

# **BASIS OF STRUGGLE**

**For a Nationally Independent  
and Unified  
People's Republic of Ireland**



**British imperialism, get out of Ireland!**

**Impiriúlachas na Breataine,  
bailigh amach as Éirinn!**

## **BASIS OF STRUGGLE FOR A NATIONALLY INDEPENDENT AND UNIFIED PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF IRELAND!**

Released by the National Executive of the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist). Adopted by the Third Consultative Conference of the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist), held on the weekend of the 60th Anniversary of the Easter Uprising, April 17-19, 1976.

This statement is released by the Party based on an assessment of the experience of struggle against British imperialism, especially over the last ten years. The statement is released as a guide for the struggle against British imperialism - the basis for struggle - and also, therefore, as the basis of unity for all the working people of Ireland.

For further information on the Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist), on this statement, or to contact the local branch of the Party in your area, please write to:

Communist Party of Ireland (Marxist-Leninist)  
Central Headquarters,  
10 Upper Exchange Street, Dublin 8.

1. There is only one way forward for the Irish people today: this is to take up the struggle to defeat British imperialism's control of the country and to bring about the establishment of a nationally independent and re-unified country, the People's Republic of Ireland, governed by an alliance of all genuinely patriotic, nationalist and progressive people, and placing the interests of the working class and small farmers at its core. This path is the only way forward because this historical contradiction has been left unresolved and no progress can be made without the solution of this issue. It is the task of this generation of Irish men and women to take up the tradition of the heroic martyrs of 1916 and to carry this struggle to completion. Any hopes of peace, economic prosperity, democracy and solutions to the working people's problems without the elimination of British imperialist domination and of British imperialism's allies in Ireland are mere day-dreaming.

This is why young men and women and older men and women of today have their hopes pinned on the success of this struggle.

2. The defeat of British imperialism is the only path for all Irish men and women to take in order to solve any of the economic, political and cultural, and military problems facing us.

It is tantamount to our future that the widest possible number of people see this struggle as the key link in liberating Ireland and ultimately in emancipating the working class from the bondage of economic and political slavery. Without overthrowing British imperialist domination, the Irish people and the Irish nation will never be re-united; military harrassment, repression and murder will continue; sectarianism and divisions will also continue to be fostered by British and Irish governments; workers, small farmers, small businessmen, professionals and other exploited and oppressed sections of the people will continue to be forced to live under economic hardship or under economic conditions and standards having no bearing on the actual labour they perform and the actual wealth in the country. (This actual wealth is reflected in the massive wealth of a small handful of the Irish capitalist class and in the vast profits made by British imperialism and other foreign imperialist powers out of the Irish people.)

As long as British imperialist domination continues, the labour, land and resources of the Irish people will be used to boost the superprofits of the British imperialists and others, and to increase the wealth of the Unionist bourgeoisie and the entire Irish capitalist class.

3. In order to succeed in this struggle and endeavour of the Irish people, which has been contributed to by every generation of Irish people over the last eight centuries, it is crucial to clearly identify our main enemy and its primary and secondary allies, and to identify clearly the friends and allies of the Irish people.

Ireland is a highly exploited country. It is dominated by British imperialism north and south and exploited also by other imperialist powers including U.S. imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism, Japanese imperialism and the imperialist powers of the EEC, with the most reactionary section of the Irish capitalist class, the Unionist section, opposing every move of the Irish workers and small farmers towards national and class emancipation, and to top all this, the people are thoroughly sold out and betrayed by the so-called 'Irish' section of the Irish capitalist class. (The latter are represented by the SDLP in the north and by Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and the Irish Labour Party in the south.)

Who are our enemies then?

Our enemies are all the foreign imperialist powers who exploit the Irish people to any extent and all members of the Irish ruling class north and south who exploit and oppress the Irish people. But our main enemy is British imperialism and it is against this power that our struggle must be principally directed, because it is British imperialism which dominates the north as a colony and the south as a neo-colony; which maintains the illegal division of the country and through this maintains its "right" to interfere in the internal affairs of the Irish people and to exploit our land and labour. It is also through the division of the country that the British imperialists consistently try to frustrate the attempts of the Irish people to unite to solve the question of Irish national independence and re-unification as a step towards the total emancipation of the Irish working class and small farmers. It is also through British imperialism maintaining the domination of the Irish people (largely through its stepping stone of direct intervention in the north, which actually allows it to dominate the whole country) that other

imperialist powers are facilitated in joining the exploitation, the spoils and the booty of imperialist plunder of Ireland.

