



# Forward

## BUILDING THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT

**UNRECONSTRUCTED  
COMMUNISTS**

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in the 21st Century

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# What Does it Mean to be an Unreconstructed Communist?

*FT, Corcaigh*

As a famous Communist once said “Which is worse, the left deviation or the right? They are both worse than each other”. As comrades, we tread a fine line daily between various mistakes. Some of these mistakes are committed innocently, where comrades react to their conditions too enthusiastically and end up taking on exaggerated positions. Other mistakes are more nefarious – individual subcultures grow to exist in the Communist movement, as a result of fetishisation of certain idealised self-images of grandeur and romantic visions of uncompromising purity, replete with their own jargon to act as rhetorical shibboleths. At different times and at different phases, orthodox Marxist-Leninists have had to struggle against various currents and extremes, and sometimes have self-criticised and corrected past deviations.

Trotskyism is still a problem on the left, as is anarcho-communism, each carrying its own anti-communist perspectives as expertly trounced by Michael Parenti in his essay on Left-wing Anti-Communism. However, these tendencies have never been a serious issue in the Connolly Youth Movement.

As we enter a period where we are defining ourselves, socialist republicanism has rightfully taken a more prominent place in our programme, constitution and ideological narrative. The CYM has always prided itself on its anti-revisionism – we are opposed to reformism and support a revolutionary rather than a parliamentary road to power, in the traditional sense defined by Lenin. In our studies, we are not rigid and dogmatic. We are in the spirit

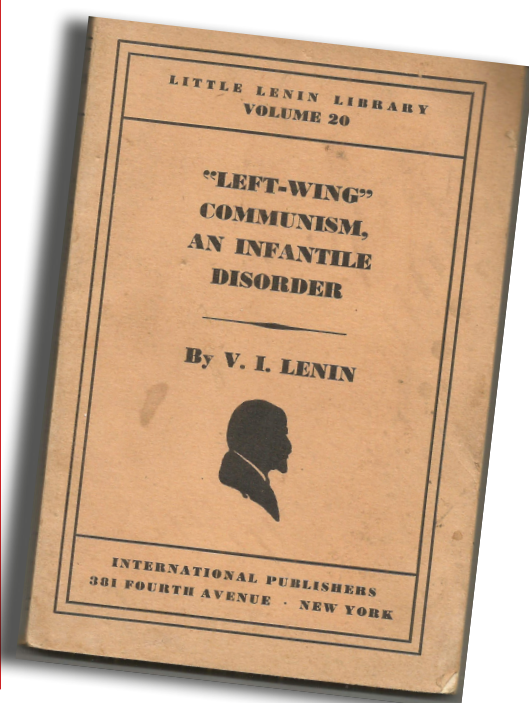
of Lukacs when he said that dialectical materialism operates as a methodology for interacting with our material conditions, not a divine exegesis of certain authors, or texts. Opportunism and sloganism have always been a feature of youth radicalism, and slogans have their place – but in the analysis of cadres, we have a responsibility to work with nuance, to carry out serious investigations, and not seek out self-confirmation to validate our biases. The proliferation of tendencies is an unfortunate effect of the influence of the internet on politics, and is a mark of individualism, as each person seeks to carve out a unique set of viewpoints for themselves that is self-expressive, rather than engage in unity and the collective development of a political stance.

The Connolly Youth Movement is a Marxist-Leninist Socialist Republican organisation and must remain so. The biggest challenge facing us today is the allure of ultra-leftism. We don't see the road to parliamentary politics as being capable of leading to socialism. Instead we see it as one of many tactics used to build up the political profile and propaganda of the proletariat. We should not support ultra-leftist positions that reject any participation in elections whatsoever as a failure of principles.

I wrote in a previous article “How communists can utilise elections”, a strategy for communists in Ireland to use elections to build bases in community and raise class consciousness without falling into the mire of careerism and reformism, by restricting cadres to a common programme and reminding them

that they are not running as individuals but as part of an unbreakable bloc, totally accountable to democratic centralism. Communists must not repeat the mistakes of the Workers' Party in the 80s in opportunistically pursuing electoral gains, nor must we repeat the mistakes of the ultra-leftists who abandoned a whole space of struggle out of sour grapes that, “if we can't win, why bother?”. Likewise, in the trade union, we must dialectically combine methods to achieve a pathway that is neither reformist nor ultra-leftist.

We must reject social partnership, and maintain trade unions that are capable of representing workers who have been sidelined by social partnership agreements. Despite that, we cannot totally abandon the mainstream workers' movement by refusing to engage with or hold dialogue with reformist trade unions. We must carry our message everywhere that people are willing to listen.



