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IRELAND HER OWN

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*"Ireland her own, and
all therein, from the
sod to the sky."
—James Fintan Lalor.*

The Programme of the Irish Workers' Party
adopted at its Fourth National Conference,
held in Dublin in March 1962

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Ireland Her Own

Programme of the Irish Workers' Party

I.—INTRODUCTION

IRELAND can be a free, prosperous, united country. The Irish people have the power to make it such.

That is the conviction behind this programme.

Ireland is a backward country economically. Yet Irish hands and brains have built a network of power stations in the twenty-six counties, which have boosted the production of electricity to over twenty times its volume in 1927. The resources and men existed to provide the power needed to industrialise the country. The resources and men exist to build a strong economy with that power.

Ireland is divided, but the workers North and South, show that there is no division of interest between them, by membership of the same trade union movement. This community of interest extends to the majority of the people.

It is on the basis of this unity of interests that the unity of the country can be won.

The Irish Workers' Party presents this programme as its views on how the many serious problems facing the country can be solved.

We believe that if the Labour movement and the people generally, can be won to support such a programme, a society can be created in Ireland in which every individual, freed from the fears of poverty and insecurity, can develop to the full, both materially and spiritually.

Foreign Capital not the Solution

IN spite of the fact that the economic position, both North and South, shows signs of improvement from time to time, it is no exaggeration to say that the economies of both parts of the country, are in a state of chronic crisis.

Heavy unemployment and emigration are common to both.

At one time Fianna Fail hoped to end the backwardness, which gives rise to this critical position, by the creation of a self-sufficient economy.

The policy of self-sufficiency—that is, living entirely off our own resources—was unrealistic, but it had the germ of the right idea, the conception of economic independence.

Now Fianna Fail is not only proposing to abandon the programme of self-sufficiency, but by following Britain in its application for membership of the Common Market, it is also throwing overboard the whole idea of Ireland as an independent nation, politically and economically.

No wonder Fine Gael spokesmen now gleefully proclaim that the policies of reliance on imperialism, which they have preached since the foundation of the Irish State in 1921, have been proven to be correct.

The application to join the Common Market is the logical conclusion of the policies which the Fianna Fail Government has been operating in the post-war years.

Economic development was presented as relying on the attraction of foreign capital to invest in Ireland.

A policy which relies heavily on foreign capital cannot solve the problems of Ireland's economy. It cannot build an independent economy. In fact, it seriously undermines our independence.

Foreign capital will only be invested here when it can bring a higher profit to the foreign firms than they can get from investing it elsewhere. These firms are not interested in developing the Irish economy.

While any economic development is welcome, results so far show that even in the short term, the returns from the policy of attracting foreign capital are small, in spite of the lavish inducements offered by the Government.

The increase in manufacturing production since 1959, was not mainly due to foreign capital, but to already existing firms, which were climbing back out of the slump of 1957.

Tailing Behind Britain

An attempt has been made to present the application by the Government to join the Common Market as an independent decision. In fact, we are being dragged in behind Great Britain. If Britain had not applied for membership neither would Ireland have.

The application means that Fianna Fail now accepts that the Irish economy must remain a subordinate part of the British economy,

The Common Market, far from being a partnership of equals co-operating together for their mutual welfare, is in fact, an attempt by the big Western European monopolies to expand their markets. By breaking down the tariff barriers between the different countries they hope to wipe out all the smaller firms, and eventually to divide the market between a group of huge cartels.

In this set-up the majority of Irish industries would go to the wall. It has been calculated that our entry into the Common Market would mean an immediate increase of 150,000 in our unemployment figures.

As far as our agriculture is concerned, it is the openly-proclaimed policy of the Common Market to wipe out the small farmer and to create huge factory farms. Since the majority of our farms are small, this would have a catastrophic effect on the countryside.

Entry into the Common Market would mean an end to our independent foreign policy and, ultimately the loss of our political independence.

Mr. Lemass admitted in his address to the Fianna Fail Ard Fheis in January, 1962, that we would no longer be able to play the same role in the United Nations after we joined the Common Market.

Our entry into the Common Market would present the Irish people with the greatest dangers ever to our growth as a nation. It would put in jeopardy our entire heritage of struggle, politically economically and culturally.

Immediate steps are needed to prevent our entry into the Common Market.

The preservation of the independence which has been won for the Twenty-six Counties is the most immediate task. At the same time it is necessary to have an alternative perspective to the present policy of submerging Ireland in the imperialist camp.

Before presenting our ideas on the type of programme and movement which is needed to create a free, prosperous society in Ireland it is necessary, first of all, to take a look at the present position, and how it came about.

II.—INDUSTRY

THE basis for a prosperous economy is a highly developed industry.

Even in a so-called agricultural country like Denmark, there are more people employed in industry than in agriculture. This is because a large part of the products of agriculture are processed in their country of origin.

In 1955, in the Twenty-Six counties, of 24 industries employing 3,000 or more, only six relied largely or wholly on home-produced raw materials. This reflects the position in agriculture, where production is not mainly for the development of the economy. Industry and agriculture go hand in hand. A developing industry would create the market for raw materials, which would help change the position in agriculture.

The economic development which has taken place in the Twenty-six Counties since 1926, has led to a doubling of the numbers engaged in industry.

Industrial output has increased over three times. Over the whole period, however, this development has completely failed to provide sufficient jobs for those leaving agriculture, not to mention the natural increase in population.

The majority of concerns are small. A small number of big firms dominate private industry. These big firms produce two-thirds of transportable goods.

The main developments in private industry in Ireland have been in light, secondary industries.

Basic Industries set up by the State

Almost all the basic industrial development has been carried out by the State concerns.

Even where private enterprise has set up heavy industry, it has been on Government initiative, and as in the case of the Verholme shipyard, with money advanced by the State.

Cement, Ltd., which is a public company, with shares quoted on the Dublin Stock Exchange, has over a sixth of its shares owned by the Irish Assurance Co., which is Government financed.

Wherever essential industries were needed in the Twenty-six Counties, the State has had to step in. Bord na Mona, the E.S.B., the Irish Sugar Co., Irish Shipping, Irish Steel—none of these industries would have been set up if the job had been left to private enterprise.

These State industries were set up, not with foreign, but with Irish capital. They have provided the basis for whatever economic development has taken place.

