



UNITY

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For Peace, Independence and Socialism

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Politics exposed

LAST Thursday *Ireland's Future*, a leading lobby group within 'civic nationalism', launched its second discussion document: 'Advancing the Conversation – The Way Forward'.

Its aim is to encourage engagement in preparing the way for Irish unity.

What that actually means however remains vague.

Vague both in content, 'relevant policy and research agendas' are called for, and in who is to engage, 'universities, funding bodies, civil society, political parties, and others' are listed.

But the message is pretty clear that *Ireland's Future* sees this as work for the experts, a 'top down' process.

That includes a call for 'the EU and political influence in the US to work with Britain in the process of informing Irish people what the criteria for a [unity] referendum is'.

Not exactly a mass democratic struggle for the right to self determination.

The one thing that is crystal clear in the document is the central concern over 'the removal of this region from the EU'.

Right at the start it is enthusiastically asserted that 'Irish reunification is an automatic route to EU return'.

And in the logic of the 'New Redmonites', who believe national inde-

pendence lies in the warm embrace of imperialism, this return will be an expression of self determination.

To show that illusion for what it is, there was no need to look back 100 years to Redmond's failed attempt to gain Irish freedom through kowtowing to British imperialism.

It took only to Friday last week for the EU to show that imperialism, whether European, British or American, has no obligations, only interests.

On this occasion, in ensuring the EU's 'share' of the Covid-19 vaccine.

In a show of naked power Brussels, announced it would use special safeguard measures in the Northern Ireland Protocol in order to limit shipments of AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine to Britain.

This was collateral damage in a dispute the EU are having with the pharmaceutical company over a shortfall in supply.

The EU subsequently backed away from this crude power play leaving in its wake increased tensions in Northern Ireland over the economic border created by the Protocol in the Irish sea.

At the start of the week the DUP drafted a five-point plan to address the 'growing crisis'; including withdrawing from north-south activities related to the Protocol.

By John Pinkerton

It has called for other unionist parties to join it in campaigning to ensure NI is 'freed from the protocol'.

In backing away from its disruption of the long negotiated NI Protocol, the EU made sure to emphasise that if vaccines move out of the bloc, it would respond with 'all the instruments at its disposal'.

As long as the development and production of medicines is driven by the pursuit of profit and not planned to meet the needs of people such conflict is inevitable.

Despite AstraZeneca's promise to sell the vaccine at-cost during the pandemic its pricing is shrouded in commercial secrecy.

But it is reported that the EU is buying the vaccine at discounted prices.

South Africa, the worst hit country in Africa, is said to have paid more than double the price that European countries have been charged.

It has been argued that the EU price reflects the public money that has gone into the research and development. But South Africa too has also contributed to the vaccine's development with thousands of volunteers there being involved in clinical trials.

Last week, the World Health Organisation warned that 'the world is on the brink of a catastrophic moral failure – and the price of this failure will be paid with lives and livelihoods in the world's poorest countries.'

That must not be allowed to happen.

Editorial

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A lesson somewhere !

IT comes as no surprise that the DUP is calling for the triggering of Article 16 of the Northern Ireland Protocol. Whilst they are using the incidence of shortages to highlight their case, the constitutional question seems to be more of a concern to them.

The pro-EU crowd's stance on shortages is no surprise either as it fits in with their prophesy of Brexit being "disastrous," "catastrophic" and so on. The TV newsreels showing rows of empty supermarket shelves could be a "we told you so" moment for them.

However while teething problems were to be expected there is a question mark as to whether there are other reasons as to why there are empty shelves in some outlets.

Interesting then was an article published in the Irish News, 29th January, on how one major supermarket chain has coped with Brexit and it has to be said, has coped very well.

The supermarket chain is Lidl. A spokesman told the Irish News that the company had spent three years working with its suppliers to ensure supply lines would continue. They had invested in software, set up infrastructure and hired a broker firm to handle imports and exports. Part of their preparations were to incorporate a new limited company in Northern Ireland.

The spokesman explained that it was more straightforward to ensure it wasn't just a branch of a German organisation, so therefore there were no complications around EU law.

