- English troops in Ireland, 1581.
- ® Troops in Ulster, 1969.
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- Defeat of Loyalists at Wexford.
- © Bloody Sunday, Dublin, 1913
- F James Connolly.
- © Dublin youth, circa 1913.

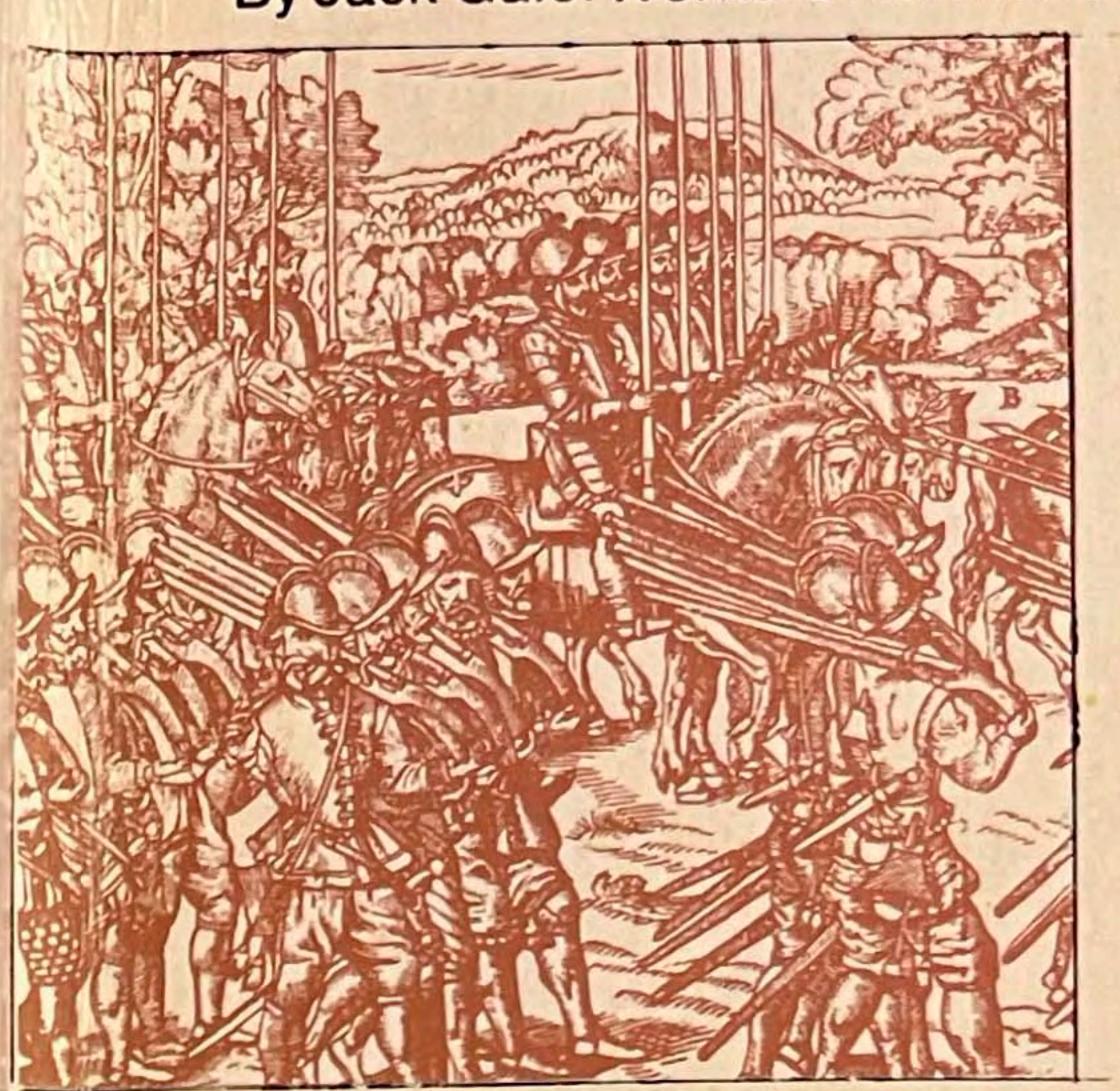
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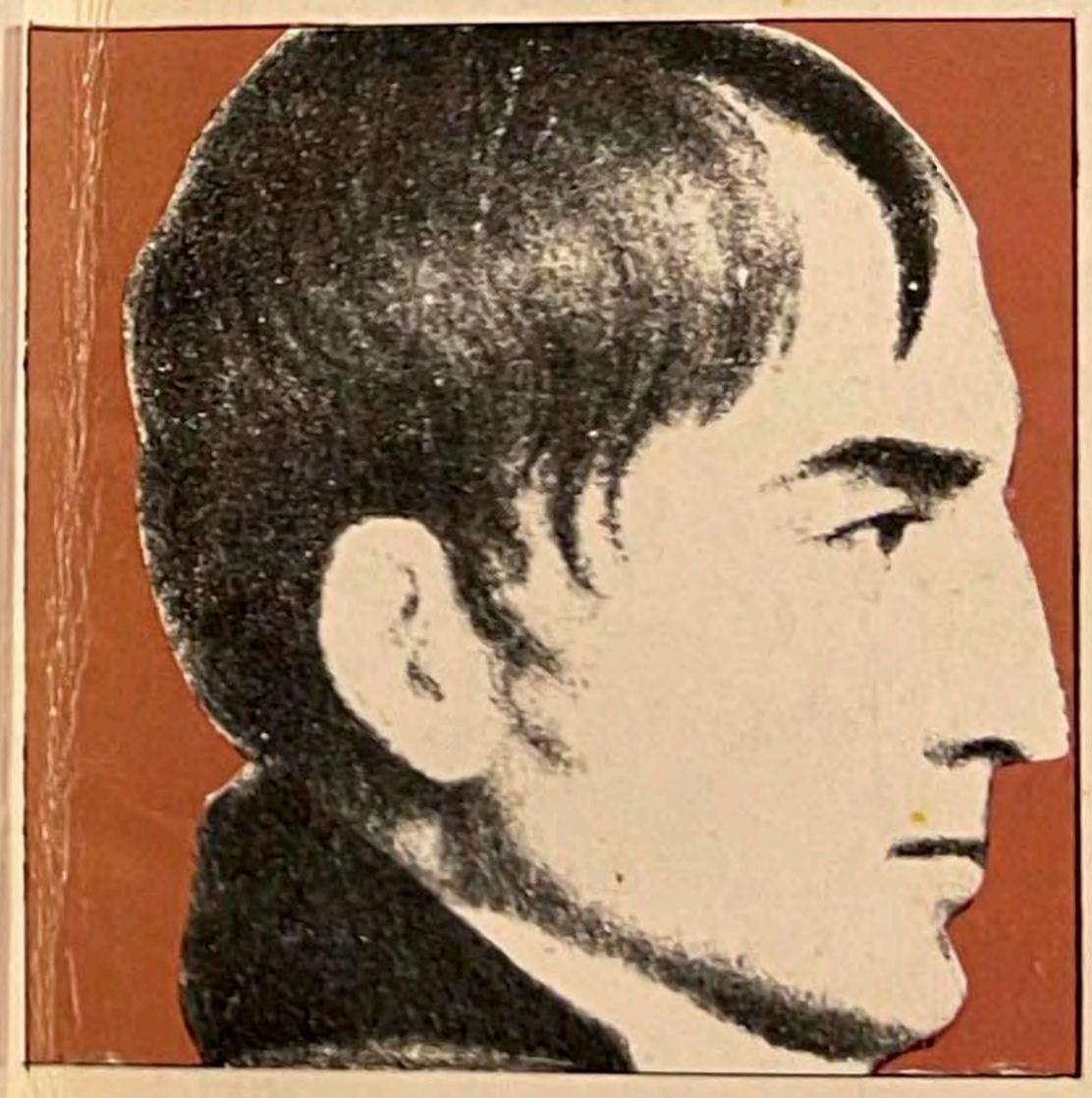
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### OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND

By Jack Gale. Workers Revolutionary Party Pocket Book No. 15

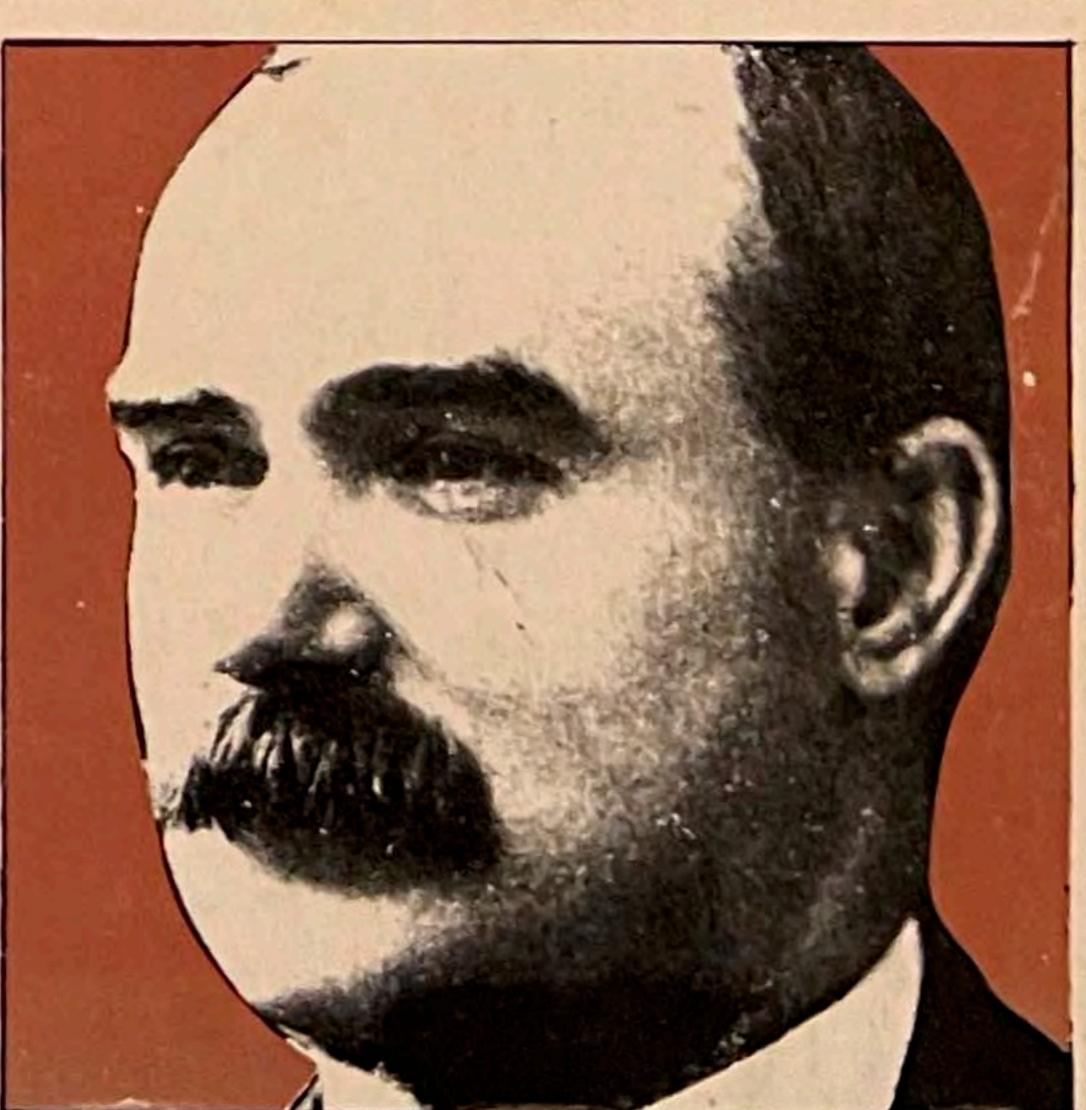












By Jack Gale

## Oppression and Revolt in Ireland

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WORKERS REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

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Set up, printed and bound by trade union labour

THE REPORT OF VALUE OF A PARTY

Printed in Great Britain by Plough Press Ltd. (T.U.) r-o 180 Clapham High Street, London SW47UG 'For centuries Britain has enslaved Ireland, doomed the Irish peasants to unparalleled suffering and gradual extinction from starvation, driven them from the land and compelled them to leave their native country in hundreds of thousands and millions

'The unparalleled destitution and suffering of the Irish peasantry are an instructive example of the lengths to which the landlords and the liberal bourgeoisie of a "dominant" nation will go. Britain largely based her "brilliant" economic development, the "prosperity" of her industry and commerce on such exploits among the Irish peasantry as recall those of the Russian feudal (landlords)."

-Lenin, in The British Liberals and Ireland, 1914.

#### CONTENTS

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the second of th

	INTRODUCTION DITCHEMENT	Pag vi
Chapte		
	IRELAND — ANNEXED FOR EVER	
11	HIS MAJESTY'S MOST LOYAL SUBJECTS	15
111	FROM FAMINE TO FENIAN	29
17	TEN THOUSAND MEN WITH RIFLES UP TO DATE	45
v	ON TORY PRINCIPLES IRELAND MUST BE KEPT	55
VI	MUTILATION OF THE IRISH NATION	69
VII	NOT THE RACK-RENTING SLUM-OWNING LANDLORDS	85
VIII	CONNOLLY AND LARKIN AS REVOLUTIONARIES	103
ıx	CONTRARY TO EVERYTHING WE STOOD FOR	119
	Postscript	135
	Chronology of Main Events	151
7	Bibliography	144
	Index	145

The second of th

The man and the first the first that the first the first

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THE PARTY OF THE PARTY OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PARTY OF TH

INTRODUCTION

vii

#### INTRODUCTION

IN AUGUST, 1969, the Labour government of Harold Wilson began the build up of more than 16,000 British troops in the north of Ireland. Their purpose was not, as the International Socialism group and the Communist Party claimed, to protect the Catholic workers. It was to protect capitalism and the interests of British imperialism.

Within a very short space of time the bloody repression carried out by this imperialist army quickly shattered any illusions that Catholic workers may have had about the 'peacekeeping' role of British troops. They discovered that the British army treated the workers of Belfast and Derry in exactly the same way as it had treated the workers of Aden and Cyprus.

Under the protection of this army, the right-wing forces of Craig and Paisley were left free to force political developments while the working class, held back by its religious, liberal, social-democratic and Stalinist leaders, was met with a hail of bullets and CS gas.

Throughout the succeeding Tory government of 1970-1974, the British Labourites were solidly behind Heath and his Northern Ireland Minister, William Whitelaw, in every act of imperialist atrocity in Ireland. They supported the imposition of internment without trial in 1971, the use of mind-breaking disorientation tortures, and the introduction of direct rule in 1972.

On October 26, 1971—with the death toll since occupation standing at 131—Workers Press warned of a 'Sharpeville' massacre in the north of Ireland.

On January 30, 1972, thirteen unarmed civilians were shot dead by the British army in Derry. Even a government inquiry subsequently admitted that not one of the murdered people had

been carrying weapons. They were awarded compensation starting at £250.

The murders caused widespread demonstrations and anger. But if Ireland could have achieved the Socialist Republic by martyrdom and anger, it would have done so long before January, 1972.

Without the development of revolutionary consciousness and organization, the working class cannot smash the capitalist state. Yet that is the enemy in Ireland. This was made clear, to any who doubted it, on December 1, 1972 when twin bombs blasted Liberty Hall in Dublin killing two busworkers and injuring 126 people.

Within minutes of this highly convenient bombing, all opposition to Jack Lynch's Offences Against the State (Amendment) Act in the Dublin parliament melted away.

Lynch's Fianna Fail government imposed five-year prison sentences for members of 'illegal organizations' on the sole 'evidence' of a senior police officer's opinion.

Not for the first time, the green Tories of Ireland had demonstrated their solidarity with British imperialism.

But the bombings—since openly acknowledged to have been the work of British agents—and the laws, also proved that the imperialist oppression of Ireland was a threat not only to Irish workers but to British workers. It involved the actual preparation of the repressive forces of reaction for the next stage of the class struggle in Britain.

Two years almost to the day after the Dublin bombs, the British Labour government seized upon bombings in Birmingham to carry through 'anti-terror' laws in Britain which gave the police the right to search and arrest without warrant and keep suspects in custody in special police centres without telling anyone where they were. They also gave the government the right of deportation without trial. There was not a single vote against these laws in the British parliament.

Anyone who doubted that the most sinister forces were at work in Ireland needed to look only at the career of Kenneth Littlejohn, thug, bankrobber, confidante of Tory ministers and aristocrats, hireling of the British Secret Service, and self-confessed paid assassin.

Littlejohn claimed that he and his brother Keith were recruited as British agents by the chairman of the Tory Party and Defence Secretary Lord Carrington, and Army Minister Geoffrey Johnson-Smith. The Littlejohn's contact man was an agent called 'Smythe'. They were to act as agents

provocateurs, carrying out explosions and armed robberies, and also as assassins of leading figures in the IRA.

Kenneth Littlejohn said that Geoffrey Johnson-Smith phoned him to congratulate him on his 'good work'—the day after the Aldershot bombings in 1972 killed six people. (An Irishman who has always protested his innocence, Noel Jenkinson, is serving 30 years for that bombing and has been refused leave to appeal.)

The sole responsibility for bloodshed in Ireland rests on British imperialism and the British army. The opponents of imperialism have the right to fight back in the manner they think most effective.

But the use of blind terrorism can never free-Ireland. The sole result of it has been to stampede the middle class and even sections of the working class into support for imperialist repression. It has assisted right wing and centrist developments in the organization of the working class. It has assisted the imperialist strategy of divide and rule.

In fact, the advocates of terrorism have themselves frequently swung right round to blatant attempts to do a deal with imperialism—as when the Provisionals' leaders engaged in talks with Whitelaw in 1972 and even presented that Tory Minister as some kind of guarantor of a 'democratic' future!

Other self-proclaimed leaders of the Irish workers—such as the Social Democratic and Labour Party led by Mr Gerry Fitt—have again and again reneged on workers who have supported them, as they did, for example, when they pledged to support a rent strike until internment was abolished and then abandoned hundreds of working-class families who responded to their call.

In Britain, the Labour government's bi-partisan policy with the Tories on Ireland reveals completely its capitalist character as a government, despite the base which the Labour Party has in the British working class. The role of the 'lefts', in particular, has been disgraceful. The 'Tribunite' Stan Orme, as second in command to north of Ireland Secretary Merlyn Rees, has sought to outdo his master in attacks on the Irish victims of the imperialism he serves so loyally.

The British and Irish Stalinists refuse even to call for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. They demand only that they be 'withdrawn to barracks' as if, once there, they could never come out again! They sow illusions in imperialism by their demand for a 'Bill of Rights'—put forward even when the Tories were in office!

Revisionists such as the International Marxist Group who bow to the spontaneous struggle of the Catholic workers, write

off the Protestant workers in the north, glorify individual terrrorism, and consistently oppose every attempt to fight the false theories and Utopian bourgeois policies of the nationalists, are conscious participants in the betrayal of the Irish working class.

The dangers of splitting the Irish working class in this way was revealed in June last year when right-wing para-military groups, politically led by extreme Unionists, and under the protective surveillance of the British army, forced the resignation of the British puppet 'power-sharing' executive and asserted their power in the streets.

The revisionist International Socialism group has never to this day explained its support of British troops going into Ireland in 1969. Instead it has subordinated itself to bourgeois republicanism and sought to enrol Irish workers and youth behind the petty-bourgeois politics of People's Democracy—which literally led unprepared people into Unionist ambushes.

Throughout 1970-1974, IS—like the Communist Party and the IMG—refused to link the Irish struggle with a campaign in the British labour movement to bring down the Tory government.

Its worship of spontaneity and rank-and-filism means actively fighting against the development of revolutionary consciousness in the working class, and thereby assisting imperialism.

The Workers Revolutionary Party, and its predecessor the Socialist Labour League, has insisted throughout that only the working class, led by a revolutionary party, can fight for the democratic revolution and national unity in Ireland. We base this analysis on Trotsky's scientific and historically verified theory of the Permanent Revolution, whose central idea is that the petty-bourgeoisie is nowhere capable of leading the democratic revolution to victory. Such a revolution can only be conceived in the form of the dictatorship of the proletariat moving forward to the achievement of socialism. The struggle for this dictatorship is the struggle for the Marxist Party.

While condemning senseless terrorism, we do not join the hypocritical wailing of the capitalist Press. The British ruling class has murdered, tortured, burned, starved and evicted in Ireland for more than 800 years. The bourgeois Press has shed no tears over that.

And for Marxists, the first enemy is our own ruling class.

The International Committee of the Fourth International (including its Irish Section, the Workers' League, and its British Section, the Workers Revolutionary Party) calls for the unity of

the British and Irish working class to demand:

- \* The immediate release of all political prisoners in the north and south of Ireland and in Britain.
- ★ Disarming and disbandment of the UDR and all Unionist anti-working class organizations.
- \* Repeal of the Offences Against the State Act in the south of Ireland, all repressive legislation in the north, and Jenkins 'anti-terror' legislation in Britain.
- \* Industrial class action in Ireland to defend jobs, living standards and democratic rights.
- \* The defeat of British imperialism, the green and Orange Tories of Ireland and the building of the United Socialist Republic of Ireland.

The aim of this book is to trace a part of the bloodstained history of British rule in Ireland, and of the courageous struggle of the Irish masses against it, despite the treacherous nature of their leadership.

Its purpose is to assist in the building of the sections of the International Committee of the Fourth International.

Jack Gale, March 1975.

#### **CHAPTER ONE**

## 'This land of Ireland — annexed for ever . . .'

The earliest English 'rights' in Ireland dated from the feudal allegiance owed to the English king by those of his subjects who acquired land there.

And the most active agency in preparing the feudalization of Ireland and the invasion of the Anglo-Normans was the Church of Rome. In particular, the hierarchy of the Roman Church in Ireland were most anxious to subject their native land to a foreign king as a means of overcoming Irish opposition to their religion and their power.

One of the leaders in this respect was Maelmaedoc O'Morgair, later sanctified by a grateful church, who described his fellow-countrymen to the 12th century Abbot of Clairvaux as follows:

'In all the barbarism which he had yet encountered, he had never met such a people so profligate in their morals, so uncouth in their ceremonies, so impious in faith, so barbarous in laws, so rebellious to discipline, so filthy in life, Christian in name, but Pagans in reality.'

It was with the active collaboration of such priests, that the English imposed feudalism on Ireland. They did so with the full authority of Rome. In 1154-1155 Pope Adrian IV granted Henry II of England a Bull Laudibiliter to invade Ireland and 'enlarge the bounds of the church, to teach the truth of Christian faith to the ignorant and rude, and to extirpate the roots of vice from the field of the Lord'.

All Henry had to do in return for the privilege of serving his

P. Berresford Ellis, 'A History of the Irish Working Class', p. 28.

God in this way was pay an annual sum into the papal coffers.

The invasion began in May 1169, under the leadership of the Earl of Pembroke ('Strongbow'). Typically, it was aided by the treachery of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, Laurence O'Toole. He persuaded the men of Dublin to sue for peace and, while negotiations were going on, the Norman forces burst into the city, with the connivance of the archbishop.

But the Irish fought back and Strongbow's army was cut off.
Accordingly, the latter—who had had ambitions to make
himself king of Ireland—was forced to appeal to Henry II of
England for help, offering him all the possessions he had taken
in Ireland as his suzerain lord.

Henry landed with 4,000 men in October 1171, and received the Lordship of Ireland from Strongbow.

All laws subsequently enacted were in accordance with English feudal law. Estates were granted in Ireland in return for military and other service to Henry's followers—such as Strongbow, who became feudal lord over Leinster—all of whom owed homage to the King of England for their new possessions.

Not only feudal lords, but also the Catholic Church, was immensely strengthened by Henry's victory. A decree was passed ordering the Irish to pay tithes in cattle, corn and other produce to the Catholic Church. Another decree freed all church property from the jurisdiction of the clans, another freed the church from having to make its traditional contribution to the clan community (such as lodging and food) and yet another placed the church above clan law altogether, excusing churchmen from any punishment under it no matter what the crime.

The Pope was duly grateful. In September 1172, Pope. Alexander III wrote to the Irish Catholic hierarchy ordering them to assist Henry II to keep possession of Ireland and to censure those who broke their oath of loyalty to him. The Pope also wrote to the Irish chiefs commending them for 'receiving him [Henry] as king of their own free will' (!).

And a third Papal letter, this time to Henry, urged him to carry on his good work in the 'acquisition' of Ireland.2

It took 500 years for the English to forcibly break up the Irish clan system. This process meant that the replacement of the communal ownership of land first by feudal ownership and then by capitalist-landlordism did not develop through the operation

of internal economic forces, but through external military oppression.

Thus, from the beginning the Irish struggle against the foreign aggressor was also a struggle against private property in land.

In the course of this struggle the Tudor and Stuart monarchies

— Protestant and Catholic alike — waged ferocious war on the
Irish. In 1541 Henry VIII proclaimed himself 'king of this Land
of Ireland as united, annexed and knit forever to the Imperial
Crown of the Realm of England'.

It was, however, during the reign of the Catholic queen, Mary Tudor (1553-1558) that the English government devised its policy to change the Irish 'course of government, apparel, manner of holding land, language and habit of life'.

This was the notorious 'Plantations' policy. Quite simply, the Irish were driven off their land and English colonists moved in. The Plantations began in the counties of Leix and Offaly in Leinster where the O'More clan was exterminated to the last man, woman and child.

The conditions under which plantations were rented to English colonists were that each one had to pay an annual rent to the English crown, bring 86 families from England to work the property, refuse to permit any Irish people to live on it, and guarantee that all female heirs would marry only Englishmen.

Despite these regulations, a major problem, in addition to the armed resistance of the Irish, was a tendency among the settlers to become assimilated into Ireland. The poet Edmund Spenser, who held a plantation in Waterford, wrote: 'Instead of keeping out the Irish, they do not only make the Irish their tenants in those lands and thrust out the English, but also some of them become mere Irish.'

The strongest resistance was in Ulster, where a rising was crushed by Lord Mountjoy, whose forces destroyed every human being, every animal, every house and every stock of food they could find.

Mountjoy had been despatched by the Tudor Elizabeth I. His victory coincided with the succession of the Stuart James I. During James' reign six Ulster counties were taken over — Donegal, Derry (then Coleraine), Tyrone, Armagh, Cavan and Fermanagh — and settled by Presbyterian Scots.

