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Capitalism must go NOW!

**OUR PLANET
CANNOT WAIT**

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Climate catastrophe - the grim figures...

By Gary McDonald

Amazon fires

Appropriately named 'The Lungs of the Earth', producing roughly 10 percent of the world's oxygen, the Amazon rainforest has, for the last three weeks been ravaged by wild-fires. These are the product of arson by ranchers who feel emboldened by Bolsonaro's regime, and are seeking to expand their operations into protected forest land.

Three forests a minute

Over 73,000 fires burned, causing extensive damage to the forest. Logging companies are currently butchering the forest at rate of 3 football fields per minute.

CO2 emissions

All for profit. The destruction of the Amazon would trigger the release of over 90 billion tons of carbon (40ppm) into the atmosphere, which would be a shot to the heart of the fight against climate change. Bolsonaro's regime and capitalism have become a very real threat to humanity.

Capitalist war pollutes

The US military is the largest institutional polluter of carbon emissions. If the US military were ranked as a country for its emissions, it would rank as the 47th largest emitter of greenhouse gases.

Plastic reality

Since the early 1950s, over eight billion tons of plastics have been pro-



duced. Most of that now lies in landfills, the oceans, and the rest of the environment. Having now become obscenely pervasive, it can be found in the food we eat, and the water we drink. It has even been discovered in the stomachs of creatures that reside in the deepest recesses of the oceans!

Climate change is heating up

The most recent heatwave to blaze its way through Europe saw

scorching heats achieving record breaking new heights reaching just under 46°C in France. These extreme heatwaves are a silent killer, and present an existential threat to vast regions across the planet. Without effective infrastructure in place, millions will be at fatal risk in the coming decades. We must leave the fossil fuels in the ground to avert complete disaster. We need anti-capitalist, socialist change, not climate change!

Eco destruction

We are currently living through the sixth mass extinction in the planet's lifecycle. Wild mammals now account for only 4% of all living mammal species, with the other 96% being composed of humans and livestock. (humans 36%, livestock 60%) 80% of the biomass of insects has disappeared in the last 30 years, mainly due to insecticide usage in crop cultivation and climate change.

Why aren't governments taking action?

James Connolly once said that "governments in capitalist society are but committees of the rich to manage the affairs of the capitalist class." This is precisely the reason why capitalist governments worldwide are taking little to no action to fight global warming and environmental destruction. Political leaders are bought and paid for by wealthy capitalists through lobbying, campaign donations, and brown envelopes.

Their roles are to facilitate the needs of big business. To curb emissions means to curb profits, and that's the last thing the representatives of capital are going to do. That's why working-class people, across the globe, need to assert their collective power by taking strike action. Attacking the profits of the capitalist class is the means to call them to order. Join the student strike on 20 September!



"Co-Living" means innovated bedsits!

By Matt Waine

THE DECISION over the summer by An Bord Pleanála to grant permission for 208 "Co-Living" accommodation units in Dun Laoghaire, marks a new low in government housing policy, while a new high in homeless figures was recorded. The two are intricately linked. The homeless crisis is big business - and developers are making a killing.

Merchants of greed

Bartra Capital is the €1.2bn-worth company behind the Co-Living development in Dun Laoghaire. Most people won't have heard of Bartra; at first sight a relative newcomer on the residential construction scene. A quick google of the name however, and you discover that its CEO is none other than Richard Barrett who, alongside greed-merchant, Johnny Ronan, headed up Treasury Holdings, the major property devel-



Blueprints for "Co-Living", the latest of the governments pathetic "solutions" to the housing crisis.



oper that was bailed out by NAMA in 2012.

In fairness, Barrett has learned some lessons since the Celtic Tiger boom and crash. He's innovated on the old shoebox apartment idea, and

is rolling out Co-Living. The units in Dun Laoghaire are expected to go for €1,300 a month! For this, you will get a fold-out bed, and you will share your kitchen and living area with up to 40 other people!

We can expect to see more of these planning applications coming in as the housing crisis continues to spiral out of control. Housing Minister Eoghan Murphy has described the concept as like "a very trendy" boutique hotel!

Public homes on public land!

Instead of investing in social and affordable housing on public land, they came up with rapid build. This isn't because the minister or the Gov-

ernment are inept or out-of-touch. It is because this government is a government that represents the interests of the capitalist market.

But it would be the same if Fianna Fáil, Labour or the other mainstream parties were in power: they all accept the logic of this system, and none of them are prepared to take on the vested interests of landlords and developers.

End the rule of the market

To really resolve the housing crisis means to implement socialist policies - like seizing the land and resources of the big land-hoarders and developers, and using them to build public homes. In 2017 and 2018, Solidarity and the Socialist Party published ambitious plans to build thousands of homes on public land banks in Blanchardstown, Tallaght, and Cork. Projects like these, alongside rent controls which actually reduced rents to affordable levels, would mean real security of tenure for working-class people.

Mental health services at breaking point

By Mary Cahillane

MENTAL HEALTH services in Ireland are at breaking point. Decades of cutbacks and austerity, with no additional funding, have stretched services to their limits, and many areas have no services at all. The whirr of the search and rescue helicopter over the River Shannon in Limerick City strikes fear into people who have family or friends struggling with mental health issues.

Frightening suicide statistics

At the moment Ireland ranks fourth in the EU/OECD area for suicide rates amongst teens, in 2018 there was more than one suicide a day on average in Ireland. Seventy children of school going age died by suicide last year. While young men are most at risk of suicide, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of young mothers dying by suicide in working class areas of Dublin, and in 2018 female suicide rates equalled that of men. Within the Traveller community, the male suicide rate is seven times higher than in the general population.

Limerick City has been hit very hard by this. The suicide rate in Limerick is twice the national average. Belfast is also a suicide black spot, in August, 15 teenagers in the city committed suicide in the space of ten days.

Suicide is of course the final recourse for people who feel there is no



Over 300 people protested against a number of recent tragic suicides in Limerick, demanding proper funding for mental health services.

other way. The frightening suicide statistics are only the tip of an iceberg of the amount of people who struggle with all sorts of mental health issues, and who cannot access help because of cuts to services.

Services at crisis level

Cuts to mental health services in Ireland have hit crisis level. Presently there are 2,908 children and adolescents on the CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) waiting list. There is no out of hours specialist service

for people in crisis, and there is a six month waiting list for early intervention. The HSE is short 20% of the staff it needs to adequately cope with demand.

In Northern Ireland the situation is similar. There, one in five people are suffering from some sort of mental health issue, yet services have been cut to the bone.

Systemic change needed

The wealth inequality in our society is a major determinant of mental illness. The greater the levels of in-

We urgently need:

The provision of mental health awareness programmes in all schools, colleges, universities and workplaces.

24 hour publically funded crisis intervention teams spanning the state.

Adequate funding & staff to provide mental health services, such as counselling, as part of national health service that is free at the point of use.

equality, the worse the health outcomes. Children from poor households have a greater risk of mental ill health than children from rich households.

Mental illness is consistently associated with social isolation, poverty, inequality, unemployment, oppression, discrimination, and feelings of alienation and disassociation. All these factors are by-products of capitalism. Ultimately an alarming number of working class and oppressed people are paying too high a price for living under this system.

