

**BRITAIN  
OUT  
OF IRELAND**



**IRELAND  
OUT  
OF THE E.U**



*FOR A WORKERS REPUBLIC  
AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIALISM*



## BRITAIN OUT OF IRELAND

Demographics in the north of Ireland are changing.

Conceived by Britain in 1921 as a gerrymandered state with built in Unionist majority; generational based political shifts in the six counties have presented a scenario wherein for the first time ever, progressive sentiment may tip the balance of public opinion in favour of ending partition itself.

Since its inception, the Irish Republican Socialist Party have challenged and rejected the right of the six-county state to exist in any form, this remains our position today.

In 1998, we opposed the Good Friday Agreement, it's so called 'principle of consent' and the triple lock system which saw the sectarian state known as 'Northern Ireland' consolidated as a quasi-legitimate entity.

Our outlook in this regard remains constant and standing on the platform of anti-imperialism, we remain committed to the dismantling of the British state in Ireland, be that by the utilisation of 'constitutional methods' or outside the confines of the GFA if needs be.

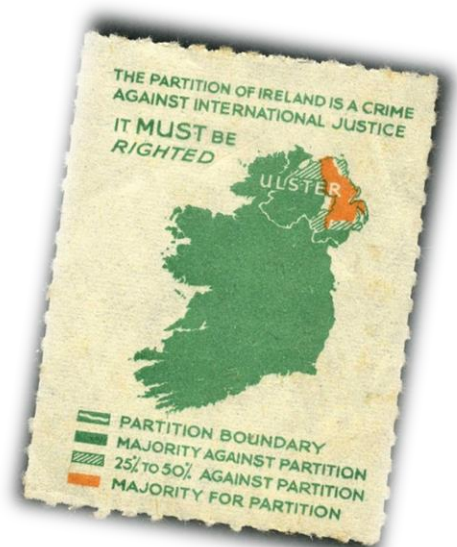
### The case for a 'border poll'

Central to the project of revolutionary change however lies a duty to recognise political and social reality as it exists at every juncture of historical development.

The IRSP have traditionally held a sceptical attitude towards electoral solutions to the British imposed border in Ireland and unlike the parties of mainstream nationalism, we do NOT recognise the Good Friday Agreement's 'principle of consent' which in reality amounts to a reactionary veto on progress towards Irish National Liberation, nor do we believe that there can be any parliamentary road to Socialism.

In the event of any failure to end partition via so called 'constitutional' means, Republican Socialists would be under no more compulsion to recognise the Unionist Veto than we are today, holding that it was founded upon the fraudulent coercion of the Irish people who under a state of duress were compelled to accept the unconstitutional division of Ireland in 1921.

Such a corrupt constitutional set up never has and never will receive recognition from the Irish Republican Socialist Party.



However, the demographic and subsequent political shifts currently being witnessed in the north are occurring at a pace unpredicted by any political party when the Good Friday Agreement was conceived. It is our belief that rising progressive sentiment (particularly amongst our youth) which today seeks an end to partition in our lifetime can conceivably be harnessed to significantly weaken, discredit and eventually play a part in dismantling the sectarian northern state itself.

The fact that this momentum may express itself via the Good Friday Agreement<sup>1</sup> (that is via a ‘border poll’ or unity referendum) presents no ideological or principled difficulty for the IRSP. Progressive popular opinion is of greater revolutionary importance than the past or current programs of any political party and for Republican Socialists to ignore the sentiments of a progressive section of the Irish working class would represent no less than arrogant posturing on our behalf. We have no intention of retreating into such an intellectual morass.



Since our inception ours has been a party that has rejected abstentionism for its own sake, favouring critical engagement with established political institutions, when and where to do so would weaken the power of the state and advance the Irish revolutionary position. Such were the teachings of our founding members James Connolly and Seamus Costello in whose tradition we today stand.

It is the considered opinion of the IRSP that in the current environment, there is more to be gained in actively calling for and campaigning around a ‘border poll’ for an end to the sectarian state than there is to be lost.



Similar initiatives in Scotland and Catalonia have introduced thousands of previously apolitical youths to the concepts and merits of radical politics there, bringing them onto the streets and into the ways of progressive activism, arguably changing the political landscapes and future fortunes of those nations forever.

