A centenary of struggle for working class power

HERITAGE

Phil Kaye

The Communist Party was formed in the crucible years of intense struggle that followed World War One, which included giant stoppages in coal, rail and engineering and culminated in the General Strike, when its twelve key leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Its founder members included giants of the labour movement such as Tom Mann and Tom Mann, Sidney and Beatrice Webb, Robert Despard and Ellen Wilkinson. Drawn from the shipyards and docks of London, the mining districts and the engineers of Red Clydeside, its members defied the government to fight for peace and saw immediately, the massive breakdown signified by the Russian Revolution. The Communist Party is entirely a voluntary labour. Its contribution to the building of the moderate and socialist wing of working class communities, is acknowledged by friend and foe alike.

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A ‘Europe of the peoples and workers’, not the ‘EU of big capital’

IRELAND

KEVIN MccorCky

A KEY REASON for the hostility of the EU and the Irish Government to Brexit and their intransigence on the artificially created problem of the Irish “backstop” is fear that a Brexit would allow the UK outside the EU customs union, single market and Court of Justice jurisdiction – the Republic of Ireland will never be short of words!

Continued EU membership by either the UK or the Republic of Ireland is in no way necessary to underpin the North-South cooperation within Ireland and the East-West cooperation between Ireland and Britain that the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) provides for. To suggest otherwise is false. Naturally both States must honour their commitments under the Agreement. Given that one of the States has opted to leave the EU – something which is not prohibited by the GFA – continued good relations between the two close neighbours demand even at this late stage that the other must either do the same or enter into a bilateral agreement with the State remaining in the EU to ensure the continuance of an open border. So far Taoiseach Varadkar’s unorthodox commitment to “team EU” has made him utterly dishonourable of any move in that direction.

Taoiseach Varadkar has consistently refused to follow the arguments on the “backstop.” The Irish establishment has gone too far down the eurofederalist road to turn back now. There are now new Irish Border problems arising at this time, they do not stem from the UK’s democratic decision to leave the EU but from the Irish Government’s desire to remain in it, even though it is not in the Irish people’s interest to continue as citizens of the EU but have to make the Point of no return for the GFA making, for they are already citizens of an Irish State.

Ireland applied to join the then EEC in 1961 because the UK did. Dublin did not want the North-South border within Ireland to become an EEC external frontier. In 1973 it joined the EEC along with the UK for the same reason. Now that the UK is leaving the EU, it is in Ireland’s interest to leave too – perhaps joining the European Economic Area for a period on the way – and thereby taking back control likewise of its laws, currency and borders.

There will be no significant benefits for Ireland from remaining in the EU if the UK leaves.

It is not either Britain’s or Ireland’s military interest that the Republic should continue to subscribe to EU Foreign and Security Policy – and the EU army now being mooted by Chancellor Merkel – by remaining in the EU when Britain leaves. If the Republic stays in and the UK follows Britain’s departure, a United Ireland at some future date would mean that the whole island would come under effective Franco-German military control while flying an EU flag.

The controversy over the “backstop” is at bottom one of the many long-term consequences of the 1920 Partition of Ireland. For nearly a century now Partition has done deep damage to the peoples of both countries. In the current instance it is being used by the most reactionary elements of the British, Irish and EU Establishments to frustrate the progressive desires of the majority in the 2016 Brexit referendum to “take back control” of their law making, most expressly边境 Agreement.

In essence Partition is being used to back reaction indirectly on the Brexit majority rather than directly on Ireland itself.

Democratic forces in Britain and Ireland have a clear political responsibility to make people aware of this reality at the core of Anglo-Irish relations.

KEVIN McCORCKY is a member of the People’s Movement, Ireland. He was formerly Secretary of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association.

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The Communist Party’s trademarks are internal unity, non-sectarian alliance building and an unwavering commitment to putting workers first. It is no surprise that the party, with its resolve solid and determination to present well-researched and strategic answers is beginning to grow in size and influence.

Communists, allies and supporters have formed an all Britain organising committee to plan the centenary celebration programme, which will include politics, culture, struggle and internationalism. There will be major events including, rallies, a school for young trade union organisers, local commemorations of significant strikes and party characters.

Expect a celebration of the Volunteers for Liberty, members who gave their lives as International Brigadiers in the fight against fascism and of the London Recruits, those who worked clandestinely against the apartheid regime in South Africa, which included many young communists. There will be seminars to study the contribution of black and minority ethnic members, women members and plenty of publishing, including reprints of historical documents and even a national boxing competition of Red Sports club.

The centenary gets into gear early in October 2019, and will be launched to coincide with the commemorations of the Russian Revolution, with the simultaneous convening of new and prospective members schools in London, Midlands and Scotland. Soon after, the party will collaborate with Manifesto Press to produce, for the first time, a single volume of the Manifesto of the Communist Party, written by Marx and Engels, in all the indigenous languages of Britain: English, Welsh, Cornish and Scots Gaelic.

Local party branches, district and nation committees are organising their own events and the programme is being added to each week. Look on facebook.com/CPBritain for news of events in your area. If you’re a parent, grandparents or great grandparents were party members and you have memories to share, let us know. If you are new to politics, just contact us to get involved. We look forward to hearing from you.

Phil Katz is a member of the Communist Party’s Centenary National Organising Committee.

The EU is a food mountain-building, wine lake-creating, austerity-boosting, job-destroying, employment-eroding, anti-democratic, bosses’ cartel designed to block socialist policies in Britain and Europe. In 2016 voters rejected EU austerity and voted to Leave the EU. Millions of these voters are our fellow trade union members.

Speakers: Arthur Scargill former President NUM, leader Socialist Labour Party Sarah Cundy Young Labour (pc) @LEFTCamper spokesperson Liz Payne National Assembly of Women and SW TUC Exec (pc) Moe Greenshiels TUC Joint Consultative Committee (Derby TUC) Eddie Dempsey RGM (pc) Gawan Little NEU (pc) Rob Griffiths general secretary Communist Party Chair: Alex Gordon former President RMT

TUC 2019 Fringe Meeting

Friends Meeting House, 58 Ship Street, Brighton BN1 1AF Tuesday 10th September - 17.45-19.30 hrs

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TUC 2019 Return to Communist Party

Date House, 19 Coombe Road, Croydon CR0 1BD

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