

# CONNOLLY



## PRESS POISONERS IN IRELAND

and other articles

British & Irish Communist Organisation

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<i>2nd Edition - June 1968.</i>	
<i>3rd Edition - May 1972.</i>	

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

When the British and Irish Communist Organisation first became involved in Irish working class politics, in accordance with its adoption of Lenin's slogan that "without a revolutionary theory there cannot be a revolutionary movement", it was a prime necessity that it study and evaluate the writings of the one socialist theoretician of substance that had emerged from the Irish working class, James Connolly. It soon became clear that there were a great many obstacles to doing so. Although four volumes of Connolly's selected writings had been edited by Desmond Ryan and Cathal O'Shannon and published in the late forties, when the B & ICO actually studied the original socialist newspaper files of the Connolly period, it

came across many articles which could be described as among Connolly's best but which had been carefully omitted from the selected writings which were republished by Ryan.

The contents of these articles made obvious the reasons for their suppression. The Ryan editions were tailored to include only those writings of Connolly which would reduce any offence to the Irish catholic bourgeoisie to a minimum, whereas Connolly's suppressed writings contained his most bitter attacks on that class.

As P.J. Musgrove wrote in an Introduction to a selection of Connolly's writings published in 1941 by the Communist Party of Great Britain under the title "A Socialist And War:-

"With the exception of a few published works, the writings of James Connolly lie buried in museum files of obscure periodicals. This virtual suppression of the mass of Connolly's writings is but part of the campaign to 'omit, obliterate and distort the revolutionary side of its doctrine, its revolutionary soul' (Lenin)."

The B & ICO accordingly set about making available to the working class those articles by Connolly which had been suppressed by his so-called followers - of assorted nationalist, social-democratic, Khrushchevite and Trotskyist persuasions.

When the B & ICO first made a number of Connolly's suppressed writings available, it had not yet freed itself from the Catholic nationalist myth of "one historic Irish nation", and accordingly held a catholic nationalist anti-partitionist position. Arising from this, not alone were Catholic nationalist deviations in Connolly's republished articles left uncriticised, but a number of catholic nationalist errors were also contained in the introductions to these writings supplied by the B & ICO. In due course through careful historical analysis and a clearer understanding of the realities of the political struggles in Ireland today, the B & ICO came to the conclusion that there were two nations in Ireland and that anti-partitionism was an undemocratic attempt to deny the right to self-determination to the Ulster Protestant nation. Its first policy statement along these lines was "Connolly and Partition" issued in July 1970, and dealing with the mistakes made by Connolly regarding the Ulster question.

Primarily because of the errors contained in the B & ICO introductions to its editions of Connolly's writings, these were withdrawn from publication in late 1971. This caused much glee in opportunist circles, but they can wipe the smile off their faces now with the republication of these articles. Despite all the ranting and raving of opportunist lefties about 'Stalinist dogmatism' and 'personality cults' it is the 'Stalinist' B & ICO alone of organisations operating among the Irish working class, which has shown itself to lack the slightest hesitancy in being publicly self-critical of any of its past errors, and it is the B & ICO alone which has refused to engage in the personality cult of "Connollyism". This cult survives both by suppressing those writings of his which are found to be embarrassing to opportunists. The B & ICO does neither and again makes "Press Poisoners In Ireland" available to the working class. The only changes made from the last edition is that the introduction can now, on the basis of our analysis of the national conflict in Ireland, point more clearly to both the strength and the weaknesses of Connolly as shown in these articles.

At the time Connolly was writing, the Home Rule campaign and its efforts to coerce Ulster under a Dublin Government were in full swing. The working class of Catholic Ireland was thoroughly infected with the 'one-nation' myth of Catholic bourgeois nationalism and opposed the right of the Ulster Protestant nation to self-determination. While Connolly attempted to develop a working class opposition to the bourgeoisie within the framework of Catholic nationalism, he did not challenge this nationalism itself but rather fell in with it, and on occasions contributed to it. This attitude of his is exemplified by the following quote from his article, "The Awakening of Ulster's Democracy":-

"The working class of Dublin in a greater proportion than that of any of the great cities of these countries, has made up its mind in favour of independent political action. The fact that it is sternly Nationalist does not alter that fact. With it Nationalism is not a thing to be argued about, any more than the existence of Ireland is a matter of controversy or speculation."