Some of these Scottish Presbyterians joined the native Irish in resistance to the English government and the English church, as they did in the so-called 'Great Rebellion' of 1641, led by Phelim O'Neill.

Cromwell crushed such resistance with unprecedented

ferocity in 1649.

A contemporary statistician, Sir William Petty, estimated that out of a total population of 1,448,000 in Ireland, about 616,000 died by 'sword, famine and plague' in Cromwell's invasion. 504,000 of them were native Irish and 112,000 were colonists, 40,000 others fled the country and 100,000 Irish were sold as slaves into the English colonies. That totals more than half the entire population of the country!

On September 23, 1653, the English parliament passed its

'final solution' of the Irish question.

Three-quarters of Ireland was to be seized. The entire population of Ulster, Munster and Leinster was to be driven into Connaught and County Clare and kept there by a line of military forts. Two and a half acres per man of land was to be confiscated to pay for the upkeep of Cromwellian troops.\*

With a few legal exceptions (women married to English Protestants, etc) all Irish caught on the 'English' side of the Shannon after May 1, 1654, were to be hanged bearing a placard 'For not transplanting'.

(Not all were hanged. One Bristol firm, with the co-operation of Lord Broghill of County Cork, shipped 6,400 Irish children to slavery in the West Indies.3)

The restoration of the English monarchy in 1660 made little difference to Ireland. True, the Catholic James II repealed Cromwell's Act of Settlement, but in practice nothing was done to restore the land to its former Catholic owners.

By this time the Irish aristocracy was either of foreign origin or completely in alliance with foreign oppression. This meant that the leadership of the Irish movement fell entirely into the hands of the middle class. The movement, indeed, became the idealized expression of middle-class interests.

The emphasis of this leadership has always been on a 'united, national movement' which ignored the class interests of the Irish workers and peasants. Religion, language, patriotism, even political reform, have all been used to prevent the development of class consciousness by the Irish working class.

For the last 200 years, every generation in Ireland has witnessed an attempted rebellion against English rule. The fighters in these rebellions have been the rural poor and the city workers.

But - with few exceptions - their leaders have consistently excluded the class interests of the poor from the aims to be achieved. They sought, instead, to woo the Irish bourgeoisie to the national cause. Needless to say, this bourgeoisie clung stubbornly to its property under the protective powers of England.

Ignoring the petty-bourgeois pleas for a 'union of classes' against England, the Irish aristocracy and bourgeoisie pursued their oppression of the Irish workers and peasants with a ruthlessness which threatened to de-populate the country.

While the Irish middle class produced many individual heroic patriots, in such movements as Young Ireland and the Fenians, they strove as a class to leave untouched the class basis of national and economic subjection.

It is this, rather than the historic conflict between James II of England and William, Prince of Orange, the adventurer who claimed his throne, that has coloured Irish history over the last 300 years.

Indeed, neither James nor William were concerned in the slightest about the needs of the Irish people. The Irish Catholics fought for James-but the reason is not hard to seek.

The Catholic noblemen and gentry in Ireland possessed considerable property on which the peasantry had been reduced to impecunious tenants.

In the most part, these wealthy landowners were the descendants of invaders who had confiscated their property as the spoils of conquest and they kept it as the fruits of co-operation with the foreign oppressor.

In supporting James II of England against William of Orange they were acting, not as Irish 'patriots', but as an English faction.

Despite their conflict with the Orangemen, therefore, they had one fundamental agreement with them-that the Irish people should remain a subject people.

As James Connolly pointed out: 'They fought not for freedom for Ireland, nor for the restitution of their rights to the Irish

<sup>\*</sup> Many of the dispossessed Irish took to the hills and carried out guerrilla raids on the English colonies. These guerrillas were given the name 'toiridhe' - meaning a pursuer. The anglicization of the word was Tory. Later the same name was given to supporters of the royal prerogative under James II, and later to the most bigoted Conservatives. A far cry from Margaret Thatcher to the original, dispossessed, landless

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. p.45.

people, but rather to secure that the class who then enjoyed the privilege of robbing the Irish people should not be compelled to give way in their turn to a fresh horde of land thieves. 4

The war between William of Orange and James II was in no sense a war of Protestant versus Catholic. In fact, William was financed in part by the Pope and backed by the Catholic King

of Spain.

His victory, after the battles of the Boyne in 1690 and Aughrim in 1691, was greeted by a 'Te Deum' in the great cathedral of St Peter's in Rome.

Celebrations were also sung in the Catholic cathedrals in

Madrid, Brussels and Vienna.

It is also an Orangeman's myth that William brought religious freedom to Protestants in Ireland. In fact, William made the Episcopalian Church the only legal church and not only Catholics but Presbyterians were persecuted in Ireland during his reign. Presbyterian ministers could not preach, Presbyterian schoolteachers could not teach and, under the Test Act of 1704, Presbyterians were barred from holding office in the law, customs, armed forces and municipal employment.

Between 1717 and 1776 over 250,000 Protestant Ulstermen migrated to America to escape the 'religious liberty' said to

have been won by William of Orange in 1691!

What did follow William's victory was yet a further wave of land annexations. By 1703 only 15 per cent of the cultivatable land of Ireland was left in Catholic hands. Altogether William confiscated 1½ million acres of Irish land and distributed it to the aristocratic plunderers who had supported him.

The next 20 years saw the introduction of the ferocious Penal Laws. Ostensibly, these laws were designed to convert Catholics to Protestantism. In reality they were used to convert

Catholic property into Protestant property.

The Penal Laws excluded Catholics from open political activity and banned Catholic education. Catholics were barred from all public office and most professions.

They could neither acquire a mortgage on land nor buy it outright. Any member of a Catholic family could take possession of the family's entire property simply by making an affidavit that he embraced the Protestant religion.

Fixed prices were placed on certain items of property and any Protestant could claim the items from any Catholic by offering that price. Needless to say, there was no shortage of ambitious Catholics who saw the Protestant light with the aid of these laws. According to one estimate, 5,000 land-owning Catholic families joined the Anglican Church between 1703 and 1788. So did numerous Catholic priests, incidentally picking up useful financial rewards on route to Anglican posts by denouncing their erstwhile co-religionists.

By the mid-eighteenth century only 7 per cent of Irish land was left in Catholic hands. But class lines were even stronger than religious lines. There are innumerable instances of the most fervent Orange landlords evicting Protestant tenants

and letting the land to Catholics at higher rents.

And probably the most brutal evictions of all were carried out by a renegade Catholic family turned Protestant—the Burke family—who were rewarded for their 'conversion' by being

created Earls of Clanrickarde.

Working-class Protestants suffered as much deprivation of democratic rights as did Catholics. Catholics were barred by the religious laws and the Protestant poor by the property qualifications and the dominance of the Irish Parliament by Pocket Boroughs (seats whose representatives were nominated by the land-owning aristocracy).

At the same time as Irish land was being acquired by pro-English Protestant settlers and fervent religious converts,

Irish trade was also being crippled.

For example, the export of woollen goods from Ireland was prohibited to anywhere except England — where it faced exhorbitant duties.

This meant that, for the Irish poor, there was no alternative to scraping a bare existence from the land — as tenants of the above-mentioned landlords. They were forced to pay the highest rents that could be squeezed from them and they had no protection against eviction.

The conditions of the Irish poor at this time provoked one of the most vitriolic satires ever penned — Jonathan Swift's 'Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of the Poor People in Ireland from Becoming a Burden on their Parents or Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Public'.

Published in 1729, when he was Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin, Swift's 'proposal' was that one-year-old Irish children could be killed off and sold as 'a most delicious, nourishing and wholesome food':

<sup>4</sup> James Connolly, Labour in Ireland p. 14

Berresford Ellisop.cit. p.57

'I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which last I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four-fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included, and I believe no gentleman would refuse to give ten shillings for the carcase of a good, fat child, which I have said, will make four dishes of excellent, nutritious meat.'

Once the question of political supremacy was decided, both Protestant and Catholic tenants found themselves suffering a common oppression. Certainly, rich Catholics received much more understanding from the rich Protestants than the latter ever extended to their Protestant tenants and workers.

Few tears were shed by either Catholic or Protestant gentry over the fate of the poor of both denominations — as, for example, in the famine of 1740 when an estimated 400,000 people died. Moreover, the landlords took full advantage of the aftermath of such famines to intensify evictions, break up small farms and seize village common lands.

The first resistance to the landlords took the form of secret societies, like the Whiteboys movement which began in 1760.

These groups of desperate men killed the landlords' cattle, tore down fences from enclosed land, reinstated evicted tenants by force, and even murdered landlords and their agents.

Similar societies sprang up all over Ireland for almost two centuries, up to the 1880s. They were known as Rightboys, Thrashers, Rockites, Ribbonmen, Whitefeet, Blackfeet, the Lady Clares, the Terry Alts and a variety of other names. In the North they were called Oakboys, Hearts of Steel and Steelboys.

It must be emphasized that this was not a matter of Catholic tenants against Protestant owners. Frequently both Catholic and Protestant property owners combined to offer large rewards for the capture of members of these societies. And when caught they were savagely punished, suffering hanging, imprisonment or transportation.

While the fight for the land was waged by the poor, the demand for Irish parliamentary independence originally came from the propertied class. Only this class had the vote.

In the Eighteenth Century, 30 individuals controlled enough rotten boroughs' (ie areas with tiny populations whose representative in parliament was in fact nominated by the landowner) to ensure a permanent majority in the Irish Parliament. Of these, the majority were agents of the British Crown.

So, in practice, the English government nominated the Irish 'government'!

The English ruling class, anxious to maintain its control of Ireland sought to keep the Dublin Parliament subordinate to the London Parliament through what was known as Poyning's Law.

Passed in 1494, this made the Irish Parliament incapable of meeting or discussing any measures without the previous approval of the King's Council In England.

The movement of Protestant property owners for political independence was led first by Henry Flood and then by Henry Grattan. Throughout, it recognized the English king as king of Ireland, seeking only legislatory powers under him.

Gains were made. In 1778 the first Catholic Relief Bill enabled Catholics to start buying property again. In 1779 restrictive commercial legislation against Irish products was repealed. In 1782 Poyning's Law was repealed and the English Parliament passed an Act of Renunciation of its legislative rights in Ireland. The same year Catholics were granted equal rights of property and leasehold in land as Protestants.

But these gains were due less to the persuasive powers of Grattan and his 'Patriots' Party than to the emergence of an armed force in Ireland and to the blows delivered against England by the American War of Independence.

The armed force—known as the Volunteers—numbered some 80,000 men by 1782. It forced the Dublin Parliament to pass a Declaration of Independence which was nominally accepted by England.

These legislative charges brought into existence what was known as 'Grattan's Parliament'. But this was more shadow than substance—it was Grattan, indeed, who spoke of a 'perpetual connection with the British Empire'.

Even the limited independence of Grattan's Parliament—consisting as it did of a collection of land thieves and their lackeys—remained an illusion as long as the English government controlled a majority in the Irish Parliament.

This was never challenged by Grattan. His government, the representative of property owners, was concerned not with the interests of the Irish masses, but with protecting its own spoils from their fellow-tyrants in England.

Indeed, this 'Parliament' turned on its own supporters with a hatred which matched that of the English ruling class. This was shown most clearly in the treatment meted out to the proletarian section of the Volunteers.

The Volunteers were organized in three corps, according to clear class lines. There was the Liberty Corps, recruited entirely from the working class; the Merchant Corps, recruited from the capitalist class; and the Lawyers' Corps, which speaks for itself

The organization concerned itself with three main grievances:

1. The English Parliament had prohibited Irish trade with Europe and America except through an English port, thus crippling the development of Irish manufacture.

 Representation in the Dublin Parliament was denied alike to Protestant and Catholic workers and to all save a few Protestant capitalists and the nominees of the aristocracy.

3. All Catholics suffered under religious disabilities.

The Volunteers, arms in hand, won free trade. But when they demanded popular representation in Parliament, they were deserted by their own leaders.

When a Dublin Convention was called to plan a campaign for parliamentary reform, the Volunteers' Commander-in-Chief, Lord Charlemont, repudiated the Convention and Henry Grattan denounced it in parliament as 'an armed rabble'.

When a second Convention was called, its instigators were arrested. The English government sent large forces of troops and the Volunteers, deserted by their leaders and abandoned by the capitalist class which had got what it wanted from them, was defeated without a blow. (Five hundred armed Volunteers waited for the order to march on the Dublin parliament to force it to pass a Reform Bill. The order never came.)

The Merchant section disarmed itself willingly. The Lawyers' Corps, in a manner typical of such a 'principled' profession, agreed to disarm following secret talks with the Dublin government.

The Liberty Corps, however, had to be disarmed forcibly. The Irish working class, inspired by the success of the revolutionary movements in America and France, was ready to fight, but the Irish capitalist class and its hangers-on feared the Irish masses more than they feared the English government.

So, the apparent gain embodied in the repeal of Poyning's Law, at a time when England had been weakened by the American War of Independence, was no real gain at all.

Its real value was assessed by one of Ireland's legendary heroes, Wolfe Tone:

'At one stroke it doubled the value of every borough-monger in the kingdom, left three-fourths of our countrymen slaves as it

found them, and the government of Ireland in the base and wicked, and contemptible hands of those who had spent their lives in degrading and plundering her...

'Who of the veteran enemies of the country lost his place or his pension? Who was called forth to station or office from the ranks of opposition? Not one.

'The power remained in the hands of our enemies, again to be exerted for our ruin, with this difference, that formerly we had our distresses, our injuries, and our insults gratis at the hands of England.

'But now we pay very dearly to receive the same with aggravation, through the hands of Irishmen—yet this we boast of and call a revolution.'6

The source of the 'patriotism' of the Irish ruling class was thus nothing more than a desire to rob the Irish people in the exclusive interests of a native-born band of oppressors.

Such 'patriots' always claimed that the Legislative Union of Great Britain and Ireland (passed in 1800) destroyed Irish trade. Repeal of the Union, they claimed, would bring prosperity. This was nonsense.

There was only one period in history when Irish manufacture was really prosperous. That was when inventions like Arkwright's water frame (1769), Hargreaves's Spinning Jenny (1770) and Crompton's mechanical mule (1779)—plus a temporary period of free trade—brought a short-lived boom to the Irish linen and cotton industries.

But with further advances in capitalist production, and particularly its growing need for coal, Irish industry was left behind. In 1830, for example, the one Scottish port of Dundee exported more linen than the whole of Ireland.

Rapidly, all Irish industries declined—the leather trade, woollen trade, the fishing industry, the milling trade etc., etc.

The truth is, that it was not the Act of Union which weakened Irish capitalism, but the weakness of the Irish capitalist class which made possible the Act of Union. It was the decline of Irish industry, which made possible the decline of the Irish Parliament, and not the other way about.

After 1782 the English government increased its dominance by deliberately extending the sale of parliamentary places, titles and honours. Needless to say, there was no shortage of patriotic

<sup>6</sup> Wolfe Tone An Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland, 1791.

Irish gentry willing to sell themselves to the English in exchange for such baubles.

Caught between the land-owning aristocracy on the one hand and the working masses on the other, the weak Irish capitalist class fundamentally threw in its lot with the aristocracy.

But this alliance was not a smooth one. For if the Irish Protestants were agreed on the need for legislative independence, they were not united on Parliamentary reform—the only way to transform the myth into reality.

So a new conflict arose, this time between the new Protestant middle class and the Protestant landed gentry. All Catholics, of course, were still excluded from participating in the political system at all. So two issues now dominated Irish political life—parliamentary reform and Catholic Emancipation.

These were linked because the Protestant middle class was prepared to recognize the Catholic middle class as allies against 'its own' Protestant aristocratic rival—at least, for a time.

The shock that was to change history throughout Europe, however—and not least in Ireland itself—occurred not in Ireland, nor in England, but in France.

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#### **CHAPTER TWO**

## 'His Majesty's most loyal subjects — the Catholics of Ireland'

In 1786, just three years before the French Revolution, the latest of the peasant secret societies, the Rightboys, had emerged as a powerful force.

In addition to terrorism against the landlord and his agents, the Rightboys put forward direct class demands.

These included raising the price of the peasant's labour, an end to the payment of tithes and a determination to pay no more than a fixed rent per acre.

Meanwhile, in Ulster, the Presbyterian tenants' movement—such as the 'Protestant Boys' (also known as the 'Peep O' Day Boys' and later to become the Orange Order) took an anti-Catholic turn.

This, however, was more a question of land and rent than of religious faith. The Protestant Societies had succeeded in holding down the price of land. And many Presbyterian families who could afford it emigrated to America. Then land-hungry Catholic peasants from the south flocked into Ulster to take over the land vacated by the emigrants.

Used to a much lower standard of living, these Catholics could be exploited by the landlord more ruthlessly than could the Protestants. Rents rose. So did the price of land.

The result was the mobilization of the 'Peep O' Day Boys' to drive out the Catholic newcomers. The Catholics, in their turn, formed their own organization, the 'Defenders', to resist the Protestants.

Under the impact of the French revolution, this organization developed into more than a defensive body, especially when the French Revolutionary Government abolished the payment of

tithes (i.e. the payment of one-tenth of the peasants' produce to

the church).

At least the French peasant had been paying tithes to a Catholic church to which he belonged. The Irish Catholic peasant was paying tithes to the Episcopalean church—the 'official' Church in Ireland! Moreover, his material living conditions were substantially worse than those of the French peasantry.

Neither was the political nature of the French Revolution lost on the new wealthy Protestant merchants and the Protestant

middle class, still denied political power in Ireland.

In 1791, the Society of United Irishmen was formed by the revolutionist Theobald Wolfe Tone, a bourgeois Protestant by origin. Deliberately setting out to be international, the Society established links with the Jacobin Club in Paris, the Revolutionary Society and the Friends of the People in England, and the Committee for Reform in Scotland.

Even after being driven underground by the British government, it negotiated on equal terms with the

Revolutionary Directory of France.

It was driven forward not only by international events, but by the development of industry in Ireland. This was drawing labour from the countryside into the town and both Catholic and

Protestant was finding himself landless and jobless.

The Protestant poor found that the landlord and the boss were more immediate dangers than the Pope of Rome and the Catholic poor discovered-in James Connolly's words-that the Catholic landlord represented the mass less than the rent-roll'.7

Tone and his followers seized this time to try to unite Irishmen of all religions around the central demand for equal representation of all people in parliament. An end to religious sectarianism among the exploited masses was the basic premise of the United Irishmen. Their Manifesto, written by Tone, and published in 1791, sought to unite these masses independently of the Irish aristocracy:

When the aristocracy come forward, the people fall backward; when the people come forward, the aristocracy. fearful of being left behind, insinuate themselves into our ranks and rise into timid leaders or treacherous auxiliaries . . . The people must serve the party, or the party must emerge in the mightiness of the people . . . on the 14th of July, the day which

7 James Connolly 'Labour in Ireland' op cit, p.82

shall ever commemorate the French Revolution, let this society pour out their first libation to European liberty.'

The desire to overcome religious differences in the working class was shared by the proletarian section of the Volunteers. The working class Liberty Corps issued a statement saying:

We cannot but lament that [religious] distinctions, injurious to both have too long disgraced the name of Irishmen; and we most fervently wish that our animosities were entombed with the bones of our ancestors; and that we and our Roman Catholic brethren would unite like citizens and claim the Rights of Man."

The 'Rights of Man' were revolutionary demands at that time, and the title 'Citizen', as in the French Revolution, was a

revolutionary name.

HIS MAJESTY'S MOST LOYAL SUBJECTS

This statement-issued in the same year as Wolfe Tone's manifesto-is further proof that religious distinctions in Ireland have been foisted on the working class from without precisely to kill the development of revolutionary class-consciousness.

It is, after all, undeniable that the Catholic masses in Ireland looked for deliverance, not to the Pope in Rome, but to the revolutionaries of France who had undermined the Catholic Church, executed many of its priests, and enthroned Reason in Notre Dame!

Meanwhile, the Irish peasantry had been active on its own account. The Defenders frequently clashed with the army, on many occasions in order to release prisoners bound for transportation. Hundreds of Defenders were executed in the most barbaric fashion.

(The sentence of death read in part: 'Being still alive, should be cut down, but being alive their bowels be taken out and burned before their faces.')

Nevertheless, for the first time, the revolt of the oppressed masses of Ireland was taking place on a national scale. The Defenders lacked a developed political programme, but they took up every grievance and acted on it, raiding the homes of the gentry, including Catholic gentry, to get arms.

And, while conservative 'Patriot' reformers like Henry Grattan were horrified by the 'excesses' of the French Revolution, the Irish struggle was assisted by a further development from it-the outbreak of war between England and France in 1793.

The English Prime Minister, Pitt, was anxious to prevent Irishmen joining the French cause and accordingly pushed through the Catholic Relief Act, which gave Catholics the vote on the same terms as Protestants (that is, gave it to 40 shillings on the same terms as Frotes Irishmen, however, demanded freeholders). The United Irishmen, however, demanded universal male adult suffrage with annual parliaments.

Looked at in isolation, the United Irishmen might have seemed little different from many middle-class radical groups in England. But in the setting of Ireland, particularly of the violence of the Irish peasants—plus, in 1793, the danger of a French invasion via Ireland—they represented a real threat to the English ruling class.

The latter soon swung from concession to repression, including the suppression of all the remaining Volunteer bands in Ireland and, later, of the Society of United Irishmen itself.

The latter immediately went underground, declared for republicanism and total separation from England, and sought co-operation with the Defenders.

By this time England was involved in what amounted to almost open war with the Defenders, who could muster hundreds and sometimes thousands of armed men in up to 13

counties. In some areas the Defenders' oath included a call to 'dethrone all kings and plant the tree of liberty on our Irish land-whilst the French Defenders will protect our cause'.

The real threat to the ruling class was that the Defenders were now linking pro-French republicanism with action on the immediate grievances of the Irish poor. And it was for this reason that throughout this period, they were consistently denounced by the Catholic Church and some of the most savage sentences against them were passed by Catholic magistrates.

Above all, the English government feared an alliance of the radical middle class in the ranks of the United Irishmen with the violent broad-based Defenders.

In 1796, the leaders of the Defenders agreed to link up with the United Irishmen and take their oath. The English government responded with the Insurrection Act of March the same year, which unleashed a further orgy of repression in Ireland.

Another factor in driving the government to panic was that one month earlier Wolfe Tone had travelled to France and spoken with leading members of the French Directory. They agreed to send a force of 10,000-15,000 men to Ireland to link up with the Irish rebellion.

Similar discussions had taken place between the French and wo wealthy Irish Republicans, Arthur O'Connor, a member of the Irish House of Commons, and Lord Edward Fitzgerald.

In December, 1796, a French fleet, so ravaged by storms that only half of it survived, arrived off the Irish coast. But the weather worsened and the French troops were unable to land. One French force did land, however, and, together with the United Irishmen, defeated a numerically superior English force at Castlebar.

In 1797 another invasion fleet was prevented from sailing by the weather, but a French invasion was still expected in 1798.

By this time, however, the United Irishmen's organization in Ulster was in a bad way. It had been undermined by the deliberate stirring up of Protestants and Catholics against each other and it was further seriously damaged by the worst display of English savagery in Ireland since the days of Cromwell.

Martial law was declared in most of Ulster. Peasants were murdered and tortured indiscriminately. In Leinster men were sentenced to between 500 and 999 lashes. Half-hanging - stopping when the victim became unconscious, then starting again when he revived - was common. So was the 'pitch-cap' - a cap full of molten pitch which was jammed on the victim's head and set alight.

Troops were granted 'free quarter' in Irish villages and towns. In theory, this meant the inhabitants had to provide free accommodation and food for the soldiers. In practice it meant the occupying troops could do exactly what they liked with the local population.

In this situation many of the leaders of the United Irishmen (though not of the Defenders) turned informer to save their own skins and large-scale arrests followed. The United Irishmen's military leader, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, was betrayed in this way and died of wounds received while being arrested.

Despite this, the planned rising was launched in May 1798, and in Wicklow and Wexford it took 30,000 British troops to put it down.

Suppressed it was, however, and burnings, floggings and executions followed on a mass scale:

A favourite method of dealing with young Irishmen was to march them in chains to the various harbours and forcibly enrol them as sailors on British men-of-war.

The notorious brutality in the British navy in the last years of the 18th century and the early 19th - when men often received hundreds of lashes for the most trivial offences - was in no small part due to the fear felt by the officers of the openly-expressed hatred of such forced recruits. In fact, in government records of the time 'administering the secret oath of the United Irishmen' is the most common offence, frequently punished by transportation the most common offence, frequently punished by transportation

The United Irishmen were finished when Wolfe Tone, travelling in a later French fleet with the rank of general in the French army, was captured by the British and taken in irons to Dublin. Sentenced to death by hanging, he avoided execution by committing suicide in his cell.

It is worth mentioning that the treatment of some of the middle-class leaders of the United Irishmen was incomparably more lenient than that meted out to the peasantry. In several cases, in return for divulging the details of their organization, they were allowed to go into voluntary exile.

And some of them did quite well. Thomas Emmet, for example, became State Attorney of New York.

It is also significant that the Catholic hierarchy and the Catholic sections of the ruling class were the ones who demanded the harshest treatment for the rebels. After the risings had been defeated, a loyal address, signed by the entire Roman Catholic College of Maynooth, by four Catholic peers and some 2,000 Catholic gentry, read:

'We, the undersigned, His Majesty's most loyal subjects, the Roman Catholics of Ireland, think it necessary at this moment publicly to declare our firm attachment to His Majesty's person, and to the constitution under which we have the happiness to live

Lieutenant of Ireland) our regret at seeing, amid the general delusion, many, particularly of the lower orders, of our own religious persuasion, engaged in unlawful associations and practices.

The struggle of the Irish 'lower orders', however, was far from over. The defeat of 1798 was followed, in 1802, by what was known as the 'Emmet Conspiracy'.

Robert Emmet recruited his forces mainly from the industrial working class of the big towns and campaigned for a democratic republic. Huge forces of troops were required to suppress this movement in Limerick, Waterford and Tipperary.

The revolutionary nature of this struggle was expressed in Emmet's proclamation for the 'Provisional Government of Ireland'. Its first article decreed the wholesale confiscation of church property and the second and third articles forbad and declared void the transfer of all landed property, bonds,

debentures, and public securities until the national (that is, the revolutionary) government was established and the 'national will' upon them declared.