In countries like Ireland, which have been colonies, and having gained political independence, are now trying to develop a strong economy, the State is the only means through which essential industries, which will not give back an immediate profit and which require heavy investment, can be set up. State control is also a means for ensuring that the industries will not fall back into imperialist hands.

The State industries which have been set up in the Twenty-six Counties were not intended as an alternative to private enterprise. Their establishment was forced on the Government by the unwillingness and incapacity of private business.

Since these State industries are not under the control of the people, and are run under a capitalist government, the treatment of the workers in them has been no different from that of workers in private firms. The present attitude of managements of State concerns to the workers is completely unacceptable, and must be militantly fought against by the trade union and Labour movement.

The fact remains that from the viewpoint of their efficiency in helping to develop the economy and making it more independent, the State industries indicate the path which must be followed, if Irish industry is to provide a strong basis for the expansion of the whole economy.

Private enterprise has shown itself incapable of solving the question of our industrial development. Industry has a "boom" period when there is a boom in Britain. When the recession occurs in Britain, Irish industry goes into a nose-dive.

III.—AGRICULTURE

THE pattern of Irish agriculture has not changed appreciably, since the time of the Famine (1845-47).

The provision of beef on the hoof for Britain has been its main role since the middle of the last century.

It is this pattern which is mainly responsible for both the low yield from agriculture and the depopulation of the countryside.

Irish agriculture as at present organised, serves mainly the interests of the British, and not the Irish, economy.

All countries undergoing industrialisation have a movement of population from agriculture into industry, but it is a flight of people from the land far in excess of this that Ireland is faced with.

There has been a catastrophic decline in the working population on the land, with a drop of nearly a quarter of a million between 1926 and 1960. Three-quarters of the farms in the Twenty-six Counties are below fifty acres. The average family cash income on a farm below fifty acres, including the value of the farm produce which the family consumed, was £8 per week, according to the last official survey.

This pattern of agriculture is obviously not in the interests of the huge majority of Irish farmers.

The small farmers find themselves caught in the present set-up. They cannot afford the intensive methods of cultivation, which would be necessary to break out of their present position, and if they went into debt to improve their techniques, a slump in agricultural prices could completely bankrupt them. As it is, the small farmers are charged exorbitant rates of interest for any money they borrow. The small farmers in the Twenty-six Counties live partly on the sale of dairy produce, some crops and some pigs.

Small Farmer Takes Most Risk

The sale of surplus calves is, however, the biggest single item in the small farmer's income. These calves are sold when they are over six months old, to the big farmers, who have extensive grazing lands where the calves are fattened. The cattle are then sold, either as stores or fat cattle, to the British cattle dealers.

The small farmer bears most of the risk. Most of the deaths of calves are his loss, since he has to rear them through their most delicate period. The small farmer does not get back the value of the amount of work he puts into his farm. Apart from the fact that the middlemen and the banks get a cut out of his production, the calves carry with them in their "Odyssey" from the small farm, to the big farm, to the British cattle dealer, the unpaid labour of the Irish farmer.

The small farmer is the backbone of Irish agriculture, but the weight of the structure which he is supporting is crushing him.

As far as the big farms are concerned, it can be seen how unproductive they are, in the main, when it is realised that in spite of the intensive mechanisation, which has taken place mainly on the big farms, agricultural production has remained almost static, and was, in fact, lower in 1960 than in 1957. This has happened although the number of tractors in use increased from 2,000 in 1939, to 32,000 in 1956. The machines have simply replaced men.

The big farms, under the present system, are wasting a large part of the potential productivity of agriculture.

The weakness of Irish agriculture is not based on the inefficiency of the small farmer, but on the pattern which keeps agriculture backward, robs the small farmer, and turns large areas of the best land in the country into ranches, which are used for nothing else except grazing cattle.

The present system of agriculture is ruinous for the Irish economy, but it suits the British economy, and is very profitable for the cattle traders and some of the big farmers.

The entire farming community, including the big farmers, is robbed by the big monopolies, which are foreign-dominated. Inflated prices are charged for such items as oil and fertiliser. In this way, the farming community is caught in a "scissors" where their produce is bought at the lowest possible price, while they are charged the last penny for the things they have to buy.

The small farmer, therefore, suffers from a double burden, being exploited both through the cattle trade and by the monopolies. The lot of the farm labourers is appalling. They are probably the worst paid section of the community. Both they and the small farmers are paying the price for the present backward state of Irish agriculture.

Fisheries Could Be Developed

THE rapid development of the British fishing industry in the latter half of the last century, plus the steady decline of the Irish population during the 19th century, reduced our fishing fleets to insignificance by 1920. Fish was imported into Ireland, while Irish fishermen emigrated to Fleetwood, New England and elsewhere.

Since 1920 very slow progress has been made towards building up the Irish fishing industry, despite the richness of fishing grounds surrounding our coasts, and the great markets which exist throughout the world for canned and processed fish. The sum of money contributed annually by successive Governments towards development is a pittance compared with the benefits which fishing could bring to the country. A conservative estimate of the employment potential in fishing and in industries directly dependent on fishing, after five years of concentrated development would amount to 40,000, instead of the present 2,500-3,000.

Geographically, Ireland is well suited for an advanced fishing industry. We have natural harbours, well positioned in relation to fishing grounds, and what is more important, have proved that we can train the highly-skilled personnel necessary. The industry is desperately short of capital, is strangled by rapacious middlemen and is lacking in bold leadership.

Better Social Welfare Services Possible

THE constant unemployment which results from our inadequate economic development, varies from 90,000 in periods of slump to 60,000 at the height of a boom (February, 1961). The highest peak is at the worst period of the winter. At the best periods, in the middle of summer, unemployment scarcely falls below 40,000.

There are over 160,000 old age pensioners living on the verge of starvation, after a lifetime in which they have produced by their labour, new wealth to enrich others. Widows and orphans are in a similar plight.

Our medical services lag behind those of most European countries. What improvements there have been have not touched the basically unjust means test and blue cards systems which perpetuate the existence of one medical service for the rich and another for the poor.

Many people living in unfit houses cannot afford to accept re-housing.

The plea that our economy cannot afford better social services must be rejected; there is far too much evidence of excessive ill-gotten wealth by the privileged few, for such an argument to merit any consideration.

IV.—TIE-UP WITH IMPERIALISM

THE economic weakness of the Irish economy is partly the legacy of our domination by Britain.

