

From Socialism Alone Can the Salvation of Ireland Come

Introduction

éirígí is committed to the struggle for a socialist alternative to capitalism.

The capitalist system is a fundamentally profit-driven system which is based upon the exploitation of the working class. Under capitalism, power and wealth are concentrated in the hands of a minority ruling class that profits at the expense of billions of people worldwide, who exist in conditions defined for the most part by hardship, poverty and inequality.

The pursuit of super-profits above all other considerations means that the capitalist system of unplanned commodity production experiences regular cycles of boom and bust. The current global capitalist crisis is but one instance of the cyclical, anarchic and crisis prone nature of capitalism. Given these facts, it can be stated definitively that capitalism is a system which is incompatible with the objective of meeting the needs of the vast majority of people.

éirígí unequivocally asserts that Irish freedom can only be achieved through the establishment of a socialist republic – a republic free from British imperialism and free from capitalist exploitation. Neither British rule nor capitalism can be reformed. In this regard, we are asserting nothing new. However, in doing so, éirígí is consciously and purposely locating itself firmly within this country's revolutionary political tradition. It is a tradition that acknowledges the working class *“as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland”*. That revolutionary tradition once again appeals directly to this class to join the fight for our collective freedom.

For éirígí, socialism is the only viable alternative to capitalism. Control and administration of all wealth and wealth producing processes by the working class in a democratically planned economic system are fundamental conditions of socialism. This requires, as a necessary feature, that all natural resources, wealth producing land, banks, major industry and communication and transportation networks should be under the collective control of the people of Ireland.

An alternative system, however, will not simply come into existence – it must be built. éirígí is committed to the process of revolutionary change in Ireland and to playing its part in securing a new society built upon the principles of equality, solidarity and cooperation. In this, we draw inspiration from revolutionary struggles across the globe. Capitalism recognises no borders and international resistance and solidarity are central to building socialism.

éirígí believes that the socialist republican position contained in this paper has the potential to contribute in a very real way to the struggle for radical economic, political and social change in Ireland.

Part I

“The cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland. The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour. They cannot be dissevered.”

A recurring theme in the history of the Irish republican struggle has been a refusal by many supporters of the national liberation struggle to accept that the class struggle is the source of the national struggle and that the successful resolution of one is impossible without the successful resolution of the other.

Too often, the struggle for social and economic rights has been subordinate to the struggle for national rights. éirígí believes that this represents a fundamentally flawed and reactionary position, which has often led to the struggle for ‘Ireland’ being elevated in importance above, and as something distinct from, the struggle for the interests of the people of Ireland.

There can be no compromise between the capitalist class and the working class, or any question of separating out the question of national liberation from that of class conflict.

Fundamentally, éirígí believes that the root cause of the conflict in Ireland is to be found in the nature of the economic and social relations that have existed for hundreds of years between Ireland and Britain; the history of Anglo-Irish relations is intertwined with the history of the development of the British Empire and of capitalism and imperialism as a global system.

The struggle in Ireland is as much about the nature of the economic and social relations that exist between the people of Ireland as it is about Ireland’s relationship with Britain. We are under no illusion as to the fact that the capitalist class ultimately has no allegiance to anything other than its own class interests. A capitalist from Ireland is essentially no different from a capitalist from England or anywhere else. Throughout history, the servants of capitalism, and its preceding property-based social systems, have utilised the tactic of ‘divide and conquer’ to great effect; confusing and dividing people along ‘national’ and religious lines so as to deflect focus from the exploitative nature of a society based upon social class distinctions.

éirígí’s position vis-à-vis the ‘national’ question, which is set out more comprehensively in the paper entitled *Imperialism – Ireland and Britain*, is that the British military-political interest in Ireland has always been intimately related to securing the interests of the capitalist-imperialist system; the updated, ongoing occupation of the Six County area involving the pro-British puppet-parliament at Stormont and the whole military-security apparatus of paramilitary police, British troops, military installations and intelligence agencies merely reflects the age-old British ruling class objective of securing and defending its interests in Ireland.

It is in this context that éirígí views the contemporary national struggle as being but one front in a much wider struggle against the joint system of capitalism and imperialism that currently dominates in Ireland and throughout the wider world.

The Currents of Revolutionary Thought in Ireland

éirígí identifies exclusively with a revolutionary current that has distinguished itself historically from the predominant conservative nationalist tendency. This current recognises and accepts the essential and inseparable relationship that exists between the national and social struggles. From the Irish Socialist Republican Party to the Irish Citizen Army, to the Republican Congress and, today, éirígí, there have been organised bodies of people throughout Irish history that have dedicated themselves to the radical transformation of economic, social and political relations in Ireland.

This tradition is evident in the work of many of Ireland's most radical thinkers and activists: from William Thompson's pre-Marxian explanation of the exploitative nature of capitalism; to James Fintan Lalor's contention that "*the entire ownership of Ireland – moral and material – is vested of right in the entire people of Ireland*"; to James Connolly's *Labour in Irish History*. They, amongst others, have contributed to the development of a revolutionary Marxist, class-based understanding of the economic, political and social history of Ireland. It was Connolly who most clearly identified both the historical nature of the struggle in Ireland and the complementary nature of both the class struggle and the struggle for national liberation when he argued that:

"The Irish question is a social question, the whole age-long fight of the Irish people against their oppressors resolves itself in the last analysis into a fight for the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production in Ireland."

For National Liberation and Socialism

éirígí is committed not merely to the struggle for the national freedom of Ireland but to the struggle for the creation of a socialist system also. When éirígí declares itself to be a socialist republican organisation, its claim to be socialist is not simply a declaration of the preferred type of post-occupation, post-reunification republic it would wish to see. We are convinced that all major political and social conflict in Ireland and the wider world emanates from the very existence of the capitalist class system.

The basis of all political and social conflict derives from the existence of conflict between opposing class interests. It was so in the past, is so today and will remain so as long as the capitalist system endures. In this context, éirígí asserts its unqualified acceptance of Karl Marx's maxim "*that the history of all hitherto existing societies is the history of class struggles*".

It is éirígí's contention that, in order to understand the centuries old conflict between Britain and Ireland, it is necessary to understand the nature of the system of exploitation at the heart of capitalism. In essence, the historical British colonial political and military presence in Ireland has always been driven by the needs of the British ruling and plundering classes. This remains the case today. The main legacy of that conquest has involved both the

exploitation and oppression of the mass of the people of Ireland and the underdevelopment of its economy.