By the time of the struggle against Wolfe Tone and Robert Emmet, the British government had perfected another instrument of class rule—paid informers and spies.

These penetrated into the highest levels of the Irish movement. For example, Leonard McNally, the lawyer who defended the leaders of the United Irishmen at their trials, was discovered later to have been a paid informer, systematically denouncing to the government the very men he was defending in the courts!

Then there was Father Thomas Barry, Roman Catholic priest, who instructed men in the confessional to reveal their plans to the military—and received a government pension of £100 a year for the rest of his life as blood money.

Emmet's movement was suppressed in 1803 and its leader like Wolfe Tone, a Protestant—was hanged by the British.

By this time the treacherous Irish Parliament had been bribed into voting for the Act of Union.

The story spread by Craig, Paisley and the rest of the contemporary Ulster Unionists that Irish Protestants have always loved the union with England is a lie.

When the idea of a legislative union was put forward at the end of the 18th century, the strongest opponents were the **Protestant** gentry, who were concerned with their own survival as a privileged group.

This feeling was strongest amongst the Ulster Orangemen, though the Protestant lawyers and bankers of Dublin also felt they had a lot to lose.

Neither was the Catholic attitude so simple. As explained earlier, laws preventing Catholics from owning land had gone before the end of the 18th century and in 1793 they had been given the vote on the same terms as Protestants.

But they could not hold state or municipal office, apart from being magistrates. In the latter capacity, they persecuted the Catholic poor with just as much gusto as did their Protestant counterparts.

Nor could they enter parliament. They could legally be elected to parliament, but in practice they were never able to take their seats because the members' oath denounced the Virgin Mary as an idel

Virgin Mary as an idol.

The claim for such rights as these, however, was obviously of

concern only to wealthy Catholics. To the Catholic poor, 'emancipation' was of little immediate value.

In any case, many rich Catholics felt they were more likely to gain emancipation through the union with England rather than through separatism, which could leave their Protestant rivals with all the advantages.

Thus, the Act of Union of 1801 was supported by many wealthy Catholics and opposed by many wealthy Protestants.

There was no difficulty in getting Union accepted by the Irish parliament. The British government simply handed out 16 English peerages, 28 Irish peerages; upgraded 20 existing Irish peerages and nominated a further 28 'representatives' of Ireland for places in the British House of Lords.

Just to make sure, the British Mother of Parliaments and Cradle of Democracy, persuaded a number of Irish MPs who were too honourable to vote for union, to resign their seats before the vote. Of course, they had to receive suitable compensation for such a gesture.

The vacant seats were then filled by union supporters, most of them English. Their support was certain, since they also were rewarded for their virtue. Kee states that over one-fifth of the Irish parliamentary seats changed hands in this way, causing one highly principled and now wealthier politician to exclaim: 'We have little alternative left but to reconcile our minds to the advantages of union.'8

In the decades after the Act of Union, the conditions of the Irish peasantry were the worst in Europe. Every land-holding was sub-let many times over, with the middle-man taking his cut each time. And the common knowledge that the Irish poor lived off potatoes is not the whole truth—in fact they lived off what was called 'lumper potato', because their land was too barren to grow normal ones.

One 19th century parliamentary report described entire families living in one-roomed hovels, often together with livestock, lying on bare floors through which ran open sewage, without bedding except straw, and going to church on alternate Sundays because there were not enough clothes to go round.

The poorest of all lived as serfs on quarter of an acre plots, giving their labour all the year round for no wages and in return receiving the right to grow enough lumper potatoes to live on. They were frequently evicted and allowed to take nothing with them except the rotten straw from their hut roofs.

On top of this, the first years of the 19th century were years of unbridled reaction throughout Europe. The fear engendered in the hearts of the ruling classes by the French Revolution caused them to hunt down even the mildest of reformers and to drive underground every form of popular organization.

In England these years saw the anti-trade union Combination Acts (1799), the 1815 Corn Law (which forced up the price of bread), the suspension of habeas corpus in 1816 (giving the government power of imprisonment without trial), the Game Law of 1816 (which prescribed seven years transportation for possession of a net which might be used to catch rabbits), the Peterloo massacre of 1819 (when workers attending a political meeting in Manchester were hewn down by the military) and the Six Acts of 1819 (which sought to prevent any expression of ideas opposed to the government—for example, no political meetings could be held without permission of the magistrates).

Added to these measures was the economic depression which followed the end of the Napoleonic Wars. This was particularly severe in Ireland. During the war agricultural prices had risen and rents had risen along with them. After the war, demand fell and agricultural prices went down—but rents stayed high.

Unemployment grew in the cities, with the decline of the war industries, and large numbers of men came out of the armed forces to swell the ranks of the unemployed in the town and the landless in the countryside.

In this setting, underground trade unions and secret societies began to grow. The Irish masses also sought a way out of their difficulties through political channels.

It was here, above all, that the treachery of the middle-class

In 1828 the Irish Catholic leader Daniel O'Connell was elected to the Westminster parliament for the Clare constituency. This was a significant victory. At that time voting in Ireland was 'open'. Every voter had to declare publicly before the clerks, and before anyone else who chose to attend, how he was casting his vote. To vote against the landlord's nominee frequently meant eviction. Despite this, and despite the fact that the poorest tenants were disfranchised by a property qualification of 40 shillings per year, O'Connell was elected.

This forced the British government to pass the Act of Catholic emancipation the following year. Catholics could henceforth sit in the British House of Commons, be appointed

<sup>8</sup> Robert Kee'The Green Flag'. 9 Devon Commission Report 1845

judges, and obtain high posts in the civil and military services.

The government also raised the Irish voting qualification from a 40 shilling freehold to a £10 freehold, thus disfranchising many Catholics. But O'Connell was not unduly bothered about that, since the Act was a means of strengthening the Catholic middle class against the Catholic poor.

Indeed, O'Connell lived in fear of the Irish poor. He rejected both republicanism and revolutionary methods of struggle.

On one occasion he presented George IV with a loyal address which claimed to unite '6 millions of a grateful people in a band of brotherly love to one another' and to express their 'affectionate attachment to your Majesty's person and throne'.

The first two principles of O'Connell's Repeal Association. which he formed in 1840, were:

Most dutiful and ever inviolate loyalty to our most gracious and ever-beloved Sovereign Queen Victoria and her heirs and successors for ever.

'The total disclaimer of and the total absence from all physical force, violence or breach of the law.'

Yet when Catholic Emancipation opened up the professions for the middle-class Catholics, the landlords vented their fury on the poor by means of mass evictions. And the peasants fought back, in their traditional manner, through their secret societies. They not only raided the gentry's home for arms, killed landlords and their agents, but assembled at night and ploughed up the grasslands so they could not be used for grazing (one of the main reasons for evictions was to turn arable land into more profitable grazing fields).

But these desperate poor were abandoned by O'Connell and his middle-class followers, who had used them to force concessions for themselves from the British government.

O'Connell, indeed, frequently warned the British government that he and his class were the alternative to the threat of revolution from the starving masses. Yet he never mobilized these masses.

And he could most certainly have done so. On one tour through Ireland in 1843, O'Connell held what Engels called a triumphal tour lasting a fortnight'. 150,000 turned out to hear him at Cork, 200,000 in Nenagh, 400,000 at Kilkenny. 10

What O'Connell did with his support is explained by Engels:

'If O'Connell really wanted to further the welfare of the people, if he were really concerned with the elimination of

10 Frederick Engels 'Letters from London' June 1843

misery — and not with his miserable, petty middle-class objectives which are at the bottom of all the shouting and agitation for Repeal — I should like to know what demand advanced by O'Connell representing the power that is at present at his disposal could be refused by Sir Robert Peel (i.e. the British government).

But what does O'Connell do with all his power and with his millions of militant and desperate Irishmen? . . . He uses the impoverished, oppressed Irish people to embarrass the Tory ministers and to help his middle-class friends to get back into office . . . If O'Connell were really a man of the people, if he had sufficient courage and were not himself frightened of the people . . . the last English soldier would have left Ireland long since . . .

moment. Daniel O'Connell and his monied aristocrats would soon find themselves in the wilderness... This is the reason for O'Connell's close association with the Catholic clergy; that is why he exorts the Irish to be on their guard against the dangerous socialists, that is why he rejects the assistance offered by the Chartists, although for form's sake he speaks occasionally about democracy.'

An example of O'Connell's 'fear of the people' occurred on October 5, 1843, when the British government banned a meeting due to be held at Clontarf, near Dublin. Fearful that they could not control the masses if it came to a clash with the troops, O'Connell and his associates cancelled the meeting. Immediately, the government went further on to the offensive. O'Connell and eight other Irish leaders were arrested and charged with sedition. O'Connell was sentenced to 12 months imprisonment, though this sentence was quashed by the House of Lords after widespread protests.

After Emancipation was secured. O'Connell proceeded to organize an 'Irish Party in the British Commons to campaign for repeal of the Act of Union'. After the 1832 Reform Act gave more power to the middle class and the new capitalists in the British parliament, there were 39 'Repealers' at Westminster. (It must be remembered that the vast majority of Irish members, who numbered 105 at that time, never supported Repeal.)

But the Repealers hated their own working class. The leader of O'Connell's organization in County Clare actually posted a public notice denouncing the unemployed and landless:

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'Unless you desist, I denounce you as traitors to the cause of the liberty of Ireland . . . I leave you to the government and the fire and bayonets of the military. Your blood be upon your own souls.'

O'Connell himself was one of the strongest opponents of the workers' struggle for the Ten-Hour Bill. And he always preferred the form to the substance. For instance, he welcomed the law of 1838 which made the landlord, rather than the tenant, responsible for paying the tithes. But he said nothing about an act passed at the same time which empowered the landlord to raise the tenants' rents by exactly the same amount.

O'Connell's emphasis was always on parliamentary manoeuvres in England. One of the most notorious of his deals was the Lichfield House Contract of 1835. This took place only two years after the Irish Coercion Bill which introduced a siege of the Irish countryside to suppress the peasant movement.

O'Connell met leading representatives of the English Whigs at the London home of Lord Lichfield and agreed to vote with the Whigs at Westminster (though he would speak against them!) in return for promises of posts for Irish political leaders after the Whigs took office. In particular, he undertook to drop the campaign for Repeal of the Union.

This betrayal had the full support of the Irish Catholic clergy. O'Connellites virtually to a man, vying with each other in their denunciations of the trade unions and secret organizations of the Irish poor.

But in this they were outdone by their hero, who actually attacked the Irish trade unions in the English parliament. O'Connell told the English MPs, to their immense delight, that there was no tyranny equal to that which was exercised by the trade unionists in Dublin over their fellow labourers. One rule of the workmen prescribed a minimum rate of wages, so that the best workman received no more than the worst. Another part of their system was directed towards depriving the masters of all freedom in their power of selecting workmen.

O'Connell sat on the government benches in the 1830s when the sufferings of the working class in England as well as in Ireland were almost beyond belief, and when the agricultural revolts in England (the 'Captain Swing' revolts) matched those in Ireland ('Captain Rock' and 'Captain Moonlight').

He defended in parliament those employers who deliberately broke the law after the Factory Acts of 1833 had forbidden the employment of children under nine years old in certain industries and limited the working hours of children under 13 years of age to nine a day.

O'Connell declared that the factory reformers 'had legislated against the nature of things, and against the right of industry'. Let them not,' declared this champion of freedom, 'be guilty of this childish folly of regulating the labour of adults, and go about parading before the world their ridiculous humanity which would end by converting their manufacturers into beggers.'

The career of this 'wily old barrister', this peddler of 'stale, obsolete rubbish' and 'old fermenting junk', as Engels called him, is instructive. 12

No understanding of Irish history is possible without grasping how the aspirations of the workers and landless in Ireland have been revolutionary aspirations — and how these have been betrayed, again and again, by leaders who used the myth of a 'national', 'above-class' interest, the sole purpose of which has always been to leave the oppressed masses of Ireland under the heel of the capitalist and the landlord.



#### CHAPTER THREE

#### From Famine to Fenian

'I never thought that famine could have such tangible reality. All Western Ireland is covered with ruined cottages. Whole villages are devastated. This state of affairs is due to famine, emigration and clearances; continual oppression has aritificially turned the Irish into a thoroughly impoverished people."

Thus Frederick Engels described-some years later-the terrible Irish famine of 1845-1848 which devastated the country

and brought class antagonisms to a head.

And he continued: 'Except for Dublin, the whole of Ireland-especially the towns-reminds one of France or Northern Italy since there is a pleasing profusion of policemen, priests, lawyers, officials and country squires.

'It would be difficult to understand how all these parasites live if the distress of the peasants did not supply an answer to the problem. "Strong measures" are to be seen in every corner of the country. The government meddles with everything and there is no trace of any so-called self-government.

'Ireland may be regarded as the first English colony, here one can see that the so-calle iberty of English citizens is based upon the oppression of t' olonies."

Engels went on to say that he had 'never seen so many

policemen in any country'. He wrote:

The bleary look of the bibulous Prussian policeman is developed to its highest perfection among the Irish constables,

who carry carbines, bayonets and handcuffs . . . 'Ireland has been utterly ruined by the English wars of conquest from 1100 to 1850-for it is a fact that the campaigns

and the state of siege have lasted as long as that.' 13

<sup>13</sup> Engels letter to Marx, May 23, 1856.

A much more complacent attitude was displayed by the Catholic hierarchy, like the bishop who wrote to Daniel O'Connell's son to say: 'The famine is spreading with fearful rapidity, and scores of persons are dying of starvation and fever, but the tenants are bravely paying their rents.'

And Archbishop Cullen considered the famine to be a dispensation of Providence, to drive the Irish abroad to spread

the Catholic faith. \*

Beginning in 1845 and reaching its peak in 1848 when the entire potato crop failed, this greatest of many Irish famines is usually presented as some kind of 'natural' disaster. It was nothing of the sort.

The 'lumper' potato was the staple food of the Irish peasant, but it was by no means all he produced. He also grew grain crops and kept cattle. But these either went straight to the

landlord or had to be sold to pay the rent.

The value of the normal potato crop on which the peasantry lived was around £20m. At the height of the 1848 famine, the value of agricultural produce in Ireland was some £45m.

In other words, in that one 'famine' year there was enough

food produced in Ireland to feed twice the population.

In 1847 21,770 people died of hunger and 250,000 of the typhoid fever that always followed in the wake of famine. In 1848 the figures were 300,000 and 600,000 respectively. That same year 2 million quarters of wheat and barley were exported from Ireland.

In 1846 O'Connell told the English House of Commons that between October 10, 1845, and January 5, 1846, over 30,000 oxen, bulls and cows, over 30,000 sheep and lambs and over 100,000 pigs were sent from Ireland to England.

Thus something like one and a quarter million people were sacrificed in three years of Irish history because the merchants, and farmers were just as entitled to their sacred profits as the landlords to their sacred rents.

Karl Marx used the experience of this famine and its aftermath, not only to expose the brutalities of capitalism, but

to refute the Malthusian theory, still prevalent today, that overpopulation was the cause of poverty. 14

In 1841 the population of Ireland had been 8,222,664. By 1866 it was below 51/2 million.

As Marx pointed out, the famine killed 'poor devils only' and forced many more to emigrate. These emigrés sent money back each year, which not only provided travelling expenses for those left behind, but made emigration 'one of the most lucrative of [Ireland's] export trade'.

Yet Irish wages remained just as low, the oppression of the labourers increased and misery forced the country towards a new crisis. Moreover small and medium farmers were rapidly crushed by the competition of agriculture managed by capital (which involved machinery and the conversion of arable into pasture land) and they were forced to join the ranks of wage-labourers.

Marx also quotes the 1870 report of the Poor Law Inspectors on the wages of agricultural labourers in the Dublin area. Over 20 years (that is, since just after the famine and its depopulation) wages had risen 50-60 per cent to an average of 6s-9s per week. But the price of basic essentials had doubled in the same period.

The same report described agricultural labourers' huts as 'a disgrace to the Christianity and the civilization of this country'. Even these were frequently swept away by the landlords who wanted to clear the land.

Together with the fact that there was no employment for such labourers between the end of the potato crop in October and the following spring, these clearances drove them into the stinking hovels of the towns where they joined the urban unemployed.

Such conditions, the Poor Law Report continued, 'has made this class particularly susceptible to low fever and pulmonary pneumonia'.

Yet the Irish land magnates, who wanted the land cleared for animal grazing, demanded more emigration both during and after the famine. Lord Dufferin, for example, called for a further one-third of a million of Irish poor to be driven out of the country.

The reason, as Marx pointed out, was that 'as the Irish population diminishes, the Irish rent-rolls swell'. Ireland's population, he wrote, 'must go yet further that thus she may fulfill her true destiny, that of an English sheep walk and cattle pasture'.

<sup>\*</sup> Not all of them succeeded in spreading it. There are memorials in Montreal to 6,000 Irish immigrants who died of fever and on Grosse Isle, where the immigrants landed, the memorial records the burial of 5,294 persons who 'flying from pestilence and famine in Ireland in the year 1847 found in America but a grave'. Cecil King On Ireland, p. 70.

<sup>14</sup> Karl Marx 'Capital' Volume I, Chapter XXV.

It is almost impossible to describe the sufferings of the Irish poor during the great famine itself. Robert Kee recounts the case of a man accused of sheep-stealing whose wife had been so hungry that she had been eating the thigh of her own daughter who had died from famine fever. The man was hanged.15

In some country towns, the dead lay in the streets for six or eight days without burial. People living on the coast tried to

keep alive by eating seaweed.

Instead of providing food for the starving, the landlords -English and Irish alike, Catholic and Protestant alike -- evicted murdered and hung. They seized the opportunity to rid their land of unwanted tenants, whether they paid their rents or not In one set of evictions, in County Mayo, 15,000 people were cleared out. In many cases landlords burned down peasants' huts and then hired thugs to beat them out of the ditches in which these desperate people sought to live.

In this situation the contemptible little lawyer O'Connell achieved little. The most he could do was plead for Poor Relief. The British Parliament, of course, reacted with its usual warm-hearted concern. Prime Minister Lord Russell declared that aid should be limited because it was necessary for 'the poor to retain their industrious habits', 16

The British government could, of course, be generous to causes it considered worthy. A starving peasant family was one thing, but the Catholic Church was another. In 1845 the British government raised its grant to the Catholic seminary at Maynooth from £6,000 to £26,000.17 chicker wind as hou

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operated as 'the Soup-Kitchen Act'.

One clause of this Act -- the Gregory Clause -- actually assisted evicting landlords by refusing assistance to persons owning more than one quarter of an acre of land. The poor were given a choice of handing over their land or starving.

Shortly before this O'Connell had gained the support of a group of middle-class young men, half of them Protestant, who became known as the Young Ireland movement. Its early leaders included Thomas Davis, John Blake Dillon and Charles Gavan Duffy.

Their paper, 'The Nation', devoted much space to what could loosely be described as poetry, the following being a fair example:

We want no swords, no savage swords,

Our fetters vile to shatter.

FROM FAMINE TO FENIAN

With conquering mind alone we fight --

'Tis all we need for freedom!'

But even a leadership such as this could command a huge following in Ireland. They held huge rallies all over the country, and these alarmed the British government, despite the moderation of the group.

O'Connell's arrest has already been mentioned (in fact he was held, not in jail, but in the governor's house in Dublin where he was allowed to hold sumptuous banquets) and the British offensive did drive some of the Young Irelanders in a more militant direction. This was intensified after O'Connell virtually dropped the Repeal campaign following the Lichfield House Contract.

And during the famine, calls for violent struggle were heard once again, leading to a split in the Repeal Association.

In 1847 the Young Irelanders founded a new organization known as the Irish Confederation -- but they still had no policy to meet the needs of the Irish poor. Instead, they dealt in the old rhetoric about 'freedom', the unity of 'all Irishmen' and the importance of developing Irish manufacture (most of the Confederation's leaders came from the manufacturing class).

But once again events in Europe were to drive forward the Irish movement. Added to O'Connell's treachery and that of his chief lieutenants, the Irish Catholic priesthood, there came not only the enormous sufferings of the famine but the revolutionary movement that swept Europe, particularly Catholic France and Italy, in 1848.

According to one account 15,000 people marched through Dublin in a demonstration to celebrate the overthrow of Louis Philippe in France.18

Revolutionary leaders began to emerge. Outstanding among these was John Mitchel, who advocated a refusal to pay rents. retention of crops to feed the starving, and breaking of bridges. roads and railways to stop the export of food.

Mitchel declared: 'He [Daniel O'Connell] led the Irish people all wrong for 40 years.

<sup>15</sup> Robert Kee. 'The Green Flag'.

<sup>16</sup> James Carty: Ireland: 1785-1850'.

<sup>17</sup> Cecil King op cit p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> K. B. Nowlan 'The Politics of Repeal'.

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<sup>17</sup> Cecil King op cit p. 59.

<sup>18</sup> K. B. Nowlan 'The Politics of Repeal'.

'By mere agitation, eternally half-sheathing a visionary sword, which friends and foes alike knew to be a mere phantom, he had, as he believed, coerced the British government to pass a Relief Act, and admit Catholics to Parliament and some offices.

'Then came the famine . . . to this condition had "moral and

peaceful agitation" brought Ireland.

'Ireland craved for food in vain. She was to be taught that the nation which parts with her nationhood or suffers it to be wrested or swindled from her, thereby loses all . . .

'And so clubs were formed expressly for arming; rifles were eagerly purchased; and the blacksmiths' forges poured forth pikeheads. Sedition, treason were eagerly preached and enforced; and the "United Irishman" (Mitchel's paper) was established specifically as an organ of revolution.'19

Another revolutionary was James Fintan Lalor, who denounced Daniel O'Connell as a 'foresworn traitor at the

helm', and declared:

'I will never act with nor aid any organization limiting itself strictly to the sole object of dissolving the present connection with Britain and rigidly excluding every other . . . A mightier question is the land.'20

Labour on the land constituted a right to the land, said Lalor,

and he called on the peasant to withold his rent.

But these were exceptional men. (And even among them, staggering political decisions could be made. Thus, Mitchel after being deported from Ireland to the colonies in 1848, fled to the United States in 1853. There he supported the Southern slave-owners in the American Civil War!)

Most of the Young Ireland leaders — such as Smith O'Brien — regarded the organization as a comprehensive national movement which would include gentry, landowners and

capitalists.

For instance, they joined with O'Connell and a number of Irish peers and landowners in an organization called the Reproduction Works Committee to channel relief into Ireland during periods which they described as 'imperial calamities'.

Yet these men were assuming the leadership of the Irish nationalist movement at a time when people were arming

themselves ready to fight. (When Daniel O'Connell died in 1847 – leaving instructions that his heart was to be conveyed to Rome! – his Repeal Association staggered on for only a short time under the leadership of his son, John.)

At the Irish Confederation conference in 1848 the right wing defeated Mitchel and specifically declared that there was harmony of interest between landlord and tenant and that henceforth all their activities would be restricted to parliamentary campaigns.

It was then that Mitchel broke from the Confederation and

launched his 'United Irishman'.

Meanwhile, the Pope of Rome had been doing his bit for the British cause. In 1847 Pius IX sent a private letter to the four Irish archbishops counselling them to work for the preservation of peace and order in the country—and obligingly provided the British government with a copy.

Then, following negotiations with a British emissary, Lord Minto, Pius issued an edict to all Catholic clergy in Ireland to restrict their activities to spiritual affairs and not to involve themselves in secular matters (such as the starvation and

murder of their flocks). 21

With the blessing of the Pope, the British government moved into action. A rising led by Mitchel in 1848 was put down, and was followed by the Crimes and Outrages Act. Warning placards appeared all over Ireland and 8,000 troops were sent to Dublin.

Mitchel was arrested, sentenced to 14 years transportation and sent to Tasmania. With his departure, the remaining Young Ireland leaders disarmed the workers and peasants, even when they came arms in hand to save those same leaders from arrest and exile!

However, as was often the case with such 'moderate' leaders, exile was frequently followed by a highly successful new career.

Charles Gavan Duffy became Prime Minister of Victoria, Australia. Another deportee became a prominent New York judge. Yet another ended up as Postmaster General of Canada.

But the Young Ireland Movement was finished. And, as always, defeat was followed by further repression. The Encumbered Estates Act of 1849 created a new category of speculators from the cities — the so-called 'Gombeen Men'—who bought up land to sell or rent for a profit.

This led to the formation of the Tenants' Right movement and

<sup>19</sup> Mitchel's 'Jail Journal' quoted in Carty 'Ireland, from Grattan's Parliament to the Great Famine'.

<sup>20</sup> Gavan Duffy 'Four Years of Irish History' pp167-168.

<sup>21</sup> See the Russell Papers PRO 1847 and 1848.

the 1852 election saw the return of 50 Tenant Right MPs. These included the Movement's leaders, John Sadleir — a banker—and William Nicholas Keogh — yet another lawyer. Both Sadleir and Keogh pledged during the election that they would not accept government posts — and then immediately did so, becoming Solicitor General and Lord of the Treasury.

The Tenants' Right leaders had been forced to do what O'Connell had always refused to do — to recognise land as the central question. But they did this, as Marx pointed out 22 in order to get elected and conclude 'a new Lichfield House Contract'. These men were, in fact, working hand in glove not only with the British government, but with the Catholic church. The workings of this deal, in Marx's words, were that 'when Palmerston hands over Ireland to the priests, the priests will elect MPs who will hand over England to Lord Palmerston.'

Behind this lay important social and economic changes in Ireland. The Irish agricultural system was being replaced by the English system. That is, small tenancies were being replaced by large ones and the capitalist was taking the place of the old landowner.

This, plus the open treachery of the Tenants Right leaders, paved the way for the next, more revolutionary, era in Irish history.

'The Irishman, banished by sheep and ox, reappears on the other side of the ocean as a Fenian.'23

In 1858, a new secret organization appeared in the South West of Ireland and its oath undertook 'to renounce all allegiance to the Queen of England, to take arms and fight at a moment's warning, and to make Ireland an independent, democratic republic.' This was the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, otherwise known as the Fenian Movement, after the fabled Gaelic hero Fionn MacCumhail.

Led by James Stephens, returned from exile in Paris where he had gone following the 1848 rising, John O'Mahoney and O'Donovan Rossa, the new organization turned to the labourers, peasants and small tradesmen, arguing that it was impossible to win the Irish upper classes to its cause.

