

Interview with Irish Socialist Republicans

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STRUGGLESSESSIONS



By Cathal

We had the honor of interviewing Irish Socialist Republican Media on several questions related to their struggle and the application of MLM to conditions there. We support the struggle for national liberation and socialism in Ireland and see their history of struggle as inspiring to all working and oppressed people of the world facing imperialism. The image in the top right is of Jim Lynagh, one of the Loughgall Martyrs who died at his post fighting for Irish freedom 33 years ago a few days ago from today, and the main picture is of Joe McCann, defending a neighborhood after British imperialism introduced internment and made an operation to sweep up IRA militants.

Question 1: The Irish question deals with a rich and complex history of struggles against colonialism, capitalism, capitulation and occupation. These things can make understanding the situation quite hard, especially for Americans who receive information filtered through the bourgeoisie, and the many different republican and socialist republican sources that are out there making comprehension a little more work. In my article titled the *On the Urban Guerrilla*, I made a major mistake regarding the Irish struggle by stating that:

“For our interests we should focus mainly on the troubles, though for lessons of urban guerrilla war we should not forget to mention the semi-successful Irish war of independence which could not be militarily defeated and had to be beaten back politically with the partition of the country. This is where the urban guerrilla was born.”

I have come to the position that this wording is wrong and that in the final instance the Free State cannot be understood as semi-successful, but counter-revolutionary. This was due to both carelessness as well as ignorance.

Can you explain the counter-revolutionary emergence and role of the Free State, and the Irish Republican Socialist position on it?

Answer 1: This is an important question. Firstly, we do not refer to the conflict in the occupied Six Counties as ‘the troubles’. This a a Brit imperialist coined term to play down the significance of the war in Ireland. Revolutionaries in Ireland refer to it as the ongoing war for National Liberation and Socialist Revolution, and although it has hit a historic bend in the road and is at a low ebb it is important that your readers understand that the war in Ireland continues, armed actions continue and there is no peace in Ireland.

In answer to your question, the seeds of the Free State Counter Revolution go back to the Black and Tan war in Ireland from 1919-1921. An Irish Republic had been Proclaimed in Arms in Dublin in 1916 and democratically ratified by an All Ireland vote in December 1918. The Irish Republic was then established on the 21st of January 1919 as a People’s Republic, issuing a Democratic Programme of Dáil Éireann, our revolutionary People’s Government, that demonstrated the People’s Republic was Socialist in nature.

On the same day, the Republican People’s Army relaunched the war against British Imperialism that quickly spread to become a mass war of the people against imperialist oppression. Along side the Revolutionary Armed Struggle the Republican movement began to build alternative power structures as functioning institutions of the People’s Republic and a system of New Power

came into effect across Ireland with the British Colonial administration no longer able to maintain its rule in the old way, with its power now confined to the large cities.

In order to maintain its power in Ireland, British Imperialism called a truce with Republicans and began to work with bourgeois sections of the Republican leadership and the reactionary settler colonialists in the north east of Ireland to devise a plan that would suppress the All Ireland People's Republic.

This plan became known as the 1922 treaty and saw the Republic suppressed and Ireland partitioned into two pro imperialist states. In the Free State the bourgeoisie agreed to administer 26 counties on behalf of Britain, while in the occupied Six Counties, the settler Colonialists would carry out the same function.

The two pro imperialist states that exist in Ireland today were created by a British Act of Parliament and it is with British Imperialism that the loyalist if the puppet administrations lie.

The treaty was rejected by the Republican Forces who continued to organise the People's Republic across Ireland. Britain, working with its new allies in the 'Irish' Free State moved then to violently suppress our People's Republic through the terror of Counter Revolution. A counter revolution that continues to this day.

The All Ireland Republic was forced underground and Britain maintained its imperial control of Ireland through the 26 county Free state and the occupied Six county state. A situation that continues today.

Question 2: Kind of developing from the above analyses, we understand that the revolutionary movement in Ireland boycotts the elections, can you talk about the boycott, and explain similarities and differences with election boycotts elsewhere and how the boycott is organized in both the Free State and the occupied north?

Answer 2: Yes, the revolutionary movement in Ireland asserts that all elections in the British created states in Ireland are illegitimate. Part of the Boycott Campaign is to highlight the illegitimate nature of the pro imperialist states in Ireland and call the Working Class back to the Revolutionary Republican Position.