The Conquest of Ireland

Any objective analysis of the historical relationship between Ireland and Britain clearly demonstrates the exploitative and dominant role that the latter country has always assumed for itself. In particular, the period from the mid-18th Century onwards exemplifies the subservience of indigenous Irish needs to those of a nascent British Empire undergoing an industrial revolution and in need of a plentiful supply of labour, land and raw materials.

Following the crushing of the 1798 rebellion, the British government passed the Act of Union in 1801. The Act of Union had a devastating effect on the development of the Irish economy. With the destruction of Irish manufacturing, Ireland became a supplier of both cheap foodstuffs and cheap labour to the British economy, as well as a market for Britain's commodities. While absentee landlords imposed ever increasing rents on the Irish peasantry, the money accumulated was not reinvested in improving Irish agriculture but, instead, was invested in the British economy.

By the time of the outbreak of the Great Hunger in 1845, almost two-thirds of the Irish population was exclusively reliant on agriculture as a means of subsistence. The laissez faire economics underpinning this period of intense economic exploitation and starvation, from 1845 to 1850, utterly decimated the Irish population. In 1847 alone, 300,000 people died of starvation.

Over a 40-year period, death from starvation and disease as well as mass emigration reduced the total population by one-third: from 8.1 million in 1841 to just five million in 1881. As Irish people starved, the British government refused to prohibit the export of grain out of the country. The 'logic' of capitalism and of the unfettered market prevailed, even at the point of the starvation of millions of Irish people. This was a time, as James Connolly noted, when one million in Ireland "*were sacrificed upon the altar of capitalist thought*".

Industrial Development in Ireland

Notwithstanding the devastation wrought by the Great Hunger, landlords continued to exploit tenants. In the late 1880s, there was a steep rise in the number of evictions: between 1849 and 1852, there were in excess of 50,000 evictions, affecting over 300,000 people.

The enclosure of common land in Britain, which occurred in circumstances of "*ruthless terrorism*" according to Marx, forced the peasantry into the cities and towns in search of employment. In Ireland, however, there was little capital investment in industry, leaving the landless peasantry little option but to emigrate. Consequently, just a few short years after the Great Hunger, in excess of one million people had emigrated from Ireland.

Given the very limited development of industry in Dublin as compared with the

major cities of Britain, employment opportunities in the capital were, by and large, restricted to low-paid unskilled labour. By the early 20th Century, one-quarter of the city's male population were engaged in unskilled labour and one-third of the population lived in the abject poverty of the city's slums.

These conditions were graphically illustrated in the *Report of the Departmental Committee on the Housing Conditions of the Dublin Working Class*, which found that there were 5,322 tenement houses in the city in which 25,822 families resided, which amounted to a total population of 87,305 or approximately one third of the total population of Dublin in 1913. It was found that 78 per cent of families living in tenements houses occupied one room only and that a total of 28,000 citizens of the city were living in conditions that were unfit for human habitation. The militancy of Dublin's working class which burst forth during the 1913 Lockout was forged in the conditions of the city's slums.

While the vast majority of the population was primarily reliant on agriculture during this period, the north-east was booming with industrial development. Almost half of the country's industrial workforce was located there, with Belfast at its heart. The city contained over one-fifth of the country's industrial workers and the linen and shipbuilding industries transformed the city into an industrial powerhouse.

The population of Belfast grew from 75,000 in 1841 to 387,000 in 1911 and, while the importance of linen to the economy declined in the early part of the 20th Century, it had by then developed a diverse economy that included marine and mechanical engineering, distilling and tobacco manufacturing. Shipbuilding was a major source of employment and, by 1914, the Harland and Wolff shipyard alone employed 14,000 men.

The Carnival of Reaction

The contrast between economic development in the north-east and the rest of the country was to have important political implications for the future of the people of Ireland. The rationale behind proposals to partition Ireland was to secure Britain's capitalist interests and divide an increasingly militant working class. In 1914, James Connolly denounced constitutional nationalist politicians who were preparing to agree a deal with the British government to partition Ireland. He correctly predicted that:

“Such a scheme as that agreed to by Redmond and Devlin, the betrayal of the national democracy of industrial Ulster would mean a carnival of reaction both North and South, would set back the wheels of progress, would destroy the oncoming unity of the Irish Labour movement and paralyse all advanced movements whilst it endured.”

Almost a century later, the carnival of reaction continues. Ireland is enmeshed in the global capitalist system, with the political establishment in both Leinster House and Stormont presiding over a system that transfers wealth from workers and the poor to the rich.

While replacing both failed states in Ireland with a unified republic is a primary objective of éirígí, we also acknowledge the reality of the already existing all-Ireland capitalist system. This is a system presided over by a class of gangster politicians, robber bankers, scheming developers, ruthless landlords and other assorted exploiters – a system which must also be overthrown.

It is in this context that we assert the notion of national independence in the absence of socialism is worthless; the Irish capitalist class is as much an enemy of the working people of Ireland as the British political-military establishment is.

Class Struggle

The term *class struggle* most accurately describes the core relationship at the heart of the capitalist system of economic production. Explaining the necessity for invoking the notion of class struggle, James Connolly noted how:

“Socialists are always accused of trying to create ill feeling, to bring about a class struggle, to ‘set class against class’. Of course, the real fact is, we only point out what already exists, analysing the political and industrial institutions under which we live and critically noting the forces which produce them in any given phase. The necessary result of our analysis is to discover that the very basis of society today is a struggle between two classes, the landlord and capitalist who own all the means of production, and the property-less class who are only allowed to use and operate these means of life when it suits the convenience or interest of members of the other class to allow them.”

Capitalism evolved as a consequence of the changes that have taken place in how humans have produced their means of survival throughout history. A key turning point in that history was the advent of economic systems that produced surplus goods above and beyond that which was required to meet the most basic of needs and the subsequent seizure of control of this surplus by a minority. The production of a surplus and its appropriation as profit by a minority has been a defining feature of every subsequent class-based economic system.

Within slave society, the slave had no control over what they produced as the slave was owned by their rulers and worked to meet their ruler’s needs. In feudal society, the serfs were forced to do unpaid work for the local lord just to maintain access to the land, which the serf required in order to produce food and clothing.