Cruel cuts to students with disabilities

By Rory Burke

THE DECISION by Minister for Health Simon Harris to axe the training allowance for students with disabilities, just weeks before colleges are due to start back, is a devastating blow for some of the most vulnerable in society. The modest allowance of €31.80 a week is an important lifeline for students with disabilities.

A recent study undertaken by Rehab showed that 80% of students in receipt of the payment wouldn't have been able to finish their course without it. There are about 2,200 people availing of the allowance currently, with 400 estimated to be hit by the cut when it takes effect on September 1. The HSE estimate the planned cut will save €3.7 million over the next four years.

No recovery

Simon Harris said the rehabilitative allowance was discontinued in order to eliminate inequities in access to training places for people with disabilities. In reality supports for people with disabilities have been under attack for over a decade. The unequal and lopsided economic recovery has meant that funding for vital support services have never recovered to pre-2008 levels.

Since 2015, the rate of people with disabilities living in persistent poverty has doubled to 29%. With the potential of another economic crisis looming, it's clear the capitalist system is not capable of providing for even the most basic needs of people with disabilities, enabling them to have access to education and other vital services and amenities.

Hartstown Community Centre: Campaign to defend vital amenity

By Andrea Murray

OVER THE summer, Hartstown Community Centre in Dublin 15 faced closure after failing to meet fire safety standards. However, a remarkable response from the community has ensured this vital facility will stay open.

It is estimated that renovation works costing up to €100,000 are needed to keep the centre open and functioning into the future. So far, an incredible €13,000 has been raised by activists through bag packing, bake sales, quiz nights and other voluntary activities, allowing emergency works to begin.

The role of the church

HCC is a vital community amenity, which has been run by volunteers since it first opened over 30 years ago. The community relies heavily on it for childcare, sports, and reli-



Hundreds of people have rallied to save Hartstown Community Centre, but Church and State need to cough up!

gious activities. It is owned by the "Laurence O'Toole Trust" (a Catholic organisation), which initially indicated that it was unwilling or unable to cover the costs.

This provoked outrage at a public meeting of over 200 residents and parents in June. Ruth



Coppinger's call for the Church to cough up and contribute, and to hand over the centre to Fingal was enthusiastically endorsed.

The electric atmosphere at the meeting and the groundswell of support from the community to the fundraising efforts has forced action. The Department of Rural & Community Development has written to the community centre saying they will cover the costs of the emergency works. It also appears that negotiations are ongoing between Fingal and the Arch-diocese about passing over ownership and control to the Council.

Free childcare now

But this crisis has cast a spotlight on the precarious position of childcare provision in Ireland. Two fantastic and affordable child care facilities operate in HCC. One hundred and twenty families depend on

these for Montessori, pre and after-school child care. Many of these families are low-income or lone parents who couldn't afford alternative care. Child care in Ireland is heavily dependent on the private sector.

The state must provide and invest in free, good quality, public child care with proper pay and conditions and union rights for its workforce. It should be seen as important as primary and secondary education. The Socialist Party and Solidarity has called for €2.56 billion to be invested in child care in Budget 2020.

Due to pressure put on government by community activists, and Ruth Coppinger's raising of the issue in the Dáil, commitments have been given by the Department of Rural and Community Development and Fingal County Council to fund emergency work. Work has begun and all services have resumed as the new school year begins. The fight however, is not over.

Ryanair bosses & judiciary attack right to strike

By Michael O'Brien

THE GRANTING of Ryanair's injunction against the pilots' democratically balloted scheduled strike action in August was an attack on workers' rights by the judiciary that should concern the whole trade union movement. It should not however come as a surprise as the judiciary as part of the capitalist establishment has a natural class bias in favour of the bosses in these situations, demonstrated time and time again.

Opposing bogus "self employment"
The injunction application by Ryanair and the reasoning behind the judgement - which is provisional pending a full hearing - is bogus from start to finish. The strike action had the overwhelming support of the directly employed pilots who are members of the union. The fact that there is a significant cohort of pilots not yet organised into the union is a reflection of the reality that they are in an insecure bogus 'self employ-

ment' relationship with the company. There is not a satisfaction with their wages and conditions which are inferior to their directly employed colleagues.

Secondly, Ryanair has led the workers on a merry dance over the year since the last strike action. The idea that the union have rushed into this action without exhausting the ad hoc procedures brokered a year ago is a joke. Ryanair showed clearly they're not going to engage on pay, putting the ball firmly in the court of the workers and their unions to respond.

International action

It is no coincidence that industrial actions have recently occurred among Ryanair workers in Portugal, Spain and Britain. There was also practical support for these striking workers from Ryanair workers in other countries such as Belgium, where the unions directed their members not to fill in for striking Portuguese colleagues.

Faced with the possibility of industrial action by pilots in late 2017, Ryanair balked and after three

decades of resistance conceded the principle of trade union recognition. The fact that this was achieved across the continent in the wake of strong organising efforts is a great example to all workers who are employed by transnational companies that they are not omnipotent, but can be taken on if workers are co-ordinated across borders.

Further struggle is essential

While the achievement of recognition remains an important breakthrough, it is clear that gaining on pay and conditions for pilots, cabin crew and ground staff will not come without further struggle. The last two years have been characterised by heel dragging and a lack of serious engagement by the company.

Without recklessly leaving the union open to being fined by the courts, a route to mounting strike action with the shortest possible delay must be supported by the whole trade union movement. A message should be sent to the judiciary and government that the workers' movement will not meekly accept injunctions from the bosses being used to



Striking Pilots at Dublin Airport during 2018 industrial action.

curtail effective action by workers.

There is a broader issue for the trade union movement to confront as regards the Industrial Relations Act 1990 and the associated use of injunctions by the bosses to prevent effective strike action from occurring. Solidarity TDs and Socialist

Party members in the Dáil will be putting forward legislation to repeal this Act in the coming weeks. However, bringing down this Act will ultimately be the product of workplace struggles and a mass campaign of the trade union movement outside the Dáil.

Cork Mail Centre jobs axed: CWU fails to fight redundancies

By Carol Brogan

IN 2017, the Communications Workers Union (CWU) accepted a recommendation from the Labour Court that one mail centre out of the four in the state should close. This resulted in a year of uncertainty and rumours for An Post workers. On Wednesday, 26 June of this year it was announced to shocked night shift workers of the Cork Mail Centre (CMC) that the mail centre in Little Island would close in Spring 2020 with the loss of all 240 jobs.

The Socialist Party in Cork have been supporting the workers, organising meetings in preparation for union meetings and helping to organise a 2,000 strong protest in the city centre on 20 July. Our member and Solidarity TD Mick Barry forced a Dáil debate calling on the government to intervene to stop the closure with Minister for Communications Richard Bruton countering that the government could not intervene in the management of the company.

"CWU! Where were you!"

CWU brought home their refusal to fight for jobs in stark terms - apply for redeployment (upsetting the seniority and entitlements of workers in Cork hubs) or apply for redundancy by 2 August. That the workers felt completely abandoned by their union was reiterated by chants of



Hundreds March through Cork city against mail centre closure.

"CWU! Where were you!" on the July protest organised by CMC Action Group.