Struggle against British imperialism then is the main task, and although we must also be on guard against and ready to oppose other powers with an interest in Ireland - e.g. U.S. imperialism, Soviet social-imperialism and the EEC powers, it is incorrect to consider all the imperialist powers equal enemies in Ireland, or to count the EEC as the main problem. In order to rid Ireland of all imperialist domination, we must sharpen our swords against British imperialism.

4. The principal ally of the British imperialists in exploiting and dividing Ireland is the Unionist section of the Irish bourgeoisie. It is the Unionist bourgeoisie - big land-owners and industrialists with strong ties with the British aristocracy and monopoly capitalist class - that facilitated British imperialism's plans by opposing the move for independence and canvassing for the maintenance of the Union early this century, allowing the British government a way and a means of dividing Ireland and maintaining its presence here. The Unionist bourgeoisie from then to now has continued to be the most ardent ally of the British imperialist masters and, although suffering minor disagreements with the British government, has never suffered any disagreement on the question of blatant opposition to Irish national independence, and to the workers' struggles for emancipation and socialism. The Unionist bourgeoisie has provided the "raison d'etre" for the British presence in Ireland, claiming that this section of the "Irish people" had the right to determine the entire future of the whole country by opting out of a situation they did not desire. It is the Unionist bourgeoisie who have been the advocates of sectarianism, because they had to canvass supporters from the people to form their political organisations and army in order to fight Irish independence. They could hardly do this on an honest basis - i.e. telling people they wanted to maintain the Union because it best suited their economic and profiteering interests, any more than King James and William of Orange could have mustered armies if they had exposed their real aims of power, wealth and control. So, like James and William in their time, the Unionist bourgeoisie appeals to the people on the basis of religion, and deliberately fosters religious bigotry, sectarianism and discrimination in order to serve their own ends.

The Unionist bourgeoisie today is a fascist and sectar-

ian force totally dedicated to British imperialist control and the continuation of the capitalist system in Ireland. They are entirely anti-national, anti-working class, anti-communist and anti-people. Without opposing the Unionist bourgeoisie and their 'state apparatus' and unofficial armies, it will not be possible to succeed in our struggle. It is quite erroneous to think that the Unionist bourgeoisie are our enemies just because they are bigoted and sectarian. They are bigoted and sectarian, but the important thing is that they use this to protect their class interests and it is as class enemies that they and their sectarianism must be opposed.

It is also quite incorrect to consider that because they are "Irish" they are not our enemies, or can be integrated into a new Ireland. The Unionist bourgeoisie were the main force, backed by the British government, which prevented the Irish national revolution achieving complete success in 1921. The rest of the Irish bourgeoisie capitulated in the face of the Unionist opposition and refused to carry the struggle through to the end. Now the Unionists have been institutionalised as a force with their own "state" and the task of the present generation is to carry through that which was not carried through in 1921.

How can Ireland ever be free, and the working class and small farmers emancipated, if a section of the bourgeoisie can simply set up their own state, army etc. in opposition to the people's interests? To sharpen our sword against our main enemies means to sharpen it against British imperialism and the Unionist bourgeoisie.

5. However, whereas the Unionist bourgeoisie is a main enemy, the "protestant" people are friends, not enemies. The "protestant" people in the north are neither our enemies, nor are they a "separate community" or a "different nation" as the imperialist propaganda continually makes out.