From the late 18th Century, the industrial revolution began to transform productive processes, creating previously unimagined levels of wealth. However, it came at a heavy price for peasants who had traditionally lived off the land. Common lands, where peasants had produced their own means of survival, were forcibly enclosed and privatised. The peasantry was forced off the land and into wage labour in the cities. Production moved from land and home to the factory and a new set of social relations developed. Human labour itself became a commodity; in order to survive, workers had to sell their labour

power. Wages were below subsistence levels and workers were forced to live in the most appalling conditions in the newly developing cities.

The fundamental injustice at the heart of this system is exemplified by the fact that, while enormous levels of wealth were being generated, those actually creating the wealth received little benefit from that wealth, not even to the extent that their most basic needs were being met on a satisfactory and sustainable basis. The surplus wealth produced by workers in the form of profits was seized by the wealthy factory owners. A tiny minority of society controlled the means of production: land, factories and machines. As Marx observed:

“The spoliation of the church’s property, the fraudulent alienation of the state domains, the theft of the common lands, the usurpation of the feudal and clan property and its transformation into modern private property under circumstances of ruthless terrorism, all these things were just so many idyllic methods of primitive accumulation. They conquered the field for capitalist agriculture, incorporated the soil into capital, and created for the urban industries the necessary supplies of free and rightless proletarians.”

Capitalism and Commodity Production

Underlying the capitalist class system is a logic and ruthlessness which dictates that everything is to be viewed in terms of its value as a commodity – everything is valued and judged according to the price it can be sold for. The basis of this system is the production of ‘surplus wealth’ – created through the use of ‘wage labour’. Capitalism is clinical in pursuit of its objective of wealth production to such an extent that the very human beings who labour in the production process are viewed as commodities from which profit is to be made.

The class struggle essentially revolves around the struggle to control the surplus wealth created by the working class – the more workers retain of the product of their labour, the less the capitalist class can keep for itself and vice versa. Under capitalism, however, the rules of the game are rigged so that the capitalist class, as the ‘owners’ of capital and employers of the working class, always retain more of the created wealth than do workers themselves.

The champions of the current world order claim that capitalism is the only system that ‘works’. The truth is that the capitalist economic system only ‘works’ in the interests of a minority: those that seek to accumulate ever more profitable amounts of capital at the expense of squeezing evermore painful levels of ‘productivity’ from the worker. This is done so that profits can be invested, not in the interests of society, but in the interest of the capitalist keeping ahead of her/his business rivals, thus increasing future profits, social influence and power.

Capitalist production is not based upon a consideration of the real social needs of people; instead, commodities are produced in a manner that is ultimately socially ruinous because the economy under capitalism is unplanned.

Capitalists invest, not in an orderly and considered way, but rather in those areas only where they believe there is the possibility of generating a profit. One of the fundamental and inevitable problems of capitalism is that the unplanned, mass production of goods reaches a point where so much is produced that there aren't enough people with money in a position to buy the totality of these goods.

This results in a situation whereby workers in 'overproducing' industries are made redundant, further reducing their ability to buy the mass of goods produced in society. Very rapidly, the economy enters a downward spiral – where only a short-time previously, the system was in full swing producing commodities, now it has ground to a halt. What quickly develops is a situation where there are increasing numbers of people with no jobs and no money to buy the things they need at the same time as there are unimaginable quantities of goods stockpiled, denied to the very people who have produced them. The result is invariably a disastrous rupturing of the economic system and the lives of people that depend on employment and wage-labour to survive.

Ahmed Sahwki, writing in 1997 at the height of the then global 'boom', provided but a snapshot of the extent to which the reckless overproduction of privately-owned, for-profit goods occurs under capitalism. At a time when billions of people were forced to go without sufficient food, water, clothing and transport, he wrote of how, in that year alone:

“China manufactured one million men’s shirts a day, joining the glut of 1.5 billion already stashed in warehouses. There [were] also 10 million unsold watches, 20 million extra bicycles, and 100,000 stockpiled autos and other vehicles.”

Global System of Exploitation

Both those who maintain the occupation of the Six-County area and the Irish capitalist class are part of a wider global system of exploiters and plunderers. They are responsible for the creation and maintenance of a world that is more polarised economically and socially now than at any other time in history. The growth of global inequality has been truly astounding. The processes at the heart of the capitalist system underpin a situation whereby humanity as a whole finds itself poised precariously in the balance. Globally, we are experiencing increasingly frequent and dangerous economic, environmental and social disasters of such magnitude that they put the very future of humanity at risk.

The ultimate objective of capitalism is the acquisition of money, which is, under the capitalist system, the ultimate source of social power. To give but the merest indication of the magnitude of wealth accumulated by the capitalist class through exploiting other human beings, the Forbes 400 list estimated the combined wealth of the four hundred wealthiest North American billionaires to be \$1.54 trillion (or \$ 1,540 billion) in 2007.

The process of producing and placing such wealth in the hands of so few has involved the alienation, brutalisation and impoverishment of billions of people

worldwide. The Human Development Reports published by the United Nations consistently highlight the persistence of global poverty and inequality. Currently, 1.2 billion people struggle to survive on US\$1 per day (that is the equivalent of what one dollar would buy in the US, not when converted into a local currency). Meanwhile, the assets of the world's 200 richest people are greater than the combined income of over 40 per cent of humankind.

Even a cursory look at the state of the world in the early years of the 21st Century is enough to illustrate the terrible plight that humanity finds itself in. The following statistics are but a snapshot of the type of conditions that billions of people are forced to endure globally:

- 900,000 children under the age of five die every month from easily preventable disease.
- 1,000,000,000 human beings do not have access to clean drinking water.
- 1,600,000,000 human beings do not have access to electricity.
- 2,500,000,000 human beings do not have access to basic sanitation.
- 3,000,000,000 human beings survive on less than €2 per day.

It is an undeniable fact that the insatiable quest for wealth at the heart of the capitalist system is the primary source of the very real misery and poverty faced by the majority of people throughout the world. Once again, this reality gives lie to the notion that 'capitalism works'.

Despite the appalling levels of poverty and suffering across the globe, institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank are used by the major capitalist powers as an additional tool to ensure that global financial markets and private corporations are facilitated in exploiting the world's resources. This is achieved through the imposition of measures such as 'Structural Adjustment Programmes' on countries that these institutions purport to be assisting. These so-called austerity programmes invariably involve severe cuts in public spending, deregulation and the privatisation of state assets and public services, thus pushing millions of people deeper into poverty. The enforced destruction of the social conditions of workers in Greece is the most recent example of this 'austerity' and 'structural adjustment' model in action.

