TAKING

SIDES:
arguments about
the war

May 1984
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In our Irish solidarity activities we have not fallen to the dangers of those from the English Left that seeks to use the broad I S movement primarily as a means of publicising their own organization. The divisions that causes have a mirror image in those who refuse to work with people who do not specifically support the Republican movement. It is not a condition of I S work that people agree with unconditional support for republican military campaigns. In campaigning over specific issues (e.g. Prisoners' campaign, Stop the show trials etc.) there is no way that as a condition for co-operation, that individuals should adopt unconditional support. The Republican movement itself does not make such demands.

During the 1981 Hunger Strike there occurred a split between those (RCG) who wanted to go in advance of what the prisoners and Sinn Fein were calling for: the 5 Demands, conditions that exist prior to their withdrawal by Labour Home Secretary, Merlyn Rees. They wanted to campaign on the explicit demand of political status. A more supporative role, in trying to unite as large a section as possible on a principled basis, is not to change the Republicans demands in order to make them "more revolutionary" or "more acceptable". Our own position has been to support any demonstration on Ireland, regardless of who calls it, so long as those demands complement the struggle of the Republican movement. That stand should remain the position of the group. However individual I S activists can argue for their respective positions within that framework.

Throughout the checkered history of I S work in Britain, the Troops Out Movement was for a long time the only broad front doing solidarity work. Formed in August 1973, TOM replaced the short-lived Anti-Interment League (1971-73). Tensions within TOM arose between those down-playing the political importance of the 2 central demands in building a mass and broad based movement, and those who wanted to stress the anti-imperialist aspects of 'Troops Out Now! Self-determination for the Irish People'.
TOM split in April 1977 as Big Flame/IMG broke to form (in July 1977) United Troops Out Movement; that rose to 30 branches by mid-1978, and changed its name to TOM in 1979.

The demise of the original TOM set in with its emphasis on less mass-based work and distinct shift of emphasis towards a Labour Party solution. The absorption of TOM has meant that while remaining as a paper organization, the Labour Committee on Ireland has taken on 'Irish work' within the Labour Party.

The 'vacuum' was occupied by ad hoc campaigning broad front committees like the H-Block Hunger Strike Action committees and the establishment of campaigns associated with the RCG (ISM) and RCP (IPM). Thus the broad Irish solidarity movement is split into 3 unreconcilable strands:

"TOM will not at national level, publicise or otherwise support marches, conferences or demonstrations organized by either of these two groups, nor invite their spokespeople to TOM platforms, and urges TOM branches and members to have the same approach." (1)

The RCG complain that:

"Both TOM and RCP/IPM have not only refused to collaborate on joint activities but in fact have engaged in a consistent sectarian campaign to undermine the ISM. Sinn Fein (Britain) have not so far supported the work of ISM." (2)

This lumps together such disparate organizations and smacks of self-indignant charge that we're doing this and we are getting no credit. Both ISM and IPM have displayed tendencies whereby their activities and relationship to the Republican struggle is subordinate to the needs of their campaigns: this has been explicit in the use of P.O.W.s to sanction their campaigns when Sinn Fein has stated that SF(B) is the official body to speak for P.O.W.s in Britain. That the Irish national struggle will be an important source of inspiration and support for the struggle for socialism in Britain should not dictate our stand. Nor should IS work be undertaken to explicitly advance the revolution in Britain (by promoting specific organizations) rather than aiding the intrinsic value of the revolutionary national liberation struggle in Occupied Ireland.

Anti-imperialists within IS broad fronts argue that it is impossible to build a solidarity movement that presents Ireland as an issue which can be raised without challenging the identification of the working class with its own nation state and the reformism of the working class in Britain. Within that broad front, unconditional support for the struggle for Irish unity is a legitimate position. It means supporting the struggle against British Imperialism irrespective of the forms that struggle takes, and the leadership that leads the struggle. In rejecting the idea of British imperialist rule in Ireland means insisting on the principle of self-determination - not offering alternative policies. It is up to those fighting to decide on the methods they employ to realise their objective. It is not the job of England's radicals to offer advice to the Republican movement. They should be building an effective solidarity movement rather than ending the war with an English solution. 'Sides: Arguments about the war' is an exploration from the standpoint of unconditional support." (3)
EIRE UNFREE

Since 1969 there has been the steady offensive in British propaganda to turn the national liberation struggle into a criminal conspiracy; whereas British terrorism, even that of Bloody Sunday in January 1972, is termed "peace keeping". The question is who is using violence for political ends? Eight hundred years of the Irish war shows that Irish freedom is a political end which has to be pursued through many forms of resistance, including armed resistance.

