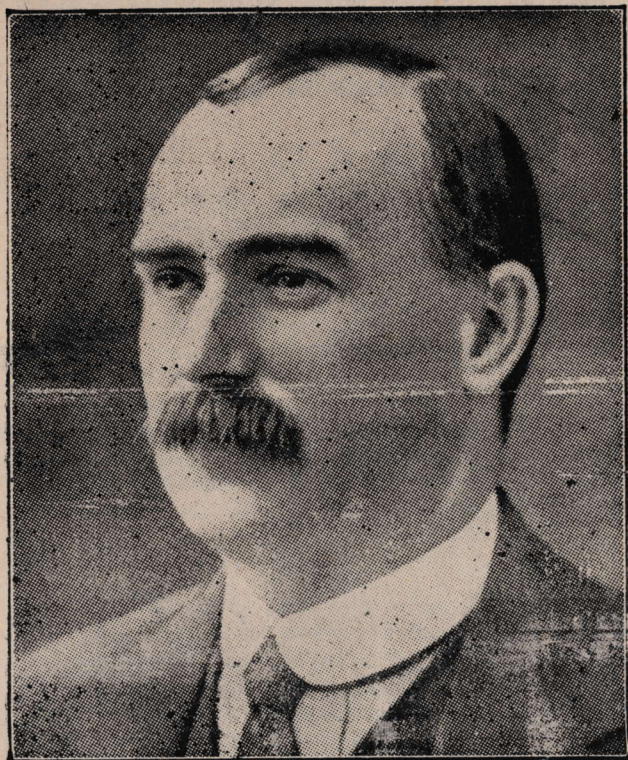


**IRISH WORKERS' ROAD
TO FREEDOM**



**MANIFESTO OF THE
IRISH WORKERS' LEAGUE**

Price Threepence

Quotations from James Connolly

WHEN questions of "class interests" are eliminated from public controversy a victory is thereby gained for the possessing conservative class, whose only hope of security lies in such elimination. Like a fraudulent trustee, the bourgeois dreads nothing so much as an impartial and rigid inquiry into the validity of his title deeds. Hence the bourgeois Press and politicians incessantly strive to inflame the working-class mind to fever heat upon questions outside the range of their own class interests.

War, religion, race, language, political reform, patriotism—apart from whatever intrinsic merits they may possess—all serve in the hands of the possessing class as counter irritants, whose functions it is to avert the catastrophe of social revolution by rendering heat in such parts of the body politic as are farthest removed from the seat of economic enquiry, and consequently of class consciousness on the part of the proletariat.

The bourgeois Irishman has long been an adept at such manoeuvring, and has, it must be confessed, found in his working-class countrymen exceedingly pliable material.

IN the Socialist movement the North and South will again clasp hands, again will it be demonstrated, as in '98, that the pressure of a common exploitation can make enthusiastic rebels out of a Protestant working class earnest champions of civil and religious liberty out of Catholics, and out of both a united Social democracy.

MANIFESTO

ISSUED BY THE

Irish Workers' League

MAY 1949

To the Working People of Ireland

IN the world to-day the common people everywhere are in revolt against imperialism, fighting for the right of self-determination and for the abolition of social injustice and inequality. Everywhere the rule of the imperialists is challenged by the growing movement of the militant working class and the nationally-oppressed peoples. In the new People's Democracies of China and Europe, following the removal of the old ruling classes vast new opportunities are opening up for the mass of the people who are working towards Socialism. The Soviet Union, the land of Socialism, having made good the enormous devastation of war and invasion is now stronger than ever and is an inspiration to peoples everywhere struggling for freedom.

IRELAND has always played her part in the great fight for freedom and democracy; she must not remain inactive now. Our country has yet to win its national unity and independence. By an Act of the British Parliament Ireland was partitioned. This action was not seriously opposed by the quiescent section of Irish capitalists which then held and once again dominates the Government of the Twenty-Six Counties. Six of our northern counties are held in military occupation, and the industries and resources of the area are directed to serve British Imperial interests. The country is burdened with the upkeep of two governments and the payment of imperial tribute, and

is prevented from developing a unified economy to serve the interests of all the Irish people. The unity and independence of the country are an urgent necessity, not only for the solution of the pressing social and economic problems of the people, North and South, but also to safeguard the country as a whole from becoming involved in the war plans and intrigues of the Anglo-American imperialists. The situation demands a vigorous and consistent leadership on the part of the working-class movement, in order to mobilise the working people of Ireland to press the nation's claim against Britain and win social independence from both British imperialists and Irish capitalists.