Capitalism, Crisis and Neo-Liberalism

Recurrent cycles of boom and bust provide clear evidence of the crisis prone nature of capitalism. We have been here many times before. The current capitalist crisis, the most severe since the 1930s, is, of course, nothing new. The oil crisis of the early 1970s and the declining rates of profit during this period resulted in a structural crisis for capitalism. As capital sought new markets in which to invest, neo-liberalism, a hitherto marginal political philosophy, emerged as the saviour of capitalism; prising open new global markets to financial speculation.

The conditions for future capital accumulation were achieved through a series

of measures that became known as the Washington Consensus, which was premised on fiscal discipline, foreign direct investment, financial liberalisation, privatisation, deregulation and trade liberalisation. With the rise to power of Margaret Thatcher in Britain and Ronald Reagan in the United States, neo-liberalism became entrenched across the rich world and provided the ideological tool to break trade union organisation, drive down wages, dismantle the welfare state and to effectively wage war on the working class. Alongside the sell-off of public assets and the introduction of generous tax incentives for private investors, the neo-liberal state created the conditions for a new round of capital accumulation and an inevitable widening of inequality.

The global pattern of deindustrialisation which emerged in the early 1970s led to a significant decline in traditional industries in the Six Counties, particularly shipbuilding, engineering and textiles and a similar decline in manufacturing in the Twenty-Six Counties. The 1980s witnessed a dramatic increase in the rate of unemployment across Ireland, bringing with it serious social consequences for working class communities. The drugs crisis, which continues to have a devastating impact on working class communities across Ireland, commenced during this period.

Boom, Bubble and Bust

The further opening up of the economy in the Twenty-Six Counties in the early 1990s to foreign capital, financiers, speculators and developers was central to the development of the so-called Celtic Tiger economy. By the mid-1990s, the Twenty-Six County economy experienced record levels of growth, averaging 4.7 per cent throughout that period. It was an economy built upon foreign direct investment, attracted by an incredibly low corporation tax rate of just 12.5 per cent. This tax system also allowed multinationals to declare profits in the Twenty-Six Counties which were, in fact, generated elsewhere, thus avoiding much higher rates of corporation tax in the United States, where many of these companies were based.

Land speculation and property development by native capitalists was facilitated by successive Dublin governments. A series of measures were introduced, including Section 23 and Section 25 tax breaks for developers, while capital gains tax was halved from 40 per cent to 20 per cent. Not satisfied with this, Fianna Fáil also introduced measures allowing rich capitalists to declare tax exile status so long as they lived outside of the state for 183 days per year. Thus, alongside a completely deregulated financial sector, the 'Celtic Tiger' provided a profit boon for capitalists.

While the 'Celtic Tiger' provided windfall profits for capitalists, those reliant upon public services did not share in the boom. The total tax take in the Twenty-Six Counties was just 30 per cent of GDP, as compared with a European Union average of 40 per cent. With such a low tax economy, investment in public services did not match the apparent growth in the economy. In 2007, the year before the collapse in the economy, Dublin government spending as a percentage of GDP was just 26.2 per cent. Those most reliant on public services felt the effects most keenly.

Workers were sold 'wage restraint', in return for lower taxes, by a trade union leadership keen to maintain a place at the social partnership table. Yet, while direct tax on wages was, indeed, reduced, wages did not increase at the same rate as profits. Furthermore, workers faced a series of additional and increasing 'stealth taxes', such as waste collection charges, private GP and prescription charges, medical insurance, private childcare costs and private toll road charges – all of which were imposed to make up for the poor investment in public services.

The reality of the Celtic Tiger era was that workers subsidised tax breaks for the capitalist class while having to endure diminishing public service provision, most evident in the two-tier health care system. Meanwhile, the availability of seemingly cheap credit and the willingness of banks to feed the credit bubble and property market created an illusion of prosperity. The economic recession, however, has brought that illusion crashing down.

Understanding the mechanisms at the heart of capitalism is the key to understanding how an economy can go from 'Celtic Tiger' to 'Celtic Nightmare' almost overnight. It is the key to explaining the capitalist cycle of boom, bubble and bust, and to understanding the economic and social instability and chaos that is an essential characteristic of capitalism. Most importantly of all for the working class, understanding how the system works is essential to understanding how workers can be discarded and forced onto the dole queues.

Under the contradictions of this system, all that appeared to be stable is now destroyed. The relative advances made by workers under periods of capitalist boom are exposed as an illusion. Unemployment, further reduced wages and the increased impoverishment of the working class occur at the same time as more and more wealth is further concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. Meanwhile, access to what is an overabundance of material goods, far in excess of that necessary to make every human being on this planet materially secure, is denied to more and more people.

The sharpening of inequality between the rich and poor countries of the world also extends to the living environment. The capitalist system is responsible for the destruction and degradation of the global environment as the ever increasing consumption of non-renewable resources in the rich world has led to rising temperatures and the widespread pollution of the air, rivers and oceans. Yet, those living in poorer countries, who consume much lower levels of non-renewable resources, are being adversely affected by the destructive nature of global climate change.

Ultimately, the rapacious nature of capitalism's relationship with nature may see to it that the ultimate human tragedy, i.e. extinction, does occur. The consequences of the rise in global temperatures for those living in poorer countries are tragically evident: increased levels of both flooding and drought, leading to further food and water shortages. Millions of people in poor countries are literally dying so that capitalism can survive; economic exploitation means that the resources needed to offset the impact of these natural disasters are not

made available

This, then, is the legacy of several hundred years of capitalism: a predatory system in which the rich accumulate their wealth from the labour of the working class. It is a system that only works in the interests of the minority. The evidence that global capitalism has been a catastrophe for the vast bulk of humanity that labours and suffers under its weight is overwhelming. The construction of an alternative social system in which people and not profit margins are masters is imperative.

Part II

Socialism - The Only Viable Alternative

As workers and communities across the globe continue to experience the crushing effects of the most recent economic crash, the reality that the capitalist system is contrary to the interests of the working class has been brought into stark relief. In the final analysis, everything about the capitalist mode of production and the type of social relations that exist under this system makes it contrary to the very notion of progress. The political establishment across Ireland has upheld and supported a capitalist system that has resulted in a sharpening of inequality in both states. Neither the withdrawal of the British administration from the Twenty-Six Counties in 1922, nor the much-heralded devolution in the Six Counties in more recent times, has made a material difference to the lives of the working class.