The issue in the Irish war is partition - the division of Ireland into six and twenty-six county states in 1921 - and the suppression of the national aspirations of the Irish people. That national question takes precedence for the problem in the Irish war is British Imperialism.

And you dare to call me a terrorist, while you looked down your gun
When I think of all the deeds you have done
You had plundered many nations divide many lands
You had terrorised their peoples you ruled with an iron hand
And you brought this reign of terror to my land

* Chorus of 'Joe McDonnell' by Wolfe Tone

The military struggle is not made up of acts of isolated terrorism. The use of such terminology makes no sense in the context of the Irish war and the mass support that sustains the Republican movement. What fanatic killed by the state drew 100,000 people to attend his funeral as did IRA volunteer Bobby Sands? What terrorists sustains an urban guerrilla war against one of the world's most experienced counter-insurgency military machine? To call republican volunteers 'terrorists' both denies the legitimacy of the liberation movement in Ireland and marks the acceptance of the views put out by the lie machine that is British propaganda.

British Imperialism avoids admitting that it is fighting a war in the North of Ireland. The propaganda that the army is holding the ring between violent extremists on either sides denies that it is a war. Accepting the reality of a war would undermine the legitimacy of the British state and raise questions about the basis of British authority in the Occupied Six counties. It would lend to the line of argument that were the French partisans who fought the partition and occupation of their country by German imperialism labelled 'criminals'? Was their resistance guerrilla struggle any less a war for being called 'terrorists' by the oppressors?

Recognition that it is a war puts the issue starkly: there are two sides in the Irish war - the side of the Irish people or the side of British imperialism. Which side are you on for, quite simply, Ireland's victory means England's defeat.

The evasion of the "withdraw and bloodbath" school forsakes politics and presents the army's barbarous terror and murder mission as 'peace'. Such arguments have been ridiculed to extinction by the Republican cartoonist Cormac (I). The arguments herein concern the force that ought to be active in solidarity if they were true to their self-proclaimed political allegiances - the English Left.
On the English Left there is a line of argument, here expressed by Workers Power that:

"It is true that the British have the aim of a united bourgeois Ireland. Their chosen method was for the Unionist leaders gradually to reform Stormont and the Northern state out of existence." (2)

This pre-supposes a tendency of British Imperialism to extract itself from Ireland and dispense with the partition system in order to open up the whole of Ireland to economic exploitation on a more massive scale.

As Big Flame put it:

"In short, the border was being made redundant by the changes in the economy ... So British Imperialism, in particular, wanted to set Ireland gradually on the road to a united, federal set-up, dominated by London, so that all Ireland could be exploited equally." (3)

This scenario, that British Imperialism can be progressive, democratise the Sectarian state in the North and re-unite Ireland, propagates the idea that the persistence of the war in Ireland is the fault of the Irish. The Republicans stress on the national question is supposedly preventing the destruction of 'Ulster capitalism' as it provoked a unionist response in direct contradiction with the needs of British imperialism to reunify Ireland (!).

Without raising questions as to why fight the Republicans who want a united Ireland? Why not destroy the loyalists who are stopping the implementation of Britain's master plan? This argument implies: if only the intransigent loyalist extremists and the impatience Irish nationalists had not needed the deployment of the British army to restrain their feuding. As the Morning Star stated in 1973:

"that system of sectarian conflict has become not so much superfluous, but rather a direct barrier to the further development of monoply exploitation of the Irish people."

