

Oration of Jimmy Doran, member of the Communist Party of Ireland's National Executive Committee, at Arbour Hill Cemetery, on the occasion of the CPI's annual Connolly Sunday commemoration.

Delivered on May 9, 2021.

Comrades and friends today, we have our annual commemoration at the graveside of James Connolly.

We are here as an expression of our continued opposition to British imperialism and partition and to reaffirm our commitment to the struggle for national unity, political and economic independence, and national sovereignty. These are not aspirations these are the solid goals the Communist Party of Ireland, every intervention we make is to further the cause of socialism in Ireland.

The establishment would wish that the Politics of James Connolly remain here in this graveyard buried forever. We are here today to remember him to learn from him and use this knowledge not to repeat history but to change it.

Pádraig Pearse, at the graveside of O'Donovan Rossa, talked about the fools leaving us our Fenian dead. James Connolly has left us much more, he left us his writings, his vision for Ireland, and how to achieve it.

They have buried his body here but in doing so they have planted a seed, a seed that will grow through his legacy that will unite the working class, that will bear fruit for all the people of Ireland.

As Connolly said: “Apostles of freedom are ever idolised when dead but crucified when living.”

Today many groups claim the legacy of James Connolly and carry banners and placards on high, quoting, lauding, and exalting him - these are the very same ones who would have crucified him when he was living. They quote him but they march in the footsteps of Walker, Redmond, and reformism.

They are the ones who in hide behind the 1990 Industrial Relations Act to compromise with the boss class, to water down workers' demands and stymie industrial action. They are the ones that are happy to have aspirations for Irish unity and socialism but as the demands grow louder they hide behind the Good Friday Agreement, and the artificial imperialist construct of sectarian division, to compromise & collaborate with Britain, to water down the people's demands, into reforms and push reunification of this country and our people down the road to nowhere. The Communist Party of Ireland is not interested in reforming British rule or capitalism, we must break the connection with Britain and capitalism, and set about building an independent all-Ireland socialist

republic, only then can the people of Ireland be free. “The cause of Ireland is the cause of labour, the cause of labour is the cause of Ireland”.

Partition is safe in the hands of the reformists. Well to the reformists in Belfast, Cork, and elsewhere, I will use the words of James Connolly: “the British government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland and never can have any right in Ireland”.

There is no such thing as a nicer, fairer capitalism, colonialism, oppression, or occupation. Capitalism is unreformable. It must be dismantled and smashed.

“The capitalist class is a beast of prey, and cannot be moralised, converted, or conciliated it must be extirpated”.

In his writing Connolly set out the theory and a template for how to defeat our class enemies and build socialism, working class unity would be the foundation stone to building socialism in Ireland. This is impossible in a partitioned, divided Ireland. This is why Britain partitioned the country. It was to protect British interests, not to protect us from each other, but to keep us apart and subvert the self determination of the Irish people.

“Our great object will be to unite the workers and to bury, in one common grave, the religious hatreds, the provincial jealousies and mutual distrusts upon which oppression has so long depended for security.”

These mutual distrusts, hatreds and divisions are fed nurtured and stoked by our class enemies, to stop workers from uniting against them. We will not unite the working class by reducing our demands and hiding behind the artificially manufactured divisions in the community, we must put forward a program that will unite the working class and that program is a socialist one.

Freedom is not a geographical thing it is a political thing. The reunification of Ireland this piece of land will not free the people. Only when a united working class take control and ownership of the means of production will our people be free, independent, and sovereign. Free from domination by the triple-lock of Imperialism, British, European and US. We must strike at imperialism’s weakest link to smash this chain of oppression.

The weakest link in imperialism today is British. Brexit has weakened imperialism’s grip on Ireland. It has weakened the European Union, it has weakened the unity of the United Kingdom, and it most certainly has weakened Britain’s continued occupation of Ireland. Imperialism is in great difficulty at this time as the different imperial blocks within the EU,

the UK and beyond do battle with each other to protect their own interests. It proves once again imperialism doesn't have friends; it only has interests.