Political change, in the absence of fundamental and democratic change in the economic organisation of society, serves only to maintain class and power differences. The evidence since the partition of Ireland simply confirms this fact. Successive Dublin governments, since the foundation of the Free State in 1922, have placed the interests of a minority ahead of those of the majority, proof positive if ever it were needed, of Connolly's assertion that the substitution of British for Irish flags and armies in the absence of the establishment of a Socialist Republic invariably leads to nothing other than a continuation of class domination.

Yet, the political establishment would have people believe that there is no alternative. No alternative to unemployment. No alternative to cuts in wages. No alternative to bailing out banks. No alternative to cutbacks in public services. No alternative to privatisation. No alternative to poverty and inequality. The 'solution' to the capitalist crisis offered by the political establishment in Ireland is to administer an even stronger dose of the neo-liberal policies that have already wrought havoc on workers and their communities. Both political administrations in Ireland have initiated savage public sector cutbacks in an attempt to rescue a failed capitalist system. Once again, the poor are being made pay for the greed of the rich.

But there is an alternative, one in which the people and not profit are masters. That alternative is socialism.

Socialism: The Liberation of All

Socialism is a philosophy of economic, social and political organisation that is the basis for the liberation of all peoples. Whereas capitalism results in inequality and exploitation, socialism offers the only hope of realising the goal of a society based upon the principles of liberty, equality and solidarity. The possibilities inherent in revolutionary socialism offer a way to conceive of how humankind might actually be saved from the effects of the recurring political and social crises that beset society under capitalism.

When éirígí declares itself to be republican it does so because the Irish Republic declared in 1916 was one that proclaimed the right of the people to the ownership of Ireland and to the sovereign, indefeasible, and unfettered control of Irish destinies. When éirígí declares itself to be republican it does so because it interprets the ownership of Ireland by the people of Ireland to mean the ownership of Ireland by the working majority, who alone are capable of producing and sustaining the economic conditions necessary to meet the needs of all the people who inhabit this small island.

We are at one with Pádraig Pearse in his assertion that *“the right of property is not good against the common welfare of the people”*. Furthermore, éirígí upholds the position outlined in the 1919 Democratic Programme of the First Dáil, which holds that the people of Ireland have the right *“to the ownership and control of the nation’s soil and resources, all the wealth and wealth producing processes within the nation”*. We state therefore that the republican notion of ownership of the nation’s wealth and wealth producing processes requires that all natural resources, wealth producing land, banks, major industry and communication and transport networks should be under the collective control of the people of Ireland.

Democratic Control of Productive Processes

To talk of ‘democracy’ in the absence of democratic control over the economic productive processes in society is meaningless. This condition is essential to the establishment of a system that can meet the needs of working people. James Connolly’s conception of socialism as being defined by *“ownership by the State of all the land and materials for labour, combined with the co-operative control by the workers of such land and materials”* is essentially the definition of socialism that éirígí adheres to. Only a system of democratic control of the productive processes by the working masses, in a democratically planned economy, can guarantee sustainable economic development and the resources necessary for society to provide for the totality of the needs of its people. The wealth of the nation must be used for the maintenance and development of the nation.

Public control of all wealth and wealth producing processes plus democratic control by the working class are fundamental conditions of socialism. The establishment of a society based upon the principles of sovereignty, democracy, liberty, justice, equality, community and international solidarity is impossible if it is not based upon a society where there is economic democracy. It is simply not possible for private banking, stock exchanges and insurance corporations to exist without the exploitation of the working class. Nor is it possible for the institutions of private capital to create a stable economic and social framework in which the advancement of humankind is paramount.

The global economic crash has demonstrated in very stark terms that private for-profit banking does not work in the interests of the majority of society. It is a system whose singular focus is on speculative investment and ‘shareholder value’. éirígí believes that state and worker control of the banking system is

essential to the democratic planning of the economy and the development of a society which functions in the interests of its people, not private profit.

Reclaiming the Commons – An Economy For the People

The ‘enclosure of the commons’, which was central to the development of the capitalist system, saw collectively owned lands appropriated, thus denying access to the commons and forcing the peasantry to sell their labour power to capitalists in order to survive. This process of accumulation, however, did not end with the enclosure of the commons and the commodification of labour power. The ‘enclosure’ of the public realm is an ongoing process, which has accelerated with neo-liberalism and its twin pillars of privatisation and liberalisation of markets. Class robbery, in the form of the appropriation of land and labour power, has been extended to include minerals, energy supplies, public services, water, transport and communication networks, knowledge and even life forms. All have been plundered in the interests of private profit.

Like all capitalist economies, Ireland’s wealth and wealth-producing resources are largely owned and controlled by a combination of multinational and domestic corporations and individuals. Ireland’s financial sector, including its banks, insurance companies and stock brokerages, are controlled by a privileged golden circle, who accrue huge personal wealth at the expense of the rest of the population. The country’s hydro-carbon and mineral resources are owned and exploited by private corporations such as Shell and Boliden. Ireland’s rich agricultural and fisheries potential have been squandered to the point of destruction, with production and margins now determined by a handful of supermarket giants such as Tesco and Dunnes Stores.

Ireland’s pharmaceutical and information & technology sectors are almost completely dependent on the whims of a handful of United States-based corporations such as Pfizer, Hewlett Packard and Intel. Much of the research and knowledge that is developed within Ireland’s universities is owned and patented by these multinationals. The reclaiming of these resources by the working class is a necessary prerequisite to the development of a democratic and socialist economy.

Ireland’s economic future should be built on the sustainable exploitation of its extensive natural resources, the revitalising of its construction, manufacturing, food and services sectors and the development of equitable trading links with other countries. With its young, well-educated population and an abundance of real and potential economic wealth, Ireland is well positioned for the creation of a new, stable, vibrant, worker-controlled, socialist economy.

Such an economy would serve the interests of the people: providing full employment and a guaranteed living wage, quality healthcare, education, housing and public transport, a clean and safe environment and an equitable share of wealth.

Within a democratic, socialist economy, all natural resources, wealth producing land, banks, major industry and communication and transportation networks

would come under the collective control of the people of Ireland, with the bulk of all economic activity being concentrated in state and semi-state agencies, working alongside worker controlled co-operatives and social enterprises. When combined with a progressive taxation system, this economic model would, over time, lead to the gradual erosion of Ireland's centuries old class-based system, resulting in a republic which would genuinely cherish 'all the children of the nation equally'.