This fatal nationalism is to be seen in varying degrees in the following three Connolly articles which we are republishing. Because Connolly subscribed to the "one nation" dogma he could not recognise

the Ulster Protestant opposition to inclusion under a Home Rule Parliament in Dublin as legitimate national defence. Rather does he in passing write off this opposition as merely a product of mob oratory (in his article "The Irish Nationalist Press") or as due to the fact that Protestant workers let themselves be "led by the nose by a party captained by landlords, and place-hunting lawyers" (in "The Awakening of Ulster's Democracy"). For Connolly, then, there is no substantial basis for Protestant working class opposition to being coerced under a Home Rule Government, despite the fact that in the last article Connolly himself states in relation to the Home Rule Party that it was no 'friend' of Labour but "*a party which voted against the Right to Work Bill, the Minimum Wage for Mines, and the Minimum Wage for Railwaymen, which intrigued against the application to Ireland of the Feeding of Necessitous School Children and the Medical Benefits of the Insurance Act*". Connolly, however, chose to ignore the fact that Protestant workers in opposing Home Rule were both asserting their legitimate national rights and also defending their class interests against the type of Party described by Connolly himself above.

Thus 2,000 Belfast trade unionists signed a Manifesto addressed to the British Labour Party in April 1914 which said among other things:-

"We are working men and trade unionists and have at heart the interests of trade unionism no less than you have. The Irish Parliament under the Home Rule Bill can pass labour laws for Ireland.... Under an Irish Parliament, controlled by small farmers, the Factory Acts and the factory regulations would remain a dead letter". (See "The Home Rule Crisis", B & ICO)

Despite the Catholic Nationalist position on the Ulster question contained in these articles by Connolly, they have nevertheless remained suppressed by all the combined forces of catholic nationalism. Whatever errors Connolly did make, one thing which remained constant was his incessant hatred for the bourgeoisie. Nowhere is this more clearly shown than in his article "Press Poisoners in Ireland" which deals with the principal organ of catholic nationalism in Belfast, the "Irish News". As Connolly says in describing its duplicity, "it never moves against Labour by direct attack".

*Its line "is that of the treacherous feline who purrs and purrs, and purrs, and scratches with poisonous claws when the purr is most seductive."*

Connolly describes the "Irish News" as one of the most deadly enemies of the Labour movement in Ireland precisely because its hostility to the working class is not open and direct but is concealed behind apparent sympathy for it:- *"In all Ireland there is no journal more ready to proclaim from the housetops its readiness, and the readiness of the party whose mouthpiece it is, to do something for the working class, and in all Ireland there is no journal more ready with the poiniard to stab to the heart every person or party that dares to organise the workers to do anything for themselves."*

The "Irish News" today is exactly the same deadly enemy of the working class that it was in Connolly's day. It mouths sympathy for the working class and opens its columns to phony 'leftists' while suppressing genuine Communists. Thus on December 21, 1970 it published two letters from the opportunists, Eamon McCann of the "Derry Labour Party" and Michael Farrell of the Peoples Democracy which ranted and raved against 'Stalinism', which they blamed for the suppression of the workers in Poland at that time by the Gomulka regime. But the "Irish News" also refused to print a reply to these letters from the B & ICO, pointing out that Gomulka had been opposed by Stalin and had come to power in 1956 on an anti-Stalinist programme, whereupon he consolidated the restoration of capitalism in Poland.

The "Irish News" also attempts to portray the struggle by Catholic nationalist forces to coerce Northern Ireland under the rule of the South, as a struggle over working class issues. Thus in its Editorial of January 18, 1971 on the Ballymurphy rioting it wrote:- *"Is not the time ripe then for a resolution by the rest of the Catholic community in Belfast to do something about the problem of Ballymurphy whose central core is, basically, living conditions and unemployment."* And this Editorial, mind you, despite the fact that a substantial element of that rioting consisted of sectarian Catholic/Protestant confrontations between the Ballymurphy and Springmartin estates.