Right at its inception it was linked with one of the most determined working-class struggles in Irish history -- the fight of the bakery workers for a 12-hour day and the abolition of night work.

committee believe that work beyond 12 hours has a tendency to undermine the health of the working man, and so leads to premature old age and death, to the great injury of families of working men thus deprived of the care and support of the head of the family when most required.')

It was the great characteristic of Fenianism that it took root in the masses as no previous Irish movement had done. It became powerful among the workers in the larger cities such as Dublin,

(Karl Marx, in 'Capital', quotes from the report of the

parliamentary commission which investigated this dispute: 'The

Cork, Wexford and Waterford.

Its growth there was part of an awakening interest in revolutionary politics. In fact, branches of the International Working Men's Association also flourished in Dublin and Cork until after the defeat of the Paris Commune.

And Marx was to describe Fenianism as 'characterized by a socialist tendency (in a negative sense, directed against the appropriation of the soil) and ... being a lower orders movement.' 24

In 1869 he was to write: 'As to the present Irish movement, there are three important factors: (1) opposition to lawyers and trading politicians and blarney. (2) opposition to the dictates of the priests, who (the superior ones) are traitors, as in O'Connell's time as well as in 1798-1800. (3) the coming out of the agricultural labouring class against the farming class at the last meetings (similar happenings in 1795-1800).' 25

Fenianism was also an international movement. Several of its leaders had worked with revolutionary groups in France and had fought against the coup d'etat of Louis Napoleon.

And the first commander of its military section, the Irish Republican Army, was General Cluseret, later to be Commander-in-Chief of the Federals in the Paris Commune. 26

From the beginning the movement was closely bound up with the Irish population in America. Indeed, it was following a trip to America by the Gaelic scholar John O'Mahoney to seek out support for the Irish struggle, that Stephens was persuaded to return from Paris.

The largest area of Fenian recruitment outside Ireland was the industrial areas of America (though recruits were also made

<sup>22.</sup> Karl Marx 'Ireland's Revenge', March 16, 1855 23 Karl Marx 'Capital'. Volume I Chapter XXV.

<sup>24</sup> Marx to Engels, December 10, 1869.

<sup>25</sup> Marx to Engels, November 30, 1867. 26 John O'Leary'Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism'.

in England and among Irish soldiers in the British army).

Engels pointed out that the hundreds and thousands of Irish-born officers and soldiers who fought in the American Civil War did so with the ulterior motive of building up an army for the liberation of Ireland. Had the conflicts between America and Britain, which the Fenians made the most of, come to open warfare, Engels suggests that Ireland would, within a few months, have become a part of the United States, or at least a republic under its protection.

Indeed, the 'Alabama Settlement', Engels suggests, was the price Britain paid to buy off American intervention in Ireland. (During the American Civil War of 1861-1865, the British government built and equipped cruisers for the Southern States. One of them, the 'Alabama', inflicted considerable damage on the north. After the war Britain paid \$15,500,000 dollars in

compensation to the United States.)

After the American Civil War, thousands of experienced. battle-hardened Irish-American veterans sailed for home where Stephens proclaimed that 1865 was to be the Fenian 'Year of Action'.

The British authorities were severely alarmed. They already knew, through their spies, of Fenian preparations and organization. (Fenian military organization consisted of 'circles' of not more than 800 men with 'centres' - leading officers - sub-centres, sergeants and nine privates for every sergeant. In theory, at least, each Fenian would know only those on the level immediately above him.)

The British alarm had been intensified by the enormous demonstration that greeted the burial of the old Irish nationalist Terence Bellew MacManus. Although the Apostolic Delegate to Ireland, Cardinal Cullen, forbade a lying-in-state or public ceremony in any Dublin church, an estimated 50,000 people marched through the capital when Bellew was buried at Glasnevin on November 10, 1861.

Accordingly, when Stephens announced his Year of Action, under the slogan 'soon or never', the British moved swiftly. In September 1865, the Fenian newspaper 'The Irish People' was suppressed and many Fenian leaders, including Stephens, were given long jail sentences. However, Stephens' dramatic escape from Richmond Prison had a powerful effect on friend and foe alike, and all agreed that this was the best time for the Fenians

(Stephens' escape was effected with the aid of two of the prison warders, named Byrne and Breslin, who were both sworn Fenians. They got him out of his cell in the middle of the night and he climbed a rope ladder over the prison wall.)

But the Fenians' American connection was now to reveal itself as a source of weakness as well as of strength. For one thing there was a British agent right at the centre of the American Fenian movement, 'Red Jim' MacDermot was selling every secret of the Fenian Brotherhood to the British Consul in New York.

Secondly, the American movement, on which Stephens was increasingly relying for men, arms and money, was split - a split probably intensified by MacDermot - into the Senate Party, or 'Party of Action', and the O' Mahoney faction.

The former wanted to fight the British in Canada and the latter in Ireland. It was this split that caused Stephens to postpone the rising in Ireland, demanded by many Irish Fenians in the heady aftermath of his escape from Richmond.

While the Fenians' leaders hesitated and squabbled, the British moved in. Hundreds of suspects were rounded up, arms were seized and British army regiments thought to have been infected with Fenianism were replaced.

In America, in order to forestall the Party of Action's plans to attack Canada, O'Mahoney organized an abortive expedition against the British-held island of Campo Bello in the vain hope of causing trouble between America and Britain.

Thus the funds of the O'Mahoney faction were dissipated and not used in Ireland itself.

Moreover, O'Mahoney could then hardly object to the Party of Action's plans and this in turn led to further fiascos in 1866, when 800 members of the Irish-American Brotherhood actually invaded Canada, and again in 1870.

Much has been made of the inefficiency of the Fenian leadership. This certainly existed. They were frequently arrested with incriminating documents on their persons. On one famous occasion a Fenian emissary was sent to an address which was to be marked by a piece of paper on the doorstep. It blew away, landed on the doorstep of a supporter of the government, and the emissary was arrested!

Yet the Fenians faced a real dilemma. At that time the British maintained 30,000 regular soldiers in Ireland and could ship. more over at any time. In addition there were 14,000 armed and militarily-trained police in Ireland. Thus, the Fenian leaders

<sup>27</sup> Engels' letter to Eduard Bernstein, June 26, 1882.

felt, with some justification, that success depended upon war or

the threat of war from without.

Their main hope rested with America. And this, as Engels explained, was doomed to disappointment: 'In America the parties flirt with the Irish electorate, make promises but do not keep them. They have no intention of getting involved in a war because of Ireland.

'They are even interested in having conditions in Ireland that promote a massive Irish emigration to America. And it is understandable that a land which in 20 years will be the most populated, richest and most powerful in the world has no special desire to rush headlong into adventures which could and

would hamper its enormous internal development. 28

Despite its shortcomings, the Fenian Movement was one of the most heroic ever to emerge in Ireland. In February, 1867. they planned a mass raid on Chester Castle to seize its store of rifles. But the organizer of the raid, Captain John McCafferty, had confided in the arch spy and informer John Joseph Corydon. So, as 2,000 Fenians converged on Chester, their leader was stranded in a railway siding while troop trains rushed into the city to prevent the attack.

In Ireland, the anguished Fenians decided they could wait no longer and on the night of March 5, 1867, two years after Stephens' 'Year of Action', they rose in rebellion. With the worst snow storm for 50 years, and betrayed by the informers Corydon and Gordon Massey (alias Patrick Condon), the rising collapsed in a single night, with hardly a serious blow being struck.

Subsequently two Fenian leaders named Captain T. J. Kelly and Captain Deasy were arrested in Manchester.

A week after their arrest, as they were being taken to jail in a prison van, it was stopped by 30 Fenians. A shot was fired to break the lock and a police sergeant named Brett was killed. Since Brett was inside the van, and he was killed by the bullet fired at the lock, his death was clearly unintentional.

Nevertheless, Irishmen throughout the city were rounded up and five of them - Maguire, Condon, Allen, Larkin and O'Brien were tried for murder and sentenced to death.

Maguire had nothing at all to do with Fenianism and his innocence was so obvious that he had to be given a free pardon. The others proudly proclaimed their Fenian beliefs. Condon, an American citizen, was reprieved. Allan, Larkin and O'Brien 28 Engels to Bernstein op cit.

were hanged, despite the fact that it was clearly established that the fatal shot had been fired by a man named Rice who had escaped.

The treatment of the 'Manchester Martyrs' reflected the belief of British imperialism, continued to this day, that the British can do as they like in Ireland, but the Irish must not fight back in England.

As Marx wrote on the Manchester trial: 'The English have a divine right to fight the Irish on their native soil, but every Irish fighting against the British government in England (is) to be treated as an outlaw.'29

Demands for an amnesty for the Manchester Martyrs swept England and Ireland. 30,000 people turned up at an amnesty meeting in Limerick, 200,000 at a rally in Dublin and similar meetings were held throughout the North. The International Working Men's Association General Council called for an amnesty.

But the British government refused all appeals, and the cry of the Martyrs from the dock - 'God Save Ireland' - became the battle cry of generations of Irish nationalists.

In December, 1867, Fenians tried to rescue a number of Irish prisoners from Clerkenwell jail. A barrel of gunpowder was placed against the outer wall of the prison and the resulting explosion shattered the surrounding district killing seven innocent Londoners and wounding over a hundred.

Marx condemned this incident. He wrote to Engels: 'This last escapade of the Fenians is very stupid . . . it is not to be expected that the mass of Londoners who had shown much sympathy with Ireland . . . will allow themselves to be blown up for the greater honour and glory of the emissaries of the Fenians. 30

After this, Fenianism was driven underground, but continued as a secret organization engaged in terrorist activities.

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<sup>29</sup> Karl Marx 'Notes for an undelivered speech on Ireland' 1867. Marx to Engels December 14, 1867.



# 'Give us but ten thousand men with rifles up to date!' (Fenian Song)

The Catholic Church in Ireland, England and America waged a persistent war against the Fenian Brotherhood. Indeed no one cursed the Fenians more consistently than Cardinal Cullen.

The London 'Times' of December 3, 1867, commented: 'It is gratifying to record the consistent firmness with which our Catholic clergymen at least have denounced all sympathy with Fenianism.'

John Devoy, a member of the Fenians' 'military council', wrote that the movement was 'denounced from almost every altar in Ireland', while John O'Leary, editor of the 'Irish People' said that clerical 'felon-setting' (ie, the clergy informing on suspected Fenians) was very common.

A certain Father Cooke declared that it was a mortal sin to read the 'Irish People', and Cardinal Vaughan forbade the religious commemoration of the Manchester Martyrs.

Not to be outdone, the Catholic Bishop of Chicago stated that it was 'a violation of the laws of the Catholic Church to entertain the idea of freeing Ireland by force of arms'. And when the Fenian leader Charles J. Kickham, a Catholic, died in Mullinahone in 1882, the local Catholic church was closed and no priests would attend the burial.

The Fenians were forced to resist this onslaught and waged something of a battle against clerical intervention. O'Leary wrote that the movement was engaged in 'a steady war against priests in politics'.

Kickham, though himself a practising Catholic, insisted: 'If the people were submissive to the clergy in politics there would be no Fenian Brotherhood. Ireland would be allowed to perish without a hand being raised to help her.'

The Fenian Movement was always officially non-sectarian, though it never attracted much support among Ulster Protestants. O'Leary wrote in the 'Irish People' that nine-tenths of the leading Irish patriots in the previous hundred years had been Protestants, even if only nominally. The claim that Catholicism equalled nationalism was, he said, 'too patently false to take root anywhere save in the clerical mind or the clerically minded . . . we look upon Protestants' fear of Catholics and Catholics' fear of Protestantism as rank nonsense'.

The 'Irish People' claimed that it was 'neither Catholic nor Protestant, but simply Irish. Catholics and Protestants serve Ireland in its columns as in the ranks of the National Party'.

And Engels wrote that, at least between 1865-1867, many Fenian flags were green and orange 'to show the Orangemen of the North that they would not be destroyed, but accepted as brothers',31

Despite this, however, there is evidence that many of the leaders as well as the ranks of the Fenians, remained loyal to Catholicism.32

John Devoy, for example, wrote in 1919 of a meeting in Philadelphia when Cardinal Gibbons spoke up for the nationalist cause; and at a similar meeting in New York:

'And yet there were some well-meaning but short-sighted Irishmen . . . who opposed and tried to frustrate the steps leading up to that splendid spectacle. They were told that inviting Cardinal O'Connell to Madison Square Garden would give a sectarian character to the meeting, would antagonize Protestant Ulster, produce a bad effect on infidel France and atheist Italy and give the movement a set-back.

But we went ahead knowing that the chief thing needed was the Unity of the Race on a reasonable and progressive policy and the breaking down of the English propaganda in America. That unity could best be secured and the world convinced of our strength by aligning the hierarchy on our side.

'It is sincerely to be hoped that in the future progress of Ireland towards complete national independence . . . the Bishops and priests of the Catholic Church in Ireland will be

31 Engels' letter to Wilhelm Liebknecht, February 29, 1888.

found solidly arrayed behind their people in the endeavour to attain the inevitable goal of the Irish nation.'

It was possible, by arrangement, to join the Fenian organization without actually taking the Fenian oath. This enabled Catholic Fenians to take confession, since the question asked there was not 'Are you a member of the Fenian . Organization?' but 'Did you take the Fenian oath?'

And the oath itself, as well as its revolutionary content, had clear religious overtones as well. Recruits swore that 'in the presence of Almighty God, I will do my utmost to make Ireland an independent democratic republic in all things not contrary to the laws of God'.

There is also evidence that, although the Fenian movement won an unprecedented response from the working masses, its activist leaders were drawn from petty-bourgeois elements.

Thus Devoy's memoirs, discussing new recruits, refers to well-to-do shopkeepers, a wealthy mill-owner, a foreman, editor, doctor, wealthy pig-dealer, linen manufacturer, head waiter, optician, dry goods merchant, shopkeeper, farmer, prominent businessmen, commercial travellers' etc etc.33

Among the national leaders, Stephens was a civil engineer, John O'Leary lived on a private income derived from house property in Tipperary and Charles J. Kickham came from a very well-to-do family.

This background influenced their social programme. Stephens himself, although nominally a member of the International Working Men's Association, wrote that 'the Utopian or childish theories of continental socialists did not by any means form part and parcel of my programme'.34

Stephens' 'communism' was well known to his associates, but caused them little concern. Thus Devoy wrote '(Stephens) claimed that he was an enrolled member of the Communist Party. Even if he were, he never tried to convert the Fenians to Communism and his chief lieutenants, O'Leary, Luby and Kickham, were most conservative men.

No wonder Marx referred to Stephens as 'this most doubtful of our acquisitions'!

O'Leary, indeed, was contemptuous of, and hostile to, the Irish peasantry. He wrote of 'such minor issues as Tenants

<sup>32</sup> For information on the religious and class background of the Fenian Leadership see D. G. Brown, 'History of the Fenian Brotherhood', Workers Press. May 8-15, 1974.

<sup>33</sup> John Devoy 'Recollections of an Irish Rebel'.

<sup>34</sup> James Stephens, 'Reminiscences'.

Rights' and accused the Boycotters of 'wanting to get as much

as they could out of their landlords'.35 And he specifically challenged Wolfe Tone's famous dictum that 'if the men of property won't join us, then we must fall back upon that highly respectable class of the community, the men of

no property'.

O'Leary replied: 'When the appeal is made only to the lower passions and one is called upon to endanger the lives and properties of other people you will certainly have many "men of no property"... on your side but no one could scarcely even laughingly call them "that respectable portion of the community".

The peasant Ribbonmen, said O'Leary, were 'intractable and ignorant', acting from 'comparatively low motives'. 'I could wish in the interests of morality,' he continued, 'that the Catholic clergy took oftener to the denunciation of Ribbonmen and the Ribbon oath.'

O'Leary, more than any other Fenian leader, cared nothing for the land question. 'English rule remaining,' he wrote, 'I saw little chance of the satisfactory settlement of the land question . . . we were always strong for all things spiritual as opposed to things merely material, for setting the soul above the stomach."

And just how little O'Leary envisaged that Ireland's social structure would be shaken by the removal of English rule may be gauged from his statement: 'Let England cease to govern Ireland and then I shall swear to be true to Ireland and the Queen and King of Ireland, even though that Queen or King should also happen to be Queen or King of England.

O'Leary was, of course, on the right wing of the Fenian movement and he was also a landlord. However, he occupied a key position. Devoy describes him as 'one of the three most prominent men in Fenianism in Ireland after James Stephens. 36 And there is no evidence that he met any determined opposition from the other two - Kickham and Luby - nor from Stephens himself, despite his so-called communist leanings.

O'Leary was not challenged because the other Fenian leaders shared his view that the national question came first and the social question a long way second.

As Emil Strauss writes: 'To the Fenians . . . nationalism and hostility towards England was the acid test of political sincerity;

social interests they regarded as secondary matters which were unimportant except in so far as they affected the main issue, the attitude of the individual or the group in the anti-English struggle.

They did not know and probably would not have cared to understand that this attitude was in the last resort determined by social interests and reflexes, and their inability to grasp this intricate but decisive connection enveloped the Fenians in an ideological fog which most of them found impenetrable, '37

Michael Davitt expressed the same point more sharply: Fenianism gave Irish landlords a decade of almost uninterrupted peace; from 1858 to 1870 there were 15,000 families evicted. 38

Since the Fenian Movement was the first to gain mass support among the Irish poor, how did it fare among the working class in England?

The Fenian declaration of the Irish Republic in 1867, made a direct appeal to English workers: 'Republicans of the entire world, it concluded, 'our cause is your cause . . . Let your hearts be with us.

'As for you, workmen of England, it is not only your hearts we wish, but your arms. Remember the starvation and degradation brought to your firesides by the oppression of labour. Remember the past, look well to the future, and avenge yourselves by giving liberty to your children in the coming struggle for human freedom. Herewith we proclaim the Irish Republic.

But, despite these fine-sounding words, the Fenians in practice made little attempt to win the English workers to their side. There were, of course, real difficulties in the way of doing this. As Marx wrote in 1870:

'Every industrial and commercial centre in England now possesses a working class divided into two hostile camps, English proletarians and Irish proletarians. The ordinary English worker hates the Irish worker as a competitor who lowers his standard of life. In relation to the Irish worker he feels himself a member of the ruling nation and so turns himself into a tool of the aristocrats and capitalists, of his country against Ireland, thus strengthening their domination over himself.

He cherishes religious, social and national prejudices against the Irish worker. His attitude towards him is much the same as

<sup>35</sup> John O'Leary, 'Recollections of Fenians and Fenianism'. 36 John Devoy op cit.

<sup>37</sup> Emil Strauss, 'Irish Nationalism and British Democracy'.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Davitt, 'The Fall of Feudalism in Ireland'.

that of the "poor whites" to the "niggers" in the former slave states of the USA. The Irishman pays him back with interest in his own money. He sees in the English worker at once the accomplice and the stupid tool of the English rule in Ireland.

'This antagonism is artificially kept alive and intensified by the Press, the pulpit, the comic papers, in short, by all the means at the disposal of the ruling classes. This antagonism is the secret of the impotence of the English working class, despite its organization. It is the secret by which the capitalist class maintains its power. And that class is fully aware of it.' 39

Much earlier, Engels had described the effect of the immigration of hundreds of thousands of poverty-stricken Irishmen into the English industrial cities:

'The custom of crowding many persons into a single room, now so universal, has been chiefly implanted by the Irish immigration. And since the poor devil must have one enjoyment, and society has shut him out of all others, he betakes himself to the drinking of spirits. Drink is the only thing which makes the Irishman's life worth having, so he revels in drink to the point of the most bestial drunkenness...

... How can society blame him when it places him in a position in which he almost of necessity becomes a drunkard? With such a competitor the English working man has to struggle with a competitor upon the lowest plane possible in a civilized country, who for this reason requires less wages than any other. Nothing else is therefore possible than that the wages of English working men should be forced down further and further in every branch in which the Irish compete with him.' 40

The Fenian leaders were well aware of the hostility which greeted Irishmen in England. Devoy wrote: 'The Irish in England had not gone very largely into the trade unions or the Liberal clubs . . . and they were in the full sense of the term in an enemy's country . . . They lived a life of incessant combat among a people who hated them and there was not a man among them who had not had several personal encounters with insolent Englishmen, while there were many instances of fights on a larger scale.' 41

Yet the Irish were not without support in England. In the

early 19th century the London Irish, in collaboration with the English reformers Hunt and Cobbett, formed an association for civil and political liberty which was one of the forerunners of Robert Owen's Grand National Consolidated Union.

The biggest upsurge of support for the Irish cause in England came with the trial of the Manchester Martyrs. The labour paper, 'The Beehive', which had connections with the London Trades Council, declared on October 19, 1867: 'There is no doubt of one thing, that the gross injustice inflicted on Ireland for so many years by the British government and legislature, has created a deep-rooted hatred of English rule in the hearts of all true Irishmen, and that the perpetrators and abettors of this unjust Irish policy are now reaping the fruits of this bad legislation.'

Later, however, Marx proposed that the General Council of the International should cut off all connections with the 'Beehive'. That paper, he said, suppressed the Council's resolutions, distorted its reports and did not even mention that thad discussed the question of the Irish prisoners.

The 'Beehive', Marx insisted, 'preached harmony with the capitalists' and had not said a word against Gladstone's Liberal government over its 1870 Coercion Bill which suspended all constitutional guarantees in Ireland. 42

Marx himself sought consistently to build up support in the British labour movement for the Irish struggle. Several trade union leaders with whom he worked in the International Working Men's Association were also active in the Reform League, which was campaigning for an extension of voting rights to the working class.

On October 23, 1867, a meeting of the Reform League Council was held to discuss a letter which its President, the bourgeois radical Edmond Beales (yet another lawyer!), had written attacking the Fenians.

Two trade union leaders, George Odger of the Shoemakers and Benjamin Lucraft (both members of the General Council of the International) opposed publication of the letter and expressed support of the Irish movement.

Marx wrote to Engels to say: 'I have sought in every way to provoke this manifestation of the English workers in support of Fenianism. 43

<sup>39</sup> Karl Marx to S. Meyer and A. Vogt, April 9, 1870.

<sup>40</sup> Engels — 'The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844'. pp 92-93.

<sup>41</sup> John Devoy- 'Recollections of an Irish Rebel'. op. cit.

Minutes of General Council Meeting, April 26, 1870.

<sup>43</sup> Marx to Engels, November 2, 1867.

At the meetings of the Reform League Council on October 30 At the meetings of the Real Odger and Lucraft, on whom and November I, however, Odger and Lucraft, on whom and November 1, nowever, been brought to bear by the pressure had in the meantime been brought to bear by the pressure had in the incarred their former position and claimed bourgeois radicals, denied their former position and claimed that they had been 'misunderstood'.

Marx was continually struggling against the opportunist Marx was continually to cling to the Liberals. Thus, when labour leaders who sought to cling to the Liberals. Thus, when Gladstone promised on the eve of the 1868 elections to separate Gladstone profilised on the state in Ireland, Marx wrote: 'The Irish question predominates here just now. It has been exploited by Gladstone and company, of course, only in order to get into office again and, above all, to have an electoral cry at the next election which will be based on household suffrage . . . the intriguers among the workers, such as Odger and Potter [George Potter of the Carpenters], who want to get into the next parliament, have now a new excuse for attaching themselves to the bourgeois Liberals. 44

On November 17, 1869, a mass demonstration, which the General Council of the International helped to organize, was held in Hyde Park to demand an amnesty for Irish political prisoners under the slogan 'Justice for Ireland'.

This followed a meeting of the Central Committee of the International on November 12 at which Marx moved a resolution which supported the Irish call for release of the prisoners, condemned Gladstone and concluded:

'That the General Council of the International Working Men's Association express their admiration of the spirited, firm and high-souled manner in which the Irish people carry on their amnesty movement.

'That these resolutions be communicated to all branches of, and working men's bodies connected with, the International Working Men's Association in Europe and America.' 45

Marx re-proposed the resolution at the Hyde Park meeting, which was in fact the first mass public demonstration of English and Irish workers for Irish independence. Only three men opposed him, the trade union leaders Odger, Applegarth and Mottershead. The latter, frequently referred to by Marx as 'Muddlehead', declared: 'Ireland cannot be independent . . . ! regret that Englishmen applauded the statements of Doctor Marx. 46

Marx told a meeting of the General Council of the International that this demonstration proved that 'at least a part of the English working class had lost their prejudice against the Irish'.47

TEN THOUSAND MEN WITH RIFLES UP TO DATE

The following month the people of Tipperary elected the political prisoner O'Donovan Rossa as their member of parliament and Marx commented 'Three cheers for O'Donovan Rossa! 48

Marx worked ceaselessly on behalf of the Fenian prisoners. In 'L'International' of February 27, 1870 and also in the Belgian newspaper 'L'Egalité', he exposed the conditions of Irish prisoners in British jails—at least 20 of whom had died or gone mad as a result of their brutal treatment.

Among the cases he quoted was that of Mulcahy, sub-editor of 'The Irish People', who was harnessed to a cart loaded with stones with a metal band round his neck at Dartmoor and also that of Martin Carey, who was incarcerated in a lunatic asylum until he went insane himself.

Marx's energetic fight in defence of the Fenians was one major reason for the growth of the International Working Men's Association both in America and in Ireland, as well as in England.

The Manifesto of the Irish Section of the International declared: 'The national antagonism between English and Irish working men in England has hitherto been one of the main impediments in the way of every attempted movement for the emancipation of the working class, and therefore one of the mainstays of class domination in England as well as in Ireland. The spread of the International in Ireland and the formation of Irish branches in England threatened to put an end to this state of things.' 49

Support for Ireland against the brutalities of the British government continued in Britain. In 1887, for example, both the Social Democratic Federation and the Socialist League held mass meetings in Hyde Park against the 'Crimes bill' which removed the right of trial by jury in Ireland. One of the main speakers was Marx's daughter, Eleanor Marx-Aveling.

Yet, despite his unconditional defence of the Fenians against

<sup>44</sup> Marx to Ludwig Kugelmann, April 6 1868.

<sup>45</sup> and 46 P. Berresford Ellis op. cit. p. 143.

<sup>47</sup> Minutes of General Council meetings October 26 and November 9, 1869.

<sup>48</sup> Marx to Engels, November 26, 1869.

<sup>49</sup> Quoted in Berresford Ellis op. cit. p. 149.