Internationally, we should work with all Communists who are friendly to us, but we must place the priority on those movements which have significant purchase and relevance to the working class in the countries where they operate.

Even if these parties have flaws or disagreements with us, it is an uncomradely route to refuse to engage with them and instead bury our heads in the sand by only working with small, purist sects, that do not have a mass following amongst the working class in those countries.

remember the importance of our mission, and moreover, the importance in getting our message out so that we remain relevant.

In the aftermath of 1991, many communists reconstructed themselves in a new light, in a new image, as willing collaborators with the establishment. This is a fate we must struggle against and avoid. We must never rename ourselves or pretend to be social democrats or democratic socialists.

ist methods to improve their line, have given us a great role model for what unreconstructed communists look like in the 21st century.

It is important that we look to parties that have concrete achievements for inspiration. Parties that consist of professional cadres who treat their work as a full-time job and a vocation, rather than those for whom politics is simply an expression of lifestyle and personal aesthetics. There are many ultra-leftist academics who have no experience of practical politics, and there are many wannabe guerrillas toting guns and shouting “protracted people’s war” from the safety of their desktops. We can’t let the aesthetics of what we wish were the conditions we operate in cloud the facts, or by our lack of judgement we make ourselves a source of ridicule.

*Left: CYM Officer School in Dublin, 2022.*

Throughout this transition period, as we readjust ourselves, we must retain our sobriety and never forget who we are. We are Marxist-Leninist, unreconstructed, the inheritors of the Bolshevik party, the Communist tradition in Ireland, and the socialist Republican tradition.

We are the brothers and sisters of millions of cadres across the world, each with their own connection tracing back to that proud tradition. We cannot and must not exoticise our work by inventing new traditions or arguing that we have found unique and new ideological fusions where we don’t have the work or theory to back it up. We have accomplished milestones and won the respect of many by staying true to our core constitution, and this minimalist and highly adaptable base will serve us well in the future.



The workers and communists in these countries know their conditions and their necessities better than we do, and while we should retain a critical eye and compare their positions to our own cautiously, we should also trust them and not denounce people when we do not fully understand the reasoning and the pressures that have led to their current analysis.

There is a danger, now that we no longer have a senior party to guide our line in international relations, that we will indulge flights of fancy and pursue false roads that lead to dead ends. We have to

We must proudly state to all of the world that we are communists and will never apologise for raising the red flag, stained with the blood of those who have struggled and died for a better world. Equally, we must not waste this legacy bequeathed to us through the pursuit of vanity and abstractions, arguing in our spare time about the number of revisionists dancing on the head of a pin while our class is being repressed and exploited. There has been a reawakening of parties all over Europe and outside it. Parties like KNE, through their self-assessment and keen eye for applying scientific social-

In the aftermath of our disaffiliation, we have broken our links with the ideologically bankrupt NEC majority of the CPI. However, we are still very much in the tradition of the CPI and we take our historical inspiration from the CPI. Michael O’Riordan, for example, supported the USSR through thick and thin, even if it was sometimes critical support.

We are not a movement for the denunciation of actually existing socialism, whether from a left perspective of a right perspective. In this issue, we try to retrace our footsteps and come back to understanding of who we are and what we stand for, in preparing for our next steps. The questions on everyone’s mind

is: where will the CYM go from here? Options including negotiating a re-affiliation to the Essex St. CPI, but that is doubtful given the current leadership does not want us affiliated to them.

Another option is to transform the CYM into a party. This is something I don’t think most CYM members would want, and it would leave us bereft of the CYM’s outstanding function as an organisation for youth radicals. The final option is to outright start a new party or reconstitute the CPI to be a better party, this is a difficult path that will need many years of work for fruition.

We must work to support comrades within the CPI who support

us against the corrupt McCartanite faction. We must also remember when considering future re-affiliation to any potential party that the struggle for reconstitution is being fought by those who backed the CYM’s corner unceasingly when it was attacked by the Essex St. group.

There are many options to consider, and the situation is volatile.

Only by intensifying our connection to our class through agitation in all youth fields, while keeping our eyes open to pathways forward, and our theoretical understanding of the contours that an ideal communist party should take, can we bridge that gap between the past and future to a new beginning, one that will lead us to *the red decade*.



*Top:  
EDON Congress,  
Cyprus, 2022.*

*Left and bottom:  
Ard Fheis, Belfast,  
2020.*



# A View from a Greek Friend of Ireland

SG, THESSALONIKI



“We propose to conquer that political power through a working class political party” (The Programme of Labour, 1916). A few months before his execution James Connolly stressed the need for a revolutionary party to seize power, a goal to which he devoted his life. But why is avanguard party so important in order to achieve power?

