to sue governments for loss of income.

One has not seen a similar agreement for people whose communities have been severely damaged by major corporations that are constantly damaging local communities by their plunder!

The EU has used its extensive toolbox of economic controls over national governments as a matter of European policy to limit trade unions' influence over our terms and conditions of employment.

We must fight back, and show the fallacy of the EU as a component of monopoly capitalism and harbinger of poverty and death by its laws.

Workers' Rights Campaign
Saturday 18 January, 2 p.m.
Press and public launch
Speakers to be confirmed
O'Lehane House (9 Cavendish Row)
Organised by the Trade Union Left Forum



‘Our country and our people need a new way forward’

AT its meeting on Saturday 7th December the National Executive Committee of the Communist Party of Ireland discussed both the national and the international situation and the current balance of global forces.

The outcome of the recent by-elections in the Republic has shown the stability of the system and the strength of the establishment political parties.

But they cannot escape the deep economic and social divisions within the structures of society throughout the country.

Homelessness continues to grow, rents are reaching a point of being unsustainable, and there is continued growth in poverty, precarious employment, and minimum-wage jobs.

The fiscal strategy pursued by both the Irish and British governments that negatively affects our people is for rewarding the rich and strengthening social inequality, for punishing working people and the poor.

Health services are at breaking point, and private medicine continues to bleed the public health system of valuable resources and to undermine the public health system itself.

The health service throughout the country suffers from severe staff shortages, ward closures, and chronic underfunding, resulting in growing waiting-lists for treatment, fewer hospital beds, and ambulances unable to discharge patients at A&Es.

There are growing calls for the re-establishment of the Northern Executive and Assembly, but a simple return to the same old institutions would not fulfil what is needed to solve the people’s needs: what is needed is a more radically reformed Executive and Assembly

that have the necessary fiscal powers to raise revenue.

This can create the basis for and become a focal point for building resistance against the continuous attacks on workers and the continued decline in health and other public services. We need to build the people’s resistance.

The North of Ireland experiences a high level of poverty, in particular child poverty, investment in health is less, and wages are also lower than in other areas within the British state.

The housing crisis cannot be resolved without massive investment in public housing and ending the sale of public land to private developers and speculators.

The recent debacle concerning the planned housing development at O’Devaney Gardens in Dublin and the imposition of the “cost-rental model” only confirms the correctness of the opposition of the CPI to such neo-liberal models, which are unfortunately supported by some left forces.

The party also notes the growing use of “housing associations” as yet another means whereby the state can evade its responsibility to provide public housing.

This can also be seen in the role of charitable organisations in housing and servicing the homeless as a form of privatisation, and the abdication by the state of its duty, both nationally and locally, to provide those services.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the global capitalist economy is slowing down.

Such countries as the United States, Britain, and Germany, along with other developed capitalist countries, are beginning to slow down and to experience contractions.

While it has not reached crisis point, it is of concern to millions of

workers who are already experiencing renewed attacks on their living standards.

This comes in a period of unprecedented accumulation and the concentration of wealth in fewer and fewer hands.

Credit Suisse has reported that the share of global wealth owned by the richest 1 per cent of the world’s population increased from 43 per cent to 47 per cent between the financial crises of 2008 and 2018.

It is estimated that twenty-six individuals now own as much wealth as the poorest half of the world’s population—about 3½ billion people.

Coupled with a growing economic slowdown, we are experiencing a growth in militarism and military spending by NATO countries and by the EU through PESCO.

Around the globe we are witnessing the overthrow of progressive governments along with the continuous and relentless attacks on working people by monopoly capitalism.

US imperialism attempts to reassert its hegemony over the peoples of Latin America

The CPI condemns the recent coup d’état in Bolivia and the overthrow of the progressive government of Evo Morales as US imperialism attempts to reassert its hegemony over the peoples of Latin America and to reverse the democratic and progressive changes won by the people.

Along with the European Union, the United States continues to strive to isolate and overthrow the governments of Venezuela, Nicaragua, and Cuba.

The party calls for a stepping up of solidarity with Cuba and Venezuela among trade unions and other workers’ organisations.

The party notes and expresses its solidarity with the working people of Bolivia, Chile, Lebanon, Greece, Iraq, Iran, and France, who, over the last

few months, have been engaged in mass struggles against their governments.

Growth in the global militancy of the working class

We are experiencing a growth in the global militancy of the working class, while the class struggle to defend its hard-won gains and further its interests is meeting growing repression and violence from the state.

Millions of people have been mobilised to demand better wages, better health services, and an end to “austerity.”

In addition, millions of women have been mobilised to demand action against their daily experience of physical and sexual violence, demanding immediate action to protect them and to allow them to fully participate in society, free from the fear of violence and machismo.

The climate resistance and the mobilisation of young people around the world has pushed the environmental catastrophe now facing our planet up the political agenda.

It has forced the system’s ruling forces to at least “talk green” though at the same time it continues to resist any real or meaningful change.