In one sense it is similar to the universal position of Maoists, calling on the masses to build new power but in Ireland it also has specific historical and political importance that differs from the experience in other Countries.

In the Irish Revolutionary tradition, the People's Republic was Proclaimed in Arms in 1916. This Republic was overwhelmingly ratified by the Irish People in December 1919 and a Revolutionary Republican Government was established in Dublin in 1919 that coordinated the building of a system of Revolutionary dual power across the country, with Irish Soviets established and the People's Republic replacing the colonial British administration in Ireland

To combat this, as explained above, Imperialism and the native comprador bourgeoisie launched a Counter Revolution that violently suppressed the People's Republic

As a result the Republican movement has always refused to recognize the two puppet pro imperialist states that were created by Britain in Ireland Abstaining from the reactionary parliament's and at certain times boycotting elections

An electoral boycott is a key part of building the red line in Ireland today and is an important revolutionary tool in building the systems of new power across the country

This situation might be better understood by Maoists, if it is considered within the context of the great teaching of Chairman Gonzalo and the Communist Party of Peru that , "Two Republics are expressed, two roads, two poles"

Question 3: Can you describe the election campaign so far?

Answer 3: Actions in the Boycott Campaign have included addressing public meetings to explain the revolutionary position, leafleting and posterings in working class districts, revolutionary graffiti campaigns and direct actions against reactionary candidates standing in bourgeois elections

It is planned to deepen and develop this campaign in the coming years and continue to drive the turn out in Ireland down until it is under 50 percent

Question 4: The US has a large population of Irish descendants within its working class, with varying degrees of consciousness and views toward the cause of their mother country, do you have anything to say to them?

Answer 4: Firstly we would remind them that the revolutionary struggle, the war against Imperialism to establish the Socialist Republic remains unfinished business in Ireland.

The Irish diaspora in the US have always led the way in supporting the revolutionary struggle in Ireland. We encourage Irish Americans to continue to support the revolutionary struggle at home in whatever way they can and in particular to support the Socialist Republican Mass Organisation, Anti Imperialist Action Ireland, who are playing a decisive role in the rebuilding of the struggle for National Liberation and Socialist Revolution in Ireland

Question 5: What can comrades in the US do, practically, to support the struggle for a unified and free Irish Socialist Republic?

Answer 5: This is an important question.

As Proletarian internationalists, Revolutionaries in Ireland and the US must act in solidarity with each other but must remember the best way in doing so is to build the Revolution in our own countries.

Keeping this in mind, it is important that Comrades in the US spread the word that the revolutionary struggle in Ireland continues and despite a long bend in

the road the war against imperialism continues.

One practical area that US revolutionaries could provide assistance On is the campaign to force the US Military out of Shannon Airport, which US Imperialism has been using as a forward operating base for imperialist war since 2001.

Other actions that can help are interviews such as this that give Irish Socialist Republicans the opportunity to explain the current situation in Ireland and appeal directly for support.

Where concentrations of support exist we would encourage solidarity committees to be formed that can offer practical and material support to the revolutionary struggle in Ireland. We can provide assistance in establishing such committees.

Question 6: Are there any further criticisms of the article which mentions the struggle Ireland, On the Urban Guerrilla, or any corrections that we can make?

Answer 6: As this is such an important issue we believe the correct approach to take is to deal with this article in a full length response which we will forward to you shortly.

Question 7: This might be a big question, but can you explain for us more about the national question in Ireland, how it is situated within imperialism?

Answer 7: The National Struggle and the Class Struggle cannot be separated in Ireland. As James Connolly said, they are two sides of the same coin. It is for this reason that it is imperative that the working class led the struggle for National Liberation and fight the class struggle simultaneously. It is the historic task of the Irish Proletariat to lead the struggle for National Liberation and Socialist Revolution to its successful conclusion.

Ireland today is both a colony and a semi colony.

Ireland is a colony because Six Irish Counties are under an illegal military occupation by British Imperialism and ruled directly from London.

Ireland is a semi colony because 26 counties are ruled over by a puppet parliament of The comprador bourgeoisie in a semi colonial relationship with British, EU and North American Imperialism.