This weakening of imperialism is Ireland's opportunity to open up these divisions in our enemies which can in turn grow class unity. The potential exists as a result of Brexit to open up the ground for greater all-Ireland economic and social policies, demands for real qualitative changes for all of the people of Ireland with one all-Ireland public health service, a national strategy for public housing and infrastructure with workers realising that these gains can be a reality, the domination by the EU will reach its final phase as it stands in their way.

The unity of our class working together to build these qualitative changes for the benefit of all the people is the undefeatable weapon of our class, the unstoppable train on the road to socialism. As it stands the ruling class has split us into multiple minorities: Catholic, Protestant, gay, straight, rich, poor and many more, but the only real minority in Ireland is the capitalist class; the rest of us must unite together to defeat them.

Irish unity will happen but once. We must get it right. We must learn from our history and use that knowledge to build a better future not to repeat the mistakes of the past. After the revolutionary period in the 1920s the counter-revolution was successful. We must learn from this.

As calls for a border poll get louder, we must be aware that a border poll in itself is not the solution to Ireland's woes. We must prepare and be ready for what lies on the road ahead.

We must not wait until events occur, we must be prepared, we must build class unity now, build a people's resistance and a socialist pathway for Ireland and reunification. We must organise workers in every corner of Ireland from Derry to Kerry, from Wexford to Rockall.

“In the light of the principle of industrial unionism, every fresh shop or factory, organised under its banner, is a fort wrenched from the control, of the capitalist class and manned with the soldiers of the revolution.”

To be independent Ireland must take into public ownership all of our resources. The wealth of the country must be shared equally through the provision of universally accessible public services in health housing and education, etc. We must go beyond an all-Ireland NHS have a fully funded publicly owned all-Ireland public health service from the Cradle to the grave from childcare to nursing home. As the care of children and the elderly fall disproportionately on women this will be a massive step in the struggle to emancipate women. Ireland is a very wealthy country but as it stands that wealth, created by all of us, is in the hands of a few and used for their benefit. These qualitative

changes to the lives of the working class both men and women will provide real liberation, economic independence, freedom from debt or fear of being ill, all of us well educated allowing us all to reach our full potential and to be truly free is the bedrock to unite our class.

We must prepare through patient, strategic organising and planning, our enemies know exactly what they want to achieve from Irish unity and that is what will happen if we are not prepared.

“The moment the worker no longer believes in the all-conquering strength of the employer is the moment when the way opens out to the emancipation of our class.”

We must have confidence in our class to stride forward to build an Ireland not only free from Britain but free from the economic oppression of capitalism.

We must not underestimate our enemies they haven't been in power for so long, without them being formidable. They have centuries of experience of domination. They not only have the police, the judiciary, and the army at their disposal, in addition to the media and education system, both of which exercise an influence every part of our lives.

As the working class grow in confidence our class enemies will regroup and use every manner and means to defeat us, we must be prepared for these attacks they will not always be in plain sight.

“When the aristocracy come forward the people fall backward when the people come forward the aristocracy fearful of being left behind insinuate themselves into our ranks and rise into timid leaders of treacherous auxiliaries”

As Irish unity draws nearer there will be many treacherous auxiliaries speaking of freedom, unity and ending British rule in Ireland. They have no interest in freedom, unity or ending British rule in Ireland, their only interest is self-interest, getting freedom to take a bigger share for themselves and holding onto power for the capitalist class.

We have seen what their Ireland is like since partition, north and south, inequality, poverty, low pay, precarious work. An Ireland of two unequal halves; the tiny minority of haves, and the vast majority have-nots.

So, you can keep your united Ireland of Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, cobbled together with various shades of unionism and social democracy. This will not free our people but keep us spinning on a carnival of reaction, a carousel of capitalist catastrophe which will only impoverish and enslave us while destroying the planet.

This time we must change more than the colour of the post boxes.

“The day has passed for patching up the capitalist system; it must go”.

Onward to the Republic!