

The Russian Revolution and Irish Self-Determination

Sources for Discussion Group: Democracy, Self-Determination and Workers' Control: The Political Relationship between the British Left and the Soviet Union

Contents

1. 'First Annual Commemoration of the Russian Revolution' handbill, 1918, National Library of Ireland, LO P114 [Item 47]. (Below)
2. Draft 'Appeal to the Irish workers by the executive of the Communist International', c.1922, Comintern Collection, Queen's University Belfast, MS 5/2/2, f.495, op.89, d.12.



Draft 'Appeal to the Irish workers by the executive of the Communist International',
c.1922, Comintern Collection, Queen's University Belfast, MS 5/2/2, f.495, op.89, d.12.

Proposal.
APPEAL TO THE IRISH WORKERS. 1e5/2/

The cause of Irish freedom has reached a new crisis. Collins and Griffiths, the agents of the Irish bourgeoisie, joined hands with British Imperialism to trade away the liberty of the people for the shadow of a sham independence. But the Irish Republican Army with arms in hand ~~NEVER~~ has compelled the Collins party to retrace their steps. The compromisers thought to divide the spoils with English Imperialism, but they have quailed before the firm resolution of the Irish toiling masses, and Ireland is again united against the menace of another British occupation.

The response of the Imperialist enemy has been swift. Belfast in the North is a seething cauldron of civil anarchy, in which the vendetta against Sinn Fein is waged anew with daily acts of brutal barbarity, and the normal life of the city goes on to the sound of rifle fire and bursting of bombs. Never in modern times was there such a city.

And the pacifists of the Liberal Imperialist bourgeoisie cry out for peace, and wring their hands, and wonder why Ireland should disturb the calm of the Geneva "truce of God" ordained by Lloyd George. They cry peace, and refuse to see that Belfast is only the rift which reveals the raging inferno that is everywhere underlying the foundations of their precious Empire. They close their eyes to the ~~BRUTAL~~ massacre of the Johannesburg miners. They do not hear the bombing aeroplanes dropping death among the innocent Herreros in British South West Africa. They have already forgotten the shooting of the natives in Kenya and the cries of the Moplahs in India. They cry peace when there is no peace, and will not understand that it has been the great mission of the Irish people to tear away the mask from this harlot of British Imperialism and reveal her in all her hideousness and cruelty as the oppressor and slayer of the toiling millions of the earth.

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Today the Irish people are still faced with the unfinished task. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~ They still stand in the vanguard of the army of national liberation, faced with new struggles.

It is now more clear than ever that Ireland and the oppressed masses of India and Egypt cannot free themselves except by the complete downfall of the British Empire. It is still more clear that the downfall of the British Empire will bring no deliverance if it is to be replaced by another Imperialist hegemony.

Today American Imperialism is raising its head, and casting off the immaculate cloak of "democracy". Behold the land of Lincoln creating a second Ireland in the one-time Negro Republic of Haiti, and violating the sovereignty of that people, putting them to forced labour, and quartering American marines upon their land. Look not to the Stars and Stripes for help! That flag also waves above the oppressed, the lynchings of negroes and unspeakable torturings, aye, and above the prison where lies your own beloved Jim Larkin.

WORKERS OF IRELAND! To you alone is now entrusted the cause of Irish freedom. It is right that you should fight for national independence. It is supremely just that you should sever the ties which bind you to the Moloch of British Imperialism. But in that struggle for national liberation, it will be the secret of your power, while breaking with the Imperialist oppressors, to keep before the toiling masses the imperishable truth that the working people of all lands, now and for ever, are one and indivisible. In this sign you will conquer.

The glorious traditions of the Celtic genius are now handed over to the care of the Irish working class. But the conflict with the British Empire can only be brought to a triumphal issue by an accord with the British working masses. And the vendetta with Ulster will go on with cumulative ferocity

until sanity is restored by the solidarity of the Belfast and the Dublin workmen.

Workers of Ireland! Are you prepared for the great task ahead of you? Are you satisfied with the leaders of the Irish Labour Party? Are you convinced that these leaders are carrying on the spirit of the noble Connolly? Does it not rather seem as if they ~~are~~ were more anxious to ape the respectable manners of Henderson and Clynes than to transform the revolutionary ardour of the Irish workers into action?

While you are driving out the creamery capitalists, what are the Labour Party leaders doing to give you help and guidance? See to it that in times like these, which call for such great sacrifices from the rank and file, the leaders shall be men of iron resolution, and not men who are content to play the undignified role of the "Balance of Power" between the bourgeois parties. Workers of Ireland! get leaders who will demand ^{not the 'balance of power'} ALL POWER for the workers, leaders who will unite the toiling masses of the towns in partnership with the working farmers of the west in ONE FREE AND INDEPENDENT WORKERS' REPUBLIC. Did your martyrs die to provide a respectable frock coated opposition for Dail Eireann? on the pattern of His Majesty's Labour Privy Councillors at Westminster? Did Connolly and Pearce and McSwiney shed their life's blood for a puppet Republic? No! They died so that Ireland shall stand ~~side~~ side by side with Soviet Russia as the inaugurator of a new era of liberation for mankind!

For it is becoming more than ever ^{clear} that the bourgeoisie cannot solve the national question. The sceptre has passed away for ever from the hands of the Liberals. Even honest petty bourgeois leaders like De Valera are hesitating and faltering and stammering with unclear watchwords before the mighty task imposed upon them. Only the advance guard of the workers animated by the programme of the Communist Party

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can ultimately solve the conflict. Only working class discipline and solidarity can bring order out of the chaos ~~XXXX~~ of hatreds and antagonisms left by capitalist Imperialism.

WORKERS OF IRELAND! The Emerald Isle of the poets can only smile again in the bloom of freedom under the Red Flag of Labour. It can only be truly emancipated by the workers organised in a class conscious party of the proletariat. As the fight for freedom was begun by Liberty Hall and the Transport workers in 1916, so it will go on, and will not be finally concluded until the Transport and General Workers Union, hand in hand with the British workers, is again rejuvenated in the spirit of the revolution.

LONG LIVE THE SOLIDARITY OF THE BELFAST AND DUBLIN WORKERS!
LONG LIVE THE WORKING CLASS LEADERSHIP IN THE STRUGGLE
FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION.

LONG LIVE THE UNITED WORKERS' REPUBLIC OF IRELAND.
LONG LIVE THE SOCIAL REVOLUTION IN ALL COUNTRIES.

The Executive of the
Communist International.