Ireland as a whole is oppressed and exploited by imperialism. The armed Imperialist militaries of Britain and the US are illegally active on Irish soil. International finance capital uses Ireland as a tax haven laundering its money through Ireland and our natural resources, which belong to the Irish People by right, are robbed by foreign multinationals while foreign, imperialist vulture funds evict Irish families from their homes in pursuit of profit.

This is the situation that confronts Irish Revolutionaries today. While the forces of imperialism appear big and strong and the forces of the revolution appear relatively small and weak, we are reminded of the immortal words of Chairman Mao that 'Imperialism is a paper tiger' and relying on the masses, who are the motive force in history, we know that the struggle for National Liberation and Socialist Revolution will ultimately be successful in Ireland.

Question 8 : The question of national liberation struggles in countries which are no longer semi-feudal can be complex and tend to be under-theorized. We understand the principle of the national liberation struggle being bound (in fact a part of) class struggle. Can you explain the process that the revolution in Ireland must undergo, we understand that the revolutionaries maintain a position of republican socialism, does this embrace aspects of Mao's theory of New Democratic revolution as well, or does it answer the matter with direct socialist revolution?

Answer 8: The struggle in Ireland is the fight for National Liberation and socialist Revolution. The Marxist method as applied in Ireland is Irish Socialist Republicanism. Socialist Republicanism uses the weapon of Marxism, today Marxism-Leninism-Maoism to demonstrate that the National Struggle and

the Class struggle are the same fight, as James Connolly put it, they are two sides of the one coin.

In practice this means that the National Liberation struggle is a fundamental part of the Socialist Revolution in Ireland and a necessary fight of the Proletariat on the road to our historic victory.

Ireland is a colonial and semi colonial country. Ireland is different from other colonial and semi colonial countries in that it has also developed in the last 50 years as an industrial capitalist country. While there are some lingering feudal land relations in Ireland that we will detail later, the primary form of production in Ireland is capitalist production and Ireland has developed as a capitalist society with the sham of bourgeois democracy in both the imperialist puppet states that illegally exist in our country. For this reason, while there is a lot to learn from Chairman Mao's theory of New Democracy, it is not directly applicable to the conditions in Ireland and the Revolution here is Socialist in character.

The Irish Revolution is a Socialist Revolution because it is led by Proletarian revolutionaries and is waged to overthrow capitalism and defeat imperialism. In fighting the Socialist Revolution the proletariat will necessarily have to successfully achieve National Liberation to seize power and in waging this important war for National Liberation, the Proletariat will necessarily strengthen the Socialist Revolution in Ireland and the World Proletarian Revolution.

For the Socialist Revolution in Ireland to be successful, it must be led by a militarised Communist Organisation of the New Type, today a Maoist organisation and it must mobilise the masses for National Liberation and the seizure of power and rely on them.

Question 9: In most countries which are oppressed by imperialism, semi-feudalism is maintained along with semi-colonialism, and bureaucratic capitalism underdevelops the economy, how has this played out in Ireland? We

understand more from this interview that Ireland is both a semi-colony and a colony, and that it is oppressed by British and American imperialism, is there any semi-feudalism intact? How is the situation in Ireland distinct from countries like India which remain semi-feudal, and are their places with similar conditions to Ireland?

Answer 8: Historically speaking, British Imperialism prevented Ireland from developing industrially for a majority of the occupation. The limited industry that was allowed to develop were those that served the interests of British Imperialism, for example the ship building industry in Belfast. The main economic activity historically for the Irish People has been agriculture, producing food for sale on the British Market.

This situation began to change in the 20th century. With the partition of Ireland in 1920, and the subsequent establishment of two pro imperialist puppet states to suppress our All Ireland People's Republic in 1922, the Free State semi colony began a process of industrial development, though at this point still heavily geared towards serving the interests of British Imperialism.

In 1971 British Imperialism led all of Ireland into the European Economic Community and Ireland as a whole began to be exploited by European Imperialism, hand in hand with British Imperialism. The economy in the Free State was now geared towards serving foreign multi nationals and international finance capital. The free state became a tax haven and money laundering factory for British, EU and North American Capital. The resources of Ireland are robbed and carved up between the imperialist powers and shipped out of our country.