Formation of Irish Workers' League.

IN response to these needs, therefore, the Irish Workers' League has been formed, composed of men and women from workshop, field and office, "nothing appearing to us more natural and at this crisis of Europe more reasonable, that those who have common interests and common enemies, who suffer common wrongs and lay claim to common rights, should know each other and should act together." (United Irishmen's Declaration, 1791).

WE have now had three different governments since the Treaty, and all have shown their chief concern to be protection of rent, interest, profit, thus proving themselves incapable of bringing the national struggle to a successful conclusion. One of the principal policies of Fianna Fail during their seventeen years of uninterrupted government was the promotion of the interests of the new industrial section of the middle class at the expense of the working people. The cause of national unity and independence—to the advocacy of which they mainly owed their original accession to power—was soon relegated to a secondary position. Wage-pegging, the undermining of the Trade Union Movement, and emigration became the chief features of their regime.

IN the present Coalition Government we have leaders of the Labour movement acting as junior partners to Fine Gael—notorious in Irish history for its shameless betrayal of the

rational struggle, its consistent support, both in and out of power for big business and ranching interests, and above all, its organisation of the Fascist Blueshirt movement. Profits and interest were never so high, and every money-grabbing racket is flourishing. Ireland to-day is a paradise for the capitalist and the profiteer and a happy hunting ground for the foreign parasite, all of whom ruthlessly exploit and batten upon the working people of the country.

Rising profits and high prices render the workers' earnings inadequate for their full needs; wages, pensions and allowances are still insufficient to meet living costs. The Labour Court is used by the Government in the interests of the employers to keep wages from rising. The pay and working conditions of the rural workers can only be described as inhuman, while the very livelihood of the working farmer is threatened by the Dillon policy for agriculture, his returns proving utterly inadequate in his struggle to buy equipment and meet his debts. Our professional workers and lower civil servants find it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. For the housewife, striving to feed and clothe her family, shopping has become a nightmare.

Our Social services are scandalous, and far below the standards prevailing in other countries. Housing needs, both in town and country, are more urgent than ever, yet material and labour are being poured into luxury building while the provision of homes and schools is neglected. All these factors are reflected in the increasing incidence of preventable diseases, the high rate of tuberculosis in particular being the result of malnutrition and bad housing.

This is not Freedom.

No serious effort has been made by any of the three governments to provide work for the people. In our country to-day, unemployment is a grave problem involving large numbers of the population. Emigration continues to claim our young men and women. Ireland is exporting her people to provide workers for English mines and factories. Doctors, nurses, teachers, technicians—trained at the expense of the Irish people—are obliged to seek work abroad, the nation thus being deprived of their services. Meanwhile the men of property sigh with relief that the safety valve of the emigrant ship is still there.

OUR system of education is completely outdated and unsatisfactory and must be replaced by a system based on the needs of the country, under which there will be full equality of educational opportunity, so that the whole intellectual and technical level of the people will be raised. After 27 years of native government the standard of elementary education is lower than ever, the school-leaving age is still fourteen and twenty per cent of the primary school buildings are officially condemned.

The struggle for higher cultural development must go hand in hand with the fight for a rising standard of living. Adequate remuneration must be guaranteed to our cultural workers and an end put to the present situation in which no Irish writer or artist can rely on his own country for his livelihood.

LOOKING at the Ireland of to-day, we say to the Irish people and above all the workers and farmers: This is not freedom. Until the people—the men and women who work and give service—own and control the nation's resources, full freedom will not have been won.

Proclaiming this anew, the Irish Workers' League raises again the Socialist banner of Connolly, and summons the working people of Ireland to rally round it, and continue the fight for full national and social independence.

In this fight for freedom our prospects to-day are brighter than ever, with Socialism triumphant in the Soviet Union, the People's Democracies rapidly advancing towards the same goal; unjust governments falling everywhere, not only in Europe, but in Asia and the far Pacific, and the age-old enemy of the Irish people, the British Empire, in the grip of an acute crisis, and reduced to dependence on the United States.