Financial Sector

All economies need a stable financial sector in order for banking, insurance and other financial services to serve as a platform upon which the rest of the economy can be built. The devastation wrought by the current financial crisis has demonstrated all too clearly the social and economic dangers of an economy being solely reliant on private financiers. In order for an economy to function in a democratic fashion, it is imperative that the financial sector be under public control.

Within the capitalist system, the financial sector is controlled by a wealthy elite, who are motivated by profit alone. This creates an inherently unplanned, chaotic and unstable system, which is prone to cyclical collapse. In contrast, a publicly controlled financial sector, motivated by wider societal considerations would have stability and long-term planning as its defining characteristics.

A publicly owned and controlled financial system would provide credit at low rates of interest and cheap insurance, as well as a secure place for those wishing to save their money or lodge pension funds. Such a financial system would be run openly and democratically on behalf of the entire society, ending the highly secretive culture of the current private financial system.

A working example of community controlled democratic financing already exists in the form of the extensive network of credit unions that exist across Ireland. This model could be easily extended to provide financial services such as credit for workers' co-operatives and private home loans. Other financial services could be provided by state banks, state insurance companies and other democratic financial institutions.

Construction, Manufacturing and Services

Over the last 20 years, the Irish economy has developed in a precarious and uneven manner, becoming overly dependent on property speculation and foreign direct investment. The recent construction boom was based upon an unsustainable property market, which saw prices rapidly rise before spectacularly collapsing.

A knock on effect of the property bubble saw massive growth in property-related activities such as estate agencies, property speculation, banking and other financial services. At the peak of the boom, up to a quarter of all economic activity and employment in the Twenty-Six Counties was linked to construction and the property market. The folly of this situation has now been fully exposed, at a huge cost to the entire Irish nation.

The regimes in both the Six and Twenty-Six Counties have prioritised the attraction of foreign direct investment in order to grow their respective economies, to the detriment of virtually all other forms of industrial development. Foreign multinationals have been provided with massive state subsidies to locate in Ireland, been granted access to a young and educated workforce across Ireland and, in the Twenty-Six Counties, they have benefited from one of the lowest rates of corporation tax in Europe.

While these multinationals do provide jobs, many of them are low paid. The vast majority of these companies refuse to recognise trade unions and repatriate the bulk of their profits to their home countries. The presence of these companies has also served to distort the rate of growth in the Twenty-Six County economy, as profits generated elsewhere are transferred to the Twenty-Six Counties so as to benefit from the state's generous rate of corporation tax. It is a simple fact that those multinationals will relocate out of Ireland should they identify the possibility of a more profitable location as demonstrated, most spectacularly, by Dell in 2009.

If Ireland is to avoid future recessions of the type that is currently engulfing the country there will need to be a fundamental realignment of how the construction, manufacturing, food and services sectors are organised. Within a democratically planned economic model, the potential for property bubbles would be removed, with the efforts of the publicly owned construction industry focused on the basis of the needs of the people and communities, not the whims of developers and speculators.

Similarly, the resources and energies of government and state agencies would be deployed to assist the development of the indigenous manufacturing and services sectors. Particular support would be given to community and workers' co-operative based enterprises operating in sustainable areas such as tourism, the arts, alternative energy and high value manufacturing. Such support could include the provision of low interest financing and premises along with worker-training.

Ireland's educated and experienced workforce would be utilised through the state supporting the creation of a large number of start-up worker-controlled enterprises focused on research and development in sectors such as information technology, pharmaceutical and chemicals. With time, such an investment could lead to the development of substantial manufacturing operations in these sectors.

National Infrastructure

The respective administrations in both the Six and Twenty-Six Counties have enthusiastically embraced the privatisation of the physical infrastructure of the nation. Through Public Private Partnerships, Private Finance Initiatives and other mechanisms, private corporations are incrementally taking control of all aspects of the national infrastructure. Schools, hospitals, motorways, railways and energy networks are just some examples of the types of infrastructure that are now routinely built, owned and managed by private corporations.

It is simply not possible for a democratic economy or a democratic society to exist in a situation where the national infrastructure is controlled by private capital. Within an Irish socialist economy, all major national infrastructure, including transport, communication and energy networks, as well as schools and hospitals, would all be collectively owned and democratically operated.

Hydrocarbon and Mineral Reserves

The Dublin government estimates that Ireland's oil and gas reserves are worth hundreds of billions of euro, with the value of these reserves set to rise as the world's oil and gas reserves diminish. Ireland also has considerable proven reserves of minerals, such as lead and zinc, with the potential for more reserves to be discovered.

Under the current system all of these hydrocarbon and mineral reserves are owned by private domestic and multinational corporations, with the people of Ireland accruing virtually no benefit from the exploitation of these resources. Within a socialist economy all of these reserves would be taken into public ownership via the creation of new state exploration and development company, which would be tasked with developing the skills necessary to exploit these resources in an environmentally and economically sustainable manner.

In the case of hydrocarbons, a portion of the created wealth would be invested in the development of alternative energy sources such as wind, tidal and hydro, of which Ireland has an immense supply. The focused development of such emergent technologies could potentially position Ireland as a world leader in the research, design, development and manufacture of the energy technology that will be required to fill the energy gap created by the ending of the oil age.

A Democratic Knowledge Economy

In recent years, there has been much hype about the so-called knowledge-based economy. This debate is, however, framed within the context of serving the needs of private capital, with the state providing subsidies and tax breaks for multinationals. The knowledge that is being created by Ireland's workforce, within its universities and across the information technology; pharmaceuticals, medicine and bio-technology sectors is being utilised to create vast profits for multinational corporations and not for the greater good of the people of Ireland.

Within a socialist economic model, such knowledge would be publicly owned and controlled, to be used for the benefit of humanity at large. Further development of Ireland's research and development capacity will require significant investment in all levels of education and the ending of the practice of private patenting of knowledge created within the country's universities.

Farming, Food, Fisheries and Forestry

With some of the most fertile land in the world, Ireland has a rich farming tradition, and, yet, across the country, the numbers of people employed in farming and food production continues to decline. Average farm sizes have steadily increased as smaller farmers have been forced out of farming. The margins for food production continue to be squeezed by supermarket chains

demanding more for less, making farming economically unviable for increasing numbers of farming families.

If farming and food production is to remain a major sector within the Irish economy, radical change will be required. Under the current regime, food is seen as simply another commodity to be produced as cheaply as possible and sold to the highest bidder. But food should not be a commodity; access to high quality, safe food, at an affordable price is a basic human right. This should be the basis upon which Ireland's farming and food processing sectors are built.