Chris Harman of the SWP identifies the fight to establish a nation-state (a unified Ireland) as one waged in the interests of an emerging capitalist class (4). He has no recognition that the rise of imperialism affected the national question on a world scale. When imperialism divided the world into oppressor and oppressed nations the consequences was that to raise themselves up the oppressed nations struggle for liberation must confront and defeat imperialism. Their struggle is part of the international struggle to smash the entire imperialist system.

The fundamental nature of Partition is that politically it divides the people of Ireland and in the North it is the only means of guaranteeing the supremacy of the unionist bourgeoisie. By dividing the Irish working class and maintaining a weakened neocolonial state in the South the border is a mechanism whereby imperialist exploitation is maintained.

Occupied Ireland is strategically important, as Daily Telegraph leader writer T.E. Utley put it in 1975: "British security is hardly compatible with the existence of a Cuba a few miles from her western shores."
The border is far from being a barrier; there are no tariff barriers, no customs barriers, no passport control, and witness the cross-border collaboration that sees Republicans extradited from the 26 Counties to stand trial for political offences in the North.

The sectarian state was a line of retreat: British imperialism's domination is necessarily violent and repressive. The inherent instability of the Occupied counties — its dependency on the permanent suppression of the nationalist population — represents a direct threat to the structure of the British state.

Yet Harman cannot concede that the national struggle against partition is revolutionary, it is a necessary and intrinsic part of the struggle against the imperialist domination of Ireland. The ruling class knows the integrity of the British state is committed in the constitutional arrangement with her loyalist servant; as The Times spelt out in 1983:

"The differences so stubbornly insisted upon in Ulster concern the most fundamental of all political issues: allegiance, national identity, the legitimacy of the state... These are issues which are usually disposed of only when one side prevails over the other."

The obstacle to a British withdrawal is not loyalist intransigence, but the interests of British imperialism. It was British imperialism that created a Protestant loyalist majority in the Six counties: it established the Protestant Ascendancy. To argue that the loyalists "were responsible for throwing away the chance to build a non-sectarian society" (5) is to misjudge the issue. It is to accept the mirage of a loyalist 'veto' and blame the loyalist as if they had an independant existence other than agents of imperialism.

Most of the English Left adopts positions hostile to the Republican Movement in Occupied Ireland regarding the struggle for national liberation as an obstacle to a working class solution:

"The Morning Star does not agree with the Provisionals. Their terror campaign is a major obstacle to uniting the Irish working class itself, and to forging unity in struggle with the British working class."

The call on the Republican movement to condemn the armed struggle is an attempt to force them down the impotent constitutional road trod by pro-British SDLP. It is a demand that the Republican struggle be tailored to the conditions imposed by those whose interests are in direct contradiction with the Irish people: the solution imposed by British imperialism.

Instead of seeing the different tasks of workers in the Oppressed and Oppressor nations, which prevents the situation in Ireland from being a simple, straightforward confrontation between Labour and Capital, the English Left ignores British imperialism in its calls for working class unity.

"It may seem an offensive strategy" says Tony Cliff of the SWP of the Republicans military actions, "because it involves shooting British soldiers. But in reality it is defensive — it does not go forward... they don't know how to relate to workers who worry about bread and butter problems." (6)
Amongst the torrent of advice from the English Left has been the exhortation to:

"Abandon the Catholic pro-nationalist politics which lead you to talk and act as if one million Irish Protestants do not exist (and the political method that seeks to 'define them away' with political labels like unionist, pro-imperialist, etc.) Stop extrapolating your political programme from the exigencies and limits of commitment to an immediate physical force solution. Stop making the physical force struggle the all shaping core of your politics." (7)

To achieve working class unity in Ireland by ignoring partition and the political domination by British imperialism which sustains loyalism is a fantasy. National oppression is built into the system of British administration. To evade that issue — the right to exercise self-determination — is to condone national oppression and accept the "right" of the British state to determine the future of the Irish people.

