

Comrades,

The Communist Party of Ireland wishes to extend its solidarity and warmest greetings to all parties gathered here in Havana for the 22nd International Meeting of Communist and Workers' Parties.

We would also like to take this moment to commend the work of the Communist Party of Cuba and congratulate the people of Cuba for their achievements, including the successful hosting of this meeting as well as the recent legislative changes such as new family code.

This work is to be lauded and a success that shows the continued gains and potential of the revolution. We also express our solidarity with the government and people struggling to overcome the impact of the ongoing blockade, the recent fire at the Matanzas oil refinery and in the recovery and rebuilding after the recent hurricanes.

At home, in Ireland, it is our neutrality and the protection of it that is at the forefront of our anti-imperialist struggle. We continue to fight back against threats and attacks on our neutrality from enemies within and without our country.

NATO and the EU, the new “empire” wish to pull our country into a war where our workers will lose no matter the outcome and we must take our stand against them. The Irish establishment are seeking membership of NATO and are only too willing to collaborate in NATO proxy war in the Ukraine under false various guises. Providing medical attention to wounded Ukrainian troops, supplying military advisors etc.

All pretension of the EU as a democratic structure or a peace-loving entity has been cast aside. Its participation in war after war outside of Europe has been previously dressed up as peacekeeping or democratisation measures and other vicious lies rather than described accurately as exercises in destruction, domination, and neo-colonisation.

Now that war has returned again to “Europe” it is clearer to the people of the countries of the EU what this project was ever about: feeding the beasts of capitalism and imperialism – the control of global fuel supplies, domination of world financial systems, the suppression of workers and consolidation of military political alliances.

It is not war that our people want or need, it is not new empire poised to exploit and control us, it is not bullets, nor bombs nor military might but hope. As James Connolly said of World War one: “There are no humane methods

of warfare, there is no such thing as civilized warfare; all warfare is inhuman, all warfare is barbaric... What lover of humanity can view with anything but horror the prospect of this ruthless destruction of human life?"

Following this we must continue to collectively condemn the growing possibility of nuclear war in Europe, the growing militarisation in the South China Sea by US imperialism, the blockade against Cuba and the theft and occupation of Palestinian land to name but a few of the ongoing struggles represented in this room.

We will continue to stand against fascism in all its guises, but our loyalty is with our class, our internationalism is one that can only be understood through class struggle rather than with imperial powers that send our class to die for their profits, and strategies of global domination.

It is our opinion that the international working class movement faces two immediate challenges to unite and give leadership in. Firstly, the growing environmental crisis, the secondly to build and mobilise a global movement for peace particularly and in particular strengthen the World Peace Council. This to ensure there is a world for us to win at all.

The Irish ruling class keeps pushing the ideological view that Ireland is one of the richest countries in the world, but we know what wealth means and it is not children homeless, families living in tents as houses stand empty, mothers and fathers hungry to feed their children or people afraid to get sick or heat their homes.

Housing is now dominated by the needs and interests of transnational finance capital. Vulture funds are buying up large blocks of housing stock and charging unaffordable rents. Our people are more and more faced with a life of precarious low paid worker, precarious health provision and precarious shelter.

Wealth in any real sense cannot and will not be measured by the bank balances of our exploiters. But these are not the concerns nor the views of the ruling elite, and they wish to tear the last vestiges of sovereignty from us.

They wish to offer our neutrality to the highest bidder, be it through the use of Shannon airport or through bowing to the EU and NATO. They wish to offer our neutrality to the highest bidder as they have done with our land, our homes and our youth, who are still forced to emigrate to make a life for themselves. While our workers struggle and scrimp they wish to pull us into a war that has already been used to gouge our people and profit energy corporations and the arms trade. We will not let them! We will continue to

fight against British, EU and US imperialism on our shores and we salute those who fight against these enemies on theirs.

In regards to Brexit, the Irish establishment has been forced to address partition and to face the possibility of national reunification. The British imposed border in Ireland has and is being used as a pawn on the chess board of negotiations between the EU and British monopoly capital but their crisis is our opportunity and we continue to work to re-unite our country as one.

Comrades, we have had our difficulties but with our focus, determination, and ideological strength our party continues to grow and develop. Our 26th congress, just completed, has allowed us to meld both the experience, expertise and wisdom of our long-standing members and leadership with new blood. We are renewed and reinvigorated.

We recommitted to advancing the cause of a 32-county socialist republic, along with an all-Ireland environmental plan, an all-Ireland Universal Public Services Plan and an all-Ireland Industrial and Financial Plan. We continue our fight on many fronts, continue to build alliances with the like minded and our work in educating ourselves and our class. We seek to develop struggles that shift the balance of forces in favour of labour and weaken the power of capital.

Finally, with our growth we have seen more women joining us, women who have brought with them their own expertise and experience. It is through these women that true change comes to our party and country, and through women that lasting social change happens in our society.

The new world we build will be shaped with their hands and by their hearts and minds. It is their strength and dedication that leads us and will bring others to us. It is through them that capitalist and patriarchal thought will be pulled down alongside the economic structures that bind us.

Our liberation will not be given to us, we must take it and we will. Let us build the unity of the international working class revolutionary movement.

Unity is our strength, division is our enemy.

Solidarity with the workers of the world.

Victory to the working class.

Laura Duggan
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National Women's Secretary