The ruling forces know that real environmental policies would require a significant change in economic and social priorities, which would challenge the system itself and power and controlling structure.

The party also expresses its solidarity with the working class within Britain as the struggle against austerity grows.

The CPI reaffirms its support and respect for the democratic decision to leave the European Union, which remains the central political structure to protect the interests of monopoly capitalism.

It is clear that the outcome of the coming general election will create a new and more complex terrain of struggle for the working class in both states.

We have experienced a number of critical mobilisation of workers

around the country and an important victory for peace forces.

Two peace activists from the American organisation Veterans for Peace, through very public campaign work by peace forces, have secured the return of their passports, allowing them to return to their families in the United States.

The recent advances made in relation to both abortion and marriage equality are to be welcomed as a necessary first step but need to be built upon.

It was the actions and the struggle of thousands of women and men over decades that forced these progressive changes.

We have also witnessed a growth in militancy and indeed small but important victories for workers.

The party salutes the workers in the National Health Service in the North in their just demands for pay parity with health service workers within the British state.

They have also linked their poor wages and working conditions to the savage cuts that have affected them and the patients they treat.

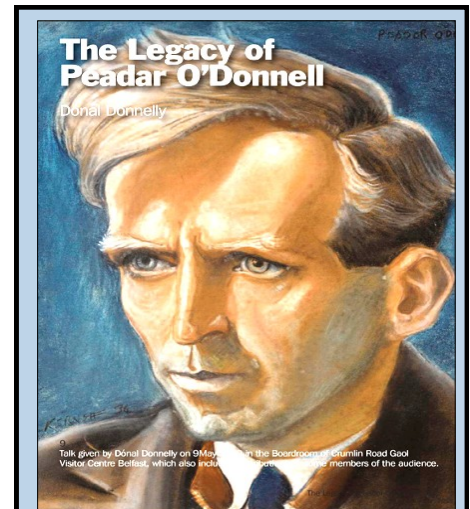
We support the recent strike by members of the University and College Union over pay and pensions.

There has been a small but important victory for English-language teachers, an underpaid group of workers who experience the precarious nature of employment.

The party also welcomes the establishment of the People’s Dáil in Co. Tyrone as an important follow-up to the centenary celebrations of the first Dáil Éireann.

The establishing of such progressive forums brings together grass-roots campaigns that oppose fracking and goldmining, local environmental campaigners and community, left and trade union activists. It shows the potential for real local co-ordinated actions and what a possible future progressive radical local democracy could look like.

It is the decisive actions of workers, both in their place of work and in their communities, that have



The Legacy of Peadar O’ Donnell. This CPI booklet is based on a CPI May Day 2019 talk given by Donal Donnelly (Peadar’s right hand man).

The publication is available from the following outlets:

Unity Press, PO Box 85, BT1 1SR £5 or £6.50p&p cheques payable to Northern Area Trading; Connolly Books, 43, East Essex Street Dublin 2; Shanway.com online; Culturlann Bookshop, 216 Falls Road BT12 6AH; Carlton Books, 159, London Rd. Glasgow G1 5BX (Available online)

changed and can further change the material conditions and hardships that they experience daily.

Our country and people need a new way forward to overcome the many social and economic crises that affect their daily lives, to break with the consensus of austerity and the “primacy of the market” and profit-driven solutions.

The newly established campaign to repeal anti-worker laws and to fight for workers’ rights needs the support of all trade union and community activists.

There is a clear and urgent need to break the legal shackles that prevent workers from protecting and furthering their own class interests.

We need to break the power of the European Union and the policy of submission to it by the Irish state, to end debt slavery, precarious employment, and poverty wages, and to demand a national programme for the building of public housing.

MEDIA REVIEW



Eat, drink and be merry - Pagan style

IN a few days time, December 25th, millions of Christians will be celebrating in one form or another, the birthday of Yeshua ben Yosef, commonly known as Jesus.

This despite the fact that the said Yeshua was probably born a couple of months before, either in September or October.

The origins of the 25th December lie in the Pagan festival of the son of Isis and many other festivals also have their origins in Pagan history and it seems the Christians were johnny-come-lately's in that respect.

Amongst the throng of celebrating Christians are some who believe in a theory called Creationism which clashes with Charles Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, published 160 years ago.

This topic was the subject of an article written by Peter Frost which appeared in the *Morning Star*.

He starts off by referring to a museum in Portsmouth called Genesis Expo.

This "weird" place, he tells us is the centre of the British Creation Science Movement which he describes as the extreme wing of the Christian church.

They believe that evolution is a fraud and a lie and that the entire world and every living thing in it was created in a few days by an all-powerful God just a few thousand years ago.

Yes I know we do have some of those believers in our midst.

They believe that Charles Darwin

was simply a liar and a fraud but as Frost writes, that weird as their theories may be they seem to be mainstream thinking in Donald Trump's reactionary and decidedly unscientific United States where the president can get away by totally denying climate change.