James Connolly's fears for a dismembered Ireland, voiced in 1914, have proved to be a sad prophecy that partition "would destroy the Labour movement by disrupting it. It would perpetuate in a form aggravated in evil the discord now prevalent, and help the Home Rule and Orange capitalists and clerics to keep their rallying cries before the public as the political watchwords of the day. In short, it would make divisions more intense and confusion of ideas and parties more confounded." (8)

A LOYALIST WORKING CLASS

The plea for class unity has been a plausible response from the English Left if the problem is seen, as Militant predicted the consequences of Sinn Fein's electoral victories, an "increase sectarian polarisation of politics" (9). In targeting 'religious sectarianism', the English Left equates those loyalist gunmen fighting in support of British imperialism, to defend their narrow privileges and enforce the subordination of the nationalist population, with those volunteers of an organization that is fighting against imperialism, in a war of national liberation that aims to destroy the institutions which enforce sectarianism.

'Northern Ireland: Tory Cuts — common misery, common struggle' is the title of a Militant pamphlet that is indicative of an approach that endorses British domination by reducing the fight against national oppression to that of a divided class. The inescapable fact is that as long as partition, and the Orange state exists, the working class in the Occupied North will be divided. The Irish working class is divided, not by religion as imperialist asks us to believe; the division is that brought about by imperialism: the loyalist workers form something akin to a labour aristocracy allied with imperialism in a class alliance to contain the struggle of the unprivileged section — the nationalist people. The sectarian state is the mechanism for this alliance. Loyalist workers never differentiate themselves as a class with their social and political institutions reflecting their political allegiance to the British state through Loyalism.

"The Belfast employers were shrewd: the loyalism of their workers was a precious asset, not only in the expropriation of profit in the factories, but also in rallying popular protestant opposition to any change in the political status quo in Ireland." (10)
British imperialism has contained the class struggle by using the social position of protestant workers to prevent any alliance with their fellow workers taking place. Partition enmeshes loyalist workers in the structure and practices of the Orange state that ratifies the catholic's inferior status in the institutionalised and perpetuated preferential access for loyalists in jobs, social amenities and state apparatus.

The institutionalised discrimination, mass intimidation and repression of the nationalist people cemented the loyalist class alliance. Loyalist workers sees nationalist workers as competitors for their privileges not class allies. As the source of the limited but definite advantages derived from the Union, the Orange state created and sustained by Britain ensures the loyalist establishment's dependancy on a permanent alliance with British imperialism. The loyalist working class active commitment to that alliance is expressed in the heavy working class membership of auxiliary orange organizations: the paramilitary Ulster Defence Association and the Loyalist Association of Workers, protestant trade unionists in Belfast shipyards.

Class unity is overshadowed by sectarian divisions. As such the winning of national independance is the pre-requistie for socialist advance in Ireland. The destruction of the Orange state is a pre-condition for eliminating loyalist privilege and opening up the road for class unity. Sectarianism can be done away only by removing its basis -- the privileges, real or promised which are entrenched by the British connection. The attacks of loyalist bigotry, indiscriminate and on all catholics, reflects the recognition that without the sectarian state, the social position and privileges of the loyalist community would be lost. The resistance of the nationalist population is of necessity anti-sectarian; its target is the forces of sectarianism and imperialist oppression regardless of religious belief.

The re-establishment of working class unity and achievement of a united Ireland, let alone a socialist Ireland, can only take place with the ending of British domination. Calls for class unity that ignores this reality are asking for the abandonment of the national struggle and submission to imperialist oppression. The English Left acquiescence to national oppression is inherent in its plea for class unity in the Six Counties as the means to forward the national liberation struggle. The line that demands the struggle tails behind the consciousness of loyalist workers only supports further divisions and greater sectarianism. It puts the unionist view on a par with the Republican cause.

Fifty-odd years of historical experiences shows that an Orange state is inseparable from economic decline, political reaction and naked sectarianism. To confer nationhood and the right of self-determination upon the Protestant settler community endorses the role of the loyalists as the political agents of British imperialism. Yet despite all this, some English left organizations will still proclaim:

"The necessity for armed struggle, and the priority that the provisionals give to it, obscures the even greater need to mobilise workers as a class against the British occupation and against the economic exploitation that this occupation defends." (II)

The goal of working class unity is promoted as an obstacle to a resolute pursance of the anti-imperialist struggle, the national liberation struggle waged by the Republican movement.
This call of the English Left obscures the distinction that besides the trans-national and monopoly capitalists there is the political oppression of Ireland by England. It amounts to little more than ‘imperialist economism’: the theory that trade unions and other labour organizations should confine themselves to questions of wages, hours and living standards. A subject people are told to concentrate on achieving piece-meal socialism and not be diverted by nationalism.