The history of the world revolutionary movement teaches that during a revolutionary upheaval the militancy of the working class is not enough for the victory of the proletarian revolution.

The working class as the pioneering force of social evolution in the age of transition from capitalism to socialism is the class that will carry out the proletarian revolution, but the formation of the corresponding strategy and tactics is a matter that weighs on the shoulders of its vanguard which must guide the whole class. In simple words the task of the working class vanguard, the communist party is to prepare the socialist revolution.

But what does this mean?

The proletarian party of the new type, in order to be ready when the revolution breaks out and in order to take the leadership of the revolution, must have organized the working class and must have formed a conception of class unity. In the case of Ireland, such a party has a dual role in preparing the revolution. The first task is

to organize the working class in trade unions in order to be able to resist against the attacks of the capitalist class. But is this enough?

It's very important to develop the economic struggles and gain rights for the workers, because they can be taught that their unity is the only way to oppose the bourgeois oppression. But through this process the communist party must explain to workers that the economic struggle itself is not enough. The most crucial matter through this process is for the vanguard party to connect the economic struggles with the political struggles.

To achieve this, the communist party should agitate among the working class that their unity must be class oriented, that social partnership is against their interests, that its ultimate goal should be the seizing of power. This means that communists should have their own agenda in the trade unions in order to take up their leadership and when a proportion of them adopt their agenda, a front of such class oriented trade unions should be established sharpening the debate for the aims and goals of the labour movement.

If a similar process develops in the farm cooperatives then the party can lead the formation of the alliance between the proletarians and the small farmers. The second task is to fight for the unity and fraternization among the people in the north. This task can be achieved by carrying out the first task of class unity, but special attention

and specific measures should be taken in order to develop a permanent front against sectarianism. A party that has thus managed to have members in the workplaces and have managed to developed class unity, in the crucial moment will be victorious. Here lies the importance of the vanguard party.

The history of the Irish War of Independence and the Irish Civil War not only teaches the devastating consequences of the absence of a vanguard party, but also shows the relations between Marxism-Leninism and socialist republicanism or republican socialism.

During that period the SPI, later CPI, instead of developing organized work in the working class and the republican movement, liquidated its forces believing that those who view themselves as “socialist republicans” could develop revolutionary strategy and tactics for a workers republic. The result was the failure of the republican movement and the Labour Party to do that, due to their failure to adopt Dialectical and Historical Materialism, Political Economy and bolsheviz.

The communists were right to seek an alliance with the republican movement in order to give a class orientation, but they should have maintained their party structure, developed an armed wing, took the leadership of the working class and its soviets and won over patriots in the North.

They were of course people who took the step further like Liam Mellows, who supported the communists' program and expressed his will to join them. But there were others who were just inspired by some communist theses and could not adopt the revolutionary theory and practice.

In my view the socialist republicanism or republican socialism or socialist republicanism, with one word revolutionary republicanism, was the class oriented republican movement as a result of communist pioneer activity. It was not a Marxist-Leninist movement but a

movement that could bring about a successful revolution if there was a vanguard party to lead this movement. So Marxism-Leninism in Ireland was the communist movement and revolutionary republicanism was the class oriented republican movement organized by communists.

In conclusion the need of a vanguard communist party in Ireland is necessary more than ever. Only an internationalist "All-Ireland Communist Party" guided by the teaching of Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin, inspired by the work of its its forerunners Connolly

and Mellows and influenced by the traditions of revolutionary republicanism and anti-sectarianism, can shoulder the burden of the Irish Question and the Proletarian Cause.



In this historical moment, it is up to you, the member of the CYM, to raise the red flag with the hammer and sickle in Ireland.



### Lessons from Afar: An Interview with Anakbayan CM, Béal Feirste

As communists our struggle is an international one, as socialist-republicans we fully understand the unity between anti-imperialism and the struggle for socialism. With this in mind we should always be striving to learn from our comrades across the world about what they do, and what methods they use, in the struggle for socialism.

The struggle currently being waged in the Philippines is one which all socialists should be following closely. Such struggles show that the struggle for socialism is not confined to history books, and utterly destroys the

defeatist notion of the "end of history". Thus, these excerpts of an interview with Comrade Cyan of Anakbayan provide some fascinating insight into the Filipino struggle, and lessons to be learnt from it.

To begin with, we must first explore a bit about what Anakbayan is and what it seeks to achieve. Comrade Cyan said, "Anakbayan (Children of the People) is the comprehensive national-democratic mass organisation of the Filipino youth, organising from all different sectors of the youth... It is one of the most steadfast organisations in waging forward the national democratic struggle of the Filipino people against US imperialism and domestic feudalism... Its role in the national-democratic struggle is an important one because without a comprehensive youth organisation, the struggle would die out as there would be no new blood there to carry out its tasks towards its victory".