The fact that such a blatantly capitalist newspaper as the "Irish News" should appear to encourage working class violence against a bourgeois state, ought to be enough to make us realise what that

paper was really at, whipping up as much trouble <sup>as possible</sup> against its enemy bourgeoisie in order to facilitate its own Catholic nationalist bourgeoisie in its takeover attempts. Despite the fact that Connolly held a catholic nationalist position on Ulster, he himself was at pains, in "The Awakening of Ulster Democracy", to expose the real nature of such 'sympathy' for Labour on the part of the catholic bourgeois nationalists:-

"Thus Labour is ever encouraged to revolt against the Orange sweaters of the North, but nothing must be done to encourage any such revolt against the Nationalist sweaters of the South... The revolt of Labour when it can be manipulated as an asset of the Home Rule movement is all right, but the revolt of Labour against the slum landlords, grabbers and sweating employers who control that movement is a very naughty, unpatriotic, anti-Irish, irreligious, blasphemous, immoral, factionist, traitorous, cloven-hoof sort of iniquity that ought to be suppressed."

It was for statements such as this that Connolly's Catholic nationalist 'followers' have continuously suppressed these articles of his. It is for statements such as this that the B & ICO feel that they merit republishing, so long as whatever errors they contain are pointed out and recognised.

#### BRITISH & IRISH COMMUNIST ORGANISATION

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* PRESS POISONERS IN IRELAND *  
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We have in Belfast a Home Rule journal, the Irish News, a careful study of whose columns would be an enlightenment to those Socialist comrades in Great Britain who imagine in their innocence that an enthusiasm for Labour is the inevitable accompaniment of the advocacy of a measure of political freedom for Ireland.

They would find that that journal is one of the most deadly enemies of the Labour movement that this country possesses, and that it never lets slip any opportunity to wound that movement even whilst softly purring its sympathy for Labour on all possible occasions. In all

Ireland there is no journal more ready to proclaim from the housetops its readiness, and the readiness of the party whose mouthpiece it is, to do something for the working class, and in all Ireland there is no journal more ready with the poiniard to stab to the heart every person or party that dares to organise the workers to do anything for themselves.

In this treacherous attitude it is more up-to-date, more thoroughly modern than its rivals in the Tory press. The latter are clumsy and antiquated in their methods, as befits the exponents of an antiquated doctrine, they still clumsily adhere to obsolete methods of attack.

Let me explain. If you wish to point out the attitude of the Orange Tory press towards the aspirations of Labour, you have just to turn to their editorials, and there you will find their hostility openly and undisguisedly expressed to all that Labour holds dear. Having read the editorials, you know immediately where you are, and how far to discount the manner in which the paper chronicles the news of the day.

But if you turn to the editorials in the Home Rule organ, you get no such infallible index to the editorial mind.

On the contrary, you find always a sloppy sentiment sloppily expressed in favour of Labour in the editorials, but all through the news columns, and in all its headings and sub-headings, you notice that always undue prominence is given to every item that tells against Labour, the views of its most unimportant enemies are heralded forth with the utmost prolixity, and the views of its most eminent partisans are slurred over and made to read as unintelligibly as possible. If you compare the telegraphic news printed in the Irish News with the telegraphic news printed in the Daily News or Daily Record, you will find that all three organs, having the same service and the same material to select from, the Irish News has carefully rejected everything that tells for the organised Labour movement, and has carefully suppressed every item the mere chronicling of which might convey to its readers an idea of the justice, power, or growth of the working class in any part of the world.

It has brought to bear against the Labour movement the most refined and insidious arts of character assassination.



It never moves against Labour by direct attack. It suppresses here, exaggerates there, distorts this bit of news, omits this qualifying sentence from some speech, drops casually a favourable paragraph from the report of some strike or Labour meeting, and is ever alert to seize every opportunity to spread the slime of poisonous suggestion over the most apparently innocuous report of the activities of Labour.

As I have said, it is up-to-date. The more astute of the capitalist politicians have long since discovered that the effectual hoodwinking of the working class must be done [*It seems that this should read: 'must now be done' - B & ICO*] by impassioned or long-winded editorials, that in fact the working class voters do not devour editorials as their daily food, but that this hoodwinking and hocussing, to them so necessary, can best be done by a clever manipulation of the news items, by an unscrupulous use of their power to suppress truth and suggest falsehood when apparently only retailing the daily happenings.