JP Scally who is the head of Lidl in Ireland confirmed that supply lines from mainland Europe into the north now bypass Britain, basically rerouting around the UK land bridge where possible. He did add that they still have goods coming from Britain to both Northern Ireland and the Republic through normal routes.

They also have a massive distribution centre at Nutts Corner which means they are bringing into the region full loads of products from their suppliers directly, as opposed to bringing in mixed pallets of goods.

Scally made the point that they have a lot of local suppliers which he says has been a huge help.

There is a three month grace period for the introduction of new checks but Lidl is not anticipating any major disruption when it is over, unlike some other major retailers.

There is a lesson in there somewhere.

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.....
.....

Contact:
unitycpireland@gmail.com
If you wish to make a donation

Thanks for Donations from:

Dave Bruce, Tommy Campbell, Derek Clarke, Sean Douglas, Andy Gibb, JAK, Peter Latham in memory of Mel Corry. He says: "I wish I had met him, he was one after my own heart," John Malloy and Co, Tommy McKearney who donated in tribute to Mel Corry, Pearse McKenna.



Disturbing development regarding Protocol

IN an extremely disturbing development, inspections at Belfast and Larne were suspended on Monday, following the discovery of sinister graffiti and concerns that individuals had been spotted taking down number plate details.

According to (PSNI) Assistant Chief Constable Mark McEwan there is no evidence that any of main loyalist paramilitary groups are involved.

He pointed to "individuals or small groups of people" being responsible for incidents of graffiti or intimidation.

Local council staff assisting officials with checks at Larne Port were withdrawn from their duties with immediate effect.

EU officials were also temporarily withdrawn.

Mid and East Antrim Borough Council said it followed an "upsurge in sinister and menacing behaviour in recent weeks" following the implementation of post-Brexit arrangements for the Irish border.

There has been widespread condemnation of the threats from the trade unions and community organisations.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, ICTU Assistant General Secretary Owen Reidy called for the threats to be immediately lifted from whoever is making them, and for elected representatives to "dial down the rhetoric."

He pointed out that since the UK left the EU last month, there has been a litany of over-the-top commentary about an 'Irish Sea Border', adding to an atmosphere of fear among people susceptible to hype about 'an economic United Ireland'.

"What is happening with the NI Protocol is very far from that

assertion," he stated.

"We express our unequivocal support for workers at these ports, and call on the PSNI to ensure their safe return to work and for all democratic representatives to be clear with the public about the reality of the new situation under Brexit."

Alison Millar, General Secretary NIPSA stated: "The threat against any worker is not acceptable and must be lifted immediately. All workers, no matter what work they do should be free to go to work and do their job without fear or threat."

The trade union leader said it is reprehensible that these threats have been made to workers and NIPSA members in both Mid and East Antrim Council and DAERA staff working at the ports who are doing their jobs.

NIPSA called for the immediate lifting of the threats so that staff can go to work safely and without concern for their safety and the safety of their families.

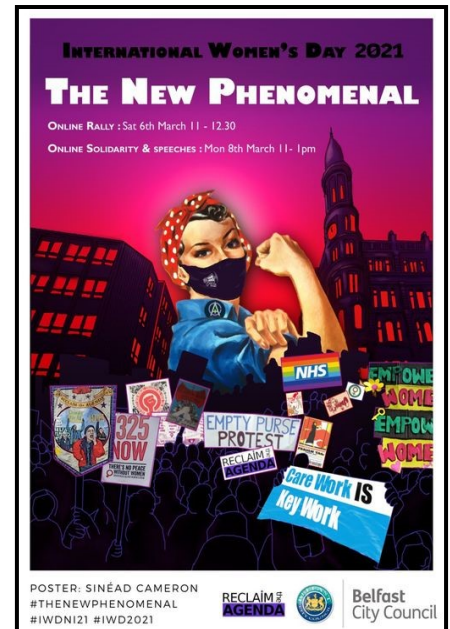
Despite their different approaches to the Protocol in a joint statement on Tuesday, the parties who form the power-sharing Northern Ireland Executive demanded an end to the threats.

"Regardless of our very different views on the Northern Ireland Protocol, the Executive is united in condemning any threats made against workers and staff going about their duties at Belfast and Larne ports," they said.