It is no use advocating that arms are laid down if there is no policy for achieving a united Ireland in the Labour movement other than assuming that after a decade or more of war, the British state would introduce democratic reforms as the preliminary stage to re-unite Ireland; that goes beyond the politics of delusion. The implication of ‘imperialist economism’ is that the subject people possess no initiative, that Britain should vacate the Six counties, and not until they are ready for socialism; that Irish freedom would be a gift of a future Socialist Britain. Besides ignoring the factor of a free Ireland in defeating capitalism in Britain, ignoring the national oppression of Ireland by Britain represents a capitulation to the social chauvinism in the oppressor nation by wishing away the nationalism of the Oppressed nation. There is the reinforcement of a condescending chauvinism that if the English socialists made a declaration for Irish independence that will suffice.

There are those who envisage the way forward to Irish unity through the introduction of English “socialist practices and policies”. But if the Irish people have the right to national independence, to self-determination then what right has the English Left to impose policies on Ireland, socialist or not? If the English working class should accept Ireland’s independence, then English organizations are precluded from organizing anything on Irish soil, and this applies even when their agent is an Irish person. This is what James Connolly did when he opposed and criticised the line of argument that republicans must put away their guns and unite with the protestants on ‘bread and butter’ issues at the turn of the century in his polemic with William Walker, the ILP Belfast socialist:

"The doctrine that because the workers of Belfast live under the same industrial conditions as those of Great Britain, they are therefore subject to the same passions and to be influenced by the same methods of propaganda, is a doctrine ...[12]

Connolly argued both against those ‘nationalists’ who derived the class struggle and those socialists who denied the central importance on the national struggle to the Irish working class: national liberation and socialism were not separate but complementary struggles. Connolly recognized that it was imperialist oppression that sustained sectarian conflict in Ireland. Britain’s dominance over Ireland overrode, as it does today, every aspect of political life in the country: such is the centrality of national oppression.

"The Irish Question" wrote James Connolly in 1913, "is a part of the social questions, the desire of the Irish people to control their own destinies is a part of the desire of the workers to forge political weapons for their own enfranchisement as a class.” [13]

The split in the Republican movement around 1970 and the desertion of the ‘Officials’ from the nationalist struggle (declaring a cease fire in May 1972) marks their adoption of the politics advocated by sections of the English Left. Now known as ‘The Workers Party’ (having dropped Sinn Fein from their title in 1982), their irrelevance to the political life in the North demonstrates the importance of partition in the war in the North – East Ireland.
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"What happens in Londonderry is very relevant to what can happen in London, and if we lose in Belfast, we may have to fight in Brixton or Birmingham. Just as Spain in the thirties was a rehearsal for a wider European conflict so perhaps what is happening in Northern Ireland is a rehearsal for urban guerrilla war more widely in Europe, particularly in Britain."

That fear expressed by Tory M.P. John Biggs-Davidson is diametrically opposed to the SWP's explanation for putting Irish work at the bottom of its list of priorities. Chris Harman explained the SWP's view that:

"Ireland is not a radicalising factor in Britain which leads people to question other aspects of capitalist society: rather it is only when people have questioned these other things that they begin to understand the significance of what is happening in the Six Counties." (1)

Since August 1969, when the Labour government sent in troops to aid the 'civil power', workers in Britain have not questioned military rule in Ireland. The subsequent years of fluctuating industrial militancy did not of necessity lead to political clarification: nor could they. As the capitalist system generated the struggle between classes, constantly forcing workers into battles, it has been the Labour orientated ideology in the organised labour movement that has remained dominant. In contrast a supportive stance on the war in Ireland in favour of the Republicans cannot but question that very same system.