You can attack an editor and impale him for false doctrine or slanderous statement in his editorial, but you cannot attack him when your only complaint is that his choice of what he shall or shall not report is different to what you think the circumstances warrant.

And this line of poisonous suggestion is just the line in which the natural instincts of the editor of the Irish News enables him to excel above his Orange contemporaries. Their line is that of naked, unashamed reaction stirring up the blackest passions in the lowest depths of human nature - the line of the obscurantist and the bigot. His line is that of the treacherous feline who purrs, and purrs, and purrs, and scratches with poisonous claws when the purr is most seductive. The following from the Irish News of 18th August is a choice sample:

"Our Glasgow correspondent writes:- 'The Labour Party announce their intention of trying to increase their strength in the Glasgow Town Council at the November elections at the expense, they state, "of a few reactionaries when they retire". Amongst the members of the Labour Party who retire are Councillors P.G. Stewart, A.M. Welsh, Lyon, and Bailie Alston. Councillor Lyon just now represents the Townhead Ward. In this Ward, Councillor Stewart was returned by a majority of about 40 votes through Irish support. He is a Labour Party man. Shortly after-

wards Mr. Stephen J. Henry, a well-known Glasgow Catholic, sought election for the same Ward. The now Councillor Lyon opposed him and was returned. Certain Labour leaders in Townhead Ward professed anxiety to see Mr. Henry returned, but the real facts were that they were working against him. The Labour leaders in Municipal Glasgow in a few weeks will be anxious to get Irish votes, and

WILL PANDER TO THE VANITY OF SOME MEN BY ASKING THEM TO SPEAK  
ON THEIR PLATFORMS

selecting those men who are supposed to have influence with the Irish electors. At present there is not an Irish Nationalist in the Glasgow Town Council, and it is for the Nationalist electors to see to it that an end is put to Municipal tricksters trying to use them for their own ends, and adopting tactics of a character that hitherto has kept Irish Nationalists out of the Council. In November no candidate whose politics are of the Tory order will oppose certain Labour candidates. When the electors discover the reason there will be a rude awakening for some of the 'Labour Politicians'."

The methods of the Irish News are the methods of a good many of the Irish Home Rule papers; as they have to cater for a class of members whose instincts are rebellious and revolutionary, and who are therefore drawn towards the Labour movement, it is necessary that the anti-Labour bias of the newspaper proprietors and professional politicians be hidden as carefully as possible, and the anti-Labour campaign conducted as discretely as it can.

Moreover, the Irish News stands as the journalistic exponent of the principles of the party of which Joseph Devlin, M.P., is the representative in Parliament for West Belfast. And Joe's seat in Parliament is doomed if he alienates even fifty per cent of the Labour votes. That is to say that if we take the Labour men who are Labour men before anything else, before being Nationalists or Unionists, the loss of fifty per cent of such votes means the loss of West Belfast to the Home Rulers, and giving over of the Parliamentary representation of Belfast completely to the Unionists.

The reader will thus see readily how the anti-Labour slime of the editor of the Irish News, despite the care with which it is spread, has yet aroused such feelings in West Belfast as to make the editor of that paper the most dangerous ally that the Home Rule party ever

had in that division - more dangerous to Joe Devlin than a hundred Orange orators.

Other factors are contributing also that make the seat in question more and more insecure.

Quite recently an attempt was made in Dublin and the South of Ireland to organise a rival railway union to that of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants. It was intended presumably to break up the forces of organised Labour on the Irish railways; its inaugural meeting was attended by a number of well-known Dublin politicians, and heralded with a great flourish of trumpets in the capitalist press.

The promoters of this scab organisation were the leading officials of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, of which Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., is the president. It failed miserably, nevertheless.

For the past few weeks the tram men in Dublin have been preparing for a struggle for better conditions. They have the general sympathy of the Dublin public, as it is well known that they are about the lowest paid and worst treated of any tram employees in these countries. The company is, by the way, owned by the editor and proprietor of the Independent, Mr. William Martin Murphy. As soon as these men began to organise, and the possibility of a struggle began to loom large upon the horizon, an effort was made to disrupt them by the organisation of "a tram men's union of which the directors approved".