Rather than simply being a talking-shop that denounces Yankee imperialism, however, Anak-

bayan knows the importance of action. Just as we in the CYM have our slogan of "Agitate, educate, organise", our Filipino comrades follow the slogan of "Arouse, organise and mobilise". So how do they do this? Arousing consists of "leaf-letting, round table discussions, educational discussions, online and on-ground propaganda and agitation work, forums, seminars and other forms of creative activities in order to raise their political consciousness of the current semi-feudal and semi-colonial system".

From here, they seek to organise. To this end they "recruit thousands upon thousands of youth towards our chapters, build alliances and forge the strong unity between various youth organisations to fight for common interests and goals".

But, as the Filipino experience shows, you must dare to struggle, and thus the mobilisations consists of "mass-actions including rallies, demonstrations, protests, occupations, strikes, walk-outs". So what is the importance of these actions?

Comrade Cyan said, “Mass-actions are important because they are a show of force, they are a form of agitation that shows the people that certain issues exist and that the government and all other state actors must address these problems seriously”.

So what sort of tactics do they use to achieve these goals? What sort of activities does Anakbayan do to advance the struggle? One particular activity of note was how they relate to community organisations, peasant associations, women’s organisations and fish-

ing groups. This involves sending members into communities through “basic mass exposures” and “basic mass integrations”. The former is often only a day or two, whereas the latter can be as long as several months. This enables Anakbayan members to “learn more from the experiences of these associations and organisations as well as aid them in various means. They help each other with political and ideological education in order to further raise the morale and consciousness of the members within these organi-

sations”. A similar practice has been discussed within the CYM, through the process of branch exchanges, thus the experience of Anakbayan in similar activities should definitely be learnt from.

When I asked Comrade Cyan what the most important lesson from the Filipino experience should be, he emphasised that it would be to “firmly grasp the mass line” in order to arouse, organise and mobilise the broadest majority of the masses.



He said that the Filipino national-democratic movement, throughout its decades of experience, has learnt from experience the importance of being “firmly rooted into the masses in order to gain their trust and confidence in waging the correct political line”. Thus, if there is to be any lesson taken from this interview, it should be the same lesson that Filipino comrades, and many others, learnt through decades of hard struggle, that grasping the mass line is invaluable and imperative for communists.

More broadly, however, Comrade Cyan also made a point about the importance of youth in any revolutionary struggle. As young communists, we should always remember our role. Comrade Cyan noted how, as young people, we are “critical-minded, creative, have physical and mental strength”, but also noted that young people can also “succumb to individualism... vacillating world-views... that could pull them away from the revolutionary line”. But, as young communists, if we are “deeply root-

ed amongst the masses”, and spread the revolutionary line, we have the potential to “rebuild the world”. Comrade Cyan provided many other insightful comments, which will be available online, however he wanted to give his own personal advice to us: “The only advice I could give for the Irish communists is - Dare to struggle, dare to win!... Our Irish comrades must remember that the struggle, far from only being national, is international and that there are many people who support the struggle in your country”.

# ON MILITARISM

SF, Gaillimh

The accusation of “militarism” or the characterisation of communists as “militarists” by their detractors (be they liberals or even other communists), is one that can be frequently seen in discourse surrounding how the revolution will be carried out. Generally, these criticisms are accompanied by claims that the working class can take power by parliamentary means, or through a campaign of general strikes and civil disobedience. However, as has been clearly demonstrated by successful revolutions the world over, in the USSR, China, or Cuba.

The ability of communists to employ physical force is integral not only to the success of a revolution, but equally as importantly, for their own defence while building up their strength. This piece is not, however, a defence of general armed struggle sans an analysis of material conditions that would make it successful. As a CYM member has already argued:

“All revolutionary leaders who sought the overthrow of capitalism and the redefinition of societal structures argued for the use of armed struggle and defined it extensively [...] They evaluated the conditions that led to the struggle, how it proceeded on a technical level, how the struggles ended and what consequences these uprisings and struggles had”

Nor is this an analysis of how to successfully carry out such an armed endeavour. Rather, the hope of this piece is to serve as a cautionary tale as to what can happen when a communist party that has established itself as a



strong leader of the working class both through its own party and affiliated organisations, decides to abandon the gun and eschews the concept of armed struggle altogether.

In 1965, the Communist Party of Indonesia (Partai Komunis Indonesia, PKI) was the largest non-governing communist party in the world behind only the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) and Chinese Communist Party (CCP), and the

second largest in Asia. The party, while siding with the USSR during the Sino-Soviet split, tended to follow more closely the organisational structure characteristic of Mao Zedong Thought, through the establishment of mass organisations in both the city and countryside.