Thus far, no movement on the left has added their weight to calls for a border poll here, leaving centrist nationalist parties like the SDLP and Sinn Féin free to promote their own concept of a United Ireland; united under the flag of the European Union and so subsequently (and unavoidably) bereft of Socialist principles or values. Such a setup is anathema to Republican Socialism and or even basic principles of Irish independence.

In such a dynamic, it is the duty of the left to intervene, not least to point out the inherent contradictions in a pro-EU/pro-independence position, but to harness and mobilise those who

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<sup>1</sup> Section 2 (1)(iv) GFA.

wish to challenge in a non-violent fashion, the ongoing partition of Ireland, while rejecting the constricted and pro-capitalist values of the EU.

The IRSP understand that the prospect of an immediate and successful outcome in a border poll is not assured, however it is our belief that the mobilising of significant numbers around such an initiative (along with the popular public debate which will undoubtedly follow) may with time set off a popular momentum for Irish unity which cannot be reversed.

We feel that such a prospect, however remote in the immediate term, is vastly more desirable and credible than a return to sporadic armed actions, which in the current environment can offer nothing but a return to suffering for Republicans and the Irish working class in general.

In recognition of the above principles, the IRSP takes this opportunity to call for (at the earliest opportunity) a ‘border poll’ on the issue of partition in Ireland, and declare our intention to campaign pro-actively and from a revolutionary socialist platform for a progressive result, namely an end to partition in Ireland.

### **IRELAND OUT OF EUROPE**

In conjunction with the above proposals however, the IRSP view calls for an independent Ireland within the European Union as a fallacy, those who have made support for the EU a cornerstone of their demands for a United Ireland have chosen to ignore the realities of that institution, whose mechanics render it no less than an economic empire, existing precisely to subject small nations like ours to the demands of international business, to the detriment of national independence and working-class aspirations to economic freedom.

### **EU, an Empire for the rich**

The European Union evolved out of a series of economic<sup>2</sup>, political<sup>3</sup> and military<sup>4</sup> initiatives established under the direction of the United States following world war two.

These projects were specifically designed to crush the growing influence of the international worker’s movement which had spread across Europe following the successful Communist backed partisan struggles against Nazism and Fascism, and sought to restore to Europe a social order (often with the help of former Fascist leaders) in which business interests would take precedence over worker’s rights and progressive national economic measures, providing a bulwark against the Soviet Union and domestic Socialism and an open market for the powerful and wealthy.<sup>5</sup>



<sup>2</sup> <http://marshallfoundation.org/marshall/the-marshall-plan/foreign-assistance-act-1948/>

<sup>3</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3Axy0022>

<sup>4</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Aai0026>

<sup>5</sup> Noam Chomsky, ‘Restoring the Traditional Order’ (1992).

Despite occasional token acknowledgements by the EU of the need to protect human and social rights<sup>6</sup>, (provoked in the main by European and global left-wing protest)<sup>7</sup> the EU has maintained a pro-business/anti-worker ethos to this very day, a fact evident in its constitutional foundations, its statutory declarations and its judicial behaviour, which, albeit to varying degrees, has nevertheless ensured the primacy and prominence of ultra-capitalist interests over the most basic concepts of worker or citizen's rights.

Basing statutes on the principles of 'the four freedoms'; (free movement of establishment, goods, workers and capital)<sup>8</sup> the European Union has presided over a raft of measures which, while gaining backing from capitalist cheerleaders in the White House, the Bank of England and the International Monetary fund (IMF) have seen both a 'race to the bottom' in terms of worker's wages, social welfare and health provisions and the denial to small nations of the right to protect their people from the excesses of global capitalism.

### **EU, an enemy of Worker's Rights**

Claims by mainstream nationalist parties and indeed some Trade Unions that we rely upon the European Union to defend workers' rights are quite simply false, and ignore not only the role which militant struggle has played in achieving such rights<sup>9</sup> but also the persistent efforts made by the EU to destroy them.