This disruptive effort was in the care of, and organised by the leading officials of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, of which Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., is president.

Mark, it was only after these poor slaves of the tram line had become rebellious that an effort was made to get them into a union other than that which had educated them into a knowledge of their power.

Mr. Joseph Devlin is a very busy man, and he may not know anything of these attacks upon Labour by his journalistic ally and his A.O.H. henchmen, but there are a whole lot of voters in West Belfast fully alive to them all. And their opinion is that somebody had better call off their dogs.

In the North of Ireland, as in Great Britain, the rank and file of the A.O.H. are generally honest, hardworking Irishmen, Labour in all their sympathies. I wonder what they will say when they find out, as they will some day, that their organisation is being prostituted in the interests of Capital, that it is being made a scab-recruiting agency.

The Ancient Order of Hibernians (Board of Erin) was founded as a weapon against clerical dictation in politics; it has become a weapon of political clerics against all Catholics who refuse to take their politics from the conventional orthodox source.

Mr. Joseph Devlin, M.P., used it for Nationalist purposes, it now seeks to use, if not already using him, for quite other purposes. As soon as Home Rule is passed into activity, and the inevitable re-constituting of parties takes place, should "Wee Joe" elect to follow the democratic path, I should not be surprised to see the AOH break him and brush him contemptuously aside, thus proving again that it is one thing to create a weapon, it is another thing to keep it in your hands, and still another thing to avoid being bruised by it when the weapon passes into the hands of others.

In other words, that the economic forces at war in society are stronger in the long run than the schemes of the most astute wire-pullers.

(FORWARD, 30th August, 1913)

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\* THE IRISH NATIONALIST PRESS \*  
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For some time past the agricultural labourers of Lancashire have been attracting, by a strike, attention to the fact that their section of the working class has its grievances as well as that which from its concentration in industries is able to more readily achieve the organisation required for the dramatic action that secures newspaper notoriety.

But I have not seen in any cross-Channel newspaper, Labour or otherwise, any notice of the fact that for some time past the organisation

of the agricultural labourers of County Dublin has been pushed with great energy and success. Our comrade, Jim Larkin, and the Irish Transport Worker's Union, with their customary energy have spread the propaganda through all the small towns and villages of the County with the result that recruits are being enrolled every Sunday in great numbers. Six hundred new members as the result of one meeting has been achieved on more than one occasion.

Of course, the Nationalist press takes no notice of these immense meetings, and gives no helping hand to the work of organising those much neglected men. But if some fourth-rate politician went out to Swarils, Malahide, or Baldazle, to establish a branch of the United Irish League, and brought with him a few bar-room orators from Dublin, the resultant meetings would be recorded with great headings and imposing editorials. The fact that an accidental conflict on the roadside between two Irish terriers would probably gather a great crowd, and leave as valuable social enlightenment behind it, would not in the least degree affect the amount of newspaper space devoted to the 'historic gathering'. All political pow-wows in Ireland are "historic gatherings"!

The reader will think I am exaggerating when I describe the manner in which the Irish Home Rule press set themselves to work to boom the efforts of their own political partisans. I am not. I have known of meetings held in Dublin in the back parlours of tenement houses capable of accomodating about thirty persons on an average, and these meetings got as many columns of space in the Home Rule Press as the British Liberal Press would give to the utterances of a fourth-rate Cabinet Minister.

These reports are and were intended for the consumption of persons outside Dublin, and intended to catch the eye of the Dubliner who was too contemptuous of the meeting to go next door to attend it.

The country people would read of the meeting, and seeing the long reports of the speeches would say that

"The League is doing great things in Dublin"

and imagine<sup>b</sup> themselves an enormous gathering of thousands.

At the same time, a Labour meeting attended by thousands of alert and vigorous-minded Dublin men and women would be dismissed in the

same issue of the same Press with a paragraph of at most a dozen lines; perhaps not noticed at all.

And the people in the country would in all probability not read the paragraph about the Labour meeting.