Protestant workers and small farmers - actually Presbyterian by descent - were brought here by British imperialism, most of them having suffered great hardship at home (in Scotland and Wales especially), under the hoax that they would have easier lives here. However, they were used as a source of profit just as the native people were, and although gaining sometimes marginally better conditions, mostly in order to foster division between them and the native Irish, (the divide and rule game), their basic situation was

and is no better. They labour in industry, on small farms, in small businesses and as professionals. The Unionists have tried to buy them off and secure them as loyal allies to the capitalist class by allowing a small number more pathways open to them than the native catholics, and although this is bigoted and undemocratic, it is not the main problem. The main problem is not civil rights for catholics but basic rights for all people - i.e. the right not to be exploited, to control the fruit of their own labour, to decide the direction of their own work and lives. It is quite erroneous to think that all so-called "loyalists" - meaning Unionist bourgeoisie and people of protestant religion - are enemies of the Irish national struggle. It is necessary clearly to differentiate the enemy (the Unionist bourgeoisie) from the friends (the people). However, it is also wrong to consider the UDA and UVF as "workers' armies" just because there are workers in them. The UDA and UVF are fascist gangs set up by the Unionist bourgeoisie using the protestant people. They harass and intimidate the protestant and catholic people, carry out sectarian and fascist murders not because sectarianism is their basic programme, but because sectarianism serves their masters - the British imperialists and the Unionist bourgeoisie. To refuse to oppose these armies on the basis that they are "workers" and "Irish" is leaving the Irish struggle completely open to attack.

Our strategy must be to mobilise and unite the entire Irish people - catholic and protestant, north and south, workers and farmers, intellectuals and small business people, men and women, to attack and defeat our main enemies - the British imperialists and their number one ally, the Unionist bourgeoisie. In the course of the struggle anyone who adopts the flag and cause of the invaders must be opposed; we cannot allow our struggle to be liquidated just because "Irish" men or "workers" are mobilised by the enemies for their armies. At the same time, we must work hard to weaken the enemy's support and divide his armies and other apparatus. We must build a united front to include all the people - and exclude the Unionist bourgeoisie.

6. The Unionist section of the bourgeoisie is the most blatantly pro-imperialist section of the Irish capitalists. At the same time, the rest of this class are also the declared enemies of the Irish people and our struggle for national and

class emancipation. Throughout the last century the 'nationalist' bourgeoisie attempted to water down the struggle for complete independence to one for simply more economic and political rights for their class, whilst keeping the workers and peasants down. During this century, it was Murphy and the Irish capitalist class that tried everything to prevent the workers organising themselves into trade unions and fighting for even minimal rights. Since that time the Irish capitalist class has continued - with divisions within it - with the sham of being "nationalist" as opposed to Unionist, whilst being dedicated to the consolidation and expansion of the capitalist system in Ireland and to British imperialist domination.

Although a section of the Irish capitalist class made out that it was against British imperialism and was even prepared to fight to a certain extent, its basic position was as conciliators of British imperialist domination. The Fine Gael section descended from the "Free Staters" and Blueshirts were the more active supporters of British imperialism, and the Fianna Fail, Irish Labour Party and SDLP were the direct conciliators. For example, Fianna Fail have given up all serious attempts to re-unite the country; the Irish Labour Party as it did in 1916, opposes the national struggle and advocates class and national compromise with imperialism, and the SDLP, although prepared to fight for a few years against the undemocratic nature of the Stormont regime, quickly conciliated with the British imperialist government once it got more equal rights in the business, commercial and political fields, rather than becoming identified with the people's movement. All the parties of the Irish capitalist class have practised suppression of the Irish people in the south and have gone along more or less with British imperialist pressure. For example, the passing of the Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act and the Criminal Law (Jurisdiction) Bill.

Therefore, the Irish capitalist class is not an ally but an enemy of the Irish people, and of the national and class struggle of the working people. No faith can be placed in it by the Irish people. It is an enemy of the people, at the same time it can be called a secondary enemy in the sense that certain sections of it are conciliators with British imperialism rather than open allies and still have considerable contradictions with the imperialist government which can and should be used to the advantage of the people's struggle.



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7. The Irish people genuinely desire peace and democracy; at the same time, as long as British imperialism dominates the country, no amount of wishful thinking can bring about peace, democracy or prosperity for the ordinary people.

The only way forward for all Irish people is to take our destiny in our own hands and, organising ourselves to wage a tit-for-tat struggle, against the imperialists, to bring about their total defeat and win total victory for the people.

British imperialism, which is at the root of all our problems, must be defeated and overthrown.

To expect, or to plead with the British government to solve our problems, to provide a Bill of Rights, or to stop sectarianism, ensure peace, democracy or economic prosperity, is like asking the Gods of Plague for a cure. A better life for all Irish people can come about neither by asking the imperialist masters for the cure, nor by "ignoring them" or leaving them and their reactionary intervention and regime alone, whilst looking for a "solution" "elsewhere".