From the onset of the closure announcement workers rightly demanded the publication of the McKinsey report, commissioned by An Post in 2016 on the future of its business. The report allegedly recommended the closure of the Athlone Mail Centre as the least well performing centre serving as a wedge to divide workers. Our message to An Post workers was clear - Solidarity with ALL workers against the closure of ANY centre.

An Post lack of foresight

An Post's lack of foresight in anticipating parcel business (winding

down their parcel delivery division SDS in 2004 and selling off parcel sorting equipment in Cork for significantly less than market value) has been a slap in the face for workers set to lose out to private companies.

The fight mounted by the workers yielded some improvements to the redundancy package. However the manner in which this was sprung on the workers and the poor role of the CWU impacted on the mood for a sustained struggle to save the jobs.

Major responsibility rests on the shoulders of the CWU leadership who have no fighting strategy. Workers across the company need to learn the hard lesson as there is credible information of further attacks on jobs and conditions to come.

Ambulance workers continue fight against union busting



Striking Paramedics in Dublin demanding union recognition.

By Katia Hancke

THE FIGHT of NASRA members for trade union recognition is gaining international attention. As ambulance personnel are planning a national protest outside Dail Eireann on 24 September, solidarity actions are planned across the world to highlight the responsibility of the Minister for Health and the HSE.

These solidarity actions are being co-ordinated by the Committee for a Workers International (CWI), the international socialist organisation the Socialist Party belongs to. This means that our sister organisations across the globe are preparing actions at Irish embassies.

Putting dispute on the agenda

The NASRA protest outside the Dáil signals the workers' determination to

ensure the issue of trade union recognition is once again put firmly on the agenda at the start of the new Dáil term. This dispute is now running for nearly a year, and eight days of strike action have already been taken. A stepping up of industrial action must now be considered to bring pressure to bear on the powers that be.

The significance of this dispute should not be underestimated by any trade unionist on this island - the democratic right for workers to be represented by the union of their choice is under threat. Many trade union branches have already passed motions in support of the ambulance workers. NASRA cannot be allowed to fight this battle alone. It is critical the entire workers' movement gives them the necessary backing, starting by mobilising their members for 24 September protest.

No-deal Brexit:

Working-class people must not pay the price

By Eddie McCabe and Cillian Gillespie

THE PROSPECT of a no-deal Brexit will bring enormous hardship for working-class people. Reports, including from the government, have indicated that anywhere from 40-100,000 job losses can be expected in the south of Ireland, impacting on industries such as agri-business, that are reliant on exports to Britain.

The roots of this crisis

The origins of this crisis lie in a fundamental clash between a Tory government, that is eager to pursue a “bargain basement” Brexit that will see an undermining of worker’s rights and environmental standards, and the European Union, that represents the interests of its various capitalist governments, including Ireland. The interests of working-class people will not be represented in whatever negotiations take place.

The workers’ movement has a crucial role in ensuring a defence of the rights of working-class people in

the outcome of a no-deal Brexit. The trade union movement in Ireland, North and South, linking up with the movement in Britain needs to organise co-ordinated action around an action programme, to ensure there is no race to the bottom in worker’s wages and conditions, job losses or a further imposition of austerity.

No bailout for big business

At the end of August, the British Irish Chamber of Commerce argued that a fund of €1 billion should be set up by the government to provide state aid to those companies that our likely to be hit by the outcome of a no-deal Brexit. Naturally this is money is being asked for with no strings attached in terms of any guarantee of worker’s rights and environmental protection standards.

Some of these companies, such as those in the beef industry, are highly profitable as it is. A notable example are those owned by Larry Goodman. In 2018, his companies made profits of €170 million, of which they paid very little tax, and have assets of €3.45 billion. Working-class taxpay-

ers should not bail out these companies in the same manner in which the banks were bailed out in 2008-2009.

No job losses

The trade union movement should demand the books of all companies threatening job losses are opened, to see where there hidden profits are siphoned away. Instead of “corporate welfare” for Goodman and his ilk, all companies threatening job bosses, in agri-business for example, should be brought into public ownership, with compensation only paid on the basis of proven need.

The struggle of Harland and Wolff workers is an inspiring example, and one that should be followed, with workers occupying their workplace, fighting for its nationalisation, in order to defend jobs and skills.

No austerity

It is crucial that the trade union movement also seeks to organise to fight any attempt by the government to impose a new austerity regime against the backdrop of the eco-

The trade union movement should demand the books of all companies threatening job losses are opened, to see where there hidden profits are siphoned away. Instead of “corporate welfare” for Goodman and his ilk, all companies threatening job bosses, in agri-business for example, should be brought into public ownership.

nomical fallout from a no-deal Brexit. It is clear that the government are preparing a no-deal Brexit budget for October, which will mean a fur-

ther rationing of resources as far as working people are concerned.

Working-class people experienced such a regime in the aftermath of the last crisis, with devastating consequences, and since the beginning of this neoliberal recovery we’ve experienced a housing crisis and a continued starving of resources for essential services such as healthcare. The status of Ireland as a tax haven must be challenged, and the resources and wealth of society should instead be invested to meet our needs, such as the construction of public homes on public land, the creation of a national health service that is free at the point of use, and free, public, and quality childcare.

Socialist Alternative

Capitalism is a crisis ridden system, politically, economically, and socially: the fallout from Brexit is a sharp example of this. We need to organise, not only to fight the effects of this crisis, but to ensure we build a socialist alternative, that means a radical break with this system, so that our needs and those of our environment our met.

World economy: The growing risks of a global downturn

By Keishia Taylor

THE RISKS of a global economic downturn are mounting. IMF chief Christine Lagarde warned that 70% of the world economy is expected to see a slowdown in growth in the next two years, and forecast only 3.2% global growth this year, the lowest since 2009.

Economies on every continent are shrinking or narrowly escaping recession, including Germany, Italy, the UK, Mexico, Brazil, Japan and India, all in the top 15 global economies. On top of this, the US and China are embroiled in a trade war, any further escalation of which could push the global economy decisively into recession, spelling more misery in the form of poverty wages, unemployment and austerity for working-class people.

Economic “Cold War” heats up

China and the US account for 40% of the world’s GDP, and after eighteen months of tit-for-tat retaliations, stops and starts, and face-saving exercises the trade conflict has damaged the already slowing economy, posing “substantial risks” according to the World Bank. Trump declared that “trade wars are easy to win”, but beneath the bravado is a desperate

battle for global domination between two rival capitalist economies, China and the US.

China’s massive economy represents a threat for US imperialism, particularly in the technology sector. Chinese tech giant Huawei, one of the largest global sellers of smartphones, caused alarm by surpassing Apple for the first time in 2018. Since then, US economic attacks on Huawei are designed to drive the company out of business, and block its coronation as world leader in 5G technology. The CEO of JP Morgan Chase said, “we’re better off dealing with [China] now, whatever that means for the economy.”

What about Ireland?

In 2018, global Foreign Direct Investment fell by 27%, and protectionist economic policy and “slowbalisation”, a partial reversal of globalisation, is increasingly prevalent. But Ireland’s very open economy means it is highly dependent on international trade, and extremely sensitive to world markets: Ireland relies on international investors for 90% of its astronomical €205 billion debt. With the double-shock of Brexit and a global economic slowdown, the outlook is quite bleak; the National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) said the chances of



a recession are 100%. Working-class people have not felt the “recovery” from the 2008-2009 recession, and the next onslaught from a crisis is approaching.