More than a century and a half after Darwin published his "ground-breaking thesis" on the development of life, evolution remains a contentious topic in the United States, but only to a smaller extent in Britain, "thankfully" Frost adds.

He recalls that in 1925 in Dayton, a school teacher, John Scopes, was fined \$100 for teaching Darwin's theory of evolution.

Even today 40 per cent of Americans think Darwin was a fraud and a liar, believing that humankind was created in the garden of Eden, 10,000 years ago, a biblical story of Adam and Eve that Darwin described as just an unscientific myth.

To add to this, "horror of horrors," Darwin's evolution theory showed that man shared a common ancestor with apes.

The religious establishment was horrified at this as they knew that God had made the Earth and every species of plant and animal had been lovingly designed by the Almighty and that included men and women.

Frost quotes David Attenborough who is often asked by viewers of his television programmes why he doesn't give credit to God for the design of all living things.

Attenborough's response on one occasion was, "They always mean beautiful things like hummingbirds.

I always reply by saying that I

think of a little child in east Africa with a worm borrowing through his eyeball. The worm cannot live in any other way, except by borrowing through eyeballs.

"I find that hard to reconcile with the notion of a divine and benevolent creator."

You wouldn't find anything like that in the dreadful hymn, *All Things Bright and Beautiful*.

Frost states that Darwin's theory wasn't the only or even the first idea of evolution.

Such ideas had been put forward by a scientific community making new discoveries in biology and zoology.

Whilst such ideas were gaining in strength, in the 19th century the English scientific establishment was closely tied to the church.

Frost writes that many of the finest naturalists were country vicars and both the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church held firm to the belief that species were unchanging parts of a designed hierarchy and that humans were unique, unrelated to other animals.

Not surprisingly Darwin was denounced from many a pulpit.

Even worse for them, Frost tells us that Darwin had written his book for a non-specialist audience and how working men in Lancashire had clubbed together to buy the 5th edition at 15 shillings.

The price of the next edition was then halved to seven shillings and sixpence.

Today Darwin's ideas are almost universally accepted truths throughout the study of life science except by those who believe the world was totally created by a wonderful god who carefully designed a worm that could only live by eating a little African children's eyeballs.

Anyway go ahead and eat, drink and be merry, but don't forget it was us Pagans who thought of it first.

W. Ows

Taking a Look at Life.....by Raymond O'Connell

Let's get Christmas done

APOLOGIES for using the 'C' word, but we do just have to get it done.

Think what would happen if we cancelled it without even asking the people if they minded not being consulted.

Nativity plays in schools cancelled.

All those little angels, Marys and Josephs who have worked so hard to be stars, they will just have to learn to spell all those words instead.

All the dotting grandparents who have practised taking selfies in preparation for the big event and who think their dear ones far outshine the original star, the chronicle of a birth foretold.

Music teachers, cheated of martyrdom, would sulk in the staff room.

Think of all those poor people who work in retail who

would be deprived of weeks of jingle bells rocking, New York Fairytales and be left literally in a bleak midwinter.

As the retail disaster unfolded the true authors of what should have been a festive occasion, the holiest of holy ones, the capitalists amongst us would not even have any mulled wine to cry into or indeed consume.

Spare a thought too for the poor consumers still reeling from the after effects of binging on Black Friday and Cyber Monday and looking forward to doing it all over again.

They would be deprived of a debt fuelled new year as well as the withdrawal symptoms resulting from being denied their raison d'être - the money burning in their wallets but not consumed.

Devastation would ensue.

Turkeys, in league with Vegans and Veggies, might gobble up the world.

Meanwhile survivors would be floundering in a sea of unimbibed Mateus rose.

There would be mass unemployment, holy men wholly redundant, deep depression over the North Pole, even Dasher, Dancer, not to mention Rudolph would suffer.

Rudolph's nose would also be redundant, like 'the time' it would in all probability be out of joint.

Santa would be unable to claw his way down and up chimneys – oh, oh, oh.

But the saddest thing of all would be that Belfast would have no Christmas Market.

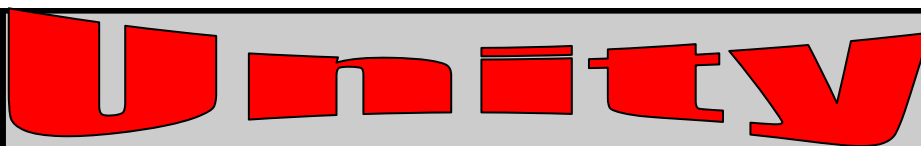
Just imagine no aroma of kangaroo burgers wafting, nay bouncing, around the city centre for weeks on end.

In answer to the question "where in fact would it all end"?

"Hogmanay" the rebellious Scots would no doubt reply, smug in the knowledge that they downsized Christmas a long time ago.

Of course that isn't the only thing they are hoping to downsize in the coming year.

So given all these potential disasters the end of the world could indeed be nigh and added to this is the second coming of Boris son of John it leaves us with no other choice – we have to get Christmas done.



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