In fact, most workers' rights exist despite of the EU and not because of it. Rights such as those protected in the often lauded 'Equal Pay Directive'<sup>10</sup> which were gained first by militant protests on behalf of French workers and were already enshrined in several



European countries who argued that their economies would be put at a comparative disadvantage if the measures were not harmonised with those of other member states in the Treaty of Rome.<sup>11</sup>

Other workers' protective measures such as the 'Working Time Directive'<sup>12</sup> are systematically diluted by the presence of 'opt out clauses'<sup>13</sup>

which due to lobbying power of domestic business are enthusiastically adopted by member states,<sup>14</sup> reducing supposed protective mechanisms to mere token gestures, never disrupting the ability of big business to exploit workers and citizens across the European Union.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the Charter of Fundamental Human Rights, adopted within Article 6(1) TEU.

<sup>7</sup> Catherine Barnard 'the four freedoms' p29.

<sup>8</sup> Article 26, Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.workersliberty.org/story/2008/07/14/real-story-made-dagenham>

<sup>10</sup> Article 141, Treaty of Rome.

<sup>11</sup> 'The Gender Pay Gap - A Literature Review', p. 7 fn. 15, citing Townsend-Smith, *Sex Discrimination in Employment* (London: Sweet and Maxwell, 1989).

<sup>12</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=706&langId=en&intPagelId=205>

<sup>13</sup> [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014\\_2019/documents/empl/dv/empl20150416\\_eurofound\\_wtd\\_/empl20150416\\_eurofound\\_wtd\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2014_2019/documents/empl/dv/empl20150416_eurofound_wtd_/empl20150416_eurofound_wtd_en.pdf)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/maximum-weekly-working-hours/weekly-maximum-working-hours-and-opting-out>

Furthermore, a raft of European measures such as the ‘Posted workers directives’ (PWD)<sup>15</sup> and several decisions taken by the Court of Justice of the European Union since, have made it clear that the laws of the EU exist to gain profits for big business at the expense of both workers from home states and those imported from poorer countries who can be relied upon to work for less than the going wage which had been gained by generations of Trade Union struggle and Labour.

The stark examples demonstrated in the *Laval* and the *Viking Line* cases<sup>16</sup> demonstrate that EU laws and institutions are systematically used to exploit wage differences between workers of different countries, with so called ‘Social dumping’ tactics being declared valid in the Court of Justice of the European Union and subsequently utilised by big business to make home workers redundant, drag down rates of pay and conditions, exploit workers from other countries and undermine Trade Union protections across the board.

Predictably, such EU directives and cases like those mentioned above are further utilised by large companies like British Airways to threaten Trade Unions from taking industrial action for fear of court injunctions and subsequent bankruptcy, as occurred with the BALPA trade union in 2008.<sup>17</sup>



The scope of ‘get out’ derogations contained within apparent worker protection clauses in the various free trade directives like the PWD allow for endless manipulation of loopholes by companies determined to undercut established levels of pay and workers’ rights gained through generations of Labour Struggle. Such as was made possible in the Irish Ferries dispute of 2005,<sup>18</sup> in which that company disgracefully replaced hundreds of workers with low paid eastern European staff recruited from a Cypriot employment agencies having reflagged their boats under the flag of Cyprus.

Such examples demonstrate how feeble claims to worker protections within the EU really are and recent attempts by the largely impotent EU parliament to reform such mechanisms<sup>19</sup> and so limit subsequent social evils such as the practice of so called ‘social dumping’ will undoubtedly result in only further chaos and uncertainty for both Irish and international workers alike as the interests of big business will at most be jostled by calls for social justice, while maintaining the central priority of the

<sup>15</sup> Directive 96/71.

<sup>16</sup> *Laval Un Partneri Ltd v Svenska Byggnadsarbetareförbundet* C-341/05 & *International Transport Workers Federation v Viking Line ABP* C-438/05.

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/document/activities/cont/201107/20110718ATT24274/20110718ATT24274EN.pdf> [5.2].

<sup>18</sup> T. Krings, ‘Irish Ferries, Labour Migration and the Spectre of Displacement’ in M. Corcoran and P. Share, *Belongings: Shaping Identity in Modern Ireland* (Dublin: Institute of Public Administration, 2008).