British capitalism, Marx was by no means uncritical of the British capitalism, Mark to Engels he pointed out that movement's leaders. In one letter to Engels he pointed out that he had to 'behave diplomatically' in order to strengthen the solidarity of the International and the Irish movement, but he implies very clearly that this did not mean that the conspiratorial tactics and the petty-bourgeois nationalism of the Fenians should not be condemned in general.30

And his rejection of the arbitrary killing of innocent London

citizens has already been mentioned.

Engels fully shared Marx's views. He replied to his letter: 'As regards the Fenians you are quite right. The beastliness of the English must not make us forget that the leaders of this sect are mostly asses and partly exploiters and we cannot in any way make ourselves responsible for the stupidities which occur in every conspiracy. And they are certain to happen. 51

Marx's position on Ireland was not that the English workers should support the Irish struggle as a thing apart. On the contrary, he insisted that the Irish revolution and the English

revolution were inextricably bound together.

From this standpoint he argued that the English workers must make Irish independence part of their own programme:

'What are we to advise the English workers to do? In my opinion they must include as a clause in their platform the Repeal of the Union. It is the only legal and so only possible form of Irish emancipation which can be accepted as part of the programme of an English party. 52

The same conclusion is stressed two years later:

'It is to the direct and absolute interest of the English working class to get rid of their present connection with Ireland . . . The English working class will never do anything before it has got rid of Ireland. The wedge must be driven in in Ireland. That is why the Irish question is of such importance for the socialist movement generally.'53

Four days later Marx told the General Council of the International that 'he considered the solution of the Irish question as the solution of the English, and the English as the solution of the European.' 54

A special session of the General Council of the International held on January 1, 1870, passed a resolution moved by Marx. which said:

If England is the fortress of European landlordism and capitalism, then the only point at which a strong blow can be struck at official England is Ireland.

Above all, Ireland is the fortress of English landlordism. If it falls in Ireland, then it will inevitably fall in England also. In Ireland this operation is a hundred times easier because the economic struggle is concentrated there exclusively around landed property, this struggle is also a national one and the people of Ireland are more revolutionary and embittered than in England. Landlordism in Ireland is only supported by the English army. The moment an end is put to the compulsory union of these two countries, a social revolution will break out in Ireland . .

.... Ireland is the only excuse of the English Government for maintaining a big standing army, which in case of need they send against the English workers . . . A people which enslaves another people forges its own chains.

'In this way the viewpoint of the International Working Men's Association on the Irish question is very clear. Its first task is the speeding of the social revolution in England. For this end the decisive blow must be struck in Ireland."

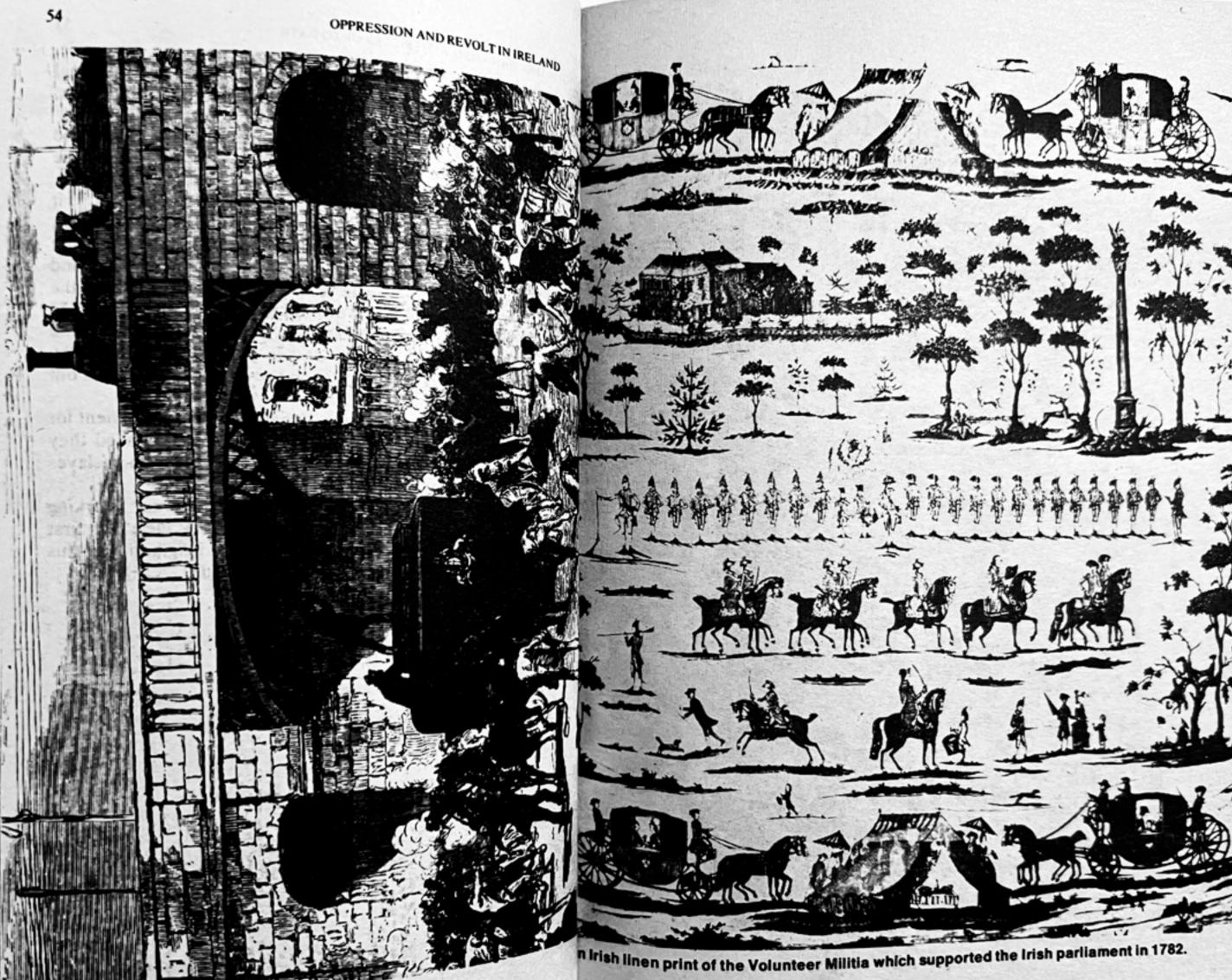
<sup>50</sup> Marx to Engels, November 28, 1867.

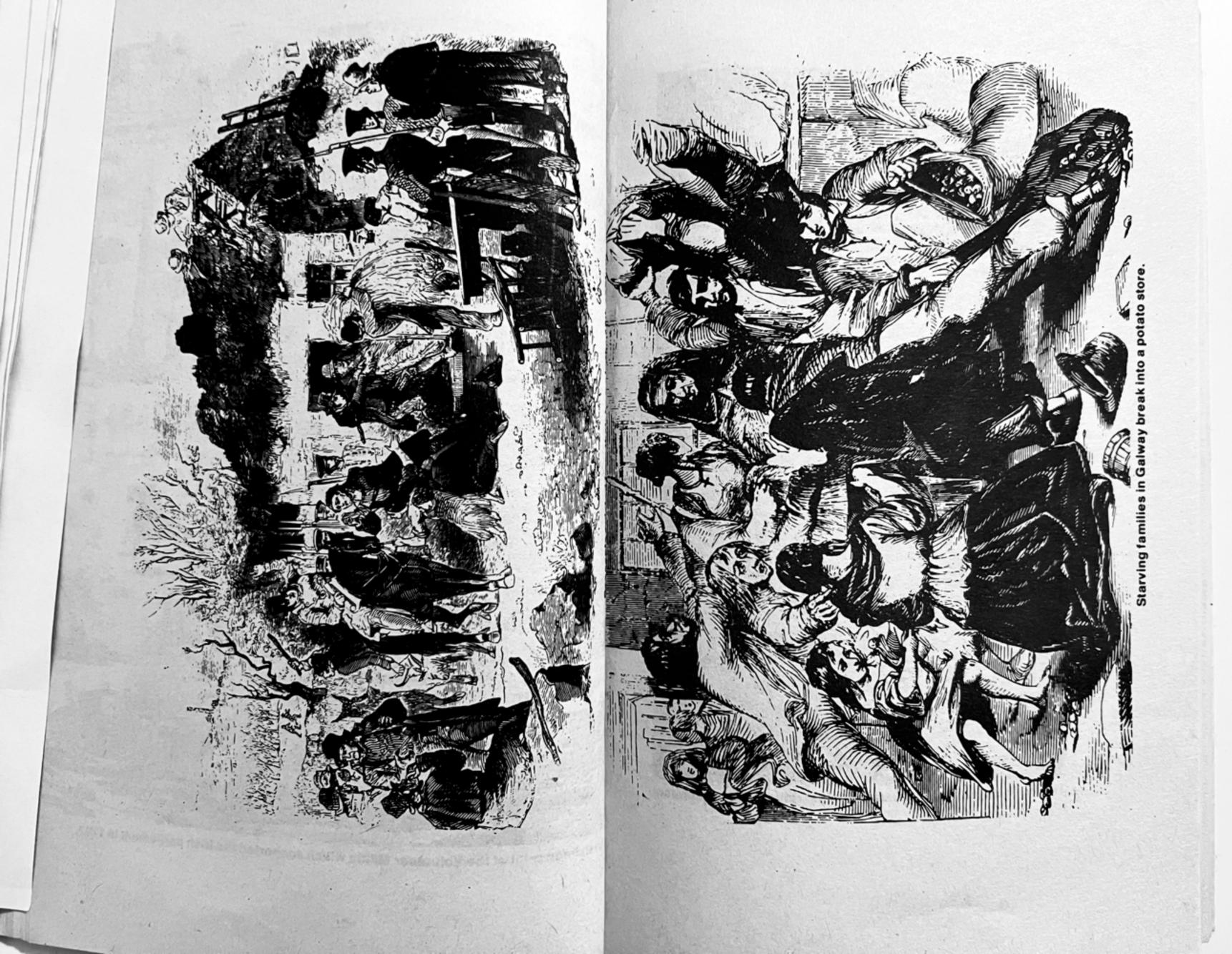
<sup>51</sup> Engels to Marx, November 29, 1867.

<sup>52&#</sup>x27; Marx to Engels, November 30, 1867.

<sup>53</sup> Marx to Engels, December 10, 1869.

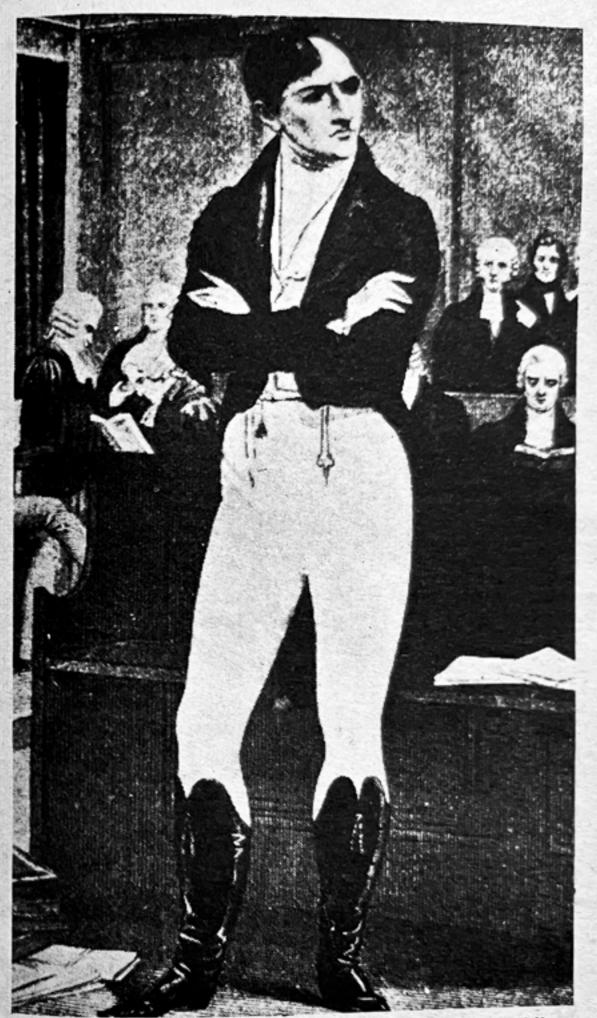
<sup>54</sup> Minutes of the General Council meeting of December 14,



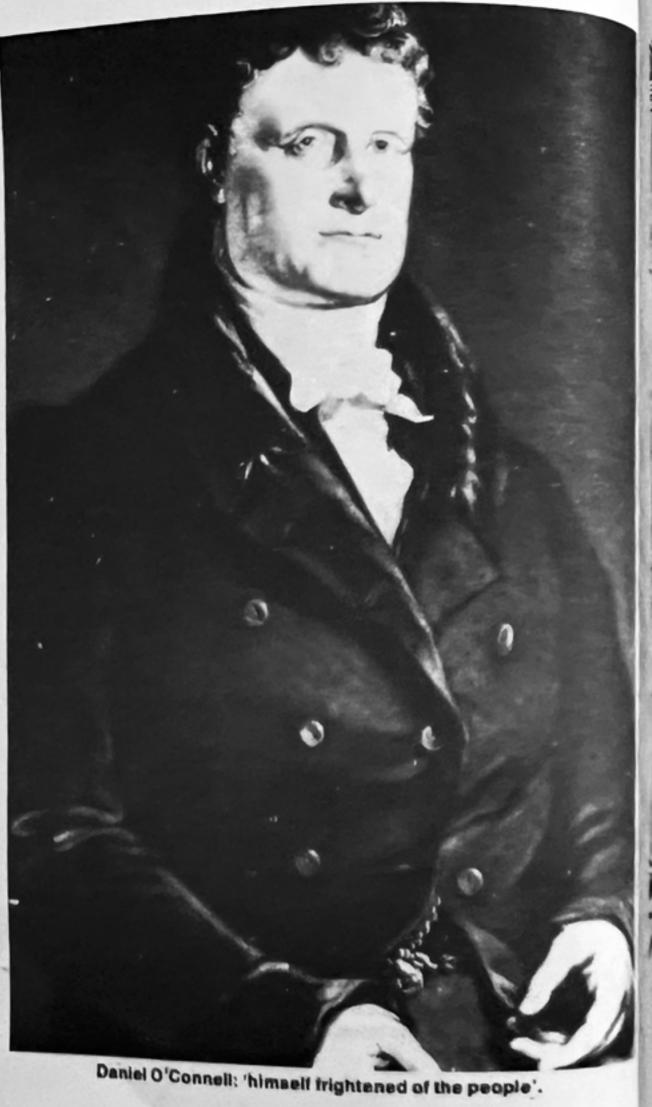


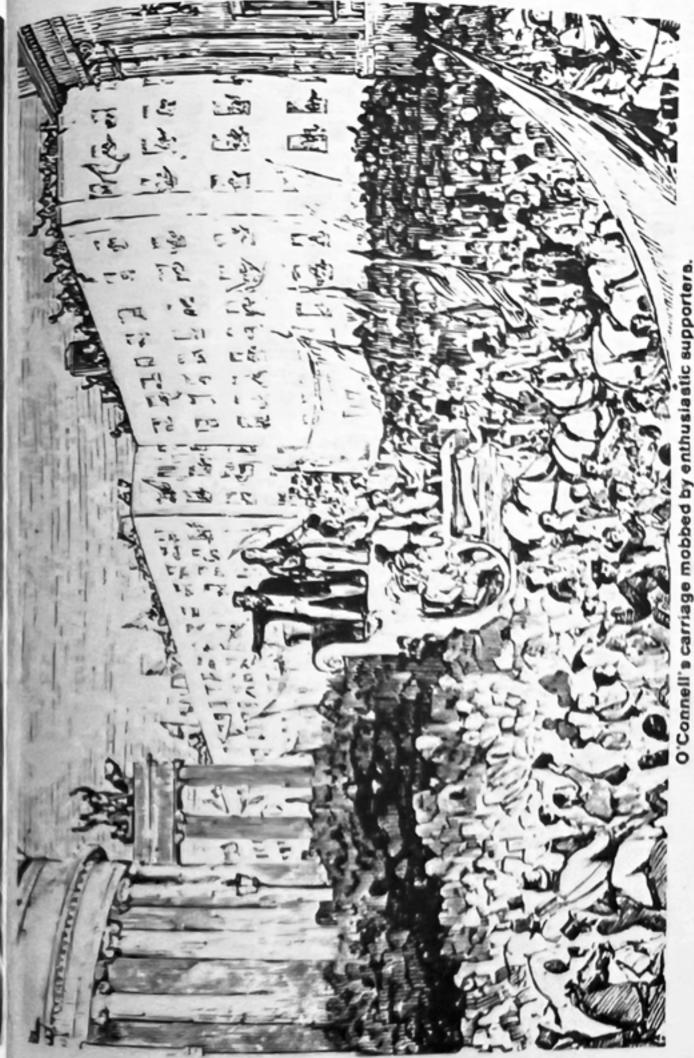


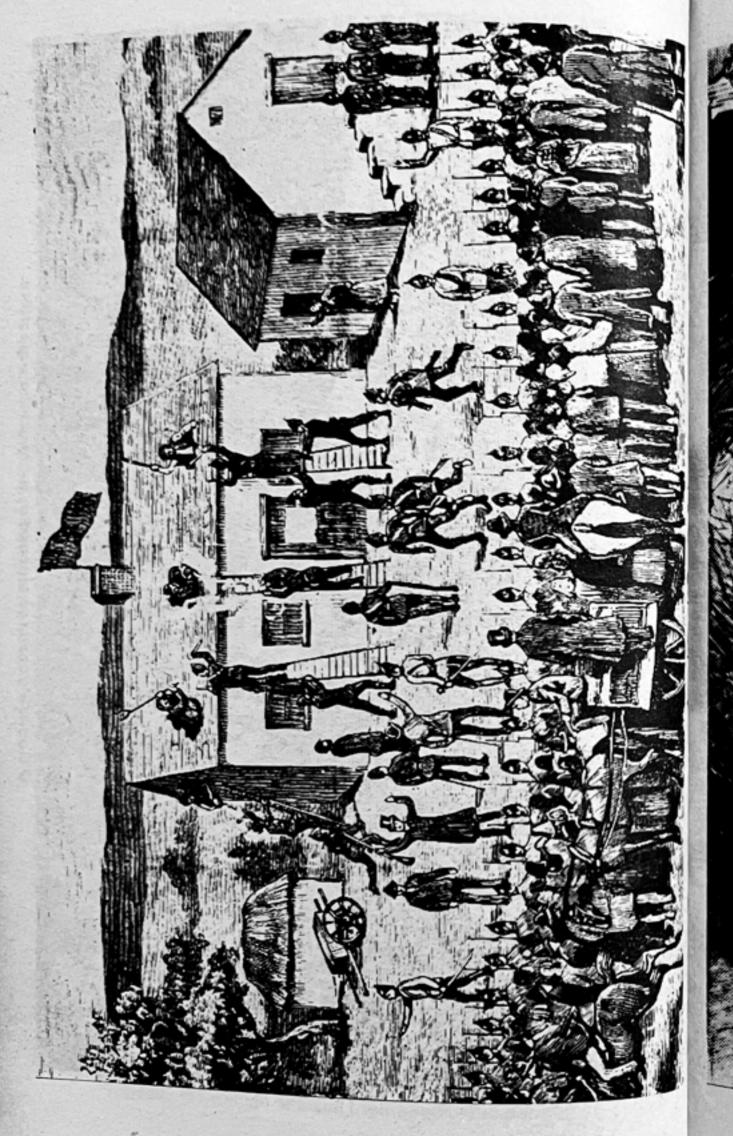
Theobald Wolfe Tone. He fought against religious sectarianism.

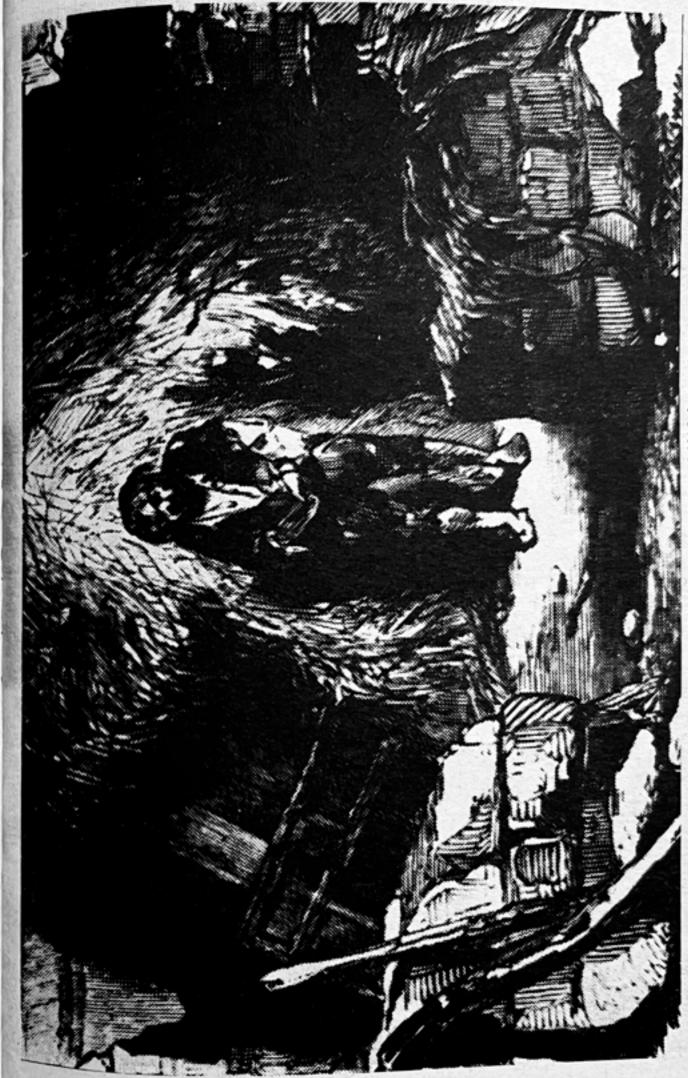


Robert Emmett. He campaigned for a democratic republic.



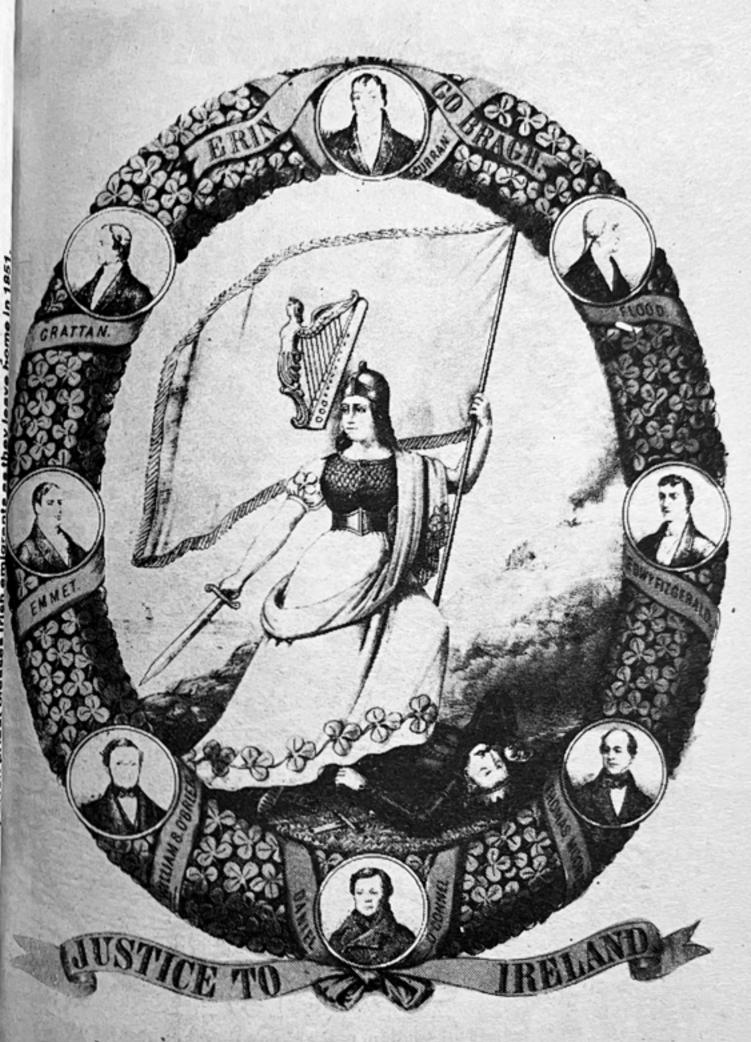






Home for an Irish peasant in the mid-19th century.





American Fenian banner.



Isaac Butt, founder of the Home Rule League.

# PONOVAN ROSSA FOR TIPPERARY, ADDRESS OF THE FRIENDS OF AMNESTY, TO THE ELECTORS OF TIPPERARY,

Men of Tipperary. Gallantly and nobly have you espoused the cause of your suffering rethren. Well and truly do you interpret the feelings that swell to bursting the full heart of reland mourning for her cruelly tortured children. Most heartily do we approve of your choice.

Unto death, and in sufferings far worse than the most dreadful death have those noble earled men proved their unselfish love of Motherland. What tongue can tell, what words describe earted men produces that have unseated reason from her throne? What the physical sufferings mental total many victims have found refuge in the grave? "Greater love than this no man bath, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Even more than life have those men laid down or their country. For we are assured by one who suffered that he would far rather meet death han endure for one three months what he suffered in prison! What love then does not Ireland we them in return? Nor has She been unmindful of them-but, humbling herself in the dusthe Petition of the Nation for their release containing 250,000 names was laid at the feet of the neen. Her humble petition was spurned with contempt. For months the Nation mourned in ilence. Again she aroused herself to another effort on behalf of her suffering sons; and at the Amnesty Meetings the full heart of the country sent up to Heaven the cry of Ireland mourning for her children because they are not. And once again the prayer of Ireland meets only the heartess denial of the English Minister and the threats and scoffs of the English Press. And now, ere she kis her hands in solemn and dignified silence, leaving the cause of outraged humanity to God and the civilized world. Ireland, by the voice of noble, gallant Tipperary, places on record her protest ainst the treatment of the Political Prisoners, and proclaims to the world that the English linisters' eruel refusal to release them from their tortures, has intensified her love for them; and that their names shall henceforth be enshrined in the hearts of their countrymen, and become the ratchword and the rallying cry to which the Nation shall be roused to action.

