

## **RSYM Position on Recent Developments**

Unfortunately, we in the RSYM have numerous concerns with what has unfolded over the last number of days. We feel that it is an absolute necessity for these concerns to be raised with the leadership of the IRSM and equally that fully comprehensive answers are forwarded to the RSYM AC as soon as possible.

### **Speech by IRSM leadership, Bray 11<sup>th</sup> October:**

Initially hearing the statement presented at the Costello Commemoration, it seemed like a simple re-iteration of the position the movement has held for the past decade. That the primacy of politics was an essential pre-requisite for a properly functioning and coherent movement was never up for debate, it was a given and as said above was the position of the movement for the past decade. So why the media attention?

On closer examination of the statement it became quite clear to members of the RSYM that serious flaws were present in it. Firstly, the statement was quite general, in the context of all the media attention and rumours it created more questions than it actually answered. With national and international media outlets listening with the intention of running stories about our movement, no grey areas should have been left. It has put the members of the movement in a perilous position, with so many questions being asked on a wide scale our members have found themselves in a position where they simply don't know where the movement is headed.

There are deep ideological flaws in the statement itself also. To quote directly from the statement:

*“The RSM has been informed by the INLA that following a process of serious debate, consultation and analysis, it has concluded that the armed struggle is over and the objective of a 32 County Socialist Republic will be **best achieved through exclusively peaceful political struggle.**”*

This sentence goes against the very principals of Republican Socialism. Not only can a 32 County Socialist Republic not be ‘best achieved through exclusively peaceful political struggle’, as the lessons of history have shown, the possibility of a peaceful revolution is not very likely at all. Accordingly, it is essential from an ideological perspective that an armed element is maintained in the IRSM so as to be ready for all possible eventualities. It has been a cornerstone of our ideology since the foundation of the movement that there is no parliamentary road to socialism and this can never change. To suggest as much is to abandon the politics of Costello, Connolly and Ta Power. It is reformist to the core.

The statement continues:

*“The RSM has always aspired to the principle of the primacy of politics as espoused by Ta Power.”*

No-one within the IRSM would argue against the Party leading the movement, this raises the question, can the principals of the primacy of politics be achieved with the existence of an armed revolutionary wing? Absolutely, of course it can. To suggest it can't would mean that no revolutionary army should exist, because if it did it would as a rule of thumb disrupt the primacy of politics within the movement. This is a flawed analysis and one Ta Power himself didn't adhere to.

*“The future struggles are political. We urge all comrades, members, volunteers and supporters to join the political struggle ahead with the same vigour, commitment and courage that was evident in our armed struggle against the British State.”*

Of course the future struggles are political, as the past struggles have been political too. The use of arms have always been in a political fashion, arms are merely a tactic to be used to forward political aims, and to term the paragraph above as it is, is to suggest retrospectively that the actions of the INLA in the past were somehow separate from the political struggle. This again is a flawed analysis.

## **The Armed Wing and the Party:**

The debate about the use of arms centres around one issue, whether or not arms are productive to the overall struggle and whether our political aspirations can be realised without them.

It has been suggested that the existence of the INLA in itself hinders the progress of the IRSP, that the INLA is standing in the way of the IRSP flourishing as a revolutionary socialist party. This again, we in the RSYM feel is a non-starter. There are fundamental, organisational, structural and ideological problems within the party itself, I think we can all agree on this point. Are these problems going to be resolved if the armed wing of the movement simply was to go away? The answer is no, it is illogical to even entertain that debate.

The major problem with the IRSP over the last number of years has been a lack of a coherent political strategy. Without such a strategy of course, the movement cannot do anything else but stagnate. So if we do acknowledge that the party has been simply existing, with no coherent strategy, **then what exactly is the existence of the armed wing holding back? A strategy that hasn't existed?**

We want to emphasise the fact that it is a progressive step to look at the situation regarding the armed wing. It is as clear as day that things could not be left as things stood with regard to the INLA. We welcome this development, and we welcome transparent and open debate among the

membership because we see this as very healthy, it being imperative that the IRSM remains a grassroots organisation. But to talk about the armed wing in isolation, to not put it in its proper context in relation to the overall debate and the movement itself, is wrong. Yes the issue of the INLA should be up for debate, but only in the context of an overall debate where it is but a component. Surely, before any such debate can take place among the membership, a concrete strategy has got to be ironed out. This is very much a case of putting the cart before the horse.

### **The Use of the Armed Wing:**

A lot of this debate has focused on whether the armed wing is productive at this point to the overall political goals of the movement. The consensus among the leadership has been that it is not, that it actually hinders our political aspirations. This is not a Marxist analysis. Yes we in the RSYM agree that the conditions for armed struggle in the North against imperialism do not exist. But the INLA is a republican SOCIALIST army, just because it may not have a role in relation to the British occupation **at this point** does not mean it won't have tomorrow, as we don't know what conditions will develop. And it certainly doesn't mean that the armed wing has no role in the class war, in any of the 32 counties.