<sup>19</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=471>

institutions of the European Union. A fact conceded to by the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).<sup>20</sup>

Asides from such direct and blatant statutory attempts to deregulate European trade at the expense of workers' rights, further ultra-capitalist initiatives such as forced austerity programs as demanded by the EU following their arranged bailouts of the banks in countries including Ireland and Greece in 2008 have assured compulsory privatisation and cuts to



already struggling public services providing for massive job losses, further deregulation and across the board attacks on workers' rights, making an undisputable mockery of those who claim that the EU is somehow concerned with the rights of workers or citizens of its member states.

In truth, those within mainstream nationalist parties here who claim that the EU is needed to protect workers' rights, are those (often with interests in cross border business themselves) who are actually content with the prospect of minimal workers' rights.

### **EU and the myth of human rights**

The European Convention of Human Rights<sup>21</sup> was drafted in 1950 by the Council of Europe<sup>22</sup>, a body made up of 48 nations, only 28 of whom are members of the European Union. Many countries (such as Russia) are part of the council of Europe yet remain outside of the EU. When the British conservative party announced plans to explore leaving the EU it simultaneously announced plans to review the Human Rights Act<sup>23</sup> which gave effect to the European Convention Rights in Britain.



This provides supporters of the EU in Ireland and elsewhere an opportunity to suggest that European Human Rights are reliant on membership of the EU, an assertion which is simply not true.

The IRSP asserts that an independent Ireland existing outside of the European Union, could (and should) nevertheless adhere to principles of the European Convention of Human Rights, both via empowering domestic legislation and by reference to the Court of Justice of the European Union. None of which depends upon membership of the EU.

<sup>20</sup> <https://www.etuc.org/press/posted-workers-revision-%E2%80%93-equal-pay-some#.WTI702jyuUI>

<sup>21</sup> [http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention\\_ENG.pdf](http://www.echr.coe.int/Documents/Convention_ENG.pdf)

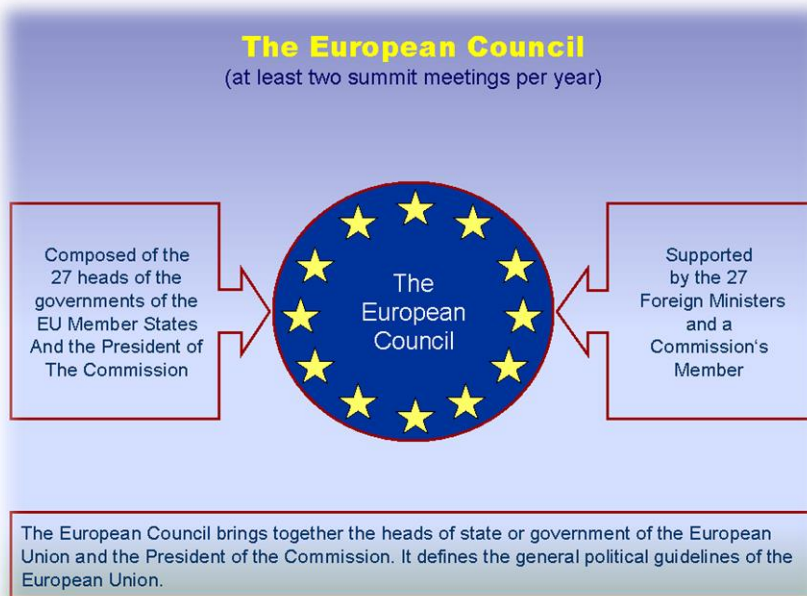
<sup>22</sup> <http://www.coe.int/en/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/contents>

## Irreformable

Claims by the mainstream Nationalist parties such as Sinn Féin and the SDLP to be fighting for a fairer Europe are frivolous nonsense.

The pillars which make the European Union an economic empire for the rich and powerful, (and so prevent member states from implementing progressive policies) are based on treaties which are hardwired into the institutions by requiring unanimous agreement from leaders or representative of all 28 states before they can be changed.<sup>24</sup>



The EU Parliament cannot initiate legislation, real power is wielded by the unelected European Commission who (on the economic advice of the unelected European Central Bank) propose, draft and initiate policy which is then signed off by the European Council of Ministers. MEPs can at the most scrutinise and disagree with the legislative initiative of the Commission and the power of the council.

Should progressive MEPs wish to change the direction of the European Union they would first need to become leaders of own state, then secure a change of government in all other 27 member states, with dissent from just one right wing government being enough to scupper progress.