Under a new democratic economy, Ireland's farming and food sector would be focused on delivering high quality, safe food to the people of Ireland and overseas at an affordable price. This would be achieved by cutting out the exorbitant profits of the supermarket chains and creating more direct lines of supply from farm to the kitchen table. By supporting farming co-operatives, farmers markets and indigenous food processing enterprises, the state could reverse the recent decline in the agricultural sector.

Tens of billions of euros' worth of fish have been taken from Irish waters since 1973, when the Twenty-Six Counties joined the EU. The majority of these fish have been landed by the fishing vessels of other EU member states. The full cost of the selling out of Irish fishing rights must be measured not only in the value of the fish but also in the revenue and employment potential that has been foregone in the food processing and tourism sectors. Reasserting Ireland's fishing rights would therefore allow for the development of a sustainable Irish fishing industry, creating employment at sea, in the food processing sector and in tourism.

At just 10 per cent, Ireland has one of the lowest levels of forest cover in Europe, despite the fact that the country has one of the most favourable climates in Europe for forestry growth. Significantly increasing the levels of forest cover will have huge economic, employment, environmental and social benefits. Within a socialist economy, the forests of Ireland would be owned and controlled by the people of Ireland, to be exploited in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.

Putting the Rights of Citizens Before the Rights of Capital

The manner in which society is organised, economically and socially, under capitalism makes it inimical to the rights of people; the rights of human beings are subservient to the needs of capital and, as such, people's rights can be, and regularly are, dispensed with when the profit-based needs of the system dictate. Domination is the cause of the denial of people's rights. Ultimately, domination and exploitation whether that be of women, ethnic groups or nations, flows directly from class domination. The fact that women, for instance, continue to suffer discrimination in the workplace, receive lower rates of pay and encounter less opportunities for promotion is a direct outworking of a male dominated, patriarchal society and provides clear-cut confirmation of the divisive and socially polarising dynamics at the heart of capitalism.

Notwithstanding the fact of conflict between the rights of people and profits that underlies the capitalist system, generations of workers have struggled to win relative advances both in the workplace and in securing access to housing, healthcare and education. The proponents of neo-liberalism have sought to roll back these advances and to drive down the wages and conditions of workers and to increasingly open up health, housing and education to the market. This agenda must be vigorously resisted and overcome. éirígí believes that working conditions should be enhanced and protected and that universal access to healthcare, education and high quality housing should be fundamental rights of all citizens.

Alongside the collective control of Ireland's natural resources, wealth producing land, banks, major industry and communication and transport networks, éirígí believes that the state should provide a guaranteed right to a job and the right of workers to organise in trade unions. Furthermore, we believe that the working week could and should be reduced significantly without any consequent loss in pay from the current standard 40-hour week. Advances in technology should be used to release workers from the burden of work as opposed to generating ever greater levels of profit for the ruling class.

On both sides of the British-imposed border, access to quality healthcare is also dependent on an individual's income. The running down of public health service provision and the introduction of a two-tiered healthcare system, based upon the neo-liberal idea of limited state provision in a predominating private, for-profit healthcare 'market', has resulted in the denial of access to quick and effective treatment to those without private medical insurance. A truly universal and accessible public healthcare system must be constructed in place of the current two-tier system. Furthermore, there must be significant investment in preventative healthcare and community-based primary health care facilities.

Alongside a revolution in the provision of healthcare, the creation of a universal and free lifetime education system shall form a central component of a new socialist Ireland. Such a system would extend from pre-school to university and beyond. The current practice of organising education based upon the needs of capital, and the market, denies the fostering of the creative talents of all for the benefit of society as a whole. State subsidies for private education alongside religious control over any aspect of educational provision would also be ended within a new education system.

In recent years, housing policy across Ireland has seen the incremental sell-off of the public housing stock, the opening up of the housing market to private speculators and developers, and a significant reduction in state investment in public housing provision. Land speculation has resulted in the exponential rise in house prices, while the use of Public Private Partnerships in community regeneration programmes in the Twenty-Six Counties has resulted in working class communities being abandoned to the vagaries of the market. Housing policy should not be directed towards creating profits for property developers and speculators, rather it should be rooted in the needs of people and the sustainability of communities. This requires significant investment in public housing, the active involvement of communities in planning sustainable

community life, investment in local services and facilities, and the immediate ending of state subsidies to developers and landlords.

Organising the Resistance

It is clear that the economic and political establishment in Ireland has declared war on the working class. The massed ranks of organised capitalism must be met with determined and organised resistance. Workers and communities across Ireland have led the way in refusing to bend the knee to the onward march of capitalism. From workplace occupations, to strike action; from local community struggles against cut backs in services to resistance to multinational oil corporations; on the streets and in the workplace the fight back is ongoing.

It is through these grassroots struggles that the foundations of a new socialist society will be created. The organising of resistance is essential, as the contradictions inherent within the capitalist system, so cruelly exposed during the course of this current crisis, will not, in and of themselves, bring about the collapse of capitalism.

History has demonstrated that the fact of living in poverty is not enough to condemn the capitalist system of labour and social exploitation to the dustbin of history. Throughout history, the overwhelming majority of humankind has lived under conditions of poverty and exploitation. As the Russian revolutionary leader VI Lenin observed:

“Oppression alone, no matter how great, does not always give rise to a revolutionary situation in a country. In most cases it is not enough for revolution that the lower classes should not want to live in the old ways.”

The state under capitalism is a formidable entity. The political establishment of the modern state, in its guise as a committee for managing the common affairs of the ruling class, does not brook tamely its responsibility to defend the interests of capital. The capitalist state has many and varied means at its disposal to assist it in this. Where possible, the ‘consent’ of the people to accept a social system contrary to their interests is manufactured by way of the promotion of an ideology that equates the values and morals of capitalism with ‘common sense’ and the notion that capitalism somehow reflects the ‘natural’ order of things. In the absence of ‘consent’, any significant threat to the dominance of the capitalist system will be met with force and state repression.

The construction of a socialist alternative will not be an easy task. It will require, as Lenin further noted, *“that the upper classes should be unable to rule and govern in the old way”*. This will require the building of widespread organised resistance, dedicated to the overthrow of the capitalist system. Fundamental economic, social and political change will only come about through the massed and organised mobilisation of workers and communities in struggle.