I remember some amusing instances of this nature. During the closing months of the split in the Home Rule Party before the present United Party was founded, the late Timothy Harrington, M.P., was editor of United Ireland, and through that paper was the first to broach the question of unity. All sides really wanted unity, but as they had for years been abusing each other in Press and on platform, and had given the Irish public such an insight into the sordid and insincere character of each others pretensions to patriotism, and such accurate, if painfully disgusting, analysis of each others personalities, that all sides professed to repudiate with scorn the idea of uniting with the party composed of the low characters they had represented their opponents to be. Hence Harrington was left to pursue his advocacy of unity alone. But although a thorough bully and unscrupulous enemy of Labour in Ireland, Harrington was a strong and sagacious personality, and held both sides to the split in that contempt the man of real force of character always holds for the puppets whose reputations depend upon the spilling of newspaper ink. So he pursued the even tenor of his way.

Good phrase that! I do not know the difference between an even tenor and an even soprano or bass, but Harrington pursued it, anyway.

He was a member of the National Club, which then was holding regular meetings in Rutland Square, and in the midst of his unity propaganda the date arrived on which he was the speaker of the evening. The meeting was boycotted by the Club members and by the outside public, and Mr. Harrington could not even secure a chairman.

So he had to take the chair himself, and introduce himself, and be both speaker and chairman. He went right ahead, delivered his speech, and next morning the report of his speech in the Press occupied more columns than there were persons present at the meeting.

The cowardly Home Rule Press was exceedingly anxious that the speech should be delivered, exceedingly anxious that the speech should get the widest publicity, exceedingly anxious that its conclusions should

be accepted and unity realised but exceedingly afraid that they should appear to recognise the proposal before they saw how the cat was going to jump.

Thus, they simulated an appearance of opposition to Mr. Harrington's proposals, but gave his reasonings and arguments the widest publicity.

Whereas in the case of Labour they simulate friendship but suppress all arguments for and exaggerate and give the widest publicity to all slanders against or happenings anyway hurtful to the cause of Labour.

An even more amusing illustration of the art of political boasting was given in Dublin when Mr. O'Brien was introducing the United Irish League into that city. I suppose many of our readers are hardly aware of the fact that although Mr. William O'Brien is now excommunicated by the United Irish League, and its bitterest foe, yet he is the founder, inspirer, and whilst it was an active force in agrarian struggles, was the chief financier and leader of that League. But such is the case.

For a long time the cities of Ireland, and Dublin in particular, remained callous and cold to the appeals of the League. They regarded it as a peasants' or as an agricultural movement, pure and simple, and would have nothing to do with it. But the politicians wanted the cities, and so a concerted attack was made upon Dublin.

Dublin, understand, was and is important politically in Ireland because even the peasantry, who in most countries are jealous of the capital, in Ireland do not trust a movement which cannot claim the intellectual adhesion of the capital.

Hence, the hosts of the United Irish League, backed up by all the financial resources of Mr. O'Brien, and the concerted powers of the Home Rule Press, set out to make Dublin a tributary of the League, whether it would or not.

A band was hired, also a gang of corner boys or loafers to cheer the speaker, and if need be break the head of any opponent. Then 'great meetings' were announced in all the various districts. All United Irish League gatherings are 'great meetings' when they are not 'magnificent demonstrations'.

The same gang of corner boys made up the meeting on each occasion. At Inchicore they were addressed by the orators as the 'unconquered democracy of Inchicore', at Wood Quay they were the 'sterling working class of Wood Quay Ward', at Drumcondra they were the 'patriot men of Drumcondra', at Arran Quay they stood for the 'true and tried men of Arran Quay', and in the Harbour Division they responded enthusiastically as the orators praised their record as 'citizen voters in that Gibraltar of Irish Nationalism - the Harbour Division of Dublin'.

And each day the newspapers described the same gang differently, and waxed eloquent in their leading columns upon the magnificent rally of the working class of Dublin in the ranks of the United Irish League.

And the readers down the country and the Irish in Great Britain swelled with exaltation as they read of the great reception the Dublin workers gave to the orators of the League. Indeed it was primarily for the benefit of the readers down the country and in Great Britain that the meetings were arranged.

But as the Dublin workers saw the corner boys marched back and forwards across their city to pose as the residents in the various wards and districts, and as they read in the papers the list of the committees in charge, and saw there the names principally of pawn-brokers, slum landlords, publicans and sweaters, what wonder that they treated the whole affair with contempt.