Can recession be averted?

Capitalism’s recovery toolkit is severely depleted since the 2008-2009 crash; very low or negative interest rates are already in place, and national debt has soared due to the stimulus measures and bank bailouts used to survive the last cri-

sis. Financialisation, speculation and growing “bubbles” of fictitious capital continues unabated – \$12 trillion are invested in derivatives markets. Even the IMF admits, “we are less prepared to cope with the recession than we should be – and less prepared than in the last crisis in 2008.”

Whether the capitalist class pursue “free trade” (in the hands of a hundred massive multinationals) or protectionism (in the hands of governments of competing nation states), it will be working-class peo-

ple who pay the price. Secure jobs and decent living standards can only ultimately be solved by breaking with this crisis-ridden capitalist system.

Uncertainty & potential for struggle

Increasing uncertainty and nationalism has sharpened tensions within, as well as between, these global powers, and austerity has paved the way for far-right populism and heightened national rivalries. The interests of the ruling elites are no longer represented by “respectable” liberals, but the brazen and hardline Trump, Boris Johnson and right-populist governments, as a result of the instability and profound crisis of capitalism.

But their increasingly authoritarian and reactionary measures will provoke a backlash. As we head into the next recession, the working-class are armed with the experiences of the 2008-2009 crash, a decade of austerity, and the struggles and victories of rising feminist and youth movements, so will more readily move into action. With the coming explosions there is huge potential for a real shift to the left, as we have witnessed in the US in recent years, and the building of a mass socialist movement that can end the rule of capitalism.



ONCE AN abstract far-fetched notion, the climate crisis has become a tangible threat to human existence. We can now witness and experience the devastating consequences of centuries of untethered exploitation of our planet. Haritha Olaganathan writes

WHILE TRUMP seeks to purchase Greenland, its ice is melting four times faster than it was 16 years ago. Furthermore, scientists at the U.S. Center for Atmospheric Research project that the Arctic will be free of ice by 2040, given the current rise in global temperatures.

This will result in catastrophic increases in sea levels, submerging coastal regions and threatening species extinction. The lack of ice caps will also expose sections of permafrost, which can spread diseases such as anthrax, and contains concentrated levels of greenhouse gases such as methane that will only exacerbate climate change.

Moreover, the rapid rise in temperatures triggers and worsens the effects of natural disasters, demonstrated to us last year through the most destructive wildfire season in California and monsoons of unprecedented severity in Kerala. The World Meteorological Organisation revealed that 62 million people worldwide were affected by natural disasters triggered by climate change in 2018.

March 2019 saw Cyclone Iday - the deadliest tropical cyclone recorded in the South-West Indian Ocean Basin - kill over 1,300 working and poor people that had zero input into the corporate activities that kindled the cyclone.

This arrangement is mirrored in every facet of capitalist society - the greed of landlords and property developers leaves precarious workers out of home or struggling to pay rackrents, while the profit motive threatens the jobs of shipyard workers at Harland and Wolff. By nationalising this company these skills and jobs could be used to invest in the development of renewable energy.

A systemic problem

Capitalism has always thrived as the upper class reap the benefits of exploiting and oppressing shackled workers. However in 2019, climate change means that the crises driven by corporate greed are no longer limited to the

economy, but rather endanger every element of human existence.

Despite this, corporations don't pretend of innocence and attempt to manipulate the guilt shared by ordinary people regarding climate change to make us purchase greenwashed products. We must stand against individualised 'solutions' to climate change such as switching to electric cars or ditching plastic toothbrushes. These aim to place the blame of the climate crisis on the working class, distracting from the 100 companies responsible for over 70% of industrial greenhouse gas emissions since 1988.

We cannot fight climate change with capitalism, a system that will always put profit before the protection of the planet and its people. Additionally, the election of supposedly 'green' candidates to government will not solve the climate crisis, but will result in the imposition of anti-working class policies such as carbon taxes, which have been proven ineffective and only amplify the unfair spread of resources in society.

Our planet cannot wait

The only viable sustainable solution to the climate crisis is a democratic socialist society that breaks with the capitalist system by seizing the resources from the hands of the private profiteers. With public ownership, democratic planning and workers' control over the chain of production, there would be no fear of switching to eco-friendly methods that do not breed overproduction and waste.

As opposed to mollycoddling big businesses with billion euro tax breaks, there would be massive public investment in sustainable energy and research, and the implementation of a free, green and frequent public transport system would attract people away from car usage.

We cannot rely on capitalist politicians that declare a climate emergency but take no serious actions to end it. The climate crisis necessitates the end of capitalism and we need to build a movement for socialist change now - our planet cannot wait.

Resist extinction:

Make capitalism

Amazon Forest - Burning the Future

By James McCabe

“AT FIRST I thought I was fighting to save the rubber trees. Then I thought I was fighting to save the Amazon rainforest. Now I realise I am fighting for humanity.” Brazilian trade union leader and environmentalist, Chico Mendes who was assassinated by a cattle rancher in 1988.

A planetary problem

The words of Chico Mendes ring true today, as the unprecedented fires scorching the Amazon have sparked worldwide outrage. This rainforest is home to 30% of the world's species

and contains an ecosystem of 400 billion trees and vegetation so dense and heavy with water it exhales a fifth of the world's oxygen.

The forest deflects and consumes a significant amount of solar heat, and stores between 90-140 billion tonnes of carbon. Therefore, the destruction of this forest is an enormous contributor to the accelerating climate catastrophe.

In the past half century, a fifth of this rainforest has been cut or burned in Brazil, whose borders contain two-thirds of the Amazon basin. This process grew rapidly under the military dictatorship in the 1960s and 70s. The ambitions of this regime were described by one of the generals who led the dictatorship, Castelo

Branco: “Amazonian occupation will proceed as though we are waging a strategically conducted war.”

Aggressive Agribusiness

The current president of Brazil, Jair Bolsonaro, often nostalgically celebrates the military dictatorship and wants to eliminate environmental protections and regulations. He has encouraged the big cattle ranchers and corporations to illegally cut and burn the forest. The Intercept magazine recently interviewed Dilermando Melo de Lima, president of the major ranchers' association in the westernmost Brazilian state of Acre, who argued: “There are too many restrictions and laws. Too many protected areas. The forest is going to be cut anyway. The military regime was good for development. Bolsonaro has the same ideas, and the ranchers are betting everything on his success.”

Bolsonaro has certainly emboldened the ranchers, as there has been an 84% increase in forest fires over the past year. The president also has plans to build many more roads and ports in the Amazon region in order to speed up the process of deforestation. A project made feasible by international financing.