"As public servants, these staff should be allowed to do their jobs without fear and it is unacceptable and intolerable that threats have been made.

"The threats should be lifted immediately and staff should be allowed to return to their posts and get back to their work."

Save the Date



THE theme for International Women's Day 2021 is 'The New Phenomenal'.

Reclaim the Agenda aims to celebrate all the phenomenal women who make up our society, all contributing to keep our communities going during 'the new normal'.

While Covid-19 restrictions mean we can't have our usual march and rally, Reclaim the Agenda will be hosting a programme of events from 1-14th March, all online.

There will be lunchtime lectures and panel discussions on the 1921 centenary, developments in the struggle to end violence against women, Black Lives Matter, activist workshops and more.

On Saturday the 6th March is the interactive online rally, get your feminist swag on, grab your placard and join in from your living room for speakers and entertainment.

On IWD itself, March 8th, we'll be sharing solidarity greetings from near and far.

*'I'm a woman
 Phenomenally.
 Phenomenal woman,
 That's me.'*

Maya Angelou

Review by David McConnell

A Centenary for Socialism – Britain’s Communist Party 1920-2020

Ed. Mary Davis... A Review

THE editor has opted for a thematic format rather than a straightforward chronological one, although there is a degree of overlap.

The three sections cover the Political, Economic and Ideological struggles.

No “house style” or “any form of censorship” was imposed and there are both positive and negative impacts as a result.

Individual contributions are rich in informed comment by participants in the various areas of activity, but there is also a consequent lack of cohesion.

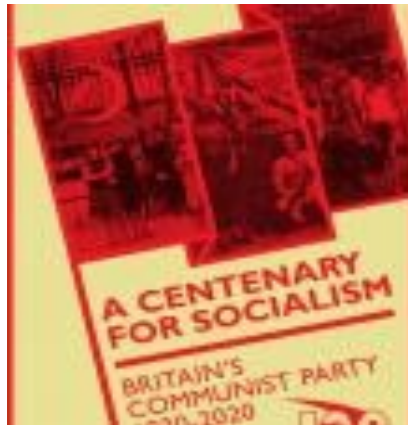
Although a celebration, the book does not shy away from self-criticism some of which other parties, including our own, would do well to study.

There are recurring themes which highlight key elements of the struggle.

These include the national and international context, reflected in the Party’s work and development and the official sanction, harassment and repression which were the state’s go to methods of dealing with the CPGB.

Tom Sibley’s chapter on anti-communism might be viewed as a case study bringing the various strands of that together.

The anti-colonial, anti-fascist struggles together with the decades of work in the organized working-class movement, often against the right-wing leadership in cahoots with the state has seen both highs and lows for the Party and the Movement.



The 1970s are described as the high point of Trade Union militancy although the Tory government was about to decimate the organized working class and privatize much around which there was a community of interest.

On current issues one chapter is devoted to the increasingly urgent “National Question” – involving Scotland and Wales.

A central theme appearing across three sections

One of the central themes which reappears across the three sections is the crisis which led to the demise of the CPGB and its reconstitution as the CPB.

It analyses the move away from Marxism-Leninism by the so-called reformers, or Euros, from the centrality of the organized working class to the struggle for socialism to a form of identity politics based on a notion of ‘intersectionality’, that people have multiple identities of which class is only one.

The concept of a ‘broad democratic alliance’ replaced that of

an anti-monopoly alliance – although communists were active in these movements as well.

The Euro’s method of dealing with opposition was victimization, denial of re-registration, expulsion, exclusion and marginalization.

The analysis refers to the fact that the reformist group represented a generational shift.

Older comrades had come through the pre-and-post war struggles.

Perhaps part of this shift was due to social mobility.

Many had obtained a third level education and ideology was more in line with their interests (and egos) than hard work over many years in often hostile environments.

Naturally, I was curious to read what the history says about Ireland, but Ireland does not feature except for passing remarks, despite the CPGB and CPG’s positive contribution to the Irish struggle for re-unification and socialism.

The editor suggests the book should be dipped into rather than read from cover to cover as it is a “tome” and it is true that people will be interested in different aspects of the struggle and history.