It is from that date I count the growth of that healthy distrust of the Dublin Press, and disbelief in its truthfulness, which is so marked a feature today in Dublin life. But for that distrust and disbelief, the Labour movement of the Metropolis of Ireland would long ago have succumbed to the fury of the onslaught made upon it by the venal prostitutes of the newspaper world.

In dealing with Labour movements in their own country and amongst their own Nationalist people, the writers on the Dublin Press surpass the bitterest ravings of Sir Edward Carson and his followers in intolerance and suggestions of mob violence.

The sole difference being that whereas the suggestion of mob violence given out by the Orange orators fall upon a people disposed to act upon them, the similar suggestions of the Dublin pressmen are



treated with contempt by the persons to whom they are directed.

The slanders and incitements to violence of the Orange orators are directed against those who differ with them politically; the slanders and incitements of the Home Rule pressmen are directed against those who oppose their paymasters industrially. If the latter generally fail where the former succeed, the spirit is the same.

Speed the day when Home Rule will strip each of the corrupt gangs of the mask they have worn so long, and show them to the democracy in their true colours upon the same platform, defending the same hateful cause of class domination.

For that day, the great work now being carried forward among the agricultural workers by Jim Larkin is an indispensable preparation. Industrial slaves or slaves acquiescing in the conditions of their slavery cannot furnish the basis of a really free nation. And the agricultural labourer is among the worst treated of all the slaves of Ireland.

Time and again attempts have been made to arouse him, and time and again he has responded. The agrarian secret societies of the past, the Ribbonmen, the Shavanests, the White Boys, the Caravats, were largely societies of agricultural labourers and small farmers.

By the way, the Ancient Order of Hibernians makes the comical claim to be descended from these bodies just mentioned. But one particular feature that marked their existence was an almost exclusive interest in and solicitude for the just settlement of social questions such as agrarian disputes, and contests over wages and conditions of labour. And these questions are the very questions Hibernianism takes no interest in; nay Hibernianism prefers the presence in its ranks of the merciless grinder of the faces of the poor, if wealthy, to the presence of the most virtuous labourer who has nothing but his virtues and his poverty to recommend him.

Nearer our own day the agricultural labourers of Ireland flocked in large numbers into the Land and Labour Association, especially in the South. This Association grew into great strength, developed a sane and practical policy of its own, and was progressing brilliantly until it was ruined by the schemes of ambitious politicians anxious to bend it to their own party interests.

The present move, by linking up the town with the country, should serve to make the gain more permanent to the latter. And by bringing to the country labourer the help of the leadership of the town worker, with his greater opportunities of education, association, and enlightenment, the alliance of both under one banner should further generally the belief in the future of Labour in this country.

We want to see an Ireland in which all classes of labour will be united under one banner, in which each industry will have its own organisation embracing all within that industry, in which all industries will be linked together in one all-embracing union, and in which that all-embracing union of labour will give effective expression to the will of Labour in the workshop, the field, the factory, the Council Chamber, and the Parliament.

(FORWARD, July 26th 1913)

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THE AWAKENING OF ULSTER'S DEMOCRACY

The largest Labour Demonstration seen in Dublin in this generation took place on Sunday, 25th May. It was on the occasion of the holding of a May demonstration, and if a little belated, it made up in size and enthusiasm for the tardiness of the celebration.

But the mere size of the demonstration was not even its most remarkable point - that was provided rather by its character than by its dimensions. There have ere now been held in Dublin Labour Demonstrations greater in magnitude, and perhaps other generations have seen some even surpassing the one under notice. But all such demonstrations have been part of some other movement - for instance, a Labour Demonstration of the supporters of Home Rule, the Land League, or as in O'Connell's days, of the Repeal Movement. It was of some such demonstration that Charles Gavan Duffy wrote one of his finest poems - the poem containing that verse so frequently quoted since by Home Rule politicians desirous of winning the English Labour vote:

"Ever to toil, ever to moil,

This is our social charter;  
And city slave and peasant serf,  
Each its unfailling martyr."

Then as now the Home Rule politician was bubbling over with sympathy for Labour, provided always that Labour knew how to behave itself, and keep its proper place.