8. The news media of the British and Irish governments always make out that the problem in the north is the sectarianism and divisions between the so-called "two communities". They make out that the Unionists are sectarian and racist, but that British imperialism is the guarantor of peace, "fairness" and "impartiality" and is supposedly non-sectarian.

This is a big lie and a fable, which the British imperialists have created in order to give themselves a standing invitation to interfere in the internal affairs of the Irish people under the hoax of 'peace' and 'justice'. It is under this signboard that the British colonialists entered, enslaved and robbed countries all over the world, from Ireland to India, thereby establishing the British Empire. This empire was actually built on the blood of millions of people and the labour of millions of others. It has meant nothing but hardship to the people all over the world whilst making massive profits for the British ruling class. All this was done under the signboard of "bringing education, christianity and civilisation" to the "uncivilised world". Also, in every country where the British government seized and controlled power, they attempted to set up or play up religious, racial or tribal differences in order to turn the people against one another, thereby keeping their domination safe.

The 'divide and rule' tactics of the imperialists are well known; at the same time, they are still waging a propaganda campaign to make out that the problem in the north is between 'protestants' and 'catholics', between the so-called 'two communities' etc. The Irish bourgeoisie echo this propaganda, talking about the violence which will be unleashed if the army pulls out, thereby going along with the imperialist propaganda that the cause of violence is sectarianism, and not the British army and the British imperialist domination of Ireland.

Another effect of this propaganda is to divert the essentially non-religious and class-based struggle for national independence into an essentially religious one against the "loyalists" and against the Unionist bourgeoisie as the main enemy because of their sectarianism, whilst allowing the British imperialists off the hook as being "impartial".

9. Therefore, struggle - politically, economically, culturally and militarily - against British imperialism and the Unionist bourgeoisie is the central item on the agenda.

This struggle must of necessity be a protracted struggle, to actually defeat and overthrow the enemies by uniting the people. Thoughts of 'quick victory' or a purely military victory are not only highly mistaken, but also totally idealistic, as the only way to actually overthrow British imperialist domination is to win over and unite the entire people north and south and through this to build the organisation to lead the struggle for national independence and unification and for the future government of the People's Republic of Ireland.

10. Getting politically organised is the central issue facing the people now. At the same time it is erroneous to think that all the problems of unifying all the people must be sorted out before any struggle against the enemy is engaged in. It is always necessary to uphold struggle against the enemy in order to defend the people and in order to build their resistance and political organisation as part of the protracted struggle for the final onslaught. Just as the path of all political struggle first, and uniting everyone before engaging in resistance or struggle, is erroneous, so also is the path of engaging in a purely military struggle and winning a quick military victory before "handing over to the politicians."

As James Connolly correctly laid down, the Irish workers need their own party and army in order to participate in and lead the struggle for national independence and unification and ensure that all the successes from the struggle are not allowed to pass into the hands of the national bourgeoisie, who would now as in the past, quickly turn successes into failures and further exclude the Irish working class from taking its rightful place at the helm of the affairs of the People's Republic. It was the national bourgeoisie who took advantage of the war of independence in 1920, and usurped leadership, resulting now in the total betrayal of the people.

Reactionary politics and reactionary violence are the creed of our enemies, and the Irish people's struggle must take up the revolutionary alternative in order to win victory.

To think that our main strategy and tactics should centre on merely 'terrorising' the enemy, forcing him to the conference table and pushing him to withdraw is incorrect, as this idea is based on the tactical weakness and sensibleness of British imperialism, i.e. that they will give up if enough soldiers are killed or enough industries bombed. This, however, is far from the truth. The British government - representing the rich ruling class of Britain - do not basically care how many of their ordinary soldiers are killed, or how many industries are bombed, because the basic interest for their domination and accompanying military intervention is far more thoroughgoing, extensive and crucial to them than that. The enemy is strategically weak, because its goal is totally unjust, but is tactically strong, highly sophisticated and superior in power, military force, control of propaganda, etc.