It is through these struggles that the capitalist system will be uprooted and the basis for the future organisation of society laid: a society based upon co-

operation and genuine participative democracy. Thus, for éirígí, the only viable alternative to the problems faced by Ireland is a Democratic Socialist Republic. As James Connolly correctly argued, this will never be realised:

“Except by a revolutionary party that proceeds upon the premise that the capitalist and the landlord classes in town and country in Ireland are criminal accomplices with the British government, in the enslavement and subjection of the nation. Such a revolutionary party must be socialist, and from socialism alone can the salvation of Ireland come.”

For a Truly Democratic Society

The supposedly democratic institutions of both states in Ireland are a sham, offering neither real opposition to capitalism nor democratic accountability to the people. An example of how a political system places private business interests above those of the people was the decision of the Dublin government to simultaneously establish NAMA and bailout the private banks. Both of these decisions, which burdens the population in the Twenty-Six Counties with massive debt to private banks for generations to come, demonstrates the fallacy of the notion of democracy in capitalist society.

Meanwhile, secret negotiations conducted between political parties in the Six County assembly and the British and Twenty-Six County governments takes power further away from communities and leaves them vulnerable to the strategic interests of the parties who claim to represent them. Liberal democratic institutions will not change the fundamental nature of the capitalist system and are incapable of delivering a truly participative democracy.

The development of fully participative democratic alternative community structures will provide the foundations upon which a new and truly democratic society will be built. As Marx pointed out, the experience of the Paris Commune in 1871 demonstrated that *“the working class cannot simply lay hold of the ready-made state machinery and wield it for its own purpose”*. The working class must build its own, new and democratic institutions – institutions that might finally transform the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland from an aspiration to a reality. By its very nature, such a people’s republic, if it is to be truly free, must be one without landlords, private bankers and capitalists and one based on principles of democracy, co-operation and solidarity.

Socialism and Internationalism

In its fullest sense, the struggle for socialism can only be achieved through an internationalist struggle: a struggle in which those forces intent on smashing the global capitalist system stand in global solidarity. Irish democratic socialist republicanism is internationalist; if the problem is global, then so must be the solution. It is the philosophy and practice of imperialism that is the ultimate cause of global social suffering, misery and war. The defeat of British imperialism in Ireland is therefore intimately connected to the defeat of imperialism globally.

Until very recently, the enemies of socialism had rejoiced in the mantra that the end of socialism equals the victory of capitalism equals the end of history. The current crisis of the capitalist system has once again clearly demonstrated that history has not ended. Every day, we see that the global capitalist system is in an ever-deeper crisis. The only way for capitalism to emerge from crisis is to administer a global dose of economic 'shock therapy' with which to prepare and pave the way for another round of exploitation and money-making.

This is evident in the response of both administrations in Ireland, who have imposed massive cuts to public spending and proposed the further privatisation of public services. This might be the manner in which the vested interests of capitalism see 'recovery' occurring, but, for the working class, the lessons of the most recent cycle of boom, bubble and bust clearly demonstrates that there is no future for humanity on the basis of capitalism.

Far from being a 'dead' ideology and political proposition, more and more countries and peoples are coming to understand the need for socialist-oriented economic and political alternatives to the capitalist agenda. Increasingly, peoples across the globe are rejecting ideologies and systems that institutionalise inequality, exploitation, poverty and the unending miseries that capitalism foists upon humanity.

In Latin America in particular, alongside the revolutionary Republic of Cuba, new and progressive 'bottom up' and participative social movements and incipient socialist projects, that involve people in democratising economic and political power, are very much in evidence. They are not just about taking over existing power structures but transforming existing ideas about how power itself should be used. Fundamentally, these movements are motivated by the idea that power is built from the grassroots upwards and that it must be embedded in and of the community and the people.

Rise Up!

The choice facing the working class is not that between different forms of capitalism; whether it is naked neo-liberalism or the 'capitalism with a conscience' of social democracy. As a revolutionary movement, éirígí's primary task at this stage in the struggle for freedom is to continue to highlight that neither formula is capable of serving the long-term interests of the working class. As proponents of revolutionary socialism, éirígí acts, where possible, as an organiser of the people and carries out only those actions which defend and advance their interests.

Based upon éirígí's understanding of the inseparable nature of the national and social struggles, this must involve agitating on a whole range of issues, including the national question and the immediate objective of better working, living and social conditions for the working class. It is for revolutionaries to show the people that their real enemies are their landlords, exploiters and those who keep a part of this country under political and military occupation.

In Ireland and internationally, socialism must be built; a socialist republic will not simply come into being – it must be built from the ground up. The Irish people's efforts to build a system based upon socialist principles must be grounded upon the fundamental principle of ownership by the people of the processes involved. That means socialism can only be built and sustained by the active participation of the masses in the very act of its construction and administration.

On a daily basis, it becomes clearer and clearer that the vision of the 1916 Proclamation remains just that – a vision. It is evident that the most important aspect of the liberation of Ireland – the liberation of its people – is impossible under capitalism. The chasm that exists between the intent, spirit and letter of the 1919 Democratic Programme of the First Dáil and that of every subsequent programme for government in the Twenty-Six Counties and, of late, in the Stormont assembly grows wider with each passing year.

The more government surrenders to a neo-liberal agenda with its guiding notions of the 'small state' and the 'government-as-facilitator for private business and profit', the more it clearly identifies itself with interests that are contrary to those of the working class. The more it does so, the more it prepares the conditions wherein the people will have no recourse other than to rise up, depose their rulers and institute a system where it is the people and not profit margins that are cherished.

éirígí believes that the relevance of revolutionary socialism is as pronounced now as it has ever been. As it was James Connolly's, it is éirígí's position also, that from socialism alone can the salvation of the working people of Ireland and the world come. We are firm in this conviction because we are convinced that the politics of revolutionary democratic socialist republicanism is the politics of the struggle to secure and defend the interests of the people of Ireland.

To this end, the politics that éirígí espouses views the struggle against capitalism and for socialism as being essential to the liberation of the people of Ireland. Securing and defending the interests of the working class is synonymous with the liberation of the working class from the yoke of capitalism and imperialism.

The ultimate task for all revolutionaries is to convince others to become revolutionaries. To convince the working class that they must take the revolutionary side in the class struggle in order to secure and defend their own collective interests. It is the task of today's revolutionaries to create the conditions whereby Tone's '*men and women of no property*' form into a revolutionary mass that will rise up, and once and for all, destroy the predatory system that is capitalism.