Its proper place, of course, being as one of the assets of the political movement of some section of its masters. Thus Labour is ever encouraged to revolt against the Orange sweaters of the North, but nothing must be done to encourage any such revolt against the Nationalist sweaters of the South.

As the song says:

"Oh, no, we never mention them:  
Their names are never heard!"

The revolt of Labour when it can be manipulated as an asset of the Home Rule movement is all right, but the revolt of Labour against the slum landlords, grabbers and sweating employers who control that movement is a very naughty, unpatriotic, anti-Irish, irreligious, blasphemous, immoral, factionist, traitorous, cloven-hoof sort of iniquity that ought to be suppressed.

Hence the significance of the demonstration of Labour on Sunday, 25th May, will be appreciated when it is understood that it was not only not under the patronage of any political party, but was out flatly and defiantly in opposition to them all. The reporters of the capitalist press were ordered off the platforms, and hooted by the assembled multitude.

The working class of Dublin<sup>in</sup> a greater proportion than that of any of the great cities of these countries, has made up its mind in favour of independent political action. The fact that it is sternly Nationalist does not alter that fact. With it Nationalism is not a thing to be argued about, any more than the existence of Ireland is a matter of controversy or speculation. But having that fact allowed, it does not propose any longer to be made the sport of politicians whom it suspects of using Nationalist aspirations to cloak and protect capitalist outrages. Thus the rising vote in

in favour of Labour at all municipal elections in Dublin, despite the fact that such elections are made political tests by the United Irish League. Given Home Rule, and payment of election expenses, Dublin would go Labour at the first election.

It is often said that the Irish flag is a green flag to suit a green people, but the Dublin workers are not so green as to believe that a party which voted against the Right to Work Bill, the Minimum Wage for Miners, and the Minimum Wage for Railwaymen, which intrigued against the application to Ireland of the Feeding of Necessitous School Children and the Medical Benefits of the Insurance Act, can be described as anything else than a treacherous 'friend' of Labour.

Some day a similar spirit will come up North, and the workers of the North-east corner will get tired of being led by the nose by a party captained by landlords, and place-hunting lawyers. Here in Ulster the ascendancy party does not even need to pretend to be favourable to the aspirations of Labour; it is openly hostile, and the inculcation of slavish sentiments is a business it never neglects. In that is the main difference between the parties - the growth of a rebellious spirit among the Nationalist democracy has compelled the Home Rule politicians to pay court to Labour, to assume a virtue even when they have it not, but the lack of such a spirit in this section has enabled the Orange leaders to openly flout and antagonise the Labour movement.

But times change, and we change with them. Ulster democracy is awakening also, and we long and will see in Belfast movements of Labour as great as, if not greater than any of which Dublin can boast. Already the dry bones are stirring. There is, thanks to our ceaseless propaganda at mill doors, more active and intelligent discontent in the mills of Belfast today than at any time past. The ranks of the Irish Textile Worker's Union are being recruited by hundreds, an emphatic demand is being made for the extension to the entire linen industry of the Trade Boards Act, and a great demonstration for that purpose is to be held on Monday, 9th June, in Smithfield, to be addressed by A. Conley of the Clothiers' Operatives of Leeds, and Councillor Tom Lawlor of Dublin. It is to be hoped that all Belfast readers of Forward will attend.

In Larne the oppressive conditions in the Aluminium works have also produced a revolt, and the poor slaves there who have been working

84 hours per week have turned to the Irish Transport Workers' Union for relief, with the result that a betterment is already in sight. The dock labourers in the same port have joined the above union to a man, and in fact Labour in the North is beginning to shake its chains.

On the Belfast docks also the section of the dockers who, under the influence of religious prejudice and political intriguing have held aloof from organisation, and now joining in troops, and increases have already been obtained for sections of these workers.

In the shipyards the agitation in favour of an Eight Hour Day is being seriously discussed, and the forces of Labour generally seem to be gathering for a battle of battles for the things that really matter.

In that glorious day Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right, but all those leaders who now trumpet forth that battle cry will be found arrayed against the Ulster democracy.

(FORWARD, 7th June, 1913)

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**Title:** Press Poisoners in Ireland and other articles  
**Organisation:** British & Irish Communist Organisation  
**Author:** James Connolly  
**Date:** 1972

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