

STRATEGY

1. The objectives of international work should be two-fold - aimed at:

(a) Gaining political support for the right to self-determination for the Irish people as a whole. British withdrawal and the political re-unification of Ireland.

and

(b) Undermining British rule in the Six Counties and, by extension, its ability to maintain its occupation.

My understanding of our analysis of (b) is that British occupation depends on:

(i) International recognition of the British governments territorial claim to the Six Counties as part of the 'United Kingdom'.

(ii) Repression.

(iii) Support for the loyalist political veto, discrimination and the marginal privilege that confers on the loyalist population.

(iv) The collaboration/co-operation of the Dublin government, the SDLP and the Irish Catholic Hierarchy.

(v) The support/acquiescence/indifference of:

(a) The Irish Nationalist Population.

(b) The British Population.

(c) The International Community.

TACTICAL REQUIREMENTS

2. Basic tactical requirements in the implementation of such a strategy are:

(a) The identification and targetting of individuals, organisations and institutions abroad whose support is deemed contributory of that strategy.

(b) A thorough working knowledge of the procedures for having issues raised and discussed.

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- (c) A competent international section, with the necessary resources, to formulate policy and implement the activities aimed at achieving our strategic objections.

Of the two strategies - (a) - seeking to gain support for self-determination - and (b) - seeking to undermine the British governments ability to occupy - (b) is clearly the easier to implement being potentially politically more realisable; although obviously we need to discuss the effectiveness of that strategy.

International support for the right of any nation to self-determination is not given solely as a matter of principle - witness South Africa. The granting or with-holding of such support is determined by many other factors - political, ideological, economic or strategic.

With particular regard to Ireland the problem is compounded by the following:

- (i) We are ruled by two internationally recognised governments whose objective vis-a-vis Irish sovereignty is diametrically opposed to ours. The right to the sovereignty of Ireland as a whole has not been contested in any international government forum from the Versailles Peace Conference to to-days United Nations.
- (ii) Our regional political hinterland is the 'liberal democracies' of Western Europe and the EEC which are ideologically and strategically at one with London and Dublin.
- (iii) The British government has by-and-large successfully sold itself as the 'honest broker' and since Hillsborough has had the active endorsement of that position from the Dublin government and the SDLP.
- (iv) Internationally we are largely perceived either as merely belonging to the 'Euro-terrorist' phenomenon or at least as a party which politically supports armed struggle - a concept which is unacceptable to the contemporary political culture of Western Europe and as such potentially politically damaging to any party which would associate itself too closely with us.

(v) International affiliations to various organisations, e.g. the Socialist International, usually means a simple referral to the national affiliate on any questions i.e. the British Labour Party, the SDLP and the Free State Labour Party. Most political, religious, trade union, womens, youth organisations in Britain and Ireland have such international affiliations.

Our actual political situation - in terms of any formal relationship we have with political parties abroad - is the political relations we have with two small left-wing parties in Western Europe - V.S. in Denmark and D.P. of Italy - and with Herri Batasuna in the Basque country.*

We have less formal links with the minority section of the Green Party in West Germany (G.A.L.) - having encountered a good deal of hostility from the Petra Kelly faction of the Greens.

We have had meetings with other similar parties which, although there was no hostility, have not, as yet, resulted in any ongoing close political relations or co-operation i.e. S.V. (Norway) S.F. (Denmark), C.P.N., P.P.R., P.S.P. (Holland) as well as meeting with major political parties with the same inconclusive outcome i.e. C.P. (France), C.P. (Italy) PASOK (Greece).

We have no firm contact with any representative political party in any other country in the world.

We have no concrete political links with any liberation movement.

We have no concrete political relationship with any government.

*V.S. % of votes: '68 - 2%; '78 - 2.1%, '77 - 2.7%; '79 - 3.7%; '84 won 5 of 179 seats - 2 defections '86, 1990 no M.F.s.

D.P. '83 won 7 of 630 seats in parliament; % of vote not available; 2 N.E.P.'s. 1990 - 1 M.E.P.

H.B. '80 11 of 60 seats in Basque parliament (16.3%) increased vote and seats in '86 elections.

Despite all that, I believe that the potential exists for developing support for the primary strategy: -

- a) Support for self-determination - through the process of gaining support for
- b) Undermining British ability to occupy - which of itself becomes a positive educational process.

We can, I believe, muster support from a wide political spectrum on such issues as e.g.:

- a) The legal and judicial system.
- b) Other forms of repression - censorship, shoot-to-kill, plastic bullets.
- c) Sectarian discrimination in employment practices.
- d) Discrimination in cultural matters.
- e) The various manifestations of loyalism, etc.

Our involvement in such issues, of course, takes us out of the purely political arena, involving, also as it must, organisations whose remit is obtaining or defending the rights of specific categories of people - workers, women, youth, etc. as well as organisations which deal with specific issues which affect society e.g. civil, human, legal, cultural rights.