Beef production has been responsible for as much as 65% of rainforest destruction across the globe over the





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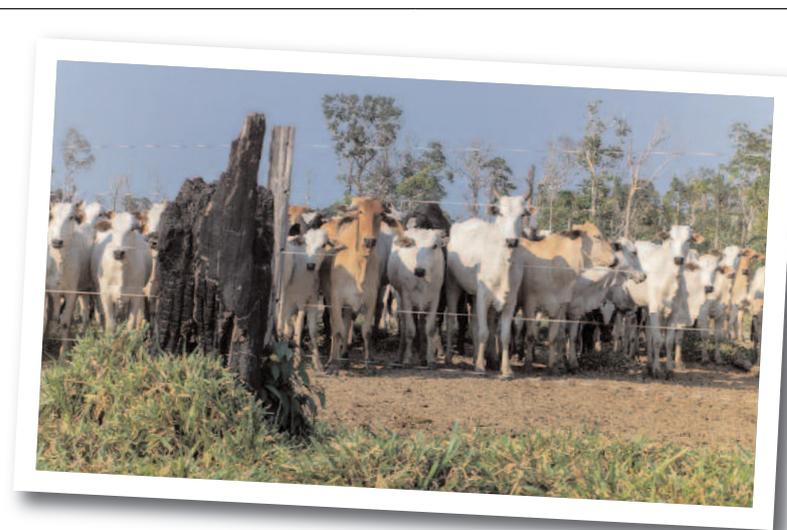
past twenty years. The EU Commission is pursuing a trade deal that will lead to 99,000 tonnes of South American beef being imported into the EU market every year. If passed, this will have major implications for the future of the Amazon.

Soybean crops

The other major farming industry that is encroaching on the rainforest is the production of soybeans. The unparalleled biodiversity of the Amazon is made possible by the nutrients provided by the constant decomposition of its bountiful vegetation, not the thin layers of soil beneath the forest floor. Take away this vegetation, and the region's topsoil dries and depletes quickly, requiring expensive systems of short-term life support and the constant creation of new land.

Most soybean crops that are planted last for only one or two years as the soil is robbed of its natural source of nutrients, requiring farmers and corporations to abandon the land in search of more land if they are to make a profit. What a rotten example of the wastage and short-term outlook that capitalist competition generates in its blind search for profits.

The damage done so far has led to the desertification of the former rainforest in many areas. The rainy season has already got much shorter and



warmer. At the rate that the farming, mining and logging corporations are felling the rainforest, another 20% of the Amazon could be destroyed within a much shorter time frame than the last fifth was.

Is it too late?

The strikes and direct actions of Chico Mendes and his coalition of indigenous people and other forest dwellers in the 1980s and 1990s, forced the government to establish environmental protections. This actually led to a decrease in deforestation in the 2000s. However, any gains made in the fight against corporations and banks will be resisted unless power is taken out of the hands of the capitalist class.

The economic downturn in Brazil in 2014 led directly to increased pres-

sure on the Amazon, in order to privatise and exploit the land in the name of profitability. The Pastoral Land Commission has recorded more than 600 land-related murders in the last 15 years, with a 20% increase in 2018. And this was before Bolsonaro came to power.

The general strike by 45 million workers that paralysed Brazil's cities back in June shows the limits of Bolsonaro's agenda when confronted by the power of the working class. The working class and oppressed in Brazil need to arm themselves with a socialist programme. Breaking with capitalism and planning the economy for our planet and human need would mean the immediate end to deforestation, along with a plan of mass reforestation to restore the lungs of the Earth.

Organising for the Climate Strike

In the Schools

By Richard Adebayo

FOLLOWING ON from the record day of action on 15 March 2019, when 1.8 million school students around the globe took action, school students are once again preparing to up the ante in response to the worsening climate crisis. On the 20 September, millions across the world will be mobilised in striking against world leaders' inaction on climate change.

We can only combat the climate crisis united, and that is why it is vital for students and workers to build for the climate strike within our communities. This means starting the conversation, promoting the climate strike movement, and explaining why socialist change is imperative to secure a safe future for all of humanity, in person and through social media.

In schools, students should set up a "Climate Action Group" to bring together all those interested in raising awareness of the strike. Draw up posters and leaflets and post them around the school.

Raise the idea with teachers to see if they will support the action themselves, or allow you two minutes at the start of class to explain what's going on and why everyone to be part of the action.



In the Workplaces

By Sean Malone

The school students have led the way in organising against climate change. Now there's a particular responsibility on the trade union movement to take the necessary steps to fighting climate change. Mobilising the power of the working class is critical to ending the destruction of our planet.

Here is what you can do:

1. If you're in a union, check to see if it is supporting the climate strike or organising activities that you can help build for it among your coworkers.

2. If your union isn't doing anything, contact your shop steward, union official or even head office. Also try to put it on the agenda of your next union meeting and put forward motions to support the Climate Strike. Talk to your coworkers about doing the same and other possible actions you could take.

3. Not in a union? Talk to your workmates and plan something yourselves. Could you take a half day or hold / attend lunchtime protest?

4. Can't get out to the protest? Make a sign in solidarity and have a group selfie at work. Invite a guest speaker to discuss climate change with your workmates in the lunchroom, and prepare for the next day of global strike action.

Big business government offers no solutions

By Dave Murphy

FIDDLING WHILE the planet burns would be an apt response to the government's latest climate action plan.

While the document is laced with warnings about the urgency of the need to tackle climate change, it is devoid of ideas or proposals that will make the necessary economic and societal changes required to prevent the impending catastrophe. Instead it tries to maintain a slightly greener 'business as usual' model.

The planet or capitalism

The plan contains goals like transitioning to a zero-carbon economy by 2050, increasing renewable energies and green jobs, but the measures outlined simply won't achieve this. Crucially the major gap in the plan is that it doesn't really tackle the major polluters of our environment: big business and agri-business.

Rather, the plan places an equivalence between the measures necessary to limit emissions and the protection of business interests. For instance, the plan outlines the need to introduce environmental measures while at the same time not doing too much in case it may hamper their ability to present Ireland as an attractive destination for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Only a number of months ago, this very same government which plans to 'go-green' blocked a Solidarity-People

Before Profit Bill which would end explorations for oil and gas. Furthermore, the government wants to try to save the planet on the cheap and in a way that boosts profits for the private sector - by relying on both private investment and private firms to fund and carry-out many of the major infrastructural and retro-fitting schemes.

Private sector investment is at historically low-levels. As the housing crisis demonstrates, private business will only take on projects if they are guaranteed to profit highly from them. The development and provision of green energy and jobs can't be left in their hands.

No carbon tax

In trying to protect big business, it puts responsibility for climate change on the individual by proposing a carbon tax - arguing that consumers need to be forced to change their behaviour. The reality is that the vast majority of people wouldn't intentionally pollute if given the choice. In most cases, however, we don't have that choice - the decisions are made by big business who control what is produced, sold and invested in.

We need to build a movement which fights to take public ownership and democratic control of production, and the wealth in society out of the hands of a small cabal so that we can democratically plan for a socialist future which protects the environment.

Hong Kong: Explosive movement gains momentum

By Amy Ferguson

AS THE struggle in Hong Kong is nearing the end of its third month, the dictatorship of the so-called Chinese “Communist” Party (CCP) shows no signs of shifting from its strategy of brutal police repression and zero concessions as a ‘solution’ to the rolling political crisis.

Brutal repression

Brutal crackdowns have already begun. Police violence rose to a new level in August, when a young female protester was blinded in one eye, and when police fired pepper-spray balls at close range at demonstrators inside a subway station. Police were revealed as having disguised themselves as demonstrators to provoke violence in order to create chaos and provide a pretext for police to arrest demonstrators. Such repression has not disillusioned the masses, but instead has been feeding their anger.