The Colonial and Semi Colonial nature of Ireland means that it is exploited by British, EU and North American Imperialism. The economy in Ireland, as it is completely reliant on international imperialism has nearly completely collapsed with the current crisis in imperialism and capitalist over production, with mass unemployment across Ireland.

As a colonial and semi colonial country there remains a small outpost of the old feudal system in Ireland. The remnants of the feudal system in Ireland are tied to the British Monarchy. The British Monarchy continues to claim jurisdiction over Ireland, not only the occupied six counties, but also buildings land and infrastructure throughout Ireland. Tied to this feudal system, there remains a small number of feudal British Aristocratic landowners in Ireland that are no longer a class in themselves but tied to Imperialism and the bourgeoisie. These are the ancient robber barons who have no legitimate claim to the land or resources in Ireland and to whom the Irish People are openly hostile. The arrangement is only continued so as the garrison class can demonstrate their continued and complete subservience to imperialism.

Further to this, landlordism, which is a feudal system in itself, remains a key problem facing the Irish working class, and revolutionaries in Ireland are centrally involved in the fight to defeat the system of landlordism once and for all.

Question 10: The history of armed struggle in Ireland is rich and extensive, what lessons, in your analysis help with the overall understanding of the universality of People's War as applicable to all countries on earth?

Answer 10: Speaking during his 1988 interview with El Diario, Chairman Gonzalo correctly noted the significance of the Revolutionary Armed struggles in Europe and specifically, the Revolutionary Armed Struggle in Ireland as demonstrating the universal validity of Protracted People's War.

The criticism that People's War is not universal because it cannot be applied in a modern industrial country, and would be crushed by the forces of reaction there, does not stand up to the reality of the experience of Revolutionary Armed Struggle in Ireland, an armed struggle that continues today, despite hitting a bend in the road in recent years.

The experience of Revolutionary Armed Struggle in Ireland and particularly the ongoing armed actions against British Imperialism in Ireland comprehensively

and decisively demonstrates the universal applicability of Protracted People's War.

Ireland is a colonial and semi colonial country, an island nation on the western periphery of the European continent. Although Ireland is a colony and semi colony it is also a modern industrialised country, which gives it specific material conditions that are useful for demonstrating the universal validity of Protracted People's War.

Ireland is both a colony and a semi colony because it is illegally and forcefully partitioned by imperialism. British imperialism maintains a direct military occupation of 6 Irish Counties in the north east of the country. The remaining 26 counties are administered by a semi colonial parliament in Dublin on behalf of British, North American and European Imperialism, who exploit and oppress the Irish working class and rob our wealth and resources.

Since the ruling class of England first invaded Ireland in 1167, every generation of Irish people since have engaged in Revolutionary violence and protracted armed struggle, particularly guerrilla warfare against imperialism amassing a great wealth of knowledge and experience, the theory and practice of waging Revolutionary War.

In 1969, the Irish Republican Army, that was established in 1916, launched a new Revolutionary Armed Struggle for National Liberation, to drive British Imperialism

While this Revolutionary Armed Struggle was not a Protracted People's War, it was a protracted guerrilla campaign, and a war of the people, particular the people in British Occupied Ireland.

While the Revolutionary Armed Struggle was able to develop base areas in rural counties such as South Armagh, Fermanagh and Tyrone, more importantly, through armed struggle revolutionary base areas were established in the urban centres, particularly in Belfast and Derry, the two key cities in British Occupied

Ireland. The establishment of such base areas proves the universal applicability of Protracted People's War to all countries, in accordance with the specific conditions.

These revolutionary base areas in the urban centres were established in the Working Class ghettos of Belfast and Derry, where the Revolutionary Army could operate openly by relying on the people and with their support vast areas of working class Belfast and Derry became no go areas for British Imperialism.

In regards to the Irish experience of Revolutionary Violence, Chairman Gonzalo's observations on Ireland are more important than might be first realised. Chairman Gonzalo, from his deep understanding of Proletarian Revolutionary Science, accurately predicted that through the waging of Revolutionary Armed Struggle, Revolutionaries would 'will sum up lessons from their errors, as they are doing, they'll advance, grasp Marxism-Leninism-Maoism, and form Parties and wage people's war in accordance with the socialist character of their revolution and in accordance with their specific conditions'.

