



UNITY

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A refusal to wait

LAST week's Unity reported industrial action across a number of areas in both the private and public sector involving among others Royal Mail/Parcelforce, the RCN, University lecturers and civil servants. It is interesting that these and other industrial activities are happening against the backdrop of a UK General Election. That it is a backdrop to the local version of these elections shows the continuation of the "carnival of reaction" that Connolly warned would come into being as a consequence of partition.

However, thankfully, despite the mainstream party political preferences north and south of the border that "labour must wait" and the voices in British labour who continue to argue for a bogus centrism (that in effect entrenches the victories of unchallenged capitalism of the Thatcher and post Thatcher years), this is not happening.

The reason it isn't is that, even in the bleakest circumstances, activists have not allowed themselves to be deflected from advancing the case for both a resto-

ration of workers' rights and for a wider, truly representative democracy. The results of such a long-term approach can be seen to have borne fruit in, for example, the British Labour Party employment law proposals launched last week. Torsten Bell the Director of the Resolution Foundation described these as "a seismic shift in the world of work."

Working class solidarity

Significantly, the other side of the class divide was not slow to spot what such proposals represented with Carloyn Fairbairn of the CBI commenting on the range of Labour policies (including the plans to part nationalise BT) that "we have real concerns that they are going to crack the foundations of our economy."

This is a more measured version of the toxic hostility filtered through the British press about "Corbynism". The megaphones of capital having cheered pluto-

crats' super-exploitation for decades now channel their owners' panic about any check on their behaviour whether from the left revival in the US Democratic Party or British Labour Party. The developments in these Parties are not in an objective sense revolutionary and the oppositional noise merely a desire to shut down the suggestion that any alternative to free market capitalism is permissible. They do reinforce however the significance of political impatience and the key role communists can play in shaping this agenda.

As stated at our last Congress "Solidarity actions with workers engaged in resistance can also provide an opportunity to break the isolation that ruling-class forces have succeeded in building, leaving each national working class with the belief that it is on its own.

We need to take every opportunity to show working-class solidarity and to learn tactics and strategies from each other's struggles. This is a struggle for the whole of the class, throughout the EU, to bring working-class internationalism back into the consciousness of workers."

Editorial

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Class struggle is alive and kicking

THERE are some people who tell us that the class struggle is a thing of the past, there are some who tried to deny it ever existed. The British Ruling class knew it existed as they were the ones who were ace at practising it.

The recent judgement by the Royal Court of Justice proved that the class struggle is alive and kicking when it supported the Royal Mail against the members of the Communication Workers' Union (CWU) who had voted by a 97 per cent majority on a 75 per cent turnout for strike action.

The present law, like others in the past, is designed to protect the interests of employers against legitimate grievances of workers. In this instance the strike was called in defence of the 2018 'Four Pillars' agreement which focused on protecting pensions, extending all working conditions agreements, guaranteeing a long-term future for the Royal Mail and ensuring a negotiated 35 hour working week for employees.

The CWU has claimed that up to 50,000 jobs are at risk at Royal Mail and Parcelforce if plans to separate the business go ahead.

Royal Mail argued that the ballot was improper as the CWU encouraged workers to intercept their ballot papers at work and vote immediately. This, claimed Royal Mail made it a "de-facto workplace ballot," which is illegal under the present law. The company also complained that union officials campaigned for a yes vote which is what they are paid to do, so you would think. The Trade Union Act 2016 declares that strike ballots are invalid if fewer than 50 per cent of union members vote and in certain sectors there is a demand that 40 per cent of members (not those voting) support strike action. Significantly not one worker made a complaint about how the ballot was conducted.

The Royal Court of Justice in the form of Mr Justice Swift described the vote "a form of subversion of the ballot process." Such judgements show that we need a Labour government that will repeal the Act and set about bringing Royal Mail into public ownership.

**Belfast Central
Branch Meeting**

Wednesday

27th November

5.30pm

CPJ Premises



**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.

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