Hong Kong plays the role of being the financial hub for Chinese capitalist interests. It is a bottleneck of financial transactions and a magnet for capitalist investment. Unlike stories told about capitalism and its



A brutal crackdown has been unleashed by the state but it has failed to stop the protests.

‘trickle down’ economics, living conditions in Hong Kong are dire. Since 2003, housing costs have trebled, whilst wages remain stagnant. Rent can suck up 70% of a worker’s income. Such crushing living stan-

dards are undoubtedly a driving force behind the movement.

CCP and big business

The CCP has been pressuring big businesses in Hong Kong to con-

demn the movement. Cathay Pacific Airways were warned that aircrew who support illegal protests are forbidden from entering Chinese airspace. Cathay warned its staff that if they participate in demonstrations, they might be fired. So far, 14 employees have been sacked, including their trade union chairperson, Rebecca Sy On-na.

Hong Kong Chief Executive (head of the local government) Carrie Lam led a press conference of big business representatives in order to demonstrate she has won the support of the capitalists. Hong Kong’s businesses have huge commercial interests in mainland China, and rely on the CCP dictatorship to maintain Hong Kong’s undemocratic political system, allowing them to exploit workers more aggressively for increased profits.

Workers’ power

Calls for a general strike are particularly powerful, not only because they reflect an increase in the class characterisation and consciousness within the movement but because of the economic position of Hong Kong. 350,000 participated in the August 5 strike; a positive start. This is despite the fact the strike was not called or led by the official trade unions,

with around 90% of those on strike not being unionised.

The movement now needs to prepare for another more extensive general strike, organised through strike committees in workplaces to attract fearful workers by showing the power of organisation. The students’ strike now being prepared is also of great significance and can encourage further workers’ struggles.

The only support that the movement can rely upon is workers in China and internationally. The movement must appeal to the struggling workers and youth on the Chinese mainland for a joint challenge against the CCP dictatorship, and to eliminate the exploitation and oppression that the authoritarian system means for Chinese and Hong Kong workers and youth.

This means fighting for a democratic socialist alternative, run by and based upon the needs of the working class, rather than the super-profits of the capitalist tycoons and CCP elite.

For regular updates and eyewitness reports from socialist activists on the ground in Hong Kong, checkout www.chinaworker.info

Seattle: Jeff Bezos goes to war with elected socialist

By Ross Malone

“SEATTLE’S WORKING people went up against the billionaire class and the richest man in the world”.

These are the words of Kshama Sawant, Seattle City Councilmember and Socialist Alternative (sister party of the Socialist Party in the US) member after her recent victory in the primary election in her district. Kshama beat the Chamber of Commerce and Amazon-backed candidate Egan Orion by 16 percentage points, and will go head to head with him in the general election in November.

Her record in organising a movement that won the \$15 dollar minimum wage, landmark renters’ rights legislation, and proposal of an “Amazon Tax” to fund affordable housing, has drawn ire from Amazon itself, and big business generally. They have poured in hundreds of thousands of dollars to ensure that Kshama loses her seat.

The election in November is an all



out battle between a socialist and the richest man in the world, Jeff Bezos, the CEO of Amazon with a disgraceful net worth of \$109.2 billion.

Capitalism personified

Bezos personifies the rotten nature of the profit driven capitalist system. Let us not forget the Amazon workers who had to urinate in bottles on road trips and make it to work in the November Kansas blizzard.

Socialist Alternative is seeking to build a grassroots movement of the Seattle working class to ensure

Kshama is victorious in November and that the billionaire class in the city does not triumph. We will be linking this in with fighting for rent control for low income earners, who are rapidly being displaced through gentrification.

In the context of the widespread radicalisation in US society, as shown by the growing militancy in the US labour movement, and the increasing support for socialist ideas, it is critical that an unapologetic socialist maintains her seat to assist the building of a working class movement in the belly of the beast.

Google contract workers get organised

By Thomas White

CONTRACT WORKERS for tech giant Google have voted to unionise in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The workers are employed by HCL America, a company frequently relied upon by Google to outsource work such as content moderation in an attempt to drive down wages and conditions.

Contract workers work alongside their in-house colleagues, but on less pay and have almost none of the benefits that in-house Google workers are given. This was highlighted as an issue in October last year, during the international walkout against sexual harassment that over 20,000 workers participated in. The decision by these workers to get organised is an important step forward.

Precarity and unfair contracts are something most workers would be familiar with, particularly in the private sector. The fightback of Google workers is part of a broader struggle of the unorganised for equal pay, decent wages and conditions, as well as dignity at work, particularly freedom from sexual harassment. The methods of militant rank and file trade unionism are a crucial tool for all workers involved in this struggle.



Nationalise to save jobs

Harland & Workers fight to defend jobs & skills

By Oisín Kelly

WORKERS IN Harland and Wolff (H&W) in Belfast have occupied their workplace since July seeking the re-nationalisation of the company to save employment, skills and safeguard industry that is essential for the expansion of renewable energy. The parent company Dolphin Drilling is in bankruptcy and seeking to sell off H&W.

H&W is one of the most iconic ship building companies in Belfast with a long history linked to the history of the North. Ship building has not taken place since 2003 with 75% of the company's work now being maritime energy generation such as wind turbines and wave power.

DUP exposed

The political parties have been placed under great pressure by the workers, in particular the DUP who have the local MP and who prop up the Tory government in Westminster. The DUP's unwillingness to support nationalisation or place any serious pressure on the Westminster



Determined Harland and Wolf workers occupying shipyard in defence of closure and loss of jobs.

government has exposed them to a wide section of the local community in East Belfast.

At its peak H&W employed 35,000 workers. At present, the permanent workforce is less than 150

positions; this can rise when contracts exist. Given the size of the workforce over the decades H&W was central in historic developments in Belfast. Often sectarian incidents in its history are highlighted such as

sectarian attacks on Catholic workers and Protestant trade unionists, however the real history of H&W is that of a strong trade union anti-sectarian tradition. Throughout the Troubles trade union activists acted

to prevent sectarian division entering the workplace.

Nationalisation is key

H&W has provided decades of skilled employment in Belfast. There have been no apprentices in H&W for several years despite the skills in the shipyard being vital. Based on running the company for the profit of private owners there will be limited opportunities to develop the education and skills there. Nationalisation is crucial if skills are to be developed.

We need to see the end of fossil fuel energy production and the expansion of renewable energy. It is disgraceful that these workers and their skills would be lost because, under capitalism their future is dependent on finding a buyer who will have short term profit as a goal. Running the economy on the basis of profit means renewable energy will not be done on the scale that is necessary to end our reliance on fossil fuels that our contributing to the destruction of our planet. We need to see H&W under democratic public ownership so that a plan to end fossil fuel energy production can be delivered.

NBRU biennial conference – fighting mood on pay & driver safety

The Biennial Conference of the National Bus and Rail Union recently took place in Cork. The Socialist spoke to Bus Eireann Broadstone Garage representative on the union's executive STEPHEN NUGENT about what came up:

"The big issue around which members want to make a stand is on driver security. Within a matter of days after the conference there was another serious assault on a driver.