"The inability of TOM to build the 'mass campaign' it hoped for was due to the hostile environment it had to work in." (2)

Such a judgement side steps the reality that confronting the chauvinism of the working class in Britain involves working in a hostile environment. We live in an imperialist country where the great mass of people, including the working class, are inculcated with imperialist and racist ideology. They are not going to be easily receptive to pro-Irish arguments in the Irish war. Those on the Left who are tied to the political traditions and methods of work acceptable to 'respectable' Labour and trade union movement and their social imperialist political views (socialist in words, imperialist in deeds) do little but condemn the Republican movement. The appeals to trade unionism and class unity projects onto Ireland the pre-occupations of reformism in Britain. If Ireland is a litmus test it is how far one breaks with the bankrupt political traditions on the English Left and uphold unconditional support for the Republican struggle. Tony Cliff has argued that "until a movement develops to break the impasse in Ireland itself, it will be very difficult to mobilize significant numbers of people... in Britain." (3) Strange that, once the 'impasse' in Ireland is overcome there will be little need for solidarity action in Britain.
Solidarity with the Republican struggle means recognition of their right to bring the war to the British ruling class on its own territory. If Britain were not occupying Ireland then there would have no occasion to bring the war to Britain. Solidarity with conditions on that struggle, denouncing acts of violence in a war, in criticism of republican tactics represents a concession to bourgeois outrage and strengthens the propaganda which portrays the liberation movement as "men of violence" abstracted from all politics. To spout about 'individual terrorism' distorts the reality that Republican military operations are the cutting edge of a people's resistance. The discipline and closed structure of the military wings is that of a fighting organization in an occupied land. While the imperialists never hesitates to use terror when its interests demands, are the oppressed to be denied the right of resistance? It is sufficient to say that we cannot call upon the oppressed to be perfect, for people struggling for liberation to achieve it without mistakes. Every lesson the Republican movement has learnt is learnt under fire and paid for dearly. Yet with no experience under military rule and little to their credit in Britain, the English Left claims the right to tell the Oppressed of another country how to fight their struggle against our ruling class.

The chauvinism of the English Left is a constant thread in its political statements:

"The WRP is opposed to the shooting or bombing of generals or Irish guards (the British army regiment stationed at Chelsea Barracks) under conditions where the working class do not yet appreciate the reactionary role of the army in this country."

An appreciation, that Newsline fails to point out, that would be more widespread if the English Left argued in support of those fighting the British army in Ireland. Are we to inform the Irish that it is best for solidarity reasons to restrict themselves to actions that will not provoke a hysterical media response? Must an oppressed people delay the struggle until such time as the working class of the imperialist countries have reached an equally high political level? In arguing against military campaigns in Britain the English left generously allows the Republicans to carry on as long as social peace in Britain is not threatened. The logic is to deny the Oppressed the means to fight back, to condemn them to years of more suffering. The bombing campaign in Britain exposes the shallow anti-imperialism on the English left. In effect, denying the right of the Irish to fight for complete national liberation.

The ruling class recognises that there can be no compromise over Ireland. The evasive stand of the English Left in attempts to discover an alternative way, for as Socialist Worker argued "you cannot bomb AND develop socialist politics simultaneously" (4), accepts British imperialism's version of the war. Such an alternative means distancing oneself from the Republican movement and the political issues involved. By analysing British imperialism out of existence and denying the crucial importance of partition dismisses the struggle in Ireland. Having criticised the Republican movement for it "cannot unite the workers north and south in struggle ... (and as) class struggle is the key to unity between Protestant and catholic ... There is no way of liberating Ireland without unity " (5) the justification is laid for attacks on the Republican movement and abandonment of any consistent work in support of the revolutionary national liberation struggle in Ireland.
The SWP is not alone in its hostility towards the Republican struggle. Socialist Organizer, one of Labour's trotskyite entryist factions, claim that:

"In terms of social programme and class concerns, the Provos are far from being adequate revolutionaries." (6)

After the execution of Unionist M.P. Robert Bradford in early 1982 the Workers' Revolutionary Party's paper, Newsline, claimed that

"The greatest enemy of the IRA today is not the British Army or the loyalist extremists. It is ... its middle class leaders."