Whatever the pretences or claims by Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) in Ireland, they are in fact elected to one of the most impotent political institutions in the western world and claims to favour reform of the EU in reality indicate conciliation with the current set up.

### **There can be no Irish Freedom within the EU**

A free Irish nation simply cannot be built on the foundations mentioned above.

To attempt build a 'United Ireland' within the EUs strictly narrow capitalist confines would create mass disillusionment amongst Irish workers along with the marginalised, the sick the vulnerable and the unemployed who would soon realise that the removal of the British presence in the North was at best a political sleight of hand, and that both the financial and political influence of the old oppressor was (along with that of the EU) still infringing upon the rights, hopes and aspirations of the Irish people.

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/voting-system/unanimity/>



In short, a United Ireland within the EU would represent little more than the coming together of two hostile capitalist states on the island, with laws and policy (as in the past) being drafted not in the interests of our long-suffering people, but on behalf of foreign capitalism.

It would be the worst possible start for a united Ireland and fall far short of the vision for which activists, freedom fighters and all who have worked against partition down through the generations have struggled.

Popular arguments suggesting that Ireland relies on EU financial provisions (such as farming subsidies)<sup>25</sup> merely emphasise the fact that the world financial system, of which the EU is a significant block, is grounded in a chaos, wherein some regions - such as South America -



*Larry Goodman receives annual EU farm payments of €483,753.  
The average farmer receives less than €12,000.*

export products like beef, at massive detriment to the environment yet at a cheaper price, while farmers here are subsidised to produce and sell at a lower price, or to not produce at all, all in a system in which wealthy land owners often end up with a windfall for doing very little at the tax payers expense.<sup>26</sup>

Such are the economics of the mad house, and must be replaced by a better system in which produce occurs not for the sake of profit, but for human welfare alone.

In order to correct the many historical imbalances created during centuries of social and economic misrule by both Britain and the 26 County State, a truly free Irish nation (as understood in the traditional Republican sense) would require the radical restructuring of property relations as they currently exist on the island.

A new Ireland will require an unapologetic reclaiming of national resources (gas, oil, fisheries and land) out of the hands of the wealthy to be put to work instead for the public good. This in turn would require a willingness on behalf of the State (hitherto not present) to explore and invest in the technology required to tap into and utilise national gas and oil reserves, as opposed to the current position (as supported by those who would keep us in the EU) which suggests wrongly that Ireland does not have the talent or resources to utilise its own resources in this way.

It will require a radical restructuring and protection of the means of Irish production, distribution and exchange (factories, transport mechanisms and retail methods) under a national program designed with the specific aim of fundamentally reducing the appalling poverty gap which is by now taken for granted in Irish society, instead creating meaningful

<sup>25</sup> [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-13-631\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-631_en.htm)

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.agriculture.gov.ie/agri-foodindustry/euinternationalpolicy/commonagriculturalpolicy/cap/capbeneficiariesdatabase/>

employment which caters for the true material needs of the Irish people, in terms of food, energy, social welfare, health and shelter etc; of ending homelessness altogether and (in as many aspects as possible) raising the living standards of the working class and the poorest in society, contributing to the common welfare of the Irish people in general.

A United Ireland would require a halt to and a reversal of set EU resource quotas as well as



of domestic and foreign privatisation initiatives, with all essential public services being nationalised, reassessed, protected and restructured to serve the interests of the people and not the profiteers, putting an end to the obscenities of a two tier health system, a failing education and transport system and gross (so called) housing shortages in the midst of empty ghost housing estates and the encroachment of private landlords determined to make a

commodity out of what should be a human right.

A socialist republic based upon such measures would, at long last, grant all of our people a stake in their own country, breaking from the capitalist economic system which has till this day reduced Irish workers and citizens to the status of mere economic units, to be used, transported, imported and cast aside by domestic and international business interests.

A socialist society in comparison would grant our people the real ability to shape and contribute to their future interests in both a personal and a collective sense and as such be worthy of the title of a free nation.

Yet such a program (indeed any part of it) would be outlawed and vociferously opposed by the European Union.

A mere cursory glance at the EU's ultra-capitalist 'four pillars' system and how it has been persistently implemented by the combined institutions of the EU, demonstrates how a progressive and free United Ireland would require a complete break from that institution.