Some people say that to blame British imperialism for any part of our economic backwardness is to try to escape from facing up to our own responsibility for the present situation. They point to the fact that the Twenty-six Counties have been an independent State since 1922, as proof that our economic problems are the result solely of wrong policies pursued by native governments.

The fact is that the effects of Ireland's subordination to Britain are not confined to the past. The nature of the exploitation has changed, but British imperialism still has a large grip on sections of the Twenty-six Counties' economy.

The Irish banks are closely tied in with British interests, and the pattern of Irish agriculture still serves Britain rather than Ireland. An analysis of the directorships of the banks, carried out by the Irish Trade Union Congress in 1951, showed that of the 36 directors of Irish banks whose other directorships were analysed, 24 were also on the boards of British banks, insurance companies or firms.

One whole section of Irish industry, with assets amounting to over £12 million is largely controlled by British interests, with a small amount of U.S. capital involved. This section of industry includes flour-milling, petrol, rubber and chocolate firms.

Modern imperialism is private enterprise, or capitalism, in its monopoly stage. Monopoly means not only the gobbling up of

smaller businesses until huge firms control the whole economy. It also means the amalgamation of the banks and these big firms. Modern imperialism can still exploit countries over which it has lost direct political control, through its investments.

That imperialism still exerts a powerful influence, even in that part of Ireland which is politically independent, is shown by the fact that a large part of the wealth produced by the Irish people is not invested at home, where it is desperately needed to build up the economy, but in Britain and in those parts of the Empire which still remain to her.

In 1960 assets held abroad by the commercial banks amounted to £104 million, but they had investments of only £31 million within the State.

No economy can be developed without capital. Capital is accumulated from the labour of the people, A large part of the Irish people's labour is being used, not to develop our economy, but to get big profits from abroad for British and Irish businessmen.

The question is why the Government of the Twenty-six Counties allows this position to continue, in spite of the fact that it has the power to alter the position. The answer to that question can be found by examining what that Government represents.

The Twenty-Six Counties' Government

THE party which held power for the first ten years of the Twenty-six Counties as an independent State, called itself Cumann na nGaedheal. It later changed its name to Fine Gael.

With some exceptions, its policy was mainly that of maintaining the existing relationship with Britain. It was content that Ireland should remain subservient economically to Britain.

Cumann na nGaedheal's policies led to economic disaster. They threw the burden of the economic slump on to the people, even cutting the old age pension. In the countryside, people actually died of starvation. Wages were slashed. Hundreds of Republicans were in jail. The policies pursued by Cumann na nGaedheal showed in whose interests it was working.

It is significant, however, that even Cumann na nGaedheal, devoted as it was to the ideals of private enterprise, was forced to set up the State electricity authority (E.S.B.), based on the Shannon Scheme, because the big Irish capitalists refused to invest in the development of the Irish economy, when their capital could earn bigger profit abroad.

Cumann na nGaedheal has changed its name to Fine Gael, but it still represents, as it did in the 1920s, those sections of the propertied classes who have a vested interest in maintaining the connection with imperialism.

1932: Fianna Fail in Power

Fianna Fail defeated Cumann na nGaedheal by putting forward a policy for ending dependence on Britain. When it

came to power it abolished the Oath of Allegiance to the British monarch and released the Republican prisoners. It ended the payout of the Land Annuities to Britain.

During the first period of Fianna Fail rule, an attempt was made to develop the economy of the Twenty-six Counties. Consumer goods industries developed behind tariff walls, and where the Government found private capital unwilling to invest in the development of basic resources, such as turf, because profits would not be immediately big enough, it established State-owned industries. These State-owned industries were set up to provide the basis for a private enterprise, or capitalist economy.

When the payment of the Land Annuities to Britain was stopped an "Economic War" was launched against the Twenty-six Counties, for having dared to challenge imperialism.

Fianna Fail came to power primarily as the representatives of the medium and small businessmen, the development of whose businesses had been held back, both under British rule and under Cumann na nGaedheal. Fianna Fail united behind it a large section of the farming population and a part of the working class. It retained that support, because the measures of development which it carried out were broadly in the interests of all those sections. It is largely this which explains the dominant position which Fianna Fail has occupied on the political scene.

During the period when Fianna Fail was achieving something in its attempt to develop the economy, it did so by attacking imperialist interests.

Fianna Fail, however, wanted to develop the economy along capitalist lines. A stage was reached when to challenge imperialism any further, would have meant seriously opposing some of the basic ideas of capitalism, such as the right of business men to invest their money wherever they wish.

There was also the fear on the part of Fianna Fail that an attack on all imperialist interests in the economy would call forth crushing retaliatory moves by Britain. At that time, in the thirties, imperialism was the dominant force in the world, and its power was used ruthlessly against all who opposed it. Only a really revolutionary regime, which Fianna Fail was not, would have dared to really challenge Britain.

Fianna Fail Halted at Main Frontiers

The banks remained as the heart of the defence system of imperialist interests. Imperialism gave up some of its outposts, but Fianna Fail did not even try to storm the main fortress.

Another factor which has prevented Fianna Fail from carrying the struggle against imperialism through to its completion are the changes which have come over some of the sections which it represents.

Since 1932, some of the business interests who supported Fianna Fail have got bigger and others have been wiped out. Some of these bigger businessmen have links with imperialism,

such as shares in British companies or a tie-up with a British firm in Ireland. It is because of these factors that Fianna Fail appears to have a two-faced attitude to imperialism, sometimes opposing it and sometimes supporting it.

It is because of these factors also, that the Government allows such a large amount of Irish capital to flow abroad.

It can be said that governments in Ireland have represented the interests not of a nation as a whole, but of different classes within the nation.

The class represented by Cumann na nGaedheal had interests which were in violent conflict with the interests of the majority of the people.

The class represented by Fianna Fail had interests which coincided in certain respects with the interests of the majority of the people for a period. Its interests, however, are now coming more and more into conflict with the interests of the majority of the people which is composed of the workers, the small farmers, the intellectuals and the small businessmen.

Only a force representing the interests of this majority, led by the most highly organised and dynamic class, the working class, can carry through the radical measures necessary to end Ireland's position as a backward country.

V.—THE LABOUR MOVEMENT

THE Irish working class is organised in the trade union movement, with the Labour Party as its political wing.

The trade union movement, North and South, unites half a million workers, yet the Labour Party finds itself in a weak political position.