Bolstered up by American dollars, imperialist Britain inflicts untold miseries on the Greek people struggling for their freedom. She employs savage head-hunters to persecute and kill Malayan patriots. She brutally shoots down African workers because they assert their rights as human beings. British imperialism, no longer the dominant power in the world now relies on the support of the Wall Street monopolists to halt the people's advance to freedom. And all this is done in the name of "Western Democracy." But it is not to the "Western Democracy" of imperialist Britain that our sympathy and support are due, but to all peoples struggling against imperialism.

American Imperialism.

PRESENT-DAY America, controlled by the Wall Street financiers, has repudiated its great democratic tradition, once the inspiration of every liberation movement in Europe, and is now the leading imperialist country of the world.

The Wall Street financiers are establishing bases over the globe. They are brandishing the atomic bomb in the faces of mankind, threatening to destroy whole cities if their power is challenged. Where a country gains its liberty despite their opposition they unleash a horde of spies and saboteurs against it. Where the workers are fighting for the right to live, they throw their agents and secret funds into attempts to break strikes and split the unity of the trade union movement. Commanding the press, the radio and the publishing world, they conduct a virulent unceasing campaign of slander and lies against every progressive movement in every part of the world.

Through the Marshall Plan the Wall Street financiers are seeking to dominate every country that can be forced or cajoled to join. The pretence that the Marshall Plan was aimed only at the economic reconstruction of Europe has long since been dropped. Already American Senators are urging the U.S. Government to "get tough with" Marshall Aid countries which threaten American trading interests.

The participating countries now realise that American surplus goods are to be dumped on them even at the expense of their own industries. They know that the loan terms will place their finances in subservience to American capitalism for years to come and that every phase of their national economies will be subject to American supervision.

And finally, they have now been ordered to form "Western Defence" and North Atlantic Pacts, which means simply American control of their national forces and American bases on their soil.

Danger of War.

NOR is there any attempt to conceal all this. The whole world resounds with it, from press, radio, platform and pulpit. That purpose is a new war. As in Wolfe Tone's day the kings of Europe conspired to overthrow the French Republic so today, the exploiters of the world are organising a capitalist crusade, not only against the Soviet Union and the People's Democracies, where these exploiters have been overthrown, but also against the Labour and national movements everywhere.

Let no Irish man or woman think that this is no concern of ours. The Fianna Fail government committed us to the Marshall Plan, and its successors are involving us more deeply. They are flying to London and Washington to discuss Ireland's part in "European Defence." The "military experts" are planning quite openly to make this island an aircraft-carrier and a bombing base in their atomic war against all democratic and peace-loving peoples.

Regardless of national interests our capitalist rulers are offering the use of the nation's territory to the Anglo-American war-mongers in return for dollars and some sort of face-saving arrangement about Partition. Our ports, airfields and territory are in danger of being used by foreign governments as vantage points from which to rain death and destruction on peoples with whom we have no quarrel. The Irish people must be roused to the danger, and the whole Labour movement must be rallied to make the government and reactionary politicians realise that war pacts or military alliances will not be tolerated under any guise; that our national claims for independence and unity are not matters for barter and intrigue, and that they will only be achieved by struggle against the war-mongering Anglo-American imperialists, in unity with all the peoples fighting against exploitation and the threat of imperialist war.

No Military Blocs.

IRISH workers, wives and mothers—Our leaders must not be allowed to drag us along the road to war. This madness must not come to pass. Our working people own no shares in Krupps, have no investments in Rumanian oil, and would lose

nothing if every bank in Europe was nationalised and every landlord put to the plough. On the contrary, they would have much to gain, for the advance of freedom elsewhere hastens our own freedom.

Let the whole island ring with the outcry against war. Let us proclaim to the whole world that Ireland wants enmity with no nation, will join no military blocs or alliances, and will allow none of her territory to be used for war. Let us make clear to those politicians and others who are scheming to involve our country that they do so at their peril, and that the Irish people will not tolerate treachery in any form.

Our Aims.