In essence we would be attempting to generate international opposition to many aspects of British rule in Ireland which, as instruments of government, the British clearly view as essential to the maintenance of their presence, as well as opposition to aspects of life in Ireland - particularly loyalism - which are directly attributable to the British presence and partition.

We need to establish the limits of the political spectrum - if any - from which we seek support.

We need to politically prioritize the geographic areas of our international activity i.e. Britain, EEC, Western Europe, Socialist countries, North America, Central and Latin America, Australia, New Zealand, Africa, Asia, Middle East???

We need to identify, prioritize and set realistic objectives to be achieved for the international bodies we hope to target for support i.e.:

National parties

National parliaments

Governments

Regional parliaments or organisations

The non-Alligned Movement

The United Nations

Non-governmental organisations attached to the U.N.

Trade Unions - national and international federations

Rights Organisations, etc.

CONCLUSIONS AND SOME PROPOSALS

Despite their relative size and consequent lack of political power I believe it would be wrong to write-off the independent representative left parties. Certainly they are not going to be able to deliver the degree of political support we require. They, in fact, are the first to acknowledge that.

However, they are, regardless of insurmountable ideological or tactical differences with the other parties in their respective states (excepting H.B.) accepted and respected as part of the 'democratic political culture'. As such they can and have been helpful in opening doors which might otherwise have remained closed. By association they help erode the adverse European perception of Sinn Féin's position on armed struggle in Ireland.

One immediate modest step is to consolidate the relationships which we already have, while attempting to develop the existing tenuous links we have, with other parties mentioned, to the status of some formal political relationship/co-operation.

Secondly, we need to identify the representative left parties in countries where we have no party to party relationships and target them for the purpose of doing same.

Thirdly, we need to assess the present role of solidarity committees and the extent of activity we want them to be involved in and provide them with the facts, analysis and speakers to conduct their work.

We need also to immediately develop links with sections of the left in the European Parliaments i.e. the Communist and Allies Group and the Rainbow Group.

This does not rule out the need to develop links with the largest group in the European Parliament i.e. the Socialist Group. However, given that, the SDLP, Free State Labour Party and British Labour Party are affiliates of this group there is little point in approaching this question directly.

Clearly, from all the foregoing one of our secondary strategies must be to erode the 'Euro-terrorist' perception and the damage that does to even pursuing our major objective of accruing support for self-determination.

In this, elected Sinn Féin representatives and 'respected' British voices for withdrawal, will play a crucial role.

REQUIREMENT

Central to all our international activity is:

- (a) the information/publicity dimension to that work; and
 - (b) a properly structured international section to fulfill the various functions required of it.
- (a) Our efforts in the area of information/publicity must generally be in keeping with our overall international strategy and aimed at the same target groups with the additional dimension of the international media, aimed at influencing international opinion - organised and unorganised - generally. Simplistically speaking we are talking about disseminating information and where possible building campaigns on the basis of that information.

Explicit in that is the need for a comprehensive information service to cater for both the general and specific information demands which are made on us and which we need to initiate rather than simply respond to.

Detailed and concise information briefs are required on all the issues we want to push.

As most of this material will have to be given away we have to produce it cheaply and be able to up-date it quickly and in a language which those we hope to persuade can understand.

Information must be categorised to suit the target group.

A system of monitoring its use must be evolved. The target groups are the same as previously mentioned:

- Solidarity Committees
- Political Parties
- Governments
- Groups and individual M.P.'s in national parliaments and the European parliament
- Liberation Movements
- Trade Unions
- N.G.O.'s attached to the U.N.
- Women's Organisations
- Youth and Student Organisations
- The Media.

Information disseminated will include our own publications plus a paper-clipping service for those abroad directly involved in work on Ireland, information briefs on a wide range of issues, e.g.:

- Repressive legislation
- Amnesty International on Ireland

Synopsis of reports by other respected international organisations on Ireland.

- Plastic Bullets
- Paid-Perjurers
- Shoot-To-Kill
- Interrogations
- RUC/UDR
- Loyalism - the ideology
 - the assassination campaign
 - international links.

The SDLP and the NDI

Dublin government voting record at U.N.

The FEA and Brit proposals re: same

Mac Bride Principles

Discrimination in employment

Censorship

Strip-searches

Social and economic data.

In short we need information briefs/position papers on the entire range of issues involving Britain and Ireland - all aimed at creating international opposition to the methods of British rule in Ireland.

Video material has become essential for the work being conducted by the solidarity committees.

(b) An international section should consist of:

1. Policy Formation Committee
2. Foreign Affairs Liaison Committee - with representatives from Trade Union, Youth, Women, Cultural Affairs Department, as required.
3. Foreign Affairs Bureau - to implement policy, initiate and co-ordinate international activities.

National or regional desks, where warranted.

International Information Service.