The time has come to change the situation where the working class, with its great potential power, finds no adequate political expression.

The subordinate position of Labour in the political life of the country is not new.

It has its roots in the period of the struggle for independence when, although the working class along with the small farmers formed the backbone of the fighting men. Labour exercised no independent political leadership.

The leadership of the movement for independence represented the middle class, and a section of the upper class.

The influence of the organised working class was always used in support of the fight for freedom, but it lacked a leadership with the vision of James Connolly, who saw the fight for independence as the first step on the road to Socialism.

To James Connolly the 1916 Rising was not only a blow against British imperialism, but also a blow against the World War raging at that time.

He tried to weld the Irish Citizen Army into an independent working class force with its own objective, but willing to cooperate with all other forces fighting for freedom.

James Connolly and Jim Larkin, the two outstanding founders of the modern Irish Labour movement, were Socialists.

Socialism means the common ownership of the means of production, distribution and exchange.

Under capitalism, the worker will always be faced with the prospect of unemployment, low wages and poverty in sickness and old age. Under capitalism, the trade unions have to fight to prevent workers' living standards from being cut.

Under Socialism, the trade unions are one of the principal bodies which run the economy in the interests of the people.

It is only under Socialism that the workers and small farmers can find the complete solution of all their economic problems, because, under Socialism, the economy is not run for private profit, but in the interests of the people. Socialism would ensure that the proportion of the national income taken by the capitalist class in the form of rent, interest and profit—in other words, the surplus created by the labour of the workers—would be used instead to basically develop the economy, and to improve the economic and social conditions of the people.

It was this perspective, with the realisation that it was the working class that was the force to achieve this new society, that gave the Labour movement under the leadership of Connolly and Larkin its dynamic drive.

This was the vision which helped the workers in 1913 to fight the combined might of the British Empire and the employers to a standstill. The Labour movement at that time never flinched under attack but fought back, and by this militancy it built its tremendous power and influence.

From 1922 the leadership of the official Labour movement drifted farther and farther away from the Socialist ideals of its founders. This led to a complete lack of political perspective.

Socialism has always been viciously attacked by the spokesmen of the upper classes.

After the establishment of the Soviet Union in 1917 these attacks intensified a hundred-fold. The propaganda which had been used against Connolly and Larkin was given a new slant. Socialists were accused of wanting to suppress religion and of wanting to bring their countries under Russian dictatorship.

Attacks on Socialist Ideas

In Ireland these attacks took a particularly vicious form and succeeded in confusing and misleading sections of the people. Frightened by these attacks, some of those in the Labour movement who had professed themselves as following the Socialist ideas of James Connolly, began to retreat, and less and less was heard of Socialism in the official movement.

This was in spite of the fact that there were many who did not retreat from Socialist and militant ideas. With such leaders as the late Jim Larkin in the '20s and '30s and consistently ever since, the left-wing has continued to fight for working-class ideals. On the trade union field, in strikes and other class battles, Irish workers have won many victories.

In the official political Labour movement, however, those who put forward the idea that there was no fundamental conflict between capitalists and workers, who refused to see that the working class had any independent role to play in the struggle for complete independence from imperialism, succeeded in gaining control. The result of this idea was an almost complete abdication of independent working-class political leadership.

In the political field the official Labour movement followed first one and then the other capitalist party. This lack of an independent working-class policy led to the disastrous participation in the two Fine Gael-dominated Coalition Governments—1948-51 and 1954-57.

Lately there have been signs that the Labour movement is shaking off the deadening influence which rendered it politically ineffective for so long.

There are signs of a searching for an independent programme for the development of the economy and the creation of a progressive movement.

Militant Leadership Absent

On the industrial field the trade union movement needs much more militant leadership.

The dominance of the ideas of class collaboration and the absence of a strong militant political working-class party is reflected in the frequent failures of trade union officialdom to give effective leadership to the workers.

Often the trade union leadership seems more concerned with trying to dampen down the militancy of the workers than with fighting the employers. The participation by the trade union leadership in the Employer-Labour Conference is a dangerous step on the road to accepting wage-fixing by this body which is dominated by employer interests. It also means accepting the idea that the sacrifices which would have to be made if we joined the Common Market would fall largely on the working class.

The statement on the Common Market adopted by the 1962 I.C.T.U. declares: "Congress is also concerned with the political consequences of E.E.C. membership . . . Political principles must at times override economic considerations, and so Congress considers that no agreement should be entered into which prejudices the right of the Republic to pursue an independent foreign policy, free from involvement with dissimilar European interests and from defence commitments other than such required by our support of a policy of peace and national independence."

While the statement falls short of opposing entry into the Common Market, in the guarantees which it seeks, and in its insistence on the necessity to oppose any attempt to abandon neutrality, it represents a big advance on previous trade union statements on the E.E.C.

However, resolutions, no matter how good, are ineffective unless they are followed by a campaign to force the Government to carry

them out. It is this action which is urgently needed to rally the working class and the people against the dangers threatening us.

On the political field the Labour Party leadership, in spite of some good stands on such issues as neutrality, is still failing to give any consistent, independent leadership.

The support of the Labour Party leadership for the Government's application to join the Common Market shows how, politically, Labour is still tying itself to the policies of Fianna Fail and Fine Gael. A complete break with this subservience to the two parties whose leaderships are preparing to sell out whatever independence we have won is essential if Labour is to emerge as the fighting, leading force for progress which the present situation demands. This requires that the attitude that politics are no concern of the trade unions, which is prevalent in the movement at the moment, must end, and the traditional view which realised that the political and the economic struggle go hand-in-hand must again become the policy of the whole movement.

Labour needs an immediate programme of demands for better living standards for the people, an independent economic policy including trade with all nations, and an independent foreign policy. It needs to carry this policy into action in the Dail and outside it.

It also needs a perspective, the perspective of Socialism.

Without that goal the Labour movement drifts from day to day, dealing only with immediate problems as they arise. It lacks the initiative and capacity to lead which only the striving towards an objective can give.

Fianna Fail captured the leadership of all the forces of discontent in 1932 because it had an objective—the creation of a modern capitalist economy in Ireland. This objective involved a struggle against imperialism. If Labour had a clear perspective it could show the people that the completion of that struggle is essential if Ireland is to advance.

