

Connolly Commemoration.

This is a very important time of year for socialists and republicans. It is a time for remembering and paying respect but also, and perhaps more importantly, it is a time for reflecting upon where the working class movement is and where it ought to be. It is a time we should use to position ourselves correctly for our struggles and reposition ourselves as needs and reality dictate.

It is in this light that I say, James Connolly brought republicanism into the age of capitalism and imperialism, into the twentieth century. It is the job of all republicans and socialists to continue this process through the twenty-first century. Ideologies that do not reflect the changing times and conditions become abstract ideals at best or disruptive dogmas at worst. Either way having lost touch with reality they lose their ability to produce change, to produce revolution.

The definition or concept of a 'republic', goes back along time. In general a 'republic' can be described as a sovereign, independent, democratic nation-state with a defined territory and people. This is the ideal of all true republicans.

First conceived of by Greek and then Roman philosophers to meet their needs, it was recreated in the seventeenth and eighteenth century to meet the emerging demands in England and France. Its resurfacing reflected the rise of capitalism and the breakdown of feudalism as social systems. However, very quickly it too became subject to the newly emerging class contradictions that capitalism created. It is here the 'republic' once again became an ideal out of touch with reality. That is until it reflected its social character and became 'socialist republicanism' or communism.

Very early on the more advanced 'republicans', in Ireland the likes of Wolfe Tone, Hope, Lalor, Davitt, saw the contradictions capitalism was creating and correctly rested all hope of realising a 'republic' in 'the men of no property.' These men, their actions and ideals, are part of the process and change 'republicanism' has had to go through to reflect the emerging age of capitalist imperialism. A process that logically and ultimately concludes with the demand for socialism here in Ireland and globally, as the only social system capable of saving humanity.

James Connolly can be seen as Ireland's greatest example of the logic of this process. However, it didn't end in 1916 and we must constantly be aware of the constant change around us and continually reflect that change in our working class ideology, just as Connolly did. The Connolly Youth Movement is committed to building a world of socialist republics in this twenty-first century.