To think of forcing the enemy to surrender is to underestimate its tactical strength and strategic feebleness, and will leave the people without the necessary strategy to totally defeat the enemy and to establish the alternative government at the moment of victory. To win, it is necessary to organise strategically for the total defeat of the enemy, whilst tactically preparing for a protracted struggle. By engaging in protracted struggle on this basis, it will be possible to unite the people and resist the enemy on a stepwise and systematic basis.

11. In this struggle, the Irish people must unite with the British working class to oppose the common enemy of both

working people – the British monopoly capitalist class. To make the mistake of opposing the British ruling class and people together is to confuse the friends of the Irish people with their enemies, to injure the cause of our class brothers and sisters in Britain for their goal – the overthrow of the British ruling class, and to do serious damage to the success of the Irish people's struggle.

12. The Irish people's struggle for national independence and reunification must take its stand in alignment with other peoples fighting for national liberation, and against imperialist hegemony, aggression and domination, and, through mutual assistance and building ties of friendship, assist the people of other countries and so build the People's Republic of Ireland as part of a new world order where all countries, including small countries like Ireland, can live without fear of imperialist domination and aggression. In this light the Irish people must side with all the oppressed people against the old imperialist order headed by today's two superpowers, U.S. imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, and must side with the Third World countries who are in the forefront of struggle against imperialist hegemony. The People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Albania are important allies in this struggle.

13. The Irish people can only hope to defeat British imperialism by 1) relying on themselves as their own liberators, and 2) working in alliance with the other struggling masses of the world. Therefore, the Irish people must pay attention to the favourability of national conditions, of conditions in the imperialist heartlands, both with regard to the state of decay of the bourgeoisie and the state of development of the revolutionary working class movement, and to the international conditions and balance of forces.

14. In the struggle between the Irish people and British imperialism it is certain that the Irish people will eventually win, because the facts of the matter are on our side and the defeat of British imperialism conforms with the laws of the world. On the side of the Irish people are:

1. that their struggle is just
2. that it is in the interests of the people and

enjoys broad support

3. that the old system of imperialism and capitalism is now expended and can only be replaced by the socialist system.

On the other hand, the "cause" of British imperialism :

1. is totally unjust
2. is opposed to the interests of the people and serves only a tiny minority
3. as a system it is doomed.

Furthermore, the Irish people's demand for independence and reunification enjoys the support of working and oppressed people and progressive countries all over the world, including the British working class and the peoples and nations of the Third World, whilst British imperialism enjoys only the support of the two superpowers and a handful of other imperialist powers, and enjoys little or no support from the people of the world. It is for that reason that the British government vetoes any attempt to bring the case for Irish independence up in the U.N., shamelessly labelling it as "an internal problem of the UK" whilst actually being terror-struck at the support the Irish people's cause would get there.

In terms of its strength, of course, British imperialism has tremendous strength, with the army, courts, police, prison system, propaganda and news media etc. all under its control; but all these institutions, whilst receiving hundreds of millions of pounds from the Exchequer regularly and appearing to be very strong, are in fact wrought with contradictions. Their very existence reveals the weakness, not the strength, of the British imperialist domination of Ireland and the fact is that so unjust and so unpopular is their cause that they have to rely on a heavily financed and controlled propoganda machine to turn out lies and slanders and on a network of state repressive legislation.

All the factors in the war favour the Irish people; only the temporary strength and superior force of British imperialism is the hurdle and it is certain that the Irish people can defeat those forces.

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In this way, the Irish people, who are a heroic, hard-working people with a glorious history of heroic and militant sacrifice and struggle and with a high degree of skills and rich cultural heritage, are bound to win. The land which by right belongs to the Irish people is very rich agriculturally and in resources and it is certain that with the great initiative of the Irish people and the resources of the land, Ireland can be a healthy and economically prosperous country under the government of the People's Republic of Ireland, and the Irish workers and small farmers can for the first time control their own affairs, be masters of the land and achieve economic prosperity, peace and genuine democracy.

**BRITISH IMPERIALISM, GET OUT OF IRELAND!**

**IMPIRIÚLACHAS NA BREATAINE ,  
BAILIGH AMACH AS ÉIRINN!**

**Workers and Small Farmers,  
and all patriotic and oppressed people:-**

**ORGANISE  
FOR A NATIONALLY INDEPENDENT AND UNIFIED  
PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF IRELAND!**



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