Labour must see clearly that the interests of the majority of the people are in irreconcilable conflict with the interests of the imperialists and the big businessmen and big farmers.

The working class must give the lead to the small and medium farmers, to the small businessmen, to the intellectuals, to those who are looking for a way out of the present dangerous position in which Ireland finds itself.

VI.—THE IRISH WORKERS' PARTY

THE Irish Workers' Party believes that the working class movement, before it can lead, must itself have a political party to lead the way forward. This Party must have its own distinctive viewpoint based on the interests of the working class.

The political philosophy of Connolly based on the scientific Socialist approach of Marx, has proved itself to be the correct approach for a working class party.

The Irish Workers' Party is such a Party.

The Marxist approach which James Connolly used in his analysis of Irish society and in all his political activity, is based on the realisation that society is not something static. Society is in a perpetual state of change. The type of society in which we live is a class society. This means in essence that one class, a minority, owns the means of production while the majority, whether they work by hand or brain, must rely on their capacity to produce wealth for that minority to earn their living.

This form of society is not able to make proper use of the means of production with the result that it leads to a continual cycle of slumps and chronic unemployment.

In the case of Ireland, Connolly's analysis of the classes in Irish society led him to the conclusion that before any progress could be made the imperialists and that section of Irish capitalism which was tied in with them would have to be defeated.

The Capitalists Still Rule

Although, as has been shown there have been big developments since Connolly's day this analysis, in the main, is still true.

The political structure of a society reflects the class relations in that society. The owners of the means of production also rule politically, whether directly, as in older societies, or indirectly through political parties, as under capitalism.

Class society will be eventually ended by the taking of political power by what Wolfe Tone called "the men of no property," led by the industrial workers.

Under Socialism all the means of production would be owned by all the people, exploitation would be completely abolished and the antagonisms within society and between nations, which the class system breeds, would be finally ended. The achievement of such a system is the ultimate aim of the Irish Workers' Party.

With James Connolly, the Irish Workers' Party states that Socialism is not a religious question. As Connolly wrote in his "Labour, Nationality and Religion": "Socialism is neither Protestant nor Catholic, Christian nor Freethinker, Buddhist, Mohammedan nor Jew; it is only Human." Far from being in conflict with Christianity it is only through Socialism that the basic social idea of Christianity, the brotherhood of man, can be fully realised.

The Irish Workers' Party aims to build a strong political wing of the working class which will give leadership not only on immediate economic issues but on all political and social issues. In this way it would make the working class the leading force in the nation.

The Irish Workers' Party does not set itself up in opposition to other sections of the Labour movement or other progressive groups. It wants to see the development of both the political and industrial Labour movement in a progressive direction.

In Britain and other countries parties representing the working class have been elected with sufficient strength to form Governments but have failed to build Socialism because their

leaderships rejected Marxism. Not only did they fail to build Socialism but they could not solve the immediate problems of the people and went down in defeat before the capitalist parties.

The building of the type of working class party which is needed to place the Labour movement in the leadership of the whole nation, requires the strengthening and development of the Irish Workers' Party.

The aim of the Irish Workers' Party is to unite the people under working class leadership, to end the influence of imperialism in Ireland.

It also sets the winning of the working class movement for Socialism as a principal objective. There is no conflict between these two aims. A working class movement with a clear Socialist perspective would be the invincible vanguard of a movement to preserve and extend our independence.

In this task the Irish Workers' Party sees the necessity of co-operating with all other progressive forces in the country, and particularly those in the Labour Party and the trade unions.

No significant changes can be brought about in the present position without big political changes.

The Labour movement must set itself the task of winning political power at the head of all progressive forces in the country so that a State structure run in the interests of the people can be built.

VII.—IMPERIALISM RESPONSIBLE FOR PARTITION

THE division of Ireland is the result of imperialist policies. Any attempt to prove that it is a natural division, due to differences in religion or background, is proved untrue by the historical facts.

Every country has within it, people of different religions and with different ancestries.

What has happened in North-East Ireland is that these differences were played on by British imperialism.

After the plantation of Ulster in the 17th century, sharp differences of interest arose between the Planters (and their descendants) and the British ruling class.

The danger arose that the people of the North-East would make common cause with the rest of the people of Ireland.

The United Irishmen almost achieved this objective with their aim of setting up a "democratic republic" in which they would "substitute the name of Irishman for that of Catholic, Protestant and Dissenter."

After the failure of 1798, the British ruling class bent its efforts to the opening up and maintenance of a division between the Catholic majority and the Protestant minority.

Divide and Rule

The Tories "played the Orange card" to defeat Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, and used it again to kill a Home Rule Bill in 1914.

With the slogan "Home Rule is Rome Rule" they frightened the Ulster Protestants into thinking that Irish independence meant the loss of their liberties.

Along with the political campaign to divide Ireland, went an economic policy of allowing more industry to develop in the North than in the rest of the country, and giving Ulster tenants more rights in their land than were known in the rest of the country.

The Partition of Ireland was the culmination of this process. It kept a foothold for imperialism in the country, it prevented the industries of the North-East area being used to develop the economy of the whole country, and by maintaining the division among the people it frustrated the completion of the national revolution.

The inclusion of a Nationalist minority in the Six Counties not only gave it a larger area. It created the situation in which the workers inside the Six Counties itself could be divided, and therefore prevented from effectively uniting against the British and Orange Tories who rule through the Unionist Party.

It was through the process of division, dividing the people of the two States and dividing the people within those States, that the imperialists and some sections of the Irish capitalists hoped to prevent the emergence of a movement which would not only gain Irish freedom, but would also organise society in a way that would abolish exploitation.

Since the Treaty and the tragi-comedy of the Boundary Commission which followed it, no progress has been made towards the unification of the country. The argument that entry into the Common Market would end British control of the Six Counties is completely false. The imperialist interests in Britain and the Six Counties have no intention of relinquishing their foothold in Ireland, as they have made clear, if we join the Common Market. Far from weakening the grip of British imperialism on Ireland entry into the Common Market would intensify British domination of our economy.

The Unionists proclaim that "Ulster" will remain British as long as "grass grows and water runs." They maintain that the connection with Britain is essential for the economic health of the area.

Yet the Six Counties suffers from unemployment as heavy as the Twenty-six Counties. Capital flies in pursuit of profits with the same eagerness as it flies from the Twenty-six Counties.

There has been practically no development of the natural resources in the Six Counties, whose industries are based on imported raw materials.