Such is the hypocrisy of the English Left (with its leadership drawn extensively from the middle classes) to càngise the republican movement which secret army intelligence papers firmly place as rooted in the nationalist working class community. Far from exacerbating the ruling class difficulties in Ireland, the contradictory "unconditional but critical support" line on the English Left echoes the prejudices of the bourgeoisie and never challenges the 'national consensus' on Ireland. That is what makes it difficult to build Irish solidarity in Britain: the strength of backward prejudices and pro-British imperialist sentiments. Solidarity from anti-imperialists must be prepared to challenge that chauvinism in pro-republican support activity.

Anti-republicanism is found in groups active in I S work. One variation is that voiced in Next Step, review of the Revolutionary Communist Party. It has not surpassed the arrogance and chauvinism of the RCP's strategy for the Irish revolution expounded upon in Fight Imperialism! coverage of the 79th Ard Fheis (Annual Conference) of Sinn Fein in November 1983, but it comes close. The RCP makes:

"the Irish struggle a special case ... when we have won large numbers of British workers to respond to IRA bombs with jubilation, when explosions result in trade unionists calling for strike action and mass demonstrations to force the immediate withdrawal of British troops, then there will be a time to criticise the programme of Provisional Sinn Fein." (7)

In other words, the old chauvinism of the English Left: let workers start to support the Irish struggle, then we've used Ireland to detect workers from the Right-wing then we can exercise our chauvinism in criticising the republican movement and advise the experienced practical leadership of a national liberation struggle how to do it. On the leading force in the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland, the RCP's opinion of 'Eire Nua,' political programme of Sinn Fein for a 'democratic socialist republic,' is that:

"The programme expresses the dreams of small farmers and small businessmen in the Ireland of 70 years ago. It is no answer to the needs of working class supporters of the anti-imperialist struggle in the Ireland of today." (8)

Today the chauvinist English Left remains criminally deaf to the advice offered by Karl Marx, three days after the Clerkenwell jail break that saw four innocents killed and one hundred and twenty injured:

"the English should demand separation and leave it to the Irish themselves to decide the question of land ownership." (9)
footnotes

* INTRODUCTION

1) TOM Conference resolution passed March 1983.
2) RCG , The Revolutionary Road To Communism in Britain 1984 p.86
3) 'SIDES' draws upon the analysis and factual material of four main sources:
   i. the writings of Irish revolutionary patriot, James Connolly
   ii. Revolutionary Communist League - Class Struggle
   iii. Revolutionary Communist Group - Fight Racism! Fight Imperialism!
   iv. Revolutionary Communist Party - Next Step

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1) Cormac Strikes Back: Resistance cartoons from the North of Ireland Information on Ireland
2) Workers Power, The British Left and The Irish War 1983 p.23
3) Big Flame, Ireland: Rising in the North 1975
4) Socialist Worker 14.8.82
5) Ken Livingstone, Guardian 7.3.83
6) Socialist Worker 4.12.82
7) Socialist Organiser April 1982
8) Ireland Upon the Dissecting Table: James Connolly on Ulster & Partition Cork Workers Historical Reprints No. II 1975 p.53
9) Militant 29.10.82
10) The Loyalist Working Class. Revolutionary Communist Papers 7 - July 1981 p.3
11) SWP, Why We Say Troops Out of Ireland 1980 p.9
12) Ireland upon the dissecting table p.41
13) ibid. p.37

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1) Socialist Review January 1981
2) G.Bell, Troublesome Business: The Labour Party and the Irish Question Pluto Press 1983
3) Socialist Worker 4.12.82
4) Socialist Worker 7.11.81
5) Socialist Worker 4.12.82
6) Socialist Organiser 4.3.82
7) Next Step No. 10 February 1981
8) IFM, An anti-imperialist guide to The Irish War 1983 p.108
9) C.Desmond Greaves, Reminiscences of the Connolly Association p.4

* Readings :

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   The Loyalist Working Class (RCP 7, July 1981)

RCG: Ireland - British Labour & British Imperialism (October 1976)
   Ireland: Key to the British Revolution (1984)

RCL: The Irish Struggle, The CPB & the RCL (June 1981)