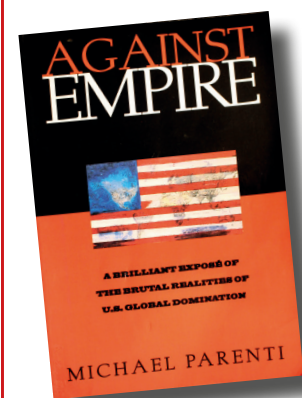
Following Indonesia’s independence from the Netherlands, the PKI participated freely in elections, reliably gaining approximately 16 percent of the national vote. However, in contrast to



notably, anti-communism. They would carry this ideology back to their country, with disastrous results.

Before we discuss the consequences this would have for the Indonesian communists, we should go back a few years, to look at a similar US experiment that ended in failure, but had a massive effect on a certain revolutionary figure. Guatemala's revolution had begun in 1944, while the US was busy in Europe and Asia with the Second World War.

Consequently, they did not immediately intervene in the small Central American state. However, by 1954, their patience had come to an end. Guatemala's President, Jacobo Árbenz, attempted to appropriate approximately 200,000 acres of unused land from the country's largest landowner, the United Fruit Company (an American company).



In retaliation, they called for US intervention, that culminated in the capital, Guatemala City, being attacked by the US Air Force, and a military dictatorship being put in power. This dictatorship would proceed to murder thousands of trade unionists and communists at the US Embassy's behest. Why this event is relevant is because present in the capital at the time was a young Argentinian doctor, Ernesto 'Che' Guevara, who stated that:

other Asian parties, the party did not have an armed wing, and refused to countenance the thought that such a thing was necessary.

As a country, Indonesia was a leading proponent of the Third Way in international politics, with President Sukarno, insisting that good relations may be held with both the US and USSR. The first Afro-Asian conference, a meeting of newly independent anti-colonial and anti-imperialist nations, was held in Indonesia at Bandung in

1955, which laid the groundwork for the founding of the Non-Aligned Movement in Belgrade in 1961.

However, as the Cold War progressed and the position of the United States towards non-alignment became increasingly intolerant, Indonesia's independence was fast becoming a problem. Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, became a home for many Indonesian military officers who were trained in counterinsurgency, intelligence gathering and, most



# ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

**"THE HARSH TRUTH IS THAT ARBENZ DID NOT KNOW HOW TO RISE TO THE OCCASION. WE WERE COMPLETELY DEFENCELESS, SINCE THERE WERE NO PLANES, NO ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUNS AND NO SHELTER.**

**PANIC GRIPPED THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THE 'BRAVE AND LOYAL ARMY OF GUATEMALA'. ARBENZ DID NOT THINK TO HIMSELF THAT A PEOPLE IN ARMS IS AN INVINCIBLE POWER [...] HE COULD HAVE GIVEN ARMS TO THE PEOPLE BUT HE DID NOT WANT TO - AND NOW WE SEE THE RESULT."**

This Guatemalan experience had a profound impact on Guevara's theories around revolution and can be credited in part for the defeat of the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961 (the preparations for which sparked a 30 year civil war in Guatemala).

Although the PKI's newspaper *Harian Rakjat* reported extensively on the Guatemalan coup, they failed to take from it the lessons that Guevara did. This failure to recognise the importance of armed defence was to be their downfall. In the early morning of 30 September 1965, a group of Indonesian army officers, ostensibly to prevent an anti-government coup, kidnapped five of the six top army generals in the country. By sunrise, all five would be dead. What followed was a wave of anti-communist propaganda by the military, claiming that the PKI had orchestrated the entire debacle in an attempt to gain power, that the murders had been accompanied by satanic rituals, and that the generals had been mutilated and emasculated by the Gerwani, the party's women's wing. Using this as pretext, the military, police, and right-wing paramilitaries proceeded to exterminate Indonesia's left-wing, with actual membership of the PKI being immaterial. In his analysis of the event, Vijay Prashad describes:

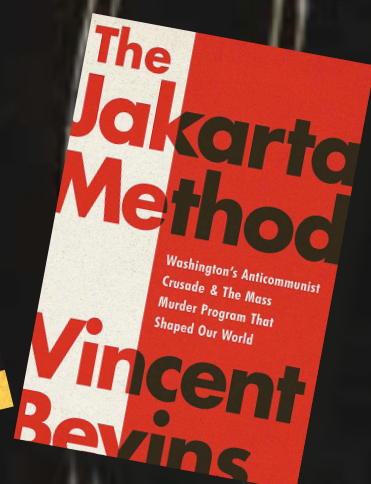
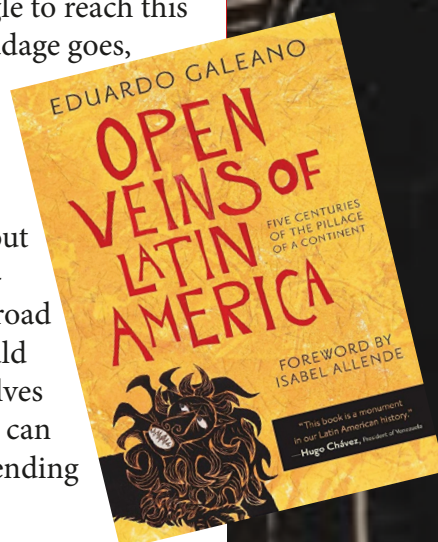
"Mass murder was the order of the day. The worst killings were in East Java and in Bali [...] the prisoners were forced to dig a grave and then 'one by one, they were beaten with bamboo clubs, their throats slit, and they were pushed into the mass grave'. By the end of the massacre, a million Indonesian men and women of the left were sent to these graves."

Within six months, Indonesia's left had either been eradicated or scared into silence, and the PKI was banned in 1966. It remains so to this day.

This method of anti-communism, colloquially referred to as "The Jakarta Method", was exported around the globe by the CIA and their allies to any state perceived to be under communist threat. By the 1980s, similar (though less extreme) massacres and coups would occur in Brazil, Chile, Sudan, Ecuador, Bolivia, Honduras, and El Salvador, to name but a few.

In his final analysis of the Indonesian massacre, Prashad makes the pertinent point that: "the USSR's reaction was tepid. The Chinese called it a 'heinous and diabolical' crime. But neither the USSR nor China could do anything. The United Nations stayed silent. The PKI had decided to take a path that was without the guns. Its cadre could not defend themselves. They were not able to fight the military and the anti-communist gangs. It was a bloodbath"

The fate of the PKI and its cadres stands as a cruel lesson to communists the world over that while armed struggle may be "to conclude the political struggle", the forces of reaction will not simply wait for the struggle to reach this point. As the old adage goes, "The only good communist is a dead communist", and so any person who is serious about committing themselves to the long road to revolution should never fool themselves into thinking they can do so without defending themselves.



## The Leninist Movement

AH, Baile Atha Cliath

No matter where you travel, every Communist Party in the world claims to be a Leninist party. In one shape or another, a plethora of cherry-picked quotations from Lenin are used to justify revisionism, reformism, electoralism, and a myriad of other political positions that often offer more contradictions than resolutions.

However, as a member of the Connolly Youth Movement (CYM), I can proudly say that many of the basic theoretical principles of Leninism outlined in Joseph Stalin's Foundations of Leninism, can be found in both our constitution and programme. For instance, article 2 of the Introduction states that:

“The philosophical outlook the Connolly Youth Movement applies is Dialectical Materialism. Materialist in that it views social change as indistinct from economic change. Dialectical in that it views social change as a highly connected process that requires a collective transformation to unify local or single-issue struggles into a single historic force”

This article definitively affirms our commitment to a class analysis of society. We accept that economic change, spurred on by class interests, drives on all other change, and that from this substructural change comes a change to the superstructure, in the realms of culture, politics and the legal system, to name a few.

A look at our programme further highlights our commitment to the fundamental principles of Leninism. Here can be found our stances on democratic central-

ism, demands versus action, and reform versus revolution.

All of these articles explain the role of a disciplined unit of young people functioning together, what manner we intervene in political struggle in society and the difference between ‘reformist’ and ‘revolutionary’ struggles. We understand these to be universally applicable concepts for all Communist organisations and that:

“This form of organisation [democratic centralism] is integral to our movement and a healthy Communist movement that can deliver long-lasting and permanent change.”

Our goal is not to temporarily fade in and out of media popularity or make noise, but to build class power, rooted and led by the youth, ultimately culminating in the revolutionary upheaval of capitalist society.

It is with these theoretical tools that we can come to political conclusions about problems of all shapes and sizes. It is with these theoretical tools that we can enact solid political practice which demarcates us from other youth organisations. It is with these theoretical tools that we were able to scrutinise the Communist Party of Ireland (CPI), ultimately choosing to disaffiliate, finding that the practical day to day activities of the CPI did not reflect what we understood a Leninist party to look like.