The economy of the Six Counties has been "integrated" with that of Great Britain, but it has been "integrated" as the economy

of a very distressed area, an area which first feels the brunt of every wind that ruffles the British economy.

The Six Counties area is to all intents and purposes, ruled by the British Government. As far as economic policy is concerned, the Stormont Government has no function. The economic policies of Great Britain apply to the Six Counties as part of Great Britain.

Imperialist policies are hampering the development of the economy of Great Britain itself, which is lagging behind its Japanese and West German competitors, because of a lack of capital investment. Capital is flying overseas from Britain, too!

Imperialism is the enemy of the people of both parts of Ireland, and of the people of Great Britain as well.

VIII.—A PROGRAMME FOR LABOUR

A PROGRAMME designed to solve Ireland's problems must first of all take into account the division of the country.

The perspective of building a prosperous economy in a united country is essential.

The division of Ireland has had catastrophic effects on both parts of the country, politically and economically.

The Labour movement must show that the solution to the problems of Ireland lies within the country and not in any further link-up of the whole country with imperialism.

The Six Counties is divided into classes with conflicting interests, the same as every other class society.

There is complete unity of interest between the Protestant and Catholic workers and the Catholic and Protestant small farmers.

The interests of the imperialists and their allies are opposed to the interests of the majority of the people of the Six Counties, irrespective of religion.

The people of the Six Counties are more and more coming into conflict with imperialism on the economic field.

The unity of Ireland can be achieved on the basis of a coming together of movements for progress North and South.

The strengthening of the present unity of the Irish working class in the trade union movement is essential, as the basis for the coming together of the people of the entire country.

A movement in the Twenty-six Counties fighting for economic and political progress would act as a magnet to those workers and other classes in the Six Counties who vote Unionist, but who are dissatisfied with the results of Tory rule.

A drive against imperialist interests in the Twenty-six Counties and a strong anti-imperialist stand in the international field are essential if we are to prove to the people of the Six Counties, who are not yet won to the idea of unity, that independence means prosperity and a new national dignity.

Immediately the Twenty-Six Counties Government should be pressed to put forward concrete plans for economic development to the Stormont Government, plans which they can reject only by exposing the fact that it is not the interests of the Six Counties people, but the interests of imperialism which they are serving.

The movement of the British workers for Socialism is the natural ally of the Irish movement for unity and independence, since it is the same imperialist forces which oppose their struggle for a better life.

The division of the country represents one of the issues which the movement for independence, under capitalist leadership, could not solve.

Led by the working class, the people will complete the task begun by the great democratic republican movements from the United Irishmen onwards—the ending of the divisions among the Irish.

A Progressive Government

WHILE having the perspective of a united country, a programme for the Labour movement in the Twenty-six Counties, under the present circumstances, must be one which can be put into effect in that part of the country which is politically free.

All of the measures proposed in the following programme apply in a united country, but unity would also raise problems, such as the drafting of a new Constitution for the whole country, which are not dealt with here in detail.

The strengthening of the economy of the Twenty-six Counties and of its political independence is the first necessity on the road to the building of a strong, united country.

The present political independence of the Twenty-six Counties gives the people the power to make big changes in the economic set-up if that power is used.

A Progressive Government is needed to carry out a programme in the Twenty-six Counties which would lay the basis for a united, Independent Ireland. Fianna Fail will not put such a programme into effect. While it has attempted to build an independent economy it has done so in the interests of the Irish capitalists, not in the interests of the entire people.

When a crisis develops, Fianna Fail solves it not at the expense of big business or imperialist interests, but at the expense of the workers and small farmers. This approach weakens the economy instead of strengthening it.

For All Working People

A powerful progressive movement might be able to force the Government to adopt aspects of this programme, but the taking of power by a new kind of Government would be essential for its implementation.

The programme would be in the interests of the workers, the small farmers and the middle farmers. It would be in the interests of the small businessman, who finds his business being crushed by monopolies run by big Irish capitalists in alliance with imperialist interests.

It would be in the interests of intellectuals and professional people, many of whom are forced to emigrate due to the lack of opportunities for using their talents and education.

At the present moment the working class finds its official political expression through the Labour Party, but due to the lack of a distinctive, dynamic policy and action to put it into effect, that Party is not, in fact, supported by the majority of the workers. In the absence of a really effective working class party, working class support is divided among the other parties.

In the Twenty-six Counties the other classes which would be represented in a progressive Government find expression through a number of political parties.

The left-wing of Fianna Fail represents the interests of the small businessmen, small farmers and intellectuals. This left-wing is close to Sinn Fein which represents a more radical part of the same sections.

Sinn Fein has never wavered in its opposition to imperialism. By its stand against entry into the Common Market it has shown its realisation that imperialism is threatening the amount of freedom which has been won.

The National Progressive Democrats represent another section of the radical intellectuals and small farmers.

The Irish Workers' Party is the only party which adheres to the full Marxist political outlook of James Connolly. It represents the nucleus of the leading working class party in a progressive Government.

Whether a progressive government would consist of one party representing the interests of all the classes outlined above, or whether it would consist of a number of parties in alliance, is something which only history can show.

Working Class Must Lead

What is certain is that a progressive government can only take power under the leadership of a working class party, fighting for the interests of the people. Such a progressive government would represent an alliance between the working class, the small and medium farmers, the small businessmen and the professional and intellectual sections of the people.

Only such a leadership can provide the organisation and the inspiration which would win the support of the people, and in particular the young people, for the great new adventure of building an Ireland which can provide limitless opportunities for her people.

A progressive government would aim to take power by the normal methods of winning a majority through democratic

elections. This majority would rest on the support in the country of the organised forces of the people, led by the organised working class. The organised people would defeat any attempt by undemocratic elements to overthrow the progressive government.

A Plan for Progress

A progressive government in the Twenty-six Counties would take the following steps:

A State Economic Plan would be formulated, the implementation of which would be supervised by a National Council. Such a Plan would include the following minimum measures:

(1) Nationalisation of the entire banking and finance system. This would mean putting all the financial resources of the nation at the disposal of the people's government, which would use its control to prevent wealth flowing out of the country.