### **How would the EU prevent true Irish independence?**

The entire thrust of constitutional, statutory and judicial decision making within the European Union, has (since its inception) been based upon the forced opening of domestic services and markets within member states to powerful private competition from outside.

Article 3 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union<sup>27</sup> states very clearly that any aims to achieve fuller employment levels, social equality or environmental protection, cannot be based around the progressive policies of a free and independent government, but rather within the strict economic confines of a European free trade area which recognises 'a

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<sup>27</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12012M%2FTXT>

highly competitive social market economy’ allowing progress to develop only so far as to where markets are not threatened.

Whatever the rhetoric which accompanies individual EU protection measures (such as agricultural subsidy systems, social development funds or so-called equality directives), all experience and valid academic opinion shows that societies based upon free market strategies are incapable of promoting or protecting the true and permanent welfare of workers, incapable of promoting social and economic equality and incapable of providing basic environmental protection in any form.

In fact, capitalism destroys such progressive aspirations, and those parties who claim to aspire to ‘a more progressive and fair European Union’ have in fact made their peace with the concept of a capitalist Ireland.

Far from allowing a United Ireland to develop policies which would promote the freedom, independence and wellbeing of Irish workers and citizens, the extreme capitalist philosophy of the EU would prevent and outlaw any protective and stabilising economic measures, as it has done so across Europe, in cases as diverse as *SETTG v. Ypourgos Ergasias*<sup>28</sup> (in which it was established that national ‘economic aims’ could not override the free market philosophy) and *Commission v Ireland*<sup>29</sup> in which a basic state backed campaign to encourage Irish shoppers to buy Irish goods (with a view to stemming the mass levels of emigration of Irish youth in the early 1980s) was declared illegal under European law, forcing the state to withdraw support for the campaign and contributing the decline in Irish industry and a continuation of emigration throughout the 1980s.



Crucially, nationalisation measures - vital in bringing back into the control of the Irish people our natural resources, manufacturing bases, transport, housing and health facilities – has been effectively outlawed by Article 106 TFEU which prioritises the interests of European Trade over what the EU refers to as ‘public monopolies’.

Such combined EU restrictions upon a United Ireland would ensure that it would never become what Republicans have traditionally accepted to be a free nation and in fact would be akin to the set up warned of by James Connolly who – speaking of an Ireland which was not Socialist in nature – declared... *‘It would be tantamount to a public declaration that our oppressors had so far succeeded in inoculating us with their perverted conceptions of justice and morality that we had finally decided to accept those conceptions as our own, and no longer needed an alien army to force them upon us’*.<sup>30</sup>

Upon any successful outcome in an Irish border poll, the IRSP would simultaneously and immediately commence campaigning for an Irish withdrawal from the European Union.

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<sup>28</sup> C-398/95

<sup>29</sup> Case 249/81

<sup>30</sup> James Connolly, *Socialism and Nationalism*, (1897).

## The road to the Workers' Republic

The IRSP remain committed to a political program centred upon the combination of class struggle for full worker's control and national liberation itself, this was the position of our founder James Connolly and remains the undiluted position of our party today.

It is the intention of the IRSP to campaign for a merging of all manifestations of the national and class struggles (including the exertion of influence within the Trade Unions, community groups, youth, sporting and cultural bodies) with the demands mentioned above as part of a coherent and targeted approach to securing revolutionary progress in Ireland.

Only a fusion of class and national struggles can achieve meaningful freedom for Ireland, yet the failure of mainstream nationalist parties to recognise this fact – as evidenced by both sentimental and pro-active support for the capitalist structures of the European Union – may someday result in the disastrous prospect of an Ireland united, yet still under the yoke of a self-serving empire determined to exploit the Labour of Irish workers and restrict the true potential of our long suffering nation itself.

It is just such a scenario that we seek to avoid, and have published this document to demonstrate how a United Ireland existing within the exploitative confines of the European Union would fulfil the worst imaginations of James Connolly who forewarned.... *Such action would be neither honourable nor feasible. Let us never forget that he never reaches Heaven who marches thither in the company of the Devil. Let us openly proclaim our faith: the logic of events is with us.*