Following our disaffiliation from the CPI was a half day conference on the subject of what an ideal communist party would look like. A multiplicity of topics under a dozen or so headings were discussed, but they all came back to the core concepts,

in particular democratic centralism and how it should function. Our collective experience in relation to the CPI was that democratic centralism did not function. It had been so brutally bastardised, with political authority so invested in one person, that it didn't ultimately matter who thought what, as undesirable decisions would simply be overturned. It was our view then that for a communist party to function accordingly, this can never and should never be the case. Within the CYM for instance, disagreements are plentiful. This has allowed active debate on virtually all political issues to flourish and has maintained that the debate is healthy, comradely, and productive.

However, we are a results driven organisation, so the purpose of theoretical debates is not to achieve smug satisfaction for having the ‘correct position’, but rather being able to demonstrate in practice why your position is correct. Votes are regularly taken at branch levels, branch committee levels, Ard Fheiseanna and the Ard Chomhairle. They are never predictable, although some comrades do express ‘similar’ positions the odd time, but the point is that democratic centralism functions very healthily.



Once debate has been exhausted, thoughts expressed and points made, a decision is arrived at and the movement rows together in one direction, acting as a united front.

This has proven not only to work, but to ensure that all comrades are taught a sense of respect for the decision of the collective, and a sense of trust in the organs of political power. The result of this is the rapid rise and growth of the organisation all over the country. In short, for the rest of the organisation to function, for it to fulfil its purpose, for it to grow into a vanguard organisation, democratic centralism must function impeccably. Those who lose votes must obey the result after having exercised their ability to debate the vote. Lower organs of the movement must be able to voice concerns and criticisms and higher organs must address them, but at the end of the day, they must proceed forward together.

Developing out of well oiled practices revolving around democratic centralism, can come further conclusions on how an organisation should be run. As a result, further core concepts of what an ideal Communist Party must look like emerge. A commitment to deep engagement in community areas & work.

In our analysis of the contemporary Irish left, we have discovered that while most sections of it are politically reliant on working class people for votes, they are at the same time politically disconnected from the working class. That is to say that the political structures of many Irish left organisations are weakest in working class areas. In our experience of the CPI, there was an active hostility

to activity such as door-knocking and community outreach work.

While we never received a full explanation for the reasons behind this hostility, we believe this to be an entirely incorrect position.

There will be no revolution without direct engagement with our community. There will be no Party that is “on the pulse of the masses” as Lenin said without being directly engaged.

To that end the CYM is now promoting the developing of branches in estates, started as cumann, that engage in community work. Cumann’s are in practical terms sub-branches of larger branches that require less people than a branch, but more than an individual

Industrial work and its target audience: officials or the unorganised?

Prevalent among the Irish left is the desire to influence trade union officials, to plant party members in union official positions and to climb the committees. In our experience however, this strategy is not correct, primarily for two reasons:

- 1) Most workers in Ireland are not trade union members
- 2) The trade unions targeted for this effort are dominated by the Labour Party and other social-democratic party members, hostile to any form of militancy in organising

As a result, the focus we have cultivated in the last few years is aimed at engaging directly with young workers, encouraging our own members to be worker-organisers who know how to initiate early organising steps in their place of work and linking as much

of that as possible into existing unions.

Therefore, our target audience shifted from union officials to unorganised workers who we believe must be brought into unions. This is a tactical question rather than a principled one, but it certainly does have different connotations and requirements, particularly in the workload. It is a much more complex issue to train cadres to be union organisers, but this is central to building class power.

### The Role of the Youth

We have as young activists identified that one of our strengths has been independence and autonomy. Many organisations on the left do not even have youth organisations, while others that do maintain firm control over them. In the case of the CYM, we have found that success is somewhere in the middle. Our organisation has flourished because it has exercised a greater degree of autonomous decision making than its counterparts, but still relied on the expertise and experiences of older comrades.

We took experiences of what worked (and what did not), and synthesized them into something applicable to our circumstances today. We figured it out, in practice.

We understood that the youth are an equal component of the communist movement and must be treated as so.

Indeed, it would be fair to say that a significant part of the process of disaffiliation was related to us identifying that we were neither equal nor a partner in the configuration of the CPI.

*Background: Connolly Barracks, Cork.*

## The Role of Women

Judas and the Black Messiah, a biopic portraying the lead-up to the betrayal and assassination in 1968 of the chairman of the Illinois chapter of the Black Panther Party, Fred Hampton, came out earlier this year to much acclaim. Many comrades commented positively on practical examples of punishing male comrades within Party settings for ‘taking liberties with women’. In Ireland, many organisations on the left ignore sexual abuse and do not dare comment on allegations in other organisations for fear of being branded sectarian. The result is that institutional cases of cover up are frequent. The Bolshevik Party and the subsequent Great October Revolution advanced women’s rights in a way their capitalist Western counterparts could not even imagine. In following this example, the modern Communist movement must be bold in all fields and not hesitate or relegate women’s issues. This requires a lot more than writing an article or prancing around in the local Council or one of the failed

is childcare involved. It requires the changing of times of political work to the daytime instead of the evening time. The list goes on. If we want women, especially those who have children to be politically engaged, then we must socialize the burden of childcare. There are numerous other practical examples, but the fact remains; left organisations are disproportionately dominated by men and there are clear reasons for this. Scientific and rigorous analysis of those reasons will lead to certain conclusions – the question is, will those conclusions be acted upon?