(2) Nationalisation of all major industries which are linked with imperialist interests, including milling and brewing in the South, and all large commercial and distribution services which are similarly linked. This would put the most profitable undertakings in the hands of the people, and take them away from ownership by imperialist interests. The workers in these industries and the people of the country generally would have a say in running them. The profits made by such industries would no longer go into the pockets of investors, but would be used by the State and the people to further develop the economy.

(3) Planning the economy of the whole country in the interests of the people. Industries would be set up all over the country to process new products of agriculture.

(4) To provide a sound basis for the economy it would be necessary to establish industries which would manufacture machines used in other industries and agriculture. The present production of steel from scrap metal would be stepped up to provide some of the materials necessary, and the aim would be to provide a large part of our requirements.

(5) The natural mineral and power resources of the country would be developed and used by the Government. Instead of bringing in foreign concerns to do the work and skim off the profits, the Government would initiate plans for a thorough scientific survey of all the resources and their development to provide the raw materials and power to be used in the setting up of industries.

(6) The Government would encourage the development of the consumer co-operative movement as a means for distribution of goods. In this way the people would be given a controlling say in determining the quality of the goods offered, and would be in a position to see to it that they got the things they wanted. The Co-operative movement would also have power, as part of the planned development of the economy, to set up and run factories to produce goods for sale in their shops.

(7) As has been shown, the small farmers are robbed by the present structure of agriculture which is also holding up the tremendous expansion of agricultural production which is possible.

(8) The first step of a progressive government would be to divide the big cattle farms among small farmers and landless men. The Government would then encourage a development of co-operative farming by the provision of grants and credit at a low interest rate.

(9) Entry to co-operatives would be completely voluntary, and small farmers choosing to remain outside them would be assisted to increase production in tillage, livestock and dairying, by the provision of cheap credit.

(10) Medium-sized farms employing men would also be assisted. The Government would guarantee both market and price for agricultural products.

(11) The Government would provide machinery for the co-operatives and would set up machine stations to rent machinery to the small farmers. One result of the provision of this machinery would be that five million acres in the Twenty-six Counties, which now come under the heading "other land," that is, land which has gone out of use would be made productive.

(12) Factories to provide all the fertiliser needed would be set up immediately in the different parts of the country. The nationalisation of the monopolies would end their exploitation of the countryside.

(13) These steps would give the basis for the creation of a thriving agriculture, which would provide a high standard of living and security for the people in the countryside. The increase in production would be planned first of all to satisfy the needs of our own people. The surplus would be exported and used to buy the things necessary for further development of the national economy.

(14) The Government would undertake a programme to create a modern transport network, serving all parts of the country. It would encourage the formation of co-operatives among fishermen and would provide the boats, which are urgently needed so that sea-fishing can be efficiently carried out, on easy terms to these co-operatives. It would set up factories to process and can fish for the home market and for export.

Trade With All Countries

OUR complete reliance on the British market is the real reason for our application to join the Common Market. This reliance places Ireland in a most dangerous position in the event of a slump in the capitalist world, as our export markets could disappear.

It is necessary to find new markets for our exports.

Whether we are in or out of the Common Market, it is obvious that we are going to face much fiercer competition in the British Market.

These new markets are to be found in the Socialist and the newly-independent countries, and a vast expansion of our trade with them is essential.

A progressive government would open free and equal trade relations with all countries. While Britain would remain a very important market, agreements would be concluded with the Socialist and newly-independent nations, by which we would obtain machinery and raw materials for the development of our economy, in exchange for our exports.

IX.—FOREIGN POLICY SHORTCOMINGS

IN its policy of non-alignment in military blocs and in many of the proposals which it has advanced at the United Nations—for example, the motion on preventing the spread of nuclear arms—Fianna Fail pursued a foreign policy which has contributed to the maintenance of world peace.

On the other hand, in its attitude towards the struggle of the colonial peoples for their independence, the foreign policy of Fianna Fail has not only been weak, but on occasion, positively pro-imperialist.

This pro-imperialist tendency is becoming more marked since our application to join the Common Market.

The Fianna Fail leadership has now moved over to the Fine Gael position. Both the Fianna Fail and the Fine Gael leaderships now openly advocate entry into Western military pacts.

Fine Gael have proved themselves to be outright supporters of imperialism. The only thing which has prevented their advocating the joining of military blocs is the knowledge that the people would be overwhelmingly against it.

Whichever of the capitalist parties is in power, the weakness of the Labour movement on the issues of foreign policy has meant that the people have been left almost leaderless.

When putting forward progressive policies at the United Nations, Fianna Fail made no real attempt to win support for them among the people.

Fianna Fail sees the continuance of world peace as being essential to any development of Irish capitalism which is not in a position to gain anything from wars. On the other hand it fears the advance of Socialism, and wavers between the desire for peace and the desire to play its part in stemming that advance.

A policy of non-alignment in military blocs is in the best traditions of the Irish movement for independence.

The Labour movement must make this a central point in its programme and so rally the people that no government would dare depart from it.

A progressive government, with the working class as the leading force, would continue with the policy of non-alignment.

It would take steps to support the world-wide movement for the banning of the hydrogen and atomic weapons and the reduction of the huge arms burden, which is wasting so much of the world's wealth.

It would campaign on behalf of the colonial peoples fighting for their independence, and would establish close political and economic relations with them.

It would end the farce of pretending that diplomatically one-third of the world doesn't exist, and would establish diplomatic and trading relations with the Socialist countries.

It would also end the hostile attitude to the Socialist countries since Ireland has nothing to fear and much to gain from them.

Would Be Safeguarded

THE Government would put an end to all restrictions on democratic liberties and would ensure that the will of the people's Parliament prevailed in all matters affecting the cultural and material well-being of the people.

It would abolish the Offences Against the State Act and put an end to internment without trial and military courts. All political prisoners would be released. Nobody could be arrested without being brought before a civil court within a matter of days.

Full religious liberty and freedom of conscience would be guaranteed to all citizens.

The present Censorship Act and regulations in the Twenty-six Counties would be repealed and a new Act introduced, placing the burden on the State to prove the undesirability of any book or film before the courts.

Programme for Social Services

A COMPLETELY free medical service, without any means test, would be immediately introduced. This would include a free Mother-and-Child scheme which would aim drastically to reduce our present high infant mortality rate.

Medical services would be financed out of the Government's central funds.

Under a progressive government, greater emphasis would be placed on the prevention of disease. The achievement of this would be assisted by improving living conditions and housing, by better equipped health centres and hospitals, and by the provision of more sports grounds and indoor clubs. Modernisation of mental health centres would receive special attention.