Health and safety

"We support the call of the union for a policing service dedicated to public transport. But Bus Eireann is also way behind the private coach firms when it comes to safe handling of cash. The company say that because of tendering rules we could have to wait for years before we get the technology that ends a situation where we can be held up and made to hand over cash.

"The decision of conference was that the next major incident warranted a withdrawal of services but a push from below will be needed to make it happen. There is no need for concern about the Industrial Relations Act. This is about workplace health and safety.

"On pay a claim is being pursued by Dublin Bus members but in Bus Eireann we've already rejected an offer from the company by a 72% margin. There is frustration that a clear plan is not yet in place to pursue our pay claim. The company are looking for us to accept a lower tier scale for new entrants which is totally unacceptable.

Climate change

"Doctor Tom O'Connor made a presentation to the delegates on climate change which is an issue that the public transport unions have to major on. This is our opportunity to join an emerging struggle and put the case for an expansion of free public transport. I made the case for the union to back the 20 September school student global climate strike.

"Finally the question of the union's political strategy was again debated. I would say the view of head office is that they look at the recent opinion polls and view a Fianna Fáil led government as the only realistic alternative to what we have and that they would be more amenable than Fine Gael. I think our position should be to support a left government and therefore parties that have a clear position in line with the union on all the

key issues I've just mentioned and Fianna Fáil does not fit the bill."



Defend customer privacy & Globetech workers' jobs

By Mick Barry TD

A RECENT controversy about Apple's Siri voice assistant raised important questions about consumer privacy and workers' rights.

The case came to light in the pages of the *Guardian* after a worker in Cork blew the whistle on a quality control programme which involved employees having to listen to tens of thousands of Siri voice recordings without customer consent.

Invasion of privacy

These recordings included instances of the voice assistant being accidentally activated and recording conversations between people.

After the *Guardian* published the story, workers at GlobeTech (one of the two companies contracted to do the work) were sent home on full pay. Two and a half weeks later they were called back in, told that the contract had been terminated and were then dismissed with one week's pay.

Half the workers were Irish, many were from other EU countries and some had come from outside the EU on work contracts.

Apart from those workers who had travelled halfway across the world to take on the job there were others who had given up alternative employment to work for GlobeTech / Apple.

Controversy ensued. The Socialist Party and Solidarity were to the fore in highlighting the scandalous treatment of the workers.



Apple workers callously dismissed after bringing to light issues concerning consumer's privacy.

Role of trade unions

Apple have now been forced to give commitments that customers will have to opt-in in future to allow their recordings be "graded", that such work will be done in-house in future by Apple workers and that many of the 300 people who lost their jobs will be employed for this purpose.

A debt of gratitude is owed to the whistleblower who highlighted the case and won the opt-in for Apple

customers. Apple must be kept under pressure to employ all 300 people let go and not to pick and choose in any attempt to weed out the whistleblower(s).

The trade union movement must take a far more active and vocal role in issues relating to privacy rights and the rights of contract workers. This means playing an active role in organising workplaces like Apple so workers can fight precarity and bullying management.

Reviewed by Darragh O'Dwyer

FOR MANY workers and young people seeking to understand the horrors of modern capitalism, the documentaries of Michael Moore often serve as an accessible introduction. *Fahrenheit 11/9*, his most recent, and perhaps politically sharpest film, will be similarly well-received by those looking to get to grips with US society in the age of Trump.

Material roots of Trump

Moore outlines how Trump's presidency didn't fall out of nowhere. The havoc that corporate America has wreaked in the last number of decades, here made most painfully clear in the ongoing Flint water crisis, created the conditions for Trump.

His campaign tapped into the accumulated anger of a layer of white working-class and poor voters who had experienced the brutal effects of neoliberal policies by Democrats and Republicans alike. Alongside vile racist scapegoating, he peppered his speeches with anti-establishment rhetoric that would seem to put him on the side of the average worker against "Wall-Street sell-outs like Hilary Clinton."

Perhaps a more important factor in understanding Trump's victory



Michael Moore's latest exposes the political representatives of US capitalism while examining those fighting back in the age of Trump.

were the 100 million who didn't turn up to vote. Moore places the blame on Democrats' wholesale embrace of neoliberalism, particularly their drift to the right under Clinton. Understandably, a vast section of US workers and youth remain apathetic during elections, as they see no party that represents their interests.

Working-class fightback

Nevertheless *Fahrenheit 11/9* offers an optimistic depiction of the radicalisation currently taking place

amongst many sections of society. From the 2018 West Virginia teachers' strike, that saw a militant rank-and-file movement win a 5% pay rise (for not only teachers but all public sector workers), to the March for Our Lives protest that brought over 1.2 million young people out on the street against gun violence, more and more are drawing far-reaching conclusions about the nature of the system and the need to struggle for change.

Moore brings this out with inti-

mate interviews with those active on the ground.

Left Democrats

This shift in consciousness has received political expression in the form of left democrats such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Rashida Tlaib, both of which make an appearance. Moore also sits down with Bernie Sanders, whose 2016 campaign for a political revolution tapped into the mass anger of millions of workers and youth.

Although *Fahrenheit 11/9* pulls no punches in exposing the pernicious role of the Democratic Party, and particularly Obama in paving the way for Trump, Moore seems to stop short of advocating for the formation of a new worker's party. At one point Tlaib reflects the view of many when she says she's not ready to turn away from the Democratic party just yet but is attempting to reclaim it, although it is unclear whether these are Moore's own views.

A New Party

Yet, the Democratic Party, a capitalist party, firmly wedded to big business, can never represent the interests of working people. As Moore himself vividly shows, Sanders' 2016 primary bid saw the Democratic National Committee (DNC) pull out every undemocratic manoeuvre to derail his attempt to be the presidential candidate.

Sanders breaking with the Democrats and running as an independent could have actually laid the basis for the worker's party so desperately needed. Free of corporate influence, with democratically accountable leaders and armed with a socialist programme, such a party could draw together the various struggles of the working class and oppressed to properly challenge Trump and the system he stands for.

#TheNorthIsNow:

Pressure needed to secure abortion rights & marriage equality

In July, MPs at Westminster voted to introduce same-sex marriage and decriminalise abortion in Northern Ireland if the Stormont Assembly is not restored by 22 October.

This is potentially a huge step forward, which reflects the aspirations of the majority of people in the North, brought to bear through mass demonstrations and civil disobedience, like the abortion pill bus organised by socialist-feminist group ROSA and Women on Web. Undoubtedly, the historic referendum victories on marriage equality and abortion rights in the South, which saw huge numbers of people mobilise for change, had a crucial impact in changing the debate around these issues.

No complacency

While this is a historic victory, we cannot be complacent. If abortion is decriminalised in October, new guidelines for medical professionals are to be put in place by March next



ROSA & Socialist Party activists demanding abortion rights - we need to fight to ensure that decriminalisation is not watered down.

year. We need to ensure these guidelines do not create new barriers, but instead guarantee free and accessible abortion services in the NHS. We must be ready to resist any attempt

to row back on these changes, either from Westminster or a restored Stormont administration.