The National Question and the National Liberation Movement One of the other central features of our analysis of the CPI and its failings was its approach to other Republican organisations and the national question. While advocating against a ‘capitalist united Ireland’ on paper, in practice the Party endorses a border poll. Little to no scrutiny is made of the Good Friday Agreement. Little understanding exists of the protocols enshrined in it, and how it will play

to the CPI assuming positions that are more appropriate of the Workers’ Party. Leading members regularly distanced themselves from Republican events, figures, and history. Communists of any country cannot distance or think themselves above the historical struggle of their class, regardless of how much they disagree with it. To do so, is to bastardise a historical materialist analysis of society. We should accept, embrace, and learn from the historical struggles of our class, including military errors or military shortsightedness. If we can learn from the past; then we can march into the future. This rejection of sections of Irish history led swiftly into a rejection of engaging with other Republican organisations, while consistently repeating to all members that it is in fact our responsibility to work with all Republicans. This blatant contradiction was quickly cut through by young communists. In Ireland, it most certainly is the responsibility of Communists to work with Republicans – in fact of all the forces found on the left, Communists and Republicans



Left Unity in Practice, not on Paper  
 In Ireland, another phenomenon has occurred whereby the criticism of other organisations is slated as 'sectarianism' and calls for 'left unity' are regularly made. Allow me to get to the crux of the issue. For political organisations on the left to come together, they must first agree the terms



of what they are coming together for and the point of unity itself. What will they unify around and for what purpose? Is the purpose actionable, and if so, how will it be acted out? These are the questions that must be answered when considering the entire concept of left unity, but instead, this has been turned on its head. In Ireland, screeches for left unity are made when legitimate criticisms are made but there exists no concrete analysis of what the left should show unity on and importantly how it will do so.

Yes, left unity is a great slogan, and is very much needed, but the exact workings of this unity must be figured out. It is my proposition that left unity should be based on issues, rather than abstract calls. Issues such as: housing, trade unions, tenant unions, the national question, anti-fascism, and community work. Groups ought to sit down together and hammer out how they will coordinate it on the subject matter of their co-ordina-

tion. In recent times, the CYM has corresponded with a multitude of organisations, with a view to developing bilateral relations on an issue-based format. We believe this to be the correct manner in promoting left unity, rather than simply shouting about it from the roof tops. It should also be noted that none of the organisations listed included any of the fake left – fifth column groups in Ireland but focused on Socialist Republican and Republican organisations.

Although this is not a blueprint for a new party or national liberation, it is a general overview of some of the issues we experienced and some of the resolutions we came upon and identified. It takes a step in the direction of envisaging what a revolutionary and militant communist party should look like, how it should function and how it should build power in the 21st century. Of course, the only way to put these theoretical positions to the test, is by acting on them and engaging our class. The business of revolution is not

one conducted through secrecy, it is not done through the ballot box and it is certainly not done by refusing to engage with our class outside of specific controlled scenarios. Proletarian revolution in Ireland will come about, but it is not going to come about from book clubs or insulated Trotskyist sects. It will spring forth from militant young people who will keep marching forward regardless of what their self-anointed betters have to say. Should they find no party to graduate into, they'll simply form one themselves. Commitment to anti-imperialism Time and time again, the left is confronted with the jarring issue of whether or not to support colour revolutions around the world. While it may seem obvious what the correct answer may be, unfortunately, mass confusion or deliberate misinformation reigns supreme. The working class in Ireland is regularly confronted with contradictory positions on international issues. The largest proponents of imperialism tend

Only a party which has mastered the Marxist-Leninist theory can confidently advance and lead the working class forward.

The Marxist-Leninist theory must not be regarded as a collection of dogmas, as a catechism, as a symbol of faith to be memorised.

The Marxist-Leninist theory is the science of the working-class movement, the science of the proletarian revolution, the science of the building of the Communist society.

Clearly, in its development it is bound to become enriched by new experience and new knowledge, and some of its propositions and conclusions are bound to change in the course of time, are bound to be replaced by new conclusions and propositions corresponding to the new historical conditions.

The Marxist-Leninist theory is not a dogma but a guide to action.

Joseph Stalin, *History of the CPSU(b)*

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