Bearing this in mind I found the editor’s final chapter with its demand for self-critical analysis with the aid of Marxism-Leninism extremely challenging, stimulating, and thought provoking.

Democratic Centralism has been much quoted here recently and Mary Davis’s view is pertinent: “Only active membership involvement, collective leadership and an emphasis on the democratic aspect of democratic centralist practice, can overcome styles of work which hinder party growth and development.”



MEDIA REVIEW

An uncomfortable legacy !

THE report on the mother and baby homes issue was described by *Irish News* columnist Patrick Murphy as a wonderfully Irish conclusion to a specifically Irish scandal in that no one was responsible.

“It just sort of happened” or as Micheál Martin suggested, “it was society’s fault.”

As Murphy states it is a cop-out to blame society, while ignoring the political and religious leaders who hammered that society into a shape of their own design.

He went on to ask the questions, so who did it, how did they do it and, most importantly why ?

The answers, he writes, lies in Ireland’s silent and shameful past.

Whilst the two main influences on society were Church and State, they were given a golden opportunity to mould society by a third largely ignored factor: Irish independence.

A suggestion, he adds, that will not be popular with nationalists as in his opinion it facilitated a repressive Irish society whose problems should have been solved with the British gone.

However Murphy makes the point that people never bothered asking what sort of Ireland they wanted.

“Instead they fought for a flag and not for a people.”

The British withdrawal created a policy vacuum which allowed church and political conservatives “both male dominated” to shape and rigidly control the new Ireland.

The 1916 Proclamation was not used as a template and its aims were ignored.

To this Murphy adds, “If the British killed those who wrote

the Proclamation, the Irish killed its contents.”

Instead, he states, they reverted to the narrow nationalism of Daniel O’Connell’s Catholic Ireland and attempted to portray Ireland, at home and abroad, as a model of moral righteousness.

This was exemplified, he states, with the appointment of the extreme right wing Eoin O’ Duffy as the first head of police who saw policing as protecting Catholic morality and attacking communism, “thereby shelving the left-wing Proclamation.”

He paraded the police outside their headquarters behind a banner of the Sacred Heart, led them on pilgrimages to Rome, was the first leader of Fine Gael and later formed the Blueshirts leading them to fight for Franco.

He was Ulster Council Secretary of the GAA and there is a terrace named after him at the Clones GAA grounds.

As Murphy writes, the Franco government stands accused of having nuns who were nurses “stealing” thousands of newborn babies from republican families to wipe out “communist tendencies” from the 1930s onwards.

Murphy then tells us that in Ireland from 1925 onwards the church and state established film censorship and banned divorce.

This was followed by official investigations into national morality, one of which went by the title of The Committee on Evil Literature.

It was established because Ireland was apparently menaced by “modern abuses” including illegitimacy, “one of the principle causes” of “crime and vice.”

It reflected the state’s desire to combat “sexual immorality” to

protect Ireland’s reputation.

Murphy points out that the 26 counties had established a very Catholic parliament for a very Catholic people, as evidenced by the 1932 Eucharistic Congress in Dublin (organised by Eoin O’ Duffy).

The government existed to do God’s work and their God was particularly vengeful.

So the mother and baby homes protected Ireland’s Catholic image and discouraged others from damaging it by placing mothers in a form of Purgatory which had been brought forward from the next life to this one and enforced through religious orders’ vows of obedience.

He goes on to write that Ireland’s purity was maintained by banning books, by Irish authors such as Liam O’Flaherty, Sean O Faolain, Austin Clarke, Brendan Behan, Belfast’s Brian Moore and John McGahern.

Whilst their works were available in “Protestant” England they were unavailable in Catholic Ireland which was above that sort of thing.

It was reaching its “lofty moral perch” on the secret sufferings of women and children.

Murphy concludes his piece by stating that the mother and baby homes were simply one shameful symptom of an exceptionally inhumane interpretation of Christianity.

But condemning them is not enough.

We need to explain why they existed.

That explanation offers an uncomfortable legacy for the modern church and state, which is why they now suggest that no one was responsible.

W. Ows