Electors of Tipperary, nobly have you responded to the wishes of the Nation. By inscribing on banner and shield "Rossa for Tipperary," you proclaim to the world how dear to the heart of Ireland he and his companions in suffering have become. You stand before the world as their and Ireland's champion. To you, they and Ireland commit a sacred cause—a sublime duty. It is for you, men, of Tipperary, to rise equal to the distinguished part you are now about to play in the History of your Country. The Tipperary election of 1869 shall be an epoch in Irish History, and shall be memorable to all future generations of Irishmen.

In the name of God and of our suffering countrymen—in the name of humanity and of Ireland, we call upon you Men, of Tipperary, to prove yourselves equal to the proud position the voice of Ireland assigns to you, by electing O'Donovan Rossa as the MOST FITTING person to represent you.

### GOD SAVE IRELAND!

O'Donovan Rossa's election address.





Michael Davitt, founder of the Land League. He and other moderate leade urged moderate measures, but how far would a desperate peasantry 90?

#### CHAPTER FIVE

#### 'On Tory principles, Ireland must be kept.'

While the Fenians sought to win independence by violent means, and Marx and Engels worked to gain support for the Irish among the English workers, the 'official' Home Rule organization continued — for a time in the guise of the Home Rule League, led by a Protestant lawyer, Isaac Butt.

Butt has been accurately described as 'a scrupulous respecter of the forms and dignity of the House of Commons (whose) appeals to English opinions were tactful and restrained', while his organization was 'a moderate and inoffensive body aiming at a moderate and inoffensive measure of self-government for Ireland'. 55

Butt was elected 'Home Rule' MP for Limerick in 1871, but such 'moderate' and 'inoffensive' people could force nothing from the English government.

This was more than amply demonstrated by Gladstone's much-vaunted Land Act passed the year before Butt arrived at Westminster.

All this did was to rule that any landlord who evicted a tenant for any other reason than non-payment of rent, had to pay for any improvements the tenant had made to the property.

This, of course, still left the landlord free to evict a tenant for any reason at all.

And if he did pay compensation, there was absolutely nothing to prevent a landlord getting his money back by simply raising the rent for the new tenant or — as many of them did — by demanding of the new tenant a lump sum in cash equivalent to the compensation to be paid and then increasing the rent.

<sup>55</sup> F. S. L. Lyons 'The Fall of Parnell'.

Thus, one tenant's compensation was, in practice, paid by

Isaac Butt died in 1879 and shortly afterwards the leadership of the Home Rule movement passed into the hands of Charles

Stewart Parnell.

Parnell used the militancy of the Fenians and the Irish masses as bargaining counters for his dealings with both the Gladstone

Liberals and the Salisbury Tories. But Parnell was in control only of the Irish in the House of

Commons - not in Ireland. He had, for example, no power over the Land League, despite being its nominal president. This League was formed in 1879 to help tenants resist rack-renting and to fight for tenant ownership of the land.

Parnell lived in fear of this organization, which he was

supposed to be leading. As Lyons says:

The very gravity of the land crisis was enough to give him pause. Davitt and other responsible leaders might counsel peaceful measures, but who could tell how far a desperate and destitute peasantry might go?

Might not the land agitation become in grim earnest what it

was soon to be called - a land war?

'And, if so, what place was there for a parliamentary leader in

a convulsion of this kind?

'Might he not either lose control of the land movement or else be swept into illegal paths which would cut him off once and for all from constitutional methods?

'On balance the risk of letting the movement pass into other hands was probably greater than the dangers involved in putting

himself at its head.' 56

Thus Parnell, yet another 'great Irish Patriot', sought Home Rule as part of a bargain, his side of which was to hold back the Irish masses.

True, both he and some other leaders of the Land League were briefly imprisoned in 1881 following a rent strike called by the Land League. But they were soon released on promises of good behaviour under the 'Kilmainham Treaty'. In return for his freedom, Parnell undertook to 'use his influence against outrage and intimidation in Ireland'. 57

However, the intensified activities of 'Captain Moonlight (Irish peasant violence against the landlords and their property),

% Lyons 'The Fall of Parnell', op. cit.

the increasing boycott of people taking over land from evicted the mercand finally the Phoenix Park assassinations (in which the Secretary of State for Ireland, Lord Cavendish, was killed\*) led to the Crimes Act—the imposition of what amounted to martial law.

This 'Coercion Bill' of 1881 saw the English 'Mother of Parliaments at its best. The Speaker pushed it through by stopping the Irish members from speaking—in direct contravention of the most hallowed traditions of the House. And when they objected, he simply suspended them until the

Bill was passed. So much for Liberalism.

Gladstone's Bill was one of the harshest pieces of legislation passed in the 19th century. What it did was to outlaw any form of opposition to landlordism, whether it was resistance to evictions, withholding of rents or boycotting. It granted the power of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment without trial. It delighted the landlords throughout the length and breadth of

And it was Charles Stewart Parnell who prevented a walk-out of the Irish Home Rule MPs over this Act!

But, as Connolly points out: 'The rising tide of revolt in Ireland compelled the Liberal Party to give a half-hearted acquiescence to the demands of the Irish peasants, and the Home Rule-Liberal alliance was consummated.' 58

The activities of the Land League had, indeed, forced some landlords to reduce rents by as much as 50 per cent and its campaign for the total abolition of rent was building up.

In 1880 it had developed a new tactic-the boycott.

The man who gave his name to history in this way was Captain Charles S. Boycott, a land agent managing the Lough Mask, Co Mayo, estate of the Earl of Arne. Boycott sent bailiffs and police to deliver eviction notices to tenants on the estate, only to see his emissaries beaten off.

In September, 1880, all Boycott's servants and farm labourers left him. Shopkeepers, blacksmiths, even laundresses

refused to serve him. Boycott wrote to the London 'Times' appealing for help to

<sup>57</sup> Hammond 'Gladstone and the Irish Nation'.

<sup>\*</sup> The killings were said to be the work of a breakaway Fenian group called 'The Invincibles', Some sources say the Invincibles were supporters of Bakunin in his split with Marx see T. A. Jackson "Ireland Her Own'.

<sup>58</sup> James Connolly 'Labour in Ireland.'

save his crops and on November 11, 50 Orange volunteers, led by six Ulster landowners, arrived at Lough Mask.

They were guarded by 200 troops of the 76th regiment, 400 troops of the 84th regiment, 200 troops of the 19th Hussars and two companies of the army service corps.

Two weeks later they all left, having saved Boycott's crop—worth £300—at an estimated cost of £3,000. Within a few days, Boycott left for England.

It was this type of action which forced Gladstone to introduce his second Land Act in 1881. The Act claimed to give fixity of tenure, provided the tenant paid his rent, and the right of free tenure, provided the tenant paid his rent, and the right of free sale of a tenant's interest and improvements to his holdings. It also transferred the definition of 'fair rent' from the landlord to a government land court.

But this was far from the revolutionary legislation it has often been made out to be. It did nothing to undermine the landlord's real power. Even if a tenant was able to withstand all the landlord's intimidation and go to the land court, he simply found it manned by the landlord's friends.

And every tenant's position was being rapidly undermined by

What Gladstone's Act really did was summed up by a leading Land Leaguer, T. P. O'Connor:

'Gladstone's policy was to fix a relation between landlords and tenants; the policy of the League was to abolish the relation and trample landlordism beneath its heels.'

Yet Parnell, while manoeuvring in parliament (in his own words 'making a demonstration . . . which will not affect the division'), urged the acceptance of the Bill as a great victory.

Despite all Parnell could do, however, riots spread throughout the Irish countryside on such a scale that agents of the British government reported fearfully that revolution was imminent.

Even Queen Victoria was moved to complain: 'These Irish are really shocking, abominable people—not like any other civilized nation.'

The 1880s were bad years throughout the British Isles. In. 1886 unemployment rose as high as 22 per cent in some industrial areas and there were riots in industrial cities throughout Britain.

The position of the Irish peasants and labourers was

59 Joan Haslip, 'Parnell: a biography'.

desperate. Bad harvests in the late 1870s were compounded by cheap agricultural imports into Britain from America. Between 1880 and 1882 there were over 200,000 recorded cases of pauper families, over 7,000 families evicted and 6,000 convictions for 'agrarian outrages'.

One account of some cattle being seized from a tenant in arrears reads as follows:

The forces of law were represented by a sheriff, half a dozen property Defence men, 40 members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, and 50 soldiers — all armed to the teeth — and a resident magistrate who appears to go about with the Riot Act pasted in the crown of his hat ready for an emergency.

'The tenant and his friends looked on with the appearance of deadly hatred and would have murdered any one of us if they could.'60

In these circumstances, Parnell was invaluable to the British ruling class. It was, indeed Gladstone himself who intervened personally to persuade Parnell not to resign the leadership of the Home Rulers when the latter offered to do so because of his 'shame' over the Phoenix Park assassinations.

Parnell was prepared to support not only Gladstone, but the Conservatives. He supported the minority Conservative Government of Lord Salisbury which lasted for seven months before the election of 1885.

Because of his dependence on the Irish vote, Salisbury—against his personal desires—could not renew the Crimes Act. Nevertheless, as an English landowner, his sympathies lay clearly with his own class in Ireland and he was, in addition, anxious to prevent tenant agitation spreading to England.

Salisbury's position on Ireland was never in doubt for a moment:

'On Tory principles, Ireland must be kept, like India, at all hazards; by persuasion if possible, if not, by force... the greatest single danger lies in the sentimental notion that Ireland ought to be governed in accordance with the desires of disloyal and irresponsible Irishmen.'61

More far-sighted Tories than Salisbury were well aware that they needed to be diplomatic with Parnell in order to get him to

<sup>60</sup>Irish Crime Records quoted in L. P. Curtis, 'Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland'.

<sup>61</sup>Article by Salisbury in the 'Quarterly Review', October, 1872, quoted by L. P. Curtis, op. cit., pp. 32-33.

'calm the Irish'. One of these, Randolph Churchill, testified: 'I told Parnell . . . that if the Tories took office I would not consent to renew the Crimes Act. Parnell replied: "In that case, you will have the Irish vote." 62

And Parnell was as good as his word. He issued a manifesto urging the 150,000 Irish voters in England to support the Tories.

He also held private talks with Salisbury's envoy in Ireland. Lord Caernaryon. This worthy aristocrat had already reported on his fears about the Land League. Those branches controlled by younger men, he had complained in horror, frequently assumed to revise and judge the relations of landlord and

'The ice is thin,' he moaned, 'I stand on a foothold so narrow that the slightest breath would overthrow me: 63

Yet in a private interview with Caernarvon, Parnell agreed:

- 1) That although no plan which did away with the Act of Union could ever be accepted by the Tories, he would collaborate with them nevertheless.
- 2) That since the activities of 'extremists' were 'alarming' he would be responsible for keeping all Irish activities within the bounds of law'.
- 3) That private property should be respected everywhere.
- 4) That the Irish land question was a matter for the imperial (Westminster) Parliament, 64

But this scheme ran into difficulties.

Working-class pressure throughout the United Kingdom for the extension of the vote led to the Franchise Bill of 1884 and this raised the Irish electorate from 222,000 to 740,000.

In the General Election the following year, Parnell's Home Rulers, with 86 seats, held the balance of power at Westminster since the Conservatives won 249 places to the Liberals' 335. Gladstone was back in office.

When Gladstone's Liberal government took office in 1885 it had a majority of 86 seats over the Conservatives-and there were exactly 86 Irish Home Rule MPs.

Under these circumstances, in the words of one historian, Gladstone felt in his own conscience the need for Home

In fact, Home Rule by itself could solve none of the basic

65 kobert Kee 'The Green Flag' p. 385.

problems of Ireland. These were, and are, jobs, land and living standards. To both Gladstone and the Irish leader Parnell, Home Rule meant no more than a domestic Irish legislature and executive for limited internal affairs only and subject to the supremacy of the British parliament.

An Irish parliament was to have no say on external matters -including the question of war and peace, or any other matter affecting foreign affairs. It would not even control Irish customs and excise!

There were to be two separate voting 'orders' in Ireland -one specifically designed to represent the Loyalist minority through higher property qualifications -- and each could veto the other's proposals.

Irish members would be excluded from the British parliament, but Ireland would contribute one-fifteenth of the United Kingdom's imperial expenditure.

Yet Parnell declared that such a Bill would be 'a final settlement of the Irish question.

Gladstone's 'conversion' to even this limited measure caused consternation in the Liberal ranks and fury among the Tories. Queen Victoria, who throughout her 60 inglorious years remained convinced that anyone not born into the Tory Party was subhuman, denounced the Liberal leader as 'a wild fanatic'.

The Tories, of course, fully shared the Queen's recorded view of the Irish as 'uncivilized, unwashed and superstitious'. 66

In the light of such sentiments, it was obvious to Gladstone that he could ensure the Parnellite vote by promising Home Rule. A deal was struck between these two political horse-traders through the intermediary of Parnell's friend Mrs O'Shea.

The Bill was introduced in 1886, but defeated because 91 Liberals voted against it. It is, indeed, highly unlikely that the experienced Gladstone cannot have been aware that almost a third of his party in parliament would vote against his Bill.

It was obvious that to the British bourgeoisie, busy acquiring vast tracts of land and trading rights in Africa and the Far East, Home Rule was a spectre to inspire terror. If Ireland could go, could the Empire be dismembered? How safe was private property?

The alarmed Liberal manufacturers of the Midlands hastily formed an alliance with the Conservatives against their own

<sup>62</sup> See Winston S. Churchill 'Churchill' pp. 390-395. 63 Curtis, op. cit.

<sup>64</sup> See C.C. P.O'Brien 'Parnell and his Party'.

<sup>66 &#</sup>x27;The letters of Queen Victoria'. Edited by G. E. Buckle.

party, campaigning under the slogan 'Home Rule is Rome

Rule .

They wholeheartedly agreed with Salisbury's speech in which they wholeheast a racial scale of political maturity with the English at the listed a racial season, and the Irish two-thirds of the

The Bill was defeated by 30 votes and in the General Election of July 1886, the Unionist forces won a majority of 118. Reaction, terrorized not only by the Irish nationalists but by working-class riots in Londonderry and Cardiff, was in full

'The Times', which had earlier run a series of articles entitled Parnellism and Crime' and published a letter -- subsequently proved to be forged -- linking Parnell with the Phoenix Park murders, now published a scurrilous poem by Swinburne. Called 'A Song for the Unionists', this denounced the Irish working class as 'Thieves and murderers, hands yet red with blood and tongues yet black with lies'.

Parnell, despite all his loyal services to the British ruling class, had to be destroyed. Captain O'Shea, whose wife was Parnell's mistress, was persuaded to go to the divorce courts, although Parnell's relationship with Mrs O'Shea was a long-standing and serious one which the husband, a notorious rake, had condoned for ten years.

Leading the pack which howled its outraged morality during this campaign had been Randolph Churchill, until his own unfortunate demise from syphilis.

This onslaught on Parnell was, indeed, an unparalleled example of ruling-class hypocrisy. In addition to Randolph Churchill's 'social disease', his wife -- Winston Churchill's mother - was notorious throughout 'society' for her friendly attitude to gentlemen.

And one of the most prominent Tory nobles, the Earl of Aylesford, was known as 'Sporting Joe' partly because he spent most of his life at the races but also because of the obliging blind eye which he turned to his wife's sport with the Prince of Wales.

The Catholic hierarchy, needless to say, preserved a discreet silence about such antics in the top set. But once the dogs had been set on Parnell, these guardians of public virtue hastened to issue a manifesto denouncing him. (On December 3, 1890).

Three days later the English establishment organized a split in Parnell's party, when 45 members walked out led by a

right-wing religious bigot called Justin MacCarthy. Parnell was finished and he died within a year at the age of 45.

The real interest in the Home Rule debate of 1886, however, lies not in the fate of the Bill itself -- which never had a hope of being passed -- nor even in the destruction of Parnell.

The most significant aspect of the affair is that the very raising of the question of Home Rule proved that for the British Conservative Party, the Constitutional inviolability of law and order was only sacred when it protected them.

Rather than accept Home Rule, Randolph Churchill declared: I should not hesitate, if other circumstances were favourable, to agitate Ulster even to resistance beyond constitutional

The historical development of this Orange-Tory alliance. however, needs examination. As has already been shown, there never was a permanent, historical attachment between the Irish Protestant capitalist class and England. When it had suited their class interests, they had fought for an Irish republic. And they had certainly opposed the Act of Union.

In fact, when the Orange Order was founded in 1793 it was not an organization of wealthy Protestants at all. It was originally an organization of the poor, concerned to protect their smallholdings. The big landlords hesitated for some time before deciding to take it over, and they were pushed into this decision only by fear of Wolfe Tone's 'United Irishmen' and the militant peasant organization 'The Defenders'.

A prominent Protestant and magistrate, Thomas Knox of Dungannon, wrote:

'As for the Orangemen, we have a rather difficult card to

They must not be entirely discountenanced - on the contrary, we must in a certain degree uphold them, for with all their licentiousness, on them we must rely for the preservation of our lives and properties, should critical times occur.'

And the magistrate's namesake, the military commander General Knox, reported:

I have arranged . . . to increase the animosity between Orangemen and the United Irish. Upon that animosity depends the safety of the centre counties of the north. Were the Orangemen disarmed or put down, or were they coalesced with the other party, the whole of Ulster would be as bad as Antrim and Down. 68

<sup>67</sup> Curtis. 'Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland'.

<sup>68</sup> Liam de Paor 'Divided Ulster'.

It was this which transformed the Orange Order from its plebian origins into a government agency. By 1797 the head of the English forces in Ireland, General Lake, was himself a member of the Orange Order and reviewed parades as the landed gentry and government agents assiduously established

And much later James Connolly was to write, from the opposing side:

The children of these men of the rank and file (of the Protestant settlers) are now an integral part of the Irish nation and their interests and well-being are now as vital to the cause of freedom and as sacred in the eyes of the Labour movement as are the interests of the descendants of those upon whom a cruel destiny compelled their forefathers to make war. If . . . we have to refer to the question of religion, it is not in order that divisions along these lines may be perpetuated, but rather that it may be learned that despite diversity of origin, the historical development of Ireland has brought the same social slavery to the whole of the workers, let their religion have been or be what it may. 69

The alliance of Orangemen and Tories developed throughout the 19th century for no other reason than to preserve this 'social slavery'. Their slogan 'Croppies Lie Down' typified their outlook.

(Croppies were the Catholic peasantry, but the term came to mean all Catholic workers, as well as peasants.)

Originally the Protestant exploiting class had encouraged poor Catholics to come north because their poverty forced them to work for lower wages or to accept land tenancies on terms that Protestant labourers rejected. Moreover, their presence diverted the attention of the Protestant workers and peasants away from their real enemies.

Indeed, there is evidence that the Protestant bosses liked a Catholic population of about 35 per cent. 70 Certainly this was the proportion in Belfast towards the end of the 19th century and it was the proportion achieved by the Ulster Unionists when they drew the boundaries of Ulster after Home Rule.

But as the working class grew — and by the 1880s Belfast, with a population of over 200,000, was one of the leading industrial cities in the United Kingdom — the Protestant ruling class came to understand beyond doubt that the preservation of

its privileges and power was bound intrinsically to the union with England,

ONTORY PRINCIPLES, IRELAND MUST BE KEPT

This alliance was necessary for both sides because Ulster has never been as safe for unionism as the Tories like to make out.

For instance, in the election which followed the defeat of Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, Ulster returned 16 MPs in favour of Home Rule compared with 17 against. At the time of Carson's rebellion (discussed later) there were 17 Ulster Home Rule MPs and 16 Unionists.

Thus, what united the Tories and the Ulster Protestants was not loyalty to the Crown, nor even anti-Catholicism, but that great God of all capitalists - white, black, green or orange -Profit.

When the Protestant Defence Association was formed in 1867 at an assembly which included 50 peers, 20 'honourables', 46 baronets and knights, 36 MPs and 360 JPs, a declaration was passed to the effect that 'the Protestants of Ireland, from their social position, wealth, intelligence and loyalty [note the order!] are entitled to protection of their interests.'

And they continued: 'All legislation affecting their property, liberty or religion [again, note the order!] should be dealt with not as a separate country, but as an integral part of the United Kingdom, 71

By 1882 a leading member of this Association - Edward Saunderson - was declaring that 'if England, in a moment of infatuation, determined to establish Home Rule . . . [Orangemen] would take up arms.

It must be said that the Tories relied on the Orangemen without overmuch confidence. As Lord Randolph Churchill wrote: 'I decided some time ago that if the GOM [Gladstone] went for Home Rule, the Orange card would be the one to play. Please God, it may turn out the Ace of Trumps and not the

Speaking in Belfast, Churchill declared that if Home Rule were passed there will not be wanting those of position and influence in England who are willing to cast their lot with you, whatever it may be, and who will share your fortune and your fate.

'Ulster would fight,' declared Churchill, 'and Ulster would be right.

The Orangemen themselves claimed that if it did come to a

<sup>69</sup> James Connolly. 'The Reconquest of Ireland'. pp. 233-234. 70 See A. T. Q. Stewart. 'The Ulster Crisis'.

<sup>71</sup> Quoted in Kee op. cit. p.397. 72 Winston S. Churchill: Randolph Churchill'. p. 59.

fight, over 1,000 British army officers would come over to their side. It did not come to that in 1886, but events some 25 years later were to prove that their boast may not have been an idle one.

Meanwhile the Tories in Britain, once Home Rule was defeated, went on the offensive to assist their Ulster class allies. Arthur Balfour — known as 'Artful Arthur' to his friends and 'Pretty Fanny' to his close friends — was appointed chief secretary for Ireland.

He had two qualifications for the job. He knew nothing whatever about Ireland, and he was the Prime Minister's nephew.

However, like all Tories at all times, he had a deep, abiding hatred of the Irish poor. A letter from him to Salisbury reads:

'My dear Uncle Robert,

I am here enjoying golf and comparative repose . . . the proper method of handling the police in the face of a mob appears to be this — they should be divided into two parties.

'One should be armed with batons . . . (for) dispersing the mob or otherwise enforcing the law. The others, if they are called upon to support the baton party, should not do so by clubbing their rifles, and acting as baton men armed with an inferior kind of baton, as they have done, but they should either fire or charge with fixed bayonets.'73

Another letter from Balfour to his uncle dealt with evictions:

This elaborate resistance to evictions is becoming intolerable. It is rendered possible largely by the legal fiction that the police have nothing to do but protect the sheriff's officers...

Resistance to evictions is part of a regular conspiracy for providing topics for agitators and for showing as far as possible the weakness of the law. Hundreds of persons assemble at these scenes exhibiting every mark of open sympathy with the law breakers and cheering whenever the defenders of the elaborately fortified houses succeed in inflicting some injury upon the police.

The whole day is not infrequently wasted upon a single siege. The police are seriously injured with every sort of missile and weapon in the very presence of the military and great expense is incurred by the state.'74

Balfour therefore issued a memorandum:

The military forces present on these occasions are not to be regarded as there simply to overawe the crowd: they are there also to protect the police. The military forces should therefore be used without hesitation.

The great waste of time which constantly occurs in conducting these sieges is due to the fact that while the besieged have made every preparation for resistance, the sheriff and the landlords have made no preparations for attack . . . This is not to be tolerated and therefore each divisional magistrate must be provided with such apparatus as may enable him to overcome serious resistance. 75

In a footnote to his uncle, Balfour made it clear that the apparatus he had in mind included battering rams and the means to set fire to the tenant's house.

And he was as good as his word. His first act was to intensify coercion through the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act which introduced summary jurisdiction, special courts and the abolition of the right to a trial.

The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland was given special powers to name any area a 'Proclaimed District' which meant that he could ban all meetings, prosecute newspapers, and — under a 'special proclamation' — name any organization or group of people who could then be jailed under the Act.

This was, of course, all done in the name of the rule of law. But the Act was introduced by the very same Balfour who, when Gladstone's 1893 Home Rule Bill was being discussed spoke to a march of 80,000 Ulster Loyalists in Belfast. His message to them was very different from his message to the Catholic poor:

'I do not come here to preach any doctrines of passive obedience or non-resistance,' he told the Orangemen. 'The tyranny of majorities may be as bad as the tyranny of Kings and the stupidity of majorities may be even greater than the stupidity of Kings, and I do not think that any rational or sober man will say that what is justifiable against a tyrannical King may not under certain circumstances be justifiable against a tyrannical majority.'76

<sup>73</sup> Appendix i. Curtis. 'Coercion and Conciliation in Ireland' pp.439-440.

<sup>74</sup> Curtis. pp. 439-440.

<sup>75</sup> Curtis. p. 441.

<sup>76</sup> Kee op. cit. p. 420.



CHAPTER SIX

## 'Mutilation of the Irish Nation'

The Tories' coercion measures in Ireland following the defeat of Gladstone's 1886 Home Rule Bill were accompanied by meagre reforms in the shape of the Land Acts of 1887 and 1891. But these did nothing to improve the lot of the Irish peasants.

When the 1892 General Election took place, the Catholic Church continued its attack on the Irish nationalists, again making its chief target Parnell, although the man was already dead.

In a sermon preached at Roundwood, Co Wicklow, for example, the priest declared: 'Parnellism is a simple love of adultery and all those who profess Parnellism profess to love and admire adultery. They are an adulterous set, their leaders are open and avowed adulterers. Beware of these Parnellites when they enter your house, you that have wives and daughters, for they will do all they can to commit these adulteries, for their cause is not patriotism—it is adultery. And they back Parnellism because it gratifies their adultery.

But even as such priests wiped the froth from their mouths, the people were voting against the Tories. Gladstone was returned to office, but again dependent on the Irish MPs. Another Home Rule Bill was introduced, almost identical to that of 1886, except that 80 Irish members were to be retained at Westminster.

As the new Conservative leader, Balfour, sneeringly pointed out, it would have placed Ireland 'immeasurably below the smallest self-governing colony in this empire'.

<sup>77</sup> Reported in the 'Irish Daily Independent', June 20, 1892 and quoted in Kee op. cit. p. 413.

71

Yet the Irish parliamentary leaders cringingly accepted it. Michael Davitt, now MP for Cork North East, called the Bill 'a pact of peace between Ireland and the Empire to be honourably upheld on both sides'.