THE Irish Workers' League declares its objective to be the establishment of Socialism in Ireland, and towards that end will work to realise the following aims:—

1. The establishment of a United, Independent and Democratic Republic for all Ireland.
2. The restoration of the unity and independence of the Labour and Trade Union Movements.
3. The raising of the people's living standards and the fullest utilisation of the nation's resources.
4. The preservation and extension of democratic rights and liberties.
5. The establishment of diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union and the New Democracies and with all countries offering their friendship, and repudiation of all war alliances and secret agreements.

WE call upon the broad masses of the Irish working people to rally to the support of this programme. We declare that the men of property who directed the national revolution into capitalist channels have proved themselves incapable of solving either national or social problems. We declare, with Connolly, that since all sections of the capitalists have compromised with imperialism on the national issue, and since their greedy profit-hunting prevents any real economic progress, "only the Irish working class remain as the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland." Only a movement based on the working people and inspired by Socialist principles will achieve the goal of an Irish People's Republic genuinely free united and democratic.

Such a People's Republic will co-operate with the peoples of all lands on a free and equal basis; will utilise the country's resources to the full and so provide the only sure guarantee for the realisation of the right to work, the right to rest and leisure, and equal rights and opportunities for all; will ensure freedom of conscience to all citizens and the fullest freedom for the practice of religion.

Such a People's Republic, laying the foundations for Socialism, will nationalise all banking, finance and credit to ensure that the nation's purse is really in the hands of the working people. It will nationalise all the main industries and plan the extension of the country's industrial arm; it will develop our power, fuel and mineral resources in accordance with a national plan; it will co-ordinate all forms of transport—road, rail, canal, sea and air—to serve the interests of the people in town and country and to promote our external trade; it will take over the ranch-lands and big estates for the benefit of the small-holders and the land-hungry, and by planning the organisation of agriculture with the aid of mechanisation, ensure the maximum production of food from every available acre, in order to provide a rising standard of life at home and to expand the export trade; it will treat the housing of our people as an urgent national responsibility and provide proper social services; it will guarantee free educational facilities for all citizens and the economic security and encouragement which are necessary for the growth of Irish culture.

The Enemy's Mask

WE are well aware of the opposition that must be faced in our struggle to achieve these aims. The "canting-fel classes" as John Mitchell called them, will raise an outcry against such a programme. By prating hypocritically about "higher things" such as religion, the sanctity of the home, the freedom of the individual, etc., they will endeavour to hide their real concern for the preservation of their profits, dividends and slum rents. But the Irish workers will not be daunted or misled by these tactics; they know that every genuine movement of the people—from the United Irishmen to the Land League and to the Trade Union Movement of 1913—has had to meet the same attack.

Such tactics will not save capitalism. It is doomed. As feudalism and slave society perished in their day, so too capitalism is perishing. The people can endure it no longer. They are replacing it by Socialism, which is now no mere Utopian idea, but an inspiring reality over more than one sixth of the globe.

A Call to You

IRISH Workers—Workers of the town and country—in these inspiring days there is work for every man and woman to do. The greatest cause mankind has ever known—the liberation of the common people—is triumphing. We must take our stand. We must build a great Labour movement. Our trade unions must be extended until they embrace every worker in the country. The present disunity in Labour's ranks must be ended on the basis of a vigorous struggle for improved standards of living and for the unity and independence of the country.

To recapture the fighting traditions of Connolly and Larkin is the urgent need of Irish Labour to-day. Participation in the present unprincipled Inter-Party Government is an abandonment of those great traditions and weakens the working-class movement. Labour must reassert its independence by ending its association with the present Government and struggling resolutely for the political, economic and social aims of the working people.

The Irish Workers' League will strive for the unity of the working class movement and for principle and integrity in its leadership. It will support every effort making for the material and cultural advancement of the working people. Only on these lines can the conditions of the people be improved and the way paved for a Socialist Ireland.

GREETING the peoples who have ended the rule of imperialism and saluting those who are struggling valiantly for their freedom, we call on all Irishmen and Irishwomen who subscribe to our aims to support our work and to join the Irish Workers' League.

Having read this Manifesto which sets out the policy of the Irish Workers League, and if you agree with it, we ask you to join the ranks and help to bring nearer the day when the Irish Workers League will have the support of the majority of the Irish working people.

By joining the Irish Workers League you declare your support for a Free and United Ireland and take your place in the struggle to end capitalism and achieve the Socialist aims of James Connolly.

JOIN THE IRISH WORKERS' LEAGUE NOW

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