

Comrades,

James Connolly brought republicanism—the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity—into the era of monopoly capitalism: imperialism. Only under socialism can real and meaningful freedom be achieved for the people of any nation.

Connolly, unlike many of his contemporaries, and unlike many of our contemporaries, understood that to build socialism a people must be free, independent, and sovereign. The working class must lead the struggle for national liberation and in doing so will consciously and unconsciously be leading the struggle for socialism.

Today, comrades, that struggle for independence, sovereignty and democracy is as vital ever.

“There can be no perfect Europe in which Ireland is denied even the least of its national rights.”

We are confronted with the final stages of the creation of a European federal superstate—a United States of Europe, a process the Connolly Youth Movement and the Communist Party have understood and campaigned against for many years. Honest social democrats who put their faith in Europe are scared and confused and looking for answers. We must continue our campaigns and must continue refining our own analysis so that when the social democrats shout “Why?” we can answer. Others on the left are only slowly realising the critical importance of the European imperial project, and subsequently their analysis is often shallow and superficial.

Comrades, I don’t say this to blow our own trumpet. Nor do I say it so we can say “I told you so.” I say it to remind us of our own strength, a strength no other movement has in this country, that of accurate, deep, substantial analysis and answers.

The CYM has seen great growth in members and in quality of activists in the last year. These developments are not on the back of slogans or frantic, often pointless campaigning. They are on the back of concrete, solid politics with focused activities. Our ideas and materials are reaching a wider audience, and from this we are receiving more attention—both positive and negative. Our aim, to become a movement of consequence for young people, is getting closer.

Comrades, this growth has attracted some negative attention and focus from certain forces, and some of our members have felt that pressure. But by standing strong and united we are sending out a clear message that we will not be intimidated and we will not be bullied.

These actions are of course part of a global campaign against communism. In Europe we have recently seen the banning of the youth movement in the Czech Republic, a move aimed at the party there. The CYM, along with our international fraternal comrades, has taken up the KSM’s request for support, and we will continue to petition and highlight their plight in every way we can. Internationalism, in its deepest sense, was a cornerstone of Connolly’s thinking, and so too the building of international links with young communists around the world remains key to the Connolly Youth Movement.

This year is a vital year for Ireland; but whatever happens we must remember it certainly will not mark the “end of Irish history.” Experience has taught us that struggle is long and hard. But we are up for it, and we will continue to play our role.

Thank you, comrades.