John Dillon said it was 'a great Charter of Liberty to the people of Ireland' and Justin McCarthy undertook to commit Irishmen yet unborn to accept it 'so far as our foresight will enable us to look into the future'.

The Irish leaders were willing to abandon completely the entire historic Irish struggle, as Dillon made clear when he pledged: 'We accept the supremacy of this [the English] parliament, and I am not aware that any considerable section of the Irish people wish to deny it.'

The Bill was passed in the Commons, but rejected by the House of Lords. The Liberals—and, indeed, the Irish MPs—quietly accepted the right of the aristocracy to overthrow the decisions of the House of Commons and Home Rule was shelved.

In 1895 the Conservatives (by now, having fused with the Liberal Unionists, they were called the Conservative and Unionist Party) came in again and remained in office for ten years.

The Liberals returned in 1906 with a majority so large that they did not require the votes of the Irish MPs. And so—to no one's very great surprise—they forgot all about Home Rule for Ireland.

(Engels had long ago succinctly summed up Liberal principles on Ireland: 'Parnell's decision in 1886 that the Irish in England should all vote against the Liberals . . . transformed Gladstone and the Liberal chiefs into Home Rulers in a matter of six weeks,')78

It cannot be stressed too often that the Liberal Party never promoted a Home Rule Bill except when at the mercy of the Irisn vote in parliament. Indeed, the Liberal leader Asquith had written before the 1906 election: 'If we are to get a majority in the next House of Commons it will only be by making it perfectly clear that it will be no part of the policy of the new Liberal government to introduce a Home Rule Bill.'79

And in 1901 he had publicly declared that Liberals should never take office if they were dependent on the Irish vote. 80

In the election of 1910, however, 80 Irish MPs were returned to Westminster, and the Liberals were dependent on them for their parliamentary majority.

Accordingly it was that very same highly-principled Asquith who introduced the third Home Rule Bill in April, 1912.

The leader of the Unionist Opposition was Sir Edward Carson, a southern Irishman who was senior MP for Dublin University and had been Solicitor-General in the previous Conservative government.

Carson had conducted the very first prosecution under Balfour's Criminal Law (Amendment) Act and had subsequently made his name as 'Coercion Carson', conducting prosecution after prosecution under the Act.

He had been present when demonstrators were shot down and three killed at Mitchelstown, Co Cork, in 1887—an incident sometimes referred to as 'the Irish Peterloo'.

Carson's ally in Ulster was Captain James Craig, of the millionaire whisky family. It was Craig who organized a parade of 50,000 Orange Lodge members in September 1911, who were told by Carson:

'We must be prepared, the morning Home Rule passes, ourselves to become responsible for the government of the Protestant province of Ulster.'81

This position had considerable support in England, right at the top of the establishment. The leader of the Conservative Party, for instance, was Andrew Bonar Law, a man with family connections in Ulster. At Easter 1912, Bonar Law led a delegation of 70 Tory MPs to a Unionist rally 100,000 strong in Ulster and publicly committed his party to their cause.

A few weeks later, speaking at a Unionist rally in England—held at the palace of the Duke of Marlborough—he said:

I can imagine no length of resistance to which Ulster can go in which I should not be prepared to support them . . . in our opposition to [Home Rule] we shall not be guided by the considerations, we shall not be restrained by the bonds, which considerations, we shall not be restrained by the bonds, which would influence us in an ordinary political struggle. We shall

<sup>78</sup> Engels' letter to August Bebel, January 23, 1890.
79 H. W. Macready 'Home Rule and the Liberal Party 1899-1908'. p.342.

<sup>80</sup> ibid. p. 324. 81 R. MacNeill 'Ulster's Stand for Union', p. 51.

use any means—whatever means seem to us likely to be the

And Carson told the same meeting:

They may tell us, if they like, that this is treason. It is not for men who have such stakes as we have at issue to trouble about the cost. We are prepared to take the consequences and in the struggle we shall not be alone, because we have all the best in

On September 27, 1912, at a mass rally in Belfast, Carson presented a document known as The Covenant, to be signed by all Unionists. It read:

Being convinced in our consciences that Home Rule would be disastrous to the material well-being of Ulster as well as the whole of Ireland, subversive of our civil and religious freedom, destructive of our citizenship, and perilous to the unity of the Empire, we, whose names are underwritten, men of Ulster, loyal subjects of His Gracious Majesty King George the Fifth, humbly relying on the God whom our fathers in days of stress and trial confidently trusted, do hereby pledge ourselves in solemn Covenant throughout this time of threatened calamity to stand by one another in defending for ourselves and our children our cherished possession of equal citizenship in the United Kingdom, and in using all means which may be found necessary to defeat the present conspiracy to set up a Home Rule parliament in Ireland.

'And in the event of such a parliament being forced upon us, we further solemnly and mutually pledge ourselves to refuse to recognize its authority. In sure confidence that God will defend the right we hereto subscribe our names. And further we individually declare that we have not already signed this Covenant. God Save the King. 84

Women signed a separate but similarly worded document, and within a short time a total of 417,414 signatures were

Meanwhile, Orange Lodges were preparing for battle, with the connivance of Unionist magistrates who liberally distributed licences for drilling and marching.

These preparations were intensified when Home Rule was passed by the Commons, but delayed by the Lords—thus falling

due in 1914. The Bill itself-like the two previous Home Rule Bills—was heavily weighted in favour of the Orangemen. The imperial legislature in Westminster remained supreme and in Ireland there was to be an Upper House whose members would be nominated from England and a Lower House in which Ulster would be well over-represented. An additional provision stipulated that both houses should sit and vote together if there was a dispute between the two.

MUTILATION OF THE IRISH NATION

And already the Liberals were retreating even from this modest step.

On May 2, 1912, the Liberal MP, W. G. Agar-Robartes called for the exclusion of Down, Derry, Antrim and Armagh from Home Rule. When this was moved as an amendment a month later, both Carson and Bonar Law voted for it.

The lines of the future betrayal of Ireland were already being drawn. On January 1, 1913, Carson—supported by Bonar Law-moved the exclusion of all nine counties of Ulster from Home Rule. And according to one biographer of Asquith, secret talks about exclusion of Ulster took place between Asquith and Bonar Law during September that year, 85

Increasing pressure was put upon the Irish parliamentary leader John Redmond who began by asserting that he could never assent to 'the mutilation of the Irish nation' 86 and ended by agreeing to any county being given the right to opt out of Home Rule for six years.

Redmond was particularly susceptible to parliamentary pressure. As one commentator puts it, Redmond was 'a man of peace' whose 'contacts with the political grass roots at home were sacrificed to his enjoyment of the parliamentary club.'87

Redmond's acceptance of the principle of partition was certainly a betrayal, not just of nationalist aspirations, but of the Irish working class. It opened the door for that class to be split, for the benefit of the employers and the imperialists.

As James Connolly had pointed out:

'All hopes of uniting the workers, irrespective of religion or old political battle cries, will be shattered, and through north and south the issue of Home Rule will be used to cover the iniquities of the capitalist and landlord classes. I am not speaking without due knowledge of the sentiments of the

<sup>82</sup> Liam de Paor 'Divided Ulster', p. 67.

<sup>84</sup> A. T. Q. Stewart 'The Ulster Crisis', p. 62.

<sup>85</sup> R. Blake. 'The unknown Prime Minister', pp. 161-167.

<sup>86</sup> D. Gwynn. 'Life of John Redmond', p. 228.

<sup>87</sup> Cecil King. 'On Ireland', p. 103.

organized labour movement in Ireland when I say we would much rather see the Home Rule Bill defeated than see it carried

But the Irish parliamentary leaders were utterly incapable of standing up to the determined Orangemen. In January 1913, Carson set up the Ulster Volunteer Force, a body of 100,000 men equipped with rifles brought in from England. Its commander was an English officer Lieutenant-General Sir George Richardson, KCB, hero of the Afghan and Indian wars, who in 1900 had led the storming and looting of Peking.

And Richardson was not the only one. Carson was not bluffing when he claimed to have 'pledges and promises from some of the greatest generals in the army who have given their word that, when the time comes, if it is necessary, they will come over and help to keep the old flag flying.' 89

In November 1913, Bonar Law visited Dublin and openly called upon army officers not to obey orders if instructed to enforce a Home Rule Bill. Having compared Asquith to James II, the Tory leader went on: 'In order to carry out his despotic intention, the King had the largest army which had ever been seen in England. What happened? There was no civil war. There was a revolution and the King disappeared. Why? Because his own army refused to fight for him.'90

In Britain, the Tories organized the British League for the Support of Ulster and the Union, which raised money, arms and volunteers for the Ulster Volunteer Force. Prominent reactionaries subscribed heavily: Waldorf Astor and Rudyard Kipling gave £30,000 each, and Lord Rothschild, Lord Iveagh and the Duke of Bedford gave £1,000 each.

Large numbers of officers resigned their commissions in the British army and joined the UVF. But they retained close links with officers who stayed behind (and who, presumably, were going to fight them), mainly through the agency of one Major-General Sir Henry Wilson. This gentleman was Director of Military Operations at the British War Office. That is, if there actually was a right-wing rebellion in Ulster, it was his job to put it down. In fact, he passed every detail of the British Cabinet's plans to Carson.

But the conviction that the British officer caste should never

be ordered to move against the Orangemen went even higher than Wilson. In September George V asked the Prime Minister: Will it be wise, will it be fair to the sovereign as head of the army, to subject the discipline, and indeed the loyalty of his troops to such a strain?' 91

When the Cabinet finally began half-hearted troop movements in Ulster (against UVF arms supplies),\* it informed all army officers resident in Ulster that they could, if they wished, simply 'disappear' during the operation. If they cared to return after it was all over, their absence would not count against them in their future careers! This message was conveyed personally on March 20, 1914, by Lieutenant-General Sir Arthur Paget, Commander-in-Chief of British troops in Ireland. The concession, he said, came straight from the Secretary of State for War.

It did not cover officers whose homes were not in Ireland, but it was such an unprecedented concession that it simply

encouraged every right-wing officer.

Immediately Brigadier-General Hubert Gough, commander of the 3rd Cavalry Brigade at the Curragh, Co Kildare, told Paget he could not bear arms against the Unionists. That same day 57 other officers in his command said they would not serve either. This was the infamous 'Curragh Mutiny'.

Not only was no action taken against the Curragh mutineers, but the army operation was cancelled, and each one of the 58 officers received a written undertaking that they would not be called upon to act against any opposition to Home Rule. 92

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in 'Liam de Paor' op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>89</sup> D. Gwynn. The History of Partition'. p. 58. 90 D. Gwynn. The History of Partition', p. 73.

<sup>\*</sup> This incident revealed how the very top circles of the British ruling class collaborated with Carson. The decision to move two battalions of infantry against UVF military supply depots in Ulster was taken at a meeting of a special cabinet committee on March 18, 1914. Present at the meeting was Sir John French, later to win undying glory for sending hundreds of thousands of men to a useless death at the battle of Ypres in World War I. French immediately told Sir Henry Wilson, who hastened to pass the news on to Lord Alfred Milner, one of the most prominent supporters of the Ulster Volunteer Force, and to Carson himself. The latter knew everything that had taken place by the same evening. (See Liam de Paor. pp. 76-77.)

<sup>91</sup> Kee, op. cit., p.486.

<sup>92</sup> Liam de Paor, op. cit. p. 78.

Needless to say, any private soldier who refused instantly to Needless to say, any production of the sed instantly to obey the orders of such 'patriotic' officers during World War I

On September 18, 1914, Home Rule finally became law accompanied by a Bill to suspend its operation until the end of the war with Germany which had begun a month earlier!

Carson, with the connivance of the British Tories, had been importing arms from Germany right up to the outbreak of war.

But during the first imperialist world slaughter, the British government had need of as many Irish soldiers north and south — as it could get. Carson's Ulster Volunteer Force fought with the British as a separate Ulster Regiment.

Meanwhile, John Redmond, the Irish nationalist parliamentary leader, vying for supremacy in the 'patriotism stakes', offered the republican Irish Volunteers on similar terms - indeed, he offered to unite them with the UVF to 'defend the shores of Ireland'

Under Redmond's encouragement, 80,000 misguided Irish Volunteers did sign up to fight with the British, but the government refused them the right to fight as a separate regiment with their own officers - though it had granted exactly those conditions to Carson.

(Many of these southern volunteers fell for the British government's appeal to fight for gallant, little, Catholic, Belgium.)

In the course of appealing for Irish volunteers, the British government promised the south that it would grant Home Rule after the war, while at the same time it promised the north that it would never grant Home Rule under any circumstances!

While Carson and the Orangemen, with the moral and physical support of the British Tories, were preparing to defend their privileges and wealth by force of arms, another force was emerging in Ireland.

This was the industrial working class - and its living conditions were not only the worst in Europe, they were among

Ireland as a whole was being depopulated. Before the famine of the 1840s over 8 million people lived there. By 1910 there were only 4 million. But it was the countryside that was being

Those who could afford to, went to America, and those who couldn't rise to that went to England. The very poorest, who could afford neither, but were forced off the land anyway, flocked into the city slums.

In 1911 the 'Medical Press' commented on the Irish infant mortality rate as follows: 'According to the latest returns, the death rate in Dublin was 27.6 per thousand - the highest in any city in Europe. The next highest being Moscow, 26.3 per thousand.

In Calcutta, in the presence of plague and cholera, the rate

was only 27 per 1,000. 93

An earlier analysis of infant mortality rates (for 1905) showed clearly the class divisions in Dublin: professional classes 0.9 per 1.000; the middle class 2.7 per 1,000; artisans and small shopkeepers 4.8 per thousand; unskilled workers 27.7 per 1,000.

This high death rate of children in Dublin was closely connected to housing conditions. A government inquiry in November 1903 revealed that 5,322 tenement houses in the city accommodated 25,822 families and a total of 87,305 people. 20,108 families had only one room each. 94

The same inquiry revealed that Dublin Corporation did not enforce its own sanitary laws in the tenements. This was scarcely surprising since 13 members of the Corporation had direct financial interests in tenement property!

The 'Irish Times' of February, 1914 quoted the government report of a Departmental Committee of Inquiry into the Housing Conditions of the Dublin Working Classes and commented:

The Report finds that the Corporation has grossly abused and mismanaged its existing powers. It has utterly failed to enforce its sanitary authority under the Act of 1890. It has encouraged slum-ownership not merely by connivance, but by example. The Report finds that three members of the Corporation - Aldermen O'Reilly and Corrigan and Councillor Crozier - are returned in evidence as owning, or being interested in nine, 19 and 18 tenement houses respectively. Some of their property is classified as "third-rate property". Ten other members of the Corporation own, or are interested in, tenement houses. '95

<sup>93</sup> Quoted in R. M. Fox History of the Irish Citizen Army'.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted in A. Wright 'Disturbed Dublin'. The author had no reason to exaggerate. His book was commissioned by the Dublin employers to put their side of the 1913 struggle!

<sup>95</sup> James Connolly, 'Reconquest of Ireland'.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND Wages, of course, were incredibly low. In 1910 the wages of an unskilled labourer in Dublin averaged 14s per week for men and 11s for women. And the average working week was 90

Conditions in Belfast were slightly better, but not much in his official report for 1909, Dr Baillie, the Medical Officer of

Premature births were found to be most prevalent among women who worked in mills and factories engaged in such work as the following — spinning, weaving, machining, tobaccospinning and laundry work. Many of the women appear to be utterly unfit for such work owing to the want of sufficient nourishment and suitable clothing, and being through stress of circumstances compelled to work up to the date of confinement . . .

The doctor's report continues: 'As in previous years, it was found that consumption (TB) was most prevalent among the poor, owing largely to the unfavourable conditions under which necessity compels them to live - such as dark, ill-ventilated houses and insanitary habits, together with insufficient food and clothing."

The same report describes the type of work and conditions of pay that the Belfast poor were compelled to endure: 'In the last week of December, a woman was observed embroidering small dots on cushion covers, there were 308 dots on each cushion, and for sewing these by hand she received the sum of one penny. She said that for a day's work of that kind she would have difficulty in making sixpence. Nor is this an exceptional case. Quite recently our inspector was shown handkerchiefs which were to be ornamented by a design in dots. These dots were counted and it was found that the worker had to sew 384 dots for one penny."

In the textile finishing trades the rates of pay are given as one penny per hour, and in many instances less.

Workers were frequently killed or mutilated at work - 17 men were killed, for example, in the construction of the 'Titanic' at the Lagan shipyard.

It was next to impossible to secure fair compensation for such deaths and injuries, as Connolly explained:

'It means lives ruined, fair prospects blighted, homes devastated, crippled wrecks of manhood upon the streets, or widows and orphans to eat the bread of poverty and pauperism.

'Add to this an army of insurance doctors paid to belittle the

injury and declare the injured to be well and hearty, a host of lawyers whose practice depends upon their success in confusing honest workers when endeavouring, amid unfamiliar surroundings, to tell the truth about the mangling or killing of their workmates, and finally, a hostile judge, treating every applicant for just compensation as if they were known and applicant riminals, and you have a faint idea of one side of industrial life [and death] in the North of Ireland.'%

But the Irish working class was being organized—and in the teeth of bitter opposition from their nationalist leaders.

We have already shown how Daniel O'Connell had opposed

factory reform and the formation of trade unions.

Charles Stewart Parnell, also, is on record as saying: 'What is trade unionism but a landlordism of Labour? I would not tolerate, if I were at the head of a government, such bodies as trade unions. Whatever has to be done for the protection of the working classes in a state should be the duty of the government. 97

And John Redmond and his Irish Parliamentary Party repeatedly urged the Irish working class not to form separate political organizations because it would split the Home Rule movement.

An Irish labour electoral association was formed in Dublin in 1895 and in 1899 there were significant labour successes in Limerick, Dundalk, Waterford and Castlebar; six labour men were elected to the Belfast corporation and labour won one-fifth of the seats in Dublin.

But before the year was out, Connolly was denouncing the Dublin labour representatives in his paper the Workers

'From the entry of the Labour Party into the Municipal Republic': Council to the present day . . . no single move in the interest of

the workers was even mooted, the most solemn pledges were broken and where the workers looked for inspiration and leadership they received only discouragement and disgust. '98

The Irish trade union movement in its early days also kept remote from the needs of the mass, of the working class. Established in 1894, it was almost exclusively composed of skilled workers, most of whom had been in Irish branches of British unions.

<sup>%</sup> James Connolly, 'Reconquest of Ireland'. 97 Arthur Mitchell. 'Labourin Irish Politics, 1890-1930', p. 15.

<sup>98</sup> Mitchell. op. cit., p. 20.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND The Irish TUC declared from the start that its job was to supplement the work of the parent body in England and it even avoided taking any position on the central question of home

But if the official labour movement was 'respectable' from the start, there was also a very different tradition among the

As early as 1865 the Fenian newspaper 'The Irish People' had pronounced: 'We make no appeal to the aristocracy . . . they are the willing tools of the alien government whose policy it is to slay the people, or drive them like noxious vermin from the soil. The people must save themselves.

Something even more than a successful insurrection is demanded. And what is that? An entire revolution which will restore the country to its rightful owners. And who are these? The people.

Every man has one simple object to accomplish. It is to rid the land of robbers, and render every cultivator of the soil his own landlord.

'Our only hope is revolution, but most bishops and many of the clergy are opposed to revolution. . . . '99

And in one of his letters, Engels describes how the Dublin Congress of the Gasworkers and General Labourers' Union of Great Britain-in Engels' opinion the most progressive union of the time-sent Eleanor Marx to represent them at the International Socialist Workers' Congress in Brussels in 1891, 100

In the early years of the 20th century, this revolutionary spirit raised its head among the oppressed of the Irish cities. In January 1907, James Larkin, an organizer of the National Dock Labourers' Union and a member of the Social Democratic Federation, arrived in Belfast to organize the dockers. By May he was involved in a violent lock-out struggle with the Belfast Steamship Company, owned by Thomas Gallagher of the tobacco company.

Blackleg labour was shipped over from England and the employers tried to use Larkin's Catholicism to split off the Protestant workers. This failed, however, when a leading Protestant trade unionist issued a statement that 'men of all creeds were determined to stand together in fighting the

common enemy'. 101 Coalmen and carriers joined the dockers and even the Royal Irish Constabulary mutinied (they were suppressed by thousands of troops brought over from England). Though the workers did not win a complete victory, they did prove that Catholics and Protestants could stand together and resist all the employers' attempts to divide them.

Larkin was also active in Dublin. By September 1907, he had around 2,000 men in the Dublin branch of the National Union of Dock Labourers. By July, 1908, he had recruited 2,700. The Dublin Coal Masters responded with a lock-out and then signed an agreement with the English headquarters of the union without any consultation with Larkin.

Larkin continued to organize. By November he had 800 members of the union in Cork where dockers had not had a wage increase for 20 years. After a quick strike, substantial increases were won.

That same month carters in Larkin's union in Dublin went on strike and mounted police patrolled the streets. Larkin brought out the malt workers to join the carters and told his union's English office that the whole unskilled labour force in Ireland could be organized. The response of the union's general secretary, James Sexton, was to suspend Larkin from his organizer's job.

Larkin's response was to form the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The employers were not slow to move against it. In 1909 a Federation of Employers was formed in Cork and a strike provoked at docks owned by the Cork Steam Packet Company, 6,000 men were involved, but the union had little money and the strike was broken. Larkin was jailed on a trumped-up charge of 'conspiracy to defraud'.

The IT&GWU fell on hard times, but by 1911 James Connolly had returned from America and become the union's Belfast secretary, where he continued Larkin's success in uniting Catholic and Protestant workers.

But the big clash was to be in Dublin. On June 30, 1911, the Dublin Employers' Federation had been formed for the 'mutual protection and indemnity of all employers of labour in Dublin'. The leader of this organization was William Martin Murphy, who owned both the Dublin United Transport Company and the

<sup>99</sup> P. Berresford Ellis. 'A History of the Irish Working Class'. p. 133.

<sup>100</sup> Engels' letter to Sorge, August, 1891.

<sup>101</sup> Berresford Ellis, op. cit., p. 179...

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND Irish Independent group of newspapers. He also owned railway and tram undertakings in Belfast and Cork as well as tramways

Barrente Margate and Paisley, Scotland in London, Ramsgate, Margate and Paisley, Scotland. He owned a large drapery business and was involved in one way or another with just about every financial enterprise in Ireland of

Murphy's political outlook was summed up by one of the most notorious articles in the 'Irish Independent' called 'Why

The reasons given included:

'(1) Its philosophy as laid down in the "bible of socialism" (Karl Marx's "Capital") is based on the materialist conception of history. (2) Because the founder of that doctrine, Marx, was an avowed atheist and bitterly opposed the teachings of Christ and his church . . . (6) Because socialism would destroy the sanctity of the family and the home, for which the Catholic church has always stood . . . (12) Because socialism stands for free love, and derides marriage, calling it a capitalistic institution and a tool for exploitation . . . (15) Because socialism justifies abortion, child murder, regulation of reproduction, prevention of conception, and its advocates proclaim it. (16) Because socialists hate the Catholic church and condemn it as an enemy of workers, whose friend it has been through the ages102

This was the man who decided to smash the Irish Transport

and General Workers' Union.

The employers, indeed, felt they could not wait any longer. The IT&GWU had showed its mettle in 1911 when the British National Seamen's and Firemen's Union had called a general strike in all the home ports.

As every ship arrived in the Port of London it was held up by the dockers, on Larkin's orders, until the crew joined the union and the owners signed union conditions and rates of pay.

Then the Transport Union employed the tactic of the sympathetic strike to enormous effect. When the coachmakers went on strike, Larkin took over all the labourers and paid them strike pay until their union won. Another sympathy strike won pay increases and union recognition for the Dublin mill-sawyers, whom the employers had refused to recognize for 20 years.

Similar action by carters in the IT&GWU won increases for engine drivers, cabinetmakers, sheetmetal workers, carpenters, building workers, Jacobs biscuit factory workers, cross channel dockers, bottle factory workers, warehouse girls and many, many more.

Employers throughout Ireland hated this union and swore that it had to be smashed.

<sup>102</sup> Emmet Larkin: James Larkin'. p. 100.



#### CHAPTER SEVEN

#### 'Not the rack-renting slum-owning landlords -but the Irish working class."

By the summer of 1913, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union had organized a majority of the unskilled workers in Dublin and trade unionism was growing throughout

An Irish Women Workers' Union had been founded in 1911 and it rapidly recruited 1,000 members. James Connolly had founded an Irish Textile Workers' Union in Belfast and had organized the women workers in the linen industry.

This movement was vehemently opposed by the nationalist leaders. In particular, Arthur Griffith, speaking officially for Sinn Fein, openly defended Irish capitalists against the Irish workers. Writing in the Party's official newspaper, he declared; at the time of a strike in Wexford:

Some of the strike orators have tried to draw a parallel between the fight of the farmers for security of tenure and fair rents and the strike of industrial workers for higher wages. The fight of the Irish people for the land was the fight of a nation for reconquest of a soil that had been theirs and had been confiscated. The landlord did not make the soil - the industrialists made the industry. 103

In the same issue of 'Sinn Fein' Griffith went for Larkin:

The consequences of Larkinism are workless fathers, mourning mothers, hungry children and broken homes.

'Not the capitalist, but the policy of Larkin has raised the price of food until the poorest in Dublin are in a state of

Quoted in P. Berresford Ellis. History of the Irish Working Class'. p. 191.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND semi-famine — the curses of women are being poured upon this

Between January and August 1913 there were more than 30 strikes in Dublin and key sections of the employers had been

On August 15 William Murphy told workers in the dispatch department of his newspaper company that they must resign from the IT&GWU or be sacked. The same ultimatum was given to tramway workers employed by Murphy.

The Dublin Employers' Federation then presented all their

workers with a document which read:

'I hereby undertake to carry out all instructions given to me by or on behalf of my employers and, further, I agree to immediately resign my membership of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (if a member) and I further undertake that I will not join or in any way support this union."

On August 21, the Dublin United Tramways Company (owned by Murphy) issued each of its 100 workers in the parcels

department with the following notice:

'As the directors understand that you are a member of the Irish Transport Union, whose methods are disorganizing the trade and business of the city, they do not further require your services.

'The parcels traffic will be temporarily suspended. If you are not a member of the union when the traffic is resumed, your application for employment will be favourably considered.' 106

A similar letter was sent to each of Murphy's employees on

the 'Irish Independent'.