In promoting these aims the government would examine the whole system by which our hospital schemes are financed. It would also aim at democratising the hospital system and making it more subject to public control; this is becoming more vital as the advance of medical science makes the hospitals more heavily dependent than ever on public money.

Housing: The aim would be to provide every family with a separate home at low rent. To achieve this money would be available at drastically reduced rates of interest and steps would be taken to ensure that housing would be no longer a source of excessive profits to builders, builders' providers, landlords and

financiers. The ground rents scandal would be ended by their complete abolition.

Widows, orphans and old people would be given a proper standard of living, through increased pensions, and facilities for work, education and leisure on exactly the same level as the rest of society.

As a temporary measure, unemployment benefits would be increased to give the unemployed and their families the same standard of living as everybody else.

Unemployment would eventually be abolished by the expansion and planning of the economy.

Education Needs Real Overhaul

A THOROUGH overhaul of the entire education system would be made.

An intensive programme of school building would be launched to end the scandal of unfit schools and overcrowded classes. The curricula would be broadened to take in such subjects as science from primary level on. Corporal punishment would be forbidden. The parents would be given a voice in the running of the schools, through parents committees.

All education would be free, entry to universities being solely on the basis of scholarships.

A developing economy would need all the scientists, doctors and teachers which the universities could produce.

The aim of education would be to end the division between those who work with their hands and those who work with their brains, and to make the cultural and scientific heritage of mankind the common property of everybody.

Safeguard Language and Culture

THE Irish language is an essential part of our nationhood, and of the cultural heritage of the people. It was a factor in preventing our complete absorption by British imperialism.

A progressive Government would promote the revival of the language and would include Irish as an essential subject on the school curriculum, while at the same time it would see to it that parents had an effective choice in deciding whether other subjects should be taught through Irish to their children.

It would see to it that the whole system of education was improved so that the children would enjoy learning the language instead of simply being crammed with it to get through examinations.

The main force which is disintegrating the Gaeltacht is emigration, arising from lack of economic development. As part of a programme for the development of the whole country the Government would take measures to develop the economy of the Gaeltacht areas. This would provide the basis for the growth and preservation of Gaelic culture.

The Irish Workers' Party believes that if the economic development of the country was being rapidly promoted on the lines

proposed in this programme, then there is no doubt that our people would be imbued with a new-found faith in the future of their country, and enthusiasm for the language would rise enormously.

The Government would encourage development in all the arts. It would provide the facilities for the production of films and would aid writers, artists, musicians by scholarships. It would give aid and encouragement to the theatre.

All means of mass communication, the Press, television and radio would be made available to the people and their organisations to express their views and demands.

X.—WHO STANDS AGAINST IRELAND FREE AND PROGRESSIVE?

THE imperialist forces and those Irish capitalists and big farmers who are tied up with them for what they can get out of it, have always been against any move for Irish independence.

They opposed the attempts of Fianna Fail to develop the economy.

They have always been the bitterest opponents of the working class movement.

These forces find their main political expression through Fine Gael, and through a section of the Fianna Fail leadership.

Fine Gael, realising how unpopular its pro-imperialism was with the people, attempted for a time to present itself as having been converted to Republicanism. It feels it has now lived down its past and that sufficient time has elapsed for people either to forget what subjection to Britain meant to Ireland, or else to be too young to have experienced it.

Fine Gael is now attempting to present a new image of itself and a new image of imperialism. It once again openly proclaims its objective to be a complete tie-up of the Irish economy with that of British and now also U.S. imperialism.

Fine Gael and those in the Fianna Fail leadership who largely agree with them, would be the spearhead of opposition to our programme. An alliance of the people could defeat them, and the imperialist interests represented by the Unionist Party.

Future for Young People

In the Ireland envisaged by this programme, all educational and cultural facilities would be open to every child. No one would be afraid that their children were going to spend their lives in blind alley jobs and insecurity.

The fear of poverty in old age and sickness would be ended. Instead of being the victims of circumstances, individuals in co-operation with one another, would mould their environment to give a full, free and happy life to all.

For young people the perspective which the implementation of this programme would open up would ensure unlimited possibilities for the realisation of their hopes and dreams.

The programme which has been outlined, implemented by a government representing the people, would lay the foundation for a really prosperous, independent Ireland.

The development of a movement based on this programme would rouse the people and give them a future worth fighting for. It would defeat the present despairing policy of both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, a policy of subservience to imperialism which means throwing overboard all that the Irish people have fought for through many bitter centuries.

The implementation of this programme would mean that the people in the countryside would eventually enjoy the same facilities and standard of living as the people in the cities.

In the Ireland envisaged in our programme the fear of unemployment, of having to break up a home or of being uprooted from one to go abroad in search of work would be ended.

The Irish Workers' Party presents this programme as the means through which the people of Ireland can be won for the building of a society which will achieve Irish independence and unity and will be the first step away from a system based on exploitation.

All who want to end poverty in Ireland, all who want freedom for Ireland, all who want peace in the world can be won to support this programme if the Labour movement fights for its implementation.

On to a Bright Future

The wrong policies of compromise which have weakened the Labour movement must be cast aside and the fighting, hopeful Socialist vision of its founders take their place.

Ireland is not finished. It is imperialism which is finished. To tie ourselves to it through the Common Market or in any other way will not solve our problems. It will make them worse. The Common Market is not the dawn of a new era, but the last desperate attempt by the monopolies to salvage something from the collapse of their empires.

The strength of the Socialist countries, with their crisis-free economic systems, and the growth of the newly-independent ex-colonies, have created a new situation in the world. No longer can imperialism dictate its will to the whole world. The weakening of world imperialism which has resulted from these developments, has placed countries such as Ireland in a much stronger position to resist imperialist pressure and to maintain their independence.

The Irish Workers' Party calls on the Irish people and particularly on the Labour movement to take up again the banner of those who like Tone, Emmet, Mitchel, Lalor, Davitt, Parnell, Pearse, Clarke, Larkin and Connolly fought to emancipate the Irish people.

Given a clear lead the Irish people have never shown themselves as lacking in fighting spirit.

Nor will they now in the last fight to drive imperialism with its legacy of poverty and oppression forever from our shores.

Title: Ireland Her Own

Organisation: Irish Workers' Party

Date: 1963

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