Boris Johnson has maintained that these are devolved matters and

is reliant on the DUP to prop up his government. Meanwhile, it is clear these issues are not really 'red lines' for Sinn Féin, who have a long history of opposing abortion rights, and only supported access up to 12 weeks on request after the referendum victory in the South.

Build on these victories

We need to keep up the pressure to ensure marriage equality and full reproductive rights become a reality and are secured for the long-term. In the coming months, mass demonstrations should be called in support of these demands. The trade union movement – in Northern Ireland representing 250,000 workers – should be front and centre in this campaign, alongside LGBT+, pro-choice and women's groups.

To build on this victory, the movement should be broadened out to challenge all manifestations of homophobia, transphobia and sexism, to fight for access to services and against the austerity policies of the

political establishment which have a disproportionate impact on LGBT+ people and women.

Fight for a socialist future

Homophobia, transphobia, sexism, sectarianism, and all forms of bigotry are rooted in the divide-and-rule nature of the capitalist system, and grow out of the poverty, alienation and division it creates. Across the world, we see right-wing forces whipping up hatred, scapegoating minorities, and attacking the rights of women and LGBT+ people in order to divert attention away from the rotten, profit-driven destructive system they represent.

To consign bigotry to the dustbin of history, we need to build solidarity between the working class and all oppressed groups in the struggle for a socialist future, where society's massive wealth and resources are used in a planned and democratic way to meet the needs of people and planet, not create profit for a tiny elite.

Brexit Crisis:

Oppose Johnson, the Tories and bosses' EU

By Seán Burns

WITH THE threat of a no-deal Brexit and general election looming, the move to suspend Parliament by Boris Johnson was not a sign of strength for his government. It is reflective of the tenuous nature of his position and the scale of dissent inside the Tory Party.

Unable to command a majority in Parliament for his Brexit plan, he must instead resort to archaic manoeuvres. The fact that Parliament can be suspended by a monarch - an unelected head of state - exposes the deeply undemocratic reality of the British state. However, rather than create a clear path, this is a measure which has further exacerbated instability and divisions amongst the political representatives of capitalism.

Economic crisis

The potential for British suppliers to face trade tariffs and have their access to European markets restricted is a nightmare scenario for the ruling class in Britain. Their cries over the protection of democracy, as shown by the editorials attacking Johnson in their "house journals", The Economist and the Financial Times, are a thin veneer - scratch below the surface and you will find that their main concern is their own profits.

Both the EU and the British capitalist class favour a deal but are stuck in a quagmire - unable to get Parliamentary support for a "Brexit in name only", which would see Britain remain in the Customs Union and the Single Market. They are unable to move the situation forward in any substantive way.

Meanwhile, the EU is not just contending with "Brexit Britain", but looking over their shoulder to the rise of right-populist governments and forces elsewhere in the EU. To grant significant concessions to Britain could give confidence to other forces that would accelerate the breakup of the European project.

No hardening of borders

The issue of the so-called "Irish backstop" contained in Theresa May's Withdrawal Agreement is the major sticking point in the negotiations around Brexit. Aimed at preventing a hard border in Ireland, this would see the UK effectively remain within the Customs Union indefinitely if no alternative trade arrangements could be found. Northern Ireland would remain closely tied to EU regulations, which could lead to increased non-customs checks on goods moving between the North and Britain. This has been staunchly opposed by hardline Tory Brexiteers, including Johnson, and by the DUP.



Farage likes to present himself as a man of the people when, in actual fact, he is just another Tory.

A "no-deal" Brexit puts the question of a hard North-South border more firmly on the table. For most Catholics, this would be unacceptable. A hard border would embody the denial of their national aspirations, as well as creating real disrup-

eral Democrats, Tory rebels and the smaller pro-Remain parties. Corbyn has backed this proposal but Liberal Democrat leader Jo Swinson and other potential "allies" in this endeavour have opposed the idea that Corbyn would lead such a government. That she could stomach five years of coalition with the Tories, but not five weeks of Corbyn as Prime Minister illustrates clearly the class interests which she and her party represent.

However, even if he were nominally leader, Corbyn would be a prisoner within such a government, with the pro-capitalist Blairites who dominate his own Parliamentary Party among the jailers. He would not be able to articulate a position which represents the interests of the working class, but would be beholden to the dominant neo-liberal, pro-EU forces. Entering such an arrangement would also fundamentally damage him among working-class Leave voters, whom he must win support from if he is to form a majority government.

Rather than engaging in Parliamentary alliances with the right, Corbyn should put pressure on the Trades Union Congress to mobilise its members in support of the demand for an immediate general election and in support of his anti-austerity, left policies through mass demonstrations and industrial action. Combined with a vote of no confidence, this could force Johnson from power.

What programme is needed

However, as things stand, there is no guarantee that Corbyn would win such an election. He must put forward a clear programme which can speak to working-class voters, whether Leave or Remain. He must articulate a vision of an exit in the interests of the working-class majority from the EU, which would free a Corbyn-led Labour government from the EU's restrictions of nationalisation, public spending and state intervention into the economy - which would act as a barrier to his policies - while guaranteeing workers' rights, migrants' rights, environmental safeguards, and so on.

Combined with demands for free education, a £10 minimum wage, massive investment in social housing and renewable energy, public ownership of key sectors of the economy, and other pro-working class measures, this could see him secure a majority in Parliament. Fighting for such a programme needs to be linked with an appeal to the working class and youth throughout Europe for a struggle to oppose the European Union and the various capitalist, pro-austerity governments that it is comprised of.

In order to be able to actually im-

plement these policies, he will have to finish the civil war within Labour and decisively drive out the Blairites. Representing the neoliberal capitalist establishment, they have sought to sabotage him at every turn, and will continue to do so. Labour must be democratised from top to bottom to allow the membership to remove sitting Blairite MPs, and replace them with working-class representatives who will back Corbyn's policies and a socialist programme for government.

Rather than engaging in Parliamentary alliances with the right, Corbyn should put pressure on the Trades Union Congress to mobilise its members in support of the demand for an immediate general election and in support of his anti-austerity, left policies through mass demonstrations and industrial action.

For socialist change

The Brexit crisis reflects a clash between forces which represent varying capitalist interests - whether the hard-right Brexiteers, the neoliberal Remainers, the EU establishment or the Fine Gael government in the South. None stand for the interests of working-class people in Britain, Ireland or Europe. Under their control, any outcome will be arranged in the interests of big business, against ordinary people.

It is urgent that the working class puts its stamp on events, by mobilising independently and across borders in defence of our common interests, in opposition to the bosses and their political representatives. This can point the way towards the building of a socialist Europe, run in the interests of the millions, not the billionaires.

TOP: As we go to press, Johnson has lost his parliamentary majority and a vital Commons vote, making a general election almost certain.

ABOVE: British capitalists fear restricted access to European Markets.

tion to people's lives. Conversely, a hardening East-West border would add to the sense among many Protestants that they are gradually being inched towards a united Ireland.

Either arrangement can inflame sectarian tensions. The trade union movement - representing the interests of workers from all backgrounds - must act independently to oppose any hardening of borders, to defend jobs and wages and to stand against sectarianism in the context of Brexit.

Class unity not "national" unity

The call has been raised for a so-called "national unity" caretaker government to block a no-deal Brexit. This would involve Labour, the Lib-

the socialist

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