The employers were determined not just to break the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, but to destroy trade unionism altogether. On September 2, the Coal Merchants Association locked out its workers. On September 9 the Master Builders Association locked out 3,000 men and three days later the County Dublin Association locked out 1,000.

By September 22, some 27 unions and 25,000 Dublin workers

were locked out.

Throughout that long and bitter battle, all the elementary rights won by trade unionists in a century of struggle were denied to the Dublin workers, with the connivance of the British government.

106 Intelligence Notes, 1913-1916'. Irish State Papers. p. 39.

James Connolly describes how the Dublin employers had secured the support of the British ruling class before they launched their offensive:

Before the lock-out was declared they went to the British government in Ireland, to its heads in Dublin Castle, and they said to that government "Now look here, we are going to make war upon the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, but we believe that we cannot succeed as we should wish, while peaceful picketing is allowed. We know it is allowed in England, Scotland and in Wales, but we don't want it allowed in Ireland". And the government said "All right, gentlemen, the law allowing peaceful picketing is only a scrap of paper; we will tear it up while the fight is on".

The employers said again: "Good, but these labour men and women will hold together while they are able to hold public meetings, whilst the fight is on". And the government replied: "Suppress public meetings? Why, of course: the law which permits public meetings in Ireland is just another scrap of paper,

and has been torn up many a time and oft.

"We will tear it up again, so as to help you in the good work of crushing the labour movement."

And you know, the British government kept its promise to

the employers. 107 This was not an idle claim by Connolly. From the beginning. Murphy had the full support of the police-both open and

underground.

Every step taken by the workers' leaders was dogged by intelligence agents. Every strike meeting had its quota of spies in attendance. The Irish State Papers 'Intelligence Notes' for 1913-1916 include the full text of Larkin's and other leaders speeches at strike meetings. 108

On the basis of reports collected by spies, Larkin was

arrested and charged with:

1) Having spoken certain seditious words with a seditious intention; 2) having spoken the words with intention of inciting to riot; and 3) having spoken with the intention to incite to have the shops and the shopkeepers pillaged and robbed." 109

<sup>104</sup> ibid

<sup>105</sup> R. M. Fox History of the Irish Citizen Army'. p. 20.

<sup>107</sup> Article in 'Workers Republic', May 29, 1915, quoted in 'The Best of Connolly 'P. MacAonghusa and L. O'Reagain. See the sections on Dublin Labour Troubles pp. 38-52 and Irish Labour Disputes 1907-1913 pp. 52-55. 109 'Intelligence Notes 1913-1916' p. 42

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND It is significant that it was Larkin, who was organizing a strike, who was charged with sedition. Only a few months later—in April, 1914—Sir Edward Carson's Unionist Ulster Volunteer Force took over the ports of Larne and Bangor and landed 24,600 rifles and 3 million rounds of ammunition to resist by force a decision of the Westminster parliament to grant an

But Carson was made Attorney-General in the war-time Cabinet under Asquith and later served in the British government under Lloyd George. A clearer example of the class nature of British justice would be hard to find.

The manner of Larkin's arrest and the events surrounding it, reveal the frenzy of the employers. A meeting fixed for Sunday, August 31, in O'Connell Street was banned by a police magistrate as seditious. In the early hours of that morning police raided the tenements known as Corporation Buildings batoning men, women and children and smashing up their homes.

At a public meeting in Beresford Place, Larkin burned the magistrate's proclamation banning the meeting in front of 10,000 people. At the O'Connell Street meeting he was dragged off the platform by police and carried off to jail.

The police then went berserk batoning everyone in sight, including people who had not even been at the meeting. This was known as 'Bloody Sunday' and 200 police plus many more workers were hospitalized. Dublin, commented Lenin, had become 'like an armed camp'.

One worker, John Byrne, was tortured to death in a police cell. A working-class woman, Alice Brady, was shot dead by a scab who was never prosecuted.

It was out of these experiences that the Irish Citizen Army was born. The Irish workers rapidly learned that the only rights they had were those they fought for. Even when rights existed in law, they only existed in practice when backed up by strength. The right to picket, for example, was a legal right, but the strikers soon learned that there was only one way to protect it, as one account graphically shows:

When the demand for legal rights was made, the police explained that they couldn't distinguish pickets from corner boys and hooligans. So it was arranged to have armlets with the word "Picket" on them to help the police in their dilemma. Also, the clause in the Trades Dispute Act granting the right to picket was printed on a handbill and each picket was given one.

'Armed with these safeguards, another picket set out for

Jacob's. He walked jauntily, feeling his legal rights assured. 'The policeman on duty looked at him with baleful eye "What

d'ye think you're doing?" he demanded. "Picketing." said the little man brightly. "See my armlet!"

he pointed to the official badge. The policeman gave him a sour look. He pulled out the leastlet and read it with eager confidence. The policeman listened grimly, fingering his club.

· "Have you finished?" he asked as the little man paused

breathless. "Yes, that's all," was the response:

"Well, take that!"—the club whistled through the air and fell with a thump, raising a lump on the picket's head. The policeman was certainly not going to stand any legal talk from a Larkinite!

So the little man departed for Liberty Hall-taking his badge, his leaflet and his lump with him-and the attempt to assert the right of picketing peacefully came to an end.' 110

Similarly, the right to hold marches was established only after someone measured the length of a policeman's baton and the marchers were issued with sticks six inches longer.

Fox describes how this happened:

'A strike procession was under way along the main road back to town when a scab tram, clanging its bell, came up behind. When this happened the police superintendent usually gave an order to his men to close in on the procession and force it over, leaving the tram lines clear. This time the order was given as usual, but nothing happened. It was repeated sharply three or four times.

The policemen looked at the hurley sticks, each with a broad club-like end and each held in a firm grip, and they measured the length of their batons against these with their eyes. The Citizen Army men looked determined, and the police batons were shorter. This fact had a decisive influence on social ethics as practised in the conduct of public processions. '111

The Irish Citizen Army which won these rights was not a nationalist army, like the Irish Volunteers, but a class army formed by the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union.

James Connolly, in particular, stressed the class and not just the national character of the Irish struggle.

'Not in the shouts of deluded wage-slave Volunteers, but in

<sup>110</sup> Fox. op. cit. p. 39. m ibid, p. 51.

the hunger cry of the nation's poor is heard the voice of

And again: 'Workers, ye are fools to train and drill for anything less than complete enfranchisement, for the utter alteration of the present social system,' 112

It was at this point that the treachery of reformist leaders reached its highest point. The Irish workers had organized in unions as never before. They showed they could overcome the disunity between Catholic and Protestant workers fostered by their enemies. (The first drill instructor of the Irish Citizen Army was a Protestant Ulsterman, Captain Jack White.) They had armed themselves to resist police violence and safeguard their rights.

Now they were to appeal for unity with the English working class. All the ingredients for victory were there — except one, revolutionary leadership of the entire class.

The British union leaders were terrified of what they saw in Ireland, just as they had been terrified by the wave of strikes that had swept through the miners, railwaymen, dockers, engineers and seamen in England in the previous two years.

They hastened to sell out this strike, just as they hastened to serve their own ruling class in the World War a few months later.

Not only the trade union leaders, but the nationalists too were terrified of the Irish working class. It should never be forgotten that William Murphy, the employers' leader, was an ardent supporter of the Irish Nationalist Party. And when a Board of Trade Inquiry into the Dublin lock-out was opened at the end of September, the employers were represented by Tim Healy KC, a Nationalist MP.

John Redmond's Nationalist newspaper 'Freeman's Journal' sided openly with the employers.

The early support from the British working class was magnificent. The British TUC raised £93,637 for the locked-out men. Liverpool railwaymen refused to handle traffic from Dublin and were themselves locked out. The conflict spread to Birmingham, Crewe, Derby, Sheffield and Leeds. But the own union refused to support them.

The railwaymen's leader J. H. Thomas, later to be prominent in the betrayals of 1926 and 1931, issued a statement that 'no trade union official ought to have the sole power of telling men

when they must cease work' — blandly ignoring the fact that one employer, Murphy, had taken 'sole power' to lock out 25,000 workers!

The Parliamentary Committee of the British TUC listened politely to Larkin, voted not to extend aid other than money to the Dublin men and, in accordance with this decision, the TUC refused to take action to stop scabs being shipped from Britain.

This guarantee of 'financial aid' by the TUC was, in fact, a means of strangling the Dublin workers rather than helping them. Connolly made this very clear in an article in 'Forward' on February 9, 1914:

We asked our friends of the transport trade unions to isolate the capitalist class of Dublin and we asked the other unions to back them up. But no, they said, we would rather help you by giving you funds. We argued that a strike is an attempt to stop the capitalist from carrying on his business, that the success or failure of the strike depends entirely upon the success or non-success of the capitalist to do without the strikers. If the capitalist is able to carry on his business without the strikers, then the strike is lost, even if the strikers receive more in strike pay than they formerly did in wages . . .

We asked for no more than the logical development of that idea of working-class unity, that the working class of Britain should help us to prevent the Dublin capitalists carrying on their

We asked for the isolation of the capitalists of Dublin and for answer the leaders of the British labour movement proceeded calmly to isolate the working class of Dublin.

'As an answer to those who supported our request for the isolation of Dublin we were told that a much better plan would be to increase the subsidies to enable us to increase strike pay. As soon as this argument had served its purpose, the subsidies fell off and the "Dublin Fund" grew smaller and smaller as if by

We had rejected the last terms offered by the employers on the strength of this talk of increased supplies, and as soon as that last attempt at settlement thus fell through, the supplies that last attempt at settlement thus fell through as had been gradually froze up instead of being increased as had been

Promised.'113

This account makes it clear that the British trade union leaders not only did not support the Dublin workers, but

<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Fox. op. cit. pp. 61-62.

Quoted in MacAonghusa and O'Reagain. op. cit. pp. 156-157.

deliberately worked in order to drive them back on the

Larkin condemned the British leaders as 'serpents' with Neither a soul to be saved nor a body to be kicked, and appealed

Tell your leaders now and everyday . . . that they must stand for trade unionism, that they are not there as apologists for the shortcomings of the capitalist system, that they are not there to assist the employers to defeat any section of workers striving to be free. '114

But at a special TUC Congress, Larkin was shouted down and a resolution calling on British trade unions to black all Dublin traffic and to organize a members' levy to support the Dublin workers was defeated by 2,280,000 to 203,000.115

While actually in attendance at this special conference, on December 9, 1913, the leaders of the National Union of Railwaymen had in their pockets the arrangements for re-starting work on the London and North-Western Railways boat at the North Wall of Dublin. The Irish delegation to the conference read of the line being re-opened while they were travelling back to Dublin.

No vote was taken of the men on strike. They were simply ordered back to work by their officials and told their strike pay would be stopped if they did not return.

Next, the Seamen's and Firemen's Union ordered its men in Dublin and Belfast to man the ships of the Head Line company, which were being discharged by scabs supplied by the Shipping Federation.

When the men refused, they were told by their leaders that union members would be sent from Britain to take their place. Members of the same union were advised to sign on for shipping companies whose Irish workers were on strike.

Goods declared black by the Dublin workers were loaded by members of the British National Union of Dockers and carried by the National Union of Seamen.

The Dublin men were savagely and cynically betrayed.

On February 1, 1914, the Irish Builders Union sent its 3,000 members back on terms of breaking off from the IT&GWU. obeying all commands of their employers, accepting a ruling never to come out in sympathy strikes, and agreeing to work with non-unionists and even men who had scabbed throughout

Connolly wrote: We Irish workers must go down into Hell, bow our backs to the lash of the slave driver, let our hearts be seared by the iron of his hatred ... eat the dust of defeat and

On October 14, 1914, Larkin left Ireland for America, betrayal. 116 ostensibly to collect funds for the Irish Transport Union. He did

not return for almost nine years. But the spirit of the Irish Revolution was to burn again, long

Despite the sell-out of the 1913 Dublin struggle by the British before that. trade union leaders, the Irish working class was not completely defeated.

The dangers revealed by the officers' Curragh Mutiny led to the convocation of a National Labour Demonstration on April 5, 1914, which declared that if Carson could arm, so could they, and if British officers were refusing to fight against their own class, the British privates should refuse to fight against theirs.

In March 1914, Larkin and Connolly had reconstituted the Irish Citizen Army, which had lost many members after the

Connolly emphasized the class nature of this army: 'An Dublin defeat. armed organization of the Irish working class is a phenomenon in Ireland. Hitherto the workers of Ireland have fought as part of the armies led by their masters, never as members of an army officered, trained and inspired by men of their own class. Now, with arms in their hands, they propose to steer their own course, to carve their own future. Neither Home Rule, nor the lack of Home Rule will make them lay down their arms. 117

And again: 'We are out for Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting, slum-owning landlords; not the sweating, profit-grinding capitalists. Not these are the Irish upon whom the future depends. Not these but the Irish working

The Irish Citizen Army, unable to get arms as easily as Carson's forces had done, went to enormous lengths to make up class.' 118 the discrepancy. Here is one account of how arms were

p. 127.

<sup>114</sup> Emmet Larkin. op. cit. pp. 145-147. 115 ibid p. 251.

MacAonghusa and O'Reagain, op. cit. p. 158.

117 O. Dudley Edwards and F. Pyle, 1916: The Easter Rising.

'Jim [Larkin] had sent me an address in Liverpool where I was to call for six guns and ship them to Ireland. Being by now in a small tombstone business, I took a crate to the place and packed the guns carefully in the case, which I addressed on my business cards showing a tombstone printed on them, and

In the bottom of the crate was laid a slab of stone one inch thick. This crate was handled at the Dublin docks by the men of

But it was not as clear-cut as all that. While the army's new constitution laid down that, where possible, its soldiers should be members of a trade union recognized by the Irish TUC, it also proclaimed its intention to 'sink all differences of birth, creed and property under the common name of the Irish people'.120

And it also claimed to stand for the 'absolute unity of Irish nationhood'.

The army's secretary was the playwright Sean O'Casey, who wrote: 'The delivery of Ireland is not in the Labour Manifesto, good and salutary as it may be, but in the strength, beauty, nobility and imagination of the Gaelic ideal."

O'Casey also insisted: 'Woe unto us if we hand over our ideals to be squared and shaped and glossed by those who would write in our skies that socialism is Ireland's hope.'121

There was thus already a definite tendency to compromise the interests of the working class for those of Irish nationalism. The outbreak of the Great War, however, sharpened up class antagonisms again.

James Connolly took an uncompromising stand against the War.

In the 'International Socialist Review' in March 1915, he wrote: 'The signal of war ought also to have been the signal for rebellion . . . when the bugles sounded the first notes for actual war, their notes should have been taken as the tocsin for social revolution.

The socialist proletariat of Europe in all the belligerent countries ought to have refused to march against their brothers across the frontiers . . . such refusal would have prevented the war and all its horrors even though it might have led to civil war.

Such a civil war would not, could not possibly have resulted in such a loss of socialist life as this international war has entailed, and each socialist who fell in such a civil war would have fallen knowing that he was battling for the cause he had worked for in days of peace, and that there was no possibility of the bullet or shell that laid him low having been sent on its murderous way by one to whom he had pledged "life-long love of comrades" in the international army of labour. 122

In his writings collected together as 'A Socialist and War' Connolly developed his thesis that the war presented the Irish revolution with its greatest opportunity. The socialist of another country is a fellow patriot, he wrote, as the capitalist of my own country is a natural enemy. 123

He bitterly attacked the Nationalist Party parliamentary leader John Redmond: 'Mr John E. Redmond has just earned the plaudits of all the bitterest enemies of Ireland and slanderers of the Irish race by declaring in the name of Ireland that the British government can now safely withdraw all its garrisons from Ireland, and that the Irish slaves will guarantee to protect the Irish estate of England until their masters come back to take possession - a statement that announces to the world that Ireland has at last accepted as permanent this status of a British province, 124

When Karl Liebknecht in Germany announced his opposition to the war, Connolly supported him enthusiastically, writing that 'all socialists would endorse his act'125 and proclaiming that 'because some 20 highly-placed criminals say our country requires us to slaughter our brothers beyond the seas or the frontiers, are we bound to accept their statement, and proceed to slaughter our comrades abroad at the dictate of our enemies at home?'126

He quoted the words of Karl Liebknecht's father, William Liebknecht:

The working class of the world has but one enemy-the

<sup>119</sup> Fred Bower, 'Rolling Stonemason', p. 218.

<sup>120</sup> R. M. Fox, 'History of the Irish Citizen Army', p. 64.

<sup>121</sup> P. Berresford Ellis, 'A History of the Irish Working Class', p.

Quoted in P. MacAonghusa and L. O'Reagain. The Best of

Connolly', p. 166. 123 'A Socialist and War . p. 29.

<sup>124</sup> ibid, p. 31.

<sup>125</sup> ibid, p. 37.

<sup>126</sup> ibid, pp. 38-39.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND capitalist class of the world, those of their own country at the

Connolly fought to defend the standards of living of the working class, particularly by opposing the export of food from Ireland to help Britain, and to defend workers' rights. He bitterly attacked the British TUC for both supporting the war and accepting the abolition of trade union conditions. He enthusiastically supported the Welsh miners who went on strike in 1915, and opposed the introduction of conscription to

James Larkin, by this time in the United States, also opposed the war. It was he who coined the famous slogan 'England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity'. The war, Larkin said, was the outcome of capitalist aggression and the desire to capture home and foreign markets'. i28

He insisted: 'We socialists are against this war. We are also against a more brutal war, the war of capital against the men who are oppressed and who have only their labour power to sell. We socialists want more than a dollar increase for the workers, we want the earth. 129

Larkin was accused of being pro-German. He replied: 'I am not for the Kaiser any more than I am for George of England. I am for the working class of every country. The English working class is as dear to me as that of my own country or any other land, but the government of England is the vilest thing on the face of the earth, 130,

According to Emmet Larkin, James Larkin in fact turned down an offer of \$200 a week from the Germans to organize sabotage in the United States.

Meanwhile, in Ireland, Connolly was drawing the conclusion that this was the time for revolution. As early as August 8, 1914, he was writing in the 'Irish Worker':

Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist

129 ibid, p. 190.

bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord. 131

By January, 1916, he was writing in 'The Workers Republic' that if revolution was not carried out during the war, it would be that it it is we know our opportunity when we see it, and we know when it has gone. We know that at the end of this war England will have an army of at least one million men, or more than two soldiers for every adult male in Ireland . . . 132

The situation in Ireland grew daily more tense. Connolly's paper the 'Irish Worker' was banned and the presses smashed by police and the military in December 1914. Its successor The Worker', printed in Glasgow, was banned in February 1915. Then Connolly produced the 'Workers Republic' printed in Liberty Hall under an armed guard of Citizen Army members.

But the Citizen Army was small. In October 1914, it could muster and equip only 200 men. The nationalist force, the Volunteers, was larger, mainly because it could get arms more easily (and therefore many sympathizers of the Citizen Army joined the Volunteers instead). But when a National Convention was held in Dublin in October 1914 to affirm the determination of the Irish Volunteers to maintain a force in Ireland, resist conscription and continue the fight for self-government, John Redmond led a breakaway called the National Volunteers.

In fact, only 12,000 of the 200,000 Volunteers supported the Convention, the rest supporting Redmond or dropping away altogether.

Nevertheless, Connolly pressed ahead with plans for an insurrection, denouncing revolutionaries who shrink from giving blow for blow until the great day has arrived and they have every shoe-string in place and every man has got his gun. and the enemy has kindly consented to postpone action in order not to needlessly hurry the revolutionists nor to disarrange their

Connolly's frustration was caused by the hesitation of the plans . . . ' 133 nationalists. But on May 19, 1915, a new Coalition Government was established in England which included eight Ulster

The nationalists, with qualified support from Connolly, Unionists, one being Carson.

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<sup>127</sup> ibid, p. 40. Karl Liebknecht had also written: 'The proletariat knows that the fatherland for which it must fight is not its fatherland, that in every country it has only one foe—the capitalist class, which oppresses and exploits it ('Militarism and Anti-Militarism').

<sup>128</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'James Larkin', p. 189.

<sup>130</sup> ibid, p. 192.

<sup>&</sup>quot; 'A Socialist and War', p. 36.

Libid, p. 125.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Berresford Ellis, op. cit. pp. 218-219.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND sought the support of the German government to equip an Irish Brigade to fight the British. Still the war dragged on, and Brigade to light the Britanian Between November 1915 and insurrection seemed no nearer. Between November 1915 and January 1916 Connolly intensified his campaign for armed revolution. Finally, the Supreme Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood decided that the armed uprising would commence on April 22, 1916. Connolly joined its Military Council where he worked with Tom Clarke, Eamonn Ceannt, Sean MacDiarmada, Padraic Pearse, Joseph Plunkett and

Volunteers were to seize key positions in Dublin and Volunteers in the Provinces were to surround garrisons in order to prevent troops and police advancing into the city. But the Irish leadership was divided. When Connolly called for the green flag to be hoisted above Liberty Hall 'as over a fortress held for Ireland by the arms of Irishmen' he was severely criticised by a committee meeting of the IT&GWU.

A German ship carrying arms and ammunition for the insurgents was scuttled after it was intercepted by 29 English warships, tipped off by police agents in the American Irish movement.

At 12 noon on April 24, 1916, (Easter Monday) the General Post Office in O'Connell Street was occupied and Pearse read out the Proclamation of the Republic of Ireland, which named Pearse as President of the Provisional Republic and Commander-General of the Army. Connolly was to be Vice-President and also Commandant-General of the Dublin Division.

But a section of the Volunteers leadership betrayed. Eoin MacNeill countermanded the order to rise and the Dublin men were left to fight alone for a week. (Connolly defiantly flew the Citizen Army flag from the Imperial Hotel, owned by the old enemy W. M. Murphy.)

Needless to say, the insurgents were totally abandoned by the Catholic Church. Indeed, the Irish bishops were vociferous in their support for the British and the war effort.

The Archbishop of Tuam declared that 'the man who strikes a blow against the Prussians, strikes a blow for justice, freedom and right'. 134

The Bishop of Cloyne said that Irishmen in the British Army

were 'defending the shores of Ireland in the trenches of the 134 Dudley and Pyle, op. cit. p. 197.

Continent. 135 Such messages of Christian peace were Continent.

incorporated in official recruitment leaflets by the British government.

The fear and horror at revolution cut across the boundaries of theological dispute. Protestant and Catholic hierarchies alike

denounced the rising.

The issue of the 'Freeman's Journal' of May 8, 1916, carried a letter from the Protestant Archbishop of Dublin which declared: This is not the time for amnesties and pardons, it is time for punishment swift and stern. On the same page another spokesman for the Prince of Peace, the Catholic Bishop of Kerry urged Irishmen never again to be 'drawn into an illegal action by evil-minded men affected by socialist and revolutionary doctrines'.136

In the British House of Commons, Redmond joined with Carson in expressing his 'horror and detestation' at the rising.

After the general surrender ordered by Pearse on April 29, the British authorities went berserk. There is no doubt whatsoever that the local military command was out of the control of the central British government.

Altogether 183 people were tried by Field General Court

Martial for complicity in the Easter Rising.

They included two youths of 16 and eight of 17 years of age. 74 of the defendants were aged 26 or younger. No fewer than 89 death sentences were imposed. 137

On May 3 P. H. Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh and Thomas

Clarke were executed.

On May 4 Joseph Plunkett, Edward Daly, Michael O'Hanrahan, and William Pearse were executed.

On May 5, John MacBride was executed.

On May 8 Eamonn Ceannt, Con Colbert, Sean Huston and Michael Mallin were executed.

On May 9, Thomas Kent was executed.

On May 12, James Connolly, wounded in the legs, was strapped to a wheel chair, wheeled out and executed. Sean

MacDermott was executed on the same day.

Asquith, the Liberal Prime Minister, desperately strove to halt these legal murders—for one very good reason. He needed American aid in the war, and there was a powerful Irish lobby in America.

<sup>135</sup> ibid.

<sup>137 &#</sup>x27;Intelligence Notes 1913-1916', pp. 257-267.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND Asquith declared himself 'shocked' at the first three Asquith declared findeed, given the War Office orders from

Yet the executions continued. Asquith then sent 'a strong telegram' to General Maxwell, Commander-in-Chief of the British Army in Ireland, demanding no further executions except 'in some quite exceptional circumstances' (i.e. prominent leaders). The next day Maxwell put four relatively

The nationalist parliamentary leader Redmond was also trying to halt the bloodletting, not because he cared for the lives of revolutionaries (he would gladly have exterminated the lot), but because he feared their martyrdom would inflame the Irish

(One of Redmond's supporters, John Dillon, MP, wrote to him: 'You should urge strongly on the government, the extreme unwisdom of any wholesale shooting of prisoners. The wisest course is to execute no one for the present. This is the most urgent matter of the moment. If there were shootings of prisoners on any large scale, the effect on public opinion might be disastrous in the extreme . . . a reaction might be very easily created.')139

Redmond, in fact, agreed to the execution of the leaders of the rising, but threatened to resign as leader of the Irish National Party at Westminster if non-leaders were shot. They were shot, and Redmond did not resign.

Eventually, the British government—alarmed by reactions in Ireland, world-wide protests and mounting anger in the United States—got the military back under control.

Even so, 1,867 prisoners—many of whom had nothing to do with the insurrection—were interned either in criminal prisons or at a special camp at Frongoch in Wales.

Even Eoin MacNeill, who had known nothing of the planning of the rebellion until the last moment and had then done everything in his power to prevent it, was sentenced to life imprisonment in Dartmoor.

The treatment of the Easter Rising prisoners was certainly in marked contrast to the honours heaped on the Ulster Unionist rebels and the mutineers of the British officer caste.

And when Roger Casement was tried for treason, and 138 Robert Kee, 'The Green Flag', p. 575. (39 ibid. p. 573.

subsequently executed for seeking German aid for the Irish revolution—even though he had explicitly opposed the Easter Rising—the man who prosecuted him was F. E. Smith who had Rising the himself organized armed resistance to the Crown only two years

F. E. Smith was not tried for treason. He was ennobled and previously. became Lord Birkenhead.



## Connolly and Larkin as Revolutionaries

Since 1916 many people have criticized the Easter Rising. Connolly, they say, should not have gone ahead when he knew, in his own words, that the odds were 'a thousand to one against'. And Pearse has often been written off as a romantic petty-bourgeois dreamer.