This grasping of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and a reappraising of the Irish Revolutionary Armed Struggle took place in Ireland at the height of the Revolutionary Violence. During the 1980s, while Chairman Gonzalo was first synthesising Marxism-Leninism-Maosim through the leading of the People's War in Peru, IRA prisoners in British Prisons in Ireland and Britain were taking up, studying and beginning to apply the teaching of Chairman Mao to the specific conditions of Ireland.

An important group of IRA commanders, operating mainly in the border areas, but with support from the guerrilla fighters in other areas, took up Maoism and began to develop a strategy of moving Revolutionary Violence in Ireland from Revolutionary Armed Struggle to Protracted People's War. This group of IRA cadre came to the conclusion that for their strategy to be successful, it would necessitate a break from the reformist leadership of the Provisional IRA and Sinn Féin, and to establish new organisations to lead the People's War.

The Maoist IRA cadre began to implement the move towards People's War from around 1986, particularly in the border region but there was support in the urban bases too. The guerrilla warfare tactics chosen successfully drove British Crown forces from the countryside and towns into the barracks in bigger towns and cities. Both the reformist leadership of Sinn Féin and the British Imperialist government realised the threat posed by the People's War Strategy to their plans for a 'peace process' and British Imperialism moved to systematically assassinate the Maoist IRA Cadre between 1986-1988.

Despite the assassination of the Maoist IRA Cadre, the Revolutionary Armed Struggle in Ireland continued at a height unknown in other European countries right into the 1990s when the reformist leadership of Sinn Féin entered into a pacification process in partnership with British Imperialism, which resulted in a major bend in the road for the Revolutionary Armed Struggle. Yet despite this, British imperialism has still been unable to crush the National Liberation struggle and Revolutionary armed actions continue to this day, though at a much lower ebb.

On investigation of the Irish Experience of Revolutionary Violence, even a brief investigation, such as the one above, it can be comprehensively established that Protracted People's War is the universally applicable Proletarian Military Line.

A Protracted People's War in an industrial country can take the form of the Revolutionary Armed Struggle in Ireland, establishing base areas in the urban working class communities and encircling the centres of power from there. Under this form of Protracted People's War, applied to the specific conditions of an industrial country, the urban war is primary and will be supported by rural base areas, instead of war in the countryside being primary as is the case in under-developed countries.

To conclude, a final note on the Irish Experience of Revolutionary Violence. The Revolutionary Armed Struggle in Ireland has continued to be unsuccessful because it is not a Protracted People's War. The armed struggle has continued

to fail because it is not led by Marxism–Leninism–Maoism or a Communist Party of the new type, waging a People’s War for the seizure of Power.

For the war for National Liberation and Socialist Revolution in Ireland to be successful, it must be led by a militarised Communist organisation of the new type, one that upholds Marxism–Leninism–Maoism and organises and mobilises the masses through People’s War for the seizure of power.

Only then will Irelands long Revolutionary Struggle be successful.

Question 12: Do you comrades have anything to add, anything we may have missed or anything at all to say to our readers?

Answer 12: Most important to for your readers to understand is that the Revolutionary Struggle for National Liberation and Socialist Revolution continues in Ireland, that the Revolutionary Armed Struggle continues to be raised by Irish Republicans and the struggle needs the support and solidarity of revolutionaries around the world.

Secondly we would like to make clear to your readers that Irish Socialist Republicans are a Marxist–Leninist–Maoist, principally Maoist organisation of the new type that is paying a leading role in the rebuilding of the revolutionary movement and the National Liberation and Socialist Revolution.

Finally we would like to say that we view the revolution in Ireland as a part of the International Communist Movement and the World Proletariat Revolution, and we are following developments in the International Communist Movement very closely. Revolutionaries in Ireland take great heart from the continued waging of Protracted People’s War in Peru, India the Philippines and Turkey, and from the efforts to constitute and reconstitute militarised Communist Parties in countries from Latin America to Europe to the USA to lead the Protracted People’s War in accordance with the specific conditions of each revolution and each country, for the seizure of power by the masses.

We thank struggle sessions for providing us with this important platform to promote the revolution in Ireland and to bring that message to a wide international audience.

We finish by raising the revolutionary cry Free Chairman Gonzalo! Long Live Marxism, Leninism, Maoism, Principally Maosim! Forward to National Liberation and Socialist Revolution in Ireland!

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