

MANDATE FOR REVOLUTION

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Post-colonial hangover reflects the success of the British in Ireland, in that the colonised are defending the coloniser, despite the centuries of brutal oppression, starvation, the Penal Laws and Penal Colonies and the plunder and looting of resources.

The Penal Laws were, according to Edmund Burke, “a machine of wise and elaborate contrivance, as well fitted for the oppression, impoverishment and degradation of a people, and the debasement in them of human nature itself, as ever proceeded from the perverted ingenuity of man.”

Pádraig Pearse and James Connolly would never have taken up arms if Britain had recognised, and implemented, the democratic wish of the Irish people for the greatest level of independence on offer (Home Rule), as overwhelmingly expressed in every election from 1870, or for the repeal of the Act of Union, as expressed in mass movements (monster meetings), insurrection (Fenians) or votes for pro-independence parties (O’Connell)) from the 1840s.

Before that, the vast Catholic majority of the population were denied a vote. As soon as they got the vote, they voted to leave the United Kingdom.

The dying-sting of old colonialists imply that the proponents of the 1916 Rising, which they refer to as an “atrocious criminal conspiracy”, had no mandate from the public to take up arms.

Indeed, what democratic mandate did Britain have to slaughter the peoples of India, South Africa, Egypt and half a hundred other places under their butcher’s apron?

British terror in Ireland had no mandate.

As they should be aware, revolutionaries, by definition, act first, then seek a retrospective mandate, which is what was given in the 1918 general election when Sinn Fein received a massive electoral endorsement, winning 75 of the 103 seats.

Either way, British rule in Ireland was a product of conquest and subjugation and, therefore, devoid of moral authority.

I take the view that the right to resist foreign occupation does not necessarily stem from the ballot box. The right of a people to resist arises from the illegitimacy and violence of illegal occupation.

The United Nations shares this view.