If the question was put to the RSYM internally, would armed action if carried out by a disciplined and ideologically strong army be productive to our struggle? The answer would be a resounding yes. For example, if an armed wing was to attack Shell to defend our natural resources and raise the political awareness of the Irish people in relation to that issue, that would be productive to the overall political struggle of the movement. There are countless other examples where the use of arms in the Marxist sense would not hinder our politics, but bring our goals closer. A perfect example of this was the previous INLA action at Mount Gabriel. We cannot let ourselves think in the same narrow terms traditional republicans tend to, our war is not just with Britain, it is with the capitalism system.

The reputation of the INLA and its association with drugs and feuding of course does hinder the movement somewhat. But this can be tackled, it is not something to stand down over. Under no circumstances should a Republican Socialist army, the army of the workers, bow to popularism and bourgeois media slander. The INLA and its reputation is an issue of concern, but it is much more a case of the way it manifests itself and acts than its existence. Its existence is ideologically sound.

Getting involved in things like shooting dealers may seem like the essential work of a people's army, it is not however. How easy is it for the capitalist media to paint the INLA as drug dealers looking for new turf when they engage in such activity? The INLA stepping in also tends to let the police off the hook, the system can't deal with these problems, we as revolutionaries [while never leaving our class completely unprotected] should not reduce ourselves to being a stop-gap, preventing the workers from seeing that the system cannot cater for their needs.

A day is a long time in politics, and if the INLA was to stop with the kind of activity alluded to above, and actually acted like an army of the workers targeting political targets, as this economic

recession deepens I think the reputation of the INLA would soon turn on its head. When people see armed action, with no material gain taken by those who carried it out, they start to ask questions. And we as socialists want to raise the class-consciousness of the workers so it is perfectly clear that the armed wing can have a role in this. Whether it be attacking US planes at Shannon or hijacking trucks from multi-nationals to give its contents to the workers, if the INLA were to act like the army of the working class, the working class will soon repay them with support for their political reasons for carrying such actions out. The situation for armed action from a republican point of view looks futile, but from a socialist viewpoint, the conditions for armed action are getting riper with every cut the government makes.

### **Education of members:**

The popular consensus among some in the IRSP is that the actions of the INLA are filtering to the IRSP and having a detrimental effect. We in the RSYM actually think the opposite is true. The failings of the IRSP and the INLA lie at the door of the party leadership. If the leadership of the party was strong enough then the primacy of politics wouldn't even be an issue. The INLA don't function like a socialist army, but why? There must be a lack of education there, and if people just want to joined the armed wing and don't want to join the party then their intentions must be questioned.

To go back to a flaw in the IRSP for a moment. Consistently, at every Ard Fheis, a motion is passed asking for the implementation of an educational programme for members. After all, every member of a socialist movement should be a socialist. But just as consistently as the motion was put forward, the motion was ignored. This is just a small yet significant example of what is wrong with our movement. This liberalism, the half-hearted attitude is not something that is the fault of the INLA, it is because of a lack of political education from top to bottom of the movement. To think that the INLA going away will fix such things is nonsense [the education programme example being one of countless people could mention], this problem goes to the heart of the party. Our ability to organise and function is directly linked to our political abilities, and in our case lack of. This attitude has simply filtered into the INLA, is it any surprise the army is not functioning effectively if the party side who are supposed to be taking the lead are in no fit state to do so? The INLA should be some of the most ideologically strong members of the movement, because one slip up by them can be very costly to the political aspirations of the IRSM. If this is not the case within the INLA, then it should be. People who are there for the wrong reasons and refuse to engage in work for the party too should be dismissed.

The IRSP and the INLA are bodies that intend, if their goals are to be realised, to lead the working class in revolution. If members are not even educated fully in our politics then there is no hope this will ever happen.

As was said above, the cart has firmly been put before the horse. There has been so much confusion, ideologically especially, that if the IRSP was actually to progress and get elected representatives at some point we in the RSYM would be very doubtful the movement would be ideologically strong enough to prevent us moving towards reform. Removing the INLA will not

change this one iota, it is an issue but it is not the most immediate problem. Educate the membership, set in place concrete and accountable structures and root out the apoliticals and we will have come a long way through relatively straight forward measures.

We would also like to say that if our goals of a Socialist Republic are to be realised, arms will be needed there is no doubt about that. So even if the movement decides to stand the INLA temporarily while the changes we have mentioned are implemented, decommissioning is just not an option and will never be an option if we are serious about revolution.

Finally, the RSYM would like to congratulate the leadership of the IRSM for opening up this debate. It would have been very easy to leave things the way they were and to continue to stagnate. This process clearly shows that we have a movement that is serious about achieving its goals, and hopefully you will take on board what we have said in this document. This is a very important debate and one in which a decision made prematurely would have seriously negative ramifications.

We look forward to working with you towards a 32 County Socialist Republic, and to seeing the ideals of Costello and Connolly realised.

Onwards to the Socialist Republic!

The AC

Republican Socialist Youth Movement

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