**LATIN AMERICA 2025, 8 February, Hamilton House, London
Speech by Chris Hazzard MP in the closing plenary:
Building A Better World – US Hands Off Latin America!**

Friends & Comrades,

Writing at the turn of the 19th Century, the Cuban José Martí called on the great many peoples of Latin America to “get together and march in close ranks – like silver in the veins of the Andes.”

With a deep desire for freedom, many of those who marched in those ranks have been from the Irish diaspora; forced across the Atlantic by British imperialism, time and again they have stood with Latin America’s many anti-colonial struggles.

From John Riley’s St Patrick’s Battalion that fought with Mexico against yankee imperialism, to Bernardo O’Higgins – the independence leader in Chile; and Daniel Florence O’Leary – who marched at Bolivar’s side and is laid to rest in Venezuela’s Pantheon of National Heroes; many Irish rebels proudly answered Martí, and have stood like silver in the veins of the Andes.

So it is a great privilege to stand with you here today, in solidarity – and in our joint endeavor to build a better world.

It is a special pleasure to stand with Dr. Aleida Guevara – the daughter of not one, but two iconic revolutionaries, and – to paraphrase her grandfather – she whose “veins flow with the blood of the Irish rebels!”

Make no mistake, imperialism in its old forms and new; continues to shape – not just the destiny of Latin America – but billions of people globally as colonial-era exploitation has evolved into modern-day neocolonialism.

From Latin America to Africa, countries in the Global South are trapped in a cycle of debt and dependency; their economies shaped by the demands of foreign powers and Western financial institutions.

The average Belgian citizen has nearly 200 times more voting power in the World Bank than the average Ethiopian!!

The top 1% in the Global North extracts USD 30 million per hour from the Global South!!

It’s clear that a new aristocratic billionaire oligarchy has emerged, and has immense power in our politics and our economy – indeed this oligarchy has just acquired the keys to the Oval Office.

Nine billionaire oligarchs now have a post in Trump’s cabinet!!

The vast syphoning of wealth from the hands of the many, into the pockets of the few will undoubtedly accelerate.

And so too for the earth’s natural resources – because these oligarchs view the world as a vast collection of resources that should belong to the USA and its acolytes.

Greenland, Panama, Canada, the Gulf of Mexico, Gaza – all now in the crosshairs of these billionaire bandits.

But the earth’s tectonic plates are shifting – the opportunity for a multipolar world exists – free from plunder, from slavery, from neocolonialism.

This is a world comrades we must strive to build.

Here in Europe we must urgently stand against the neocolonial imperative to build the “War Economy” – an economy that has more than doubled in the last decade – sinking in a swamp of economic stagnation, the EU Commission’s big idea is to call for yet “more guns.”

Abandoning the younger generations who demand action on climate crises and the cost of living – the EU elite have replaced their “Green New Deal” with lucrative loans for their war economy – the Ruhr must be militarized once again!

So comrades, we must not shirk the task ahead – we understand that the ordinary people are angry, are lost – they look for hope in a world of turbulence and uncertainty.

The cascading crisis of our time is shaking the earth to its core – great challenges lie ahead, but also great opportunities too.

Capitalism has no solutions, it is a catalyst for further catastrophe, for war, for destitution, hate and racism; comrades, now is the time to build socialist alternatives, and international solidarity in that endeavor.

But we must not limit ourselves to spectators or commentators in this struggle – we must understand that we are best placed to analyze the winds of change, and as leaders on the ground, in our communities we can provide the leadership, direction, and solidarity necessary to build that better world.

Half a century ago Walter Rodney called for activists to get serious about their responsibility to struggle; to proactively build a new world order in the face of racism, hatred and exploitation.

But we must always lift our heads, keep our attention outwards, avoid capitulating to the assumption that the nation state within whose boundaries we happen to live, is the most important political presence in our lives.

Comrades, reject western exceptionalism – recognize that racial, colonial capitalism has structured the social, political, and cultural institutions that define our collective lives in the global north.

In overcoming the atomization of human existence in today’s hyper capitalist society – Rodney’s call for revolutionary, socialist activists to be grounded in the ordinary struggles of the common people is as relevant as ever before.

A profound discontent and unrest fills the lives of ordinary people; a deep, unpredictable ferment is at work – we must be the anchor for people’s searching for hope, struggling for dignity.

In Ireland, we stand on the edge of historic constitutional change.

Sinn Féin are mobilizing ordinary people as conscious agents of change – we are empowering them to throw off the shackles of two failed, conservative states that have stolen their dreams and hijacked their aspirations.

We now set ourselves the task of finally breaking the grip of imperialism in Ireland – finally establishing a free, socially just democratic society – democratic in every sphere of life.

A republic of the people, for the people!

Built around the long established right of the people of Ireland, to the ownership of Ireland, and the unfettered control of Irish destiny.

A republic of equals, where our laws are made by reason – not landlords, kings, nor priests!

To develop the kind of freedom we want means we will have to control capital and wealth in Ireland – and not allow it to control us.

Our natural resources should not be the private property of corporations or individuals – they should be the common wealth of society.

We have heard from some inspirational Latin American comrades today – we continue to learn vital lessons from your struggles, and take fraternal strength from your solidarity

First and foremost – we in Ireland, and in Europe must understand that parliamentary politics is but one site of struggle; and electoralism is a disease stitched through the political fabric of the European Left.

We need to prioritize political education; nurture genuinely grassroots social movements; and build political and organizational strength through regional solidarity.

In all of these areas Irish, British, and European socialists must work together in building an egalitarian and socialist future – a future of human dignity free from neo-colonialism.

Crucially we must also recognize that our individual struggles for emancipation – whilst primarily fought at the local and national level – are bound to fail if we at the same time do not forge bonds of fraternal solidarity and a renewed international movement against imperialism and capitalism.

If the Bolivians can overturn a coup; if Colombians can elect their first leftist President; if Brazilians can return Lula – then we can win again in Europe!

In this endeavor Jose Martí’s wish to see the people “march in close rank like the silver in the veins of the Andes” ought to galvanize international solidarity in the cause of freedom for the peoples of Latin America and beyond.

We must always be steadfast in our solidarity with the struggles of all peoples against occupation and colonialism – observing the right to resistance; and the self-determination of all peoples of the world.

Unlike any other country in Europe, Ireland was colonized – we were the first country in the world to be colonized by England – almost 900 years ago; and in each and every generation we have struggled for independence – to throw off the yoke of British imperialism, to liberate our people, and our country.

And we have always done so with a deep interconnectedness with the humanity of the world – and you have held our struggle in your hearts.

As the forces of occupation rolled onto the streets of Derry and Belfast our cry for freedom was echoed in the townships of Soweto and through the streets of Santiago.

When the Irish people got off their knees to resist, the people of Palestine and Algeria raised their fist in solidarity.

When our prisoners hungered for freedom the wind blowing through their prison bars carried songs of fraternal strength from Robben Island where Madiba held them in his arms; from Havana where Fidel carried them on his shoulders!

So friends and comrades, we Irish rebels will never be quiet, never still – we carry the people of Latin America in our hearts until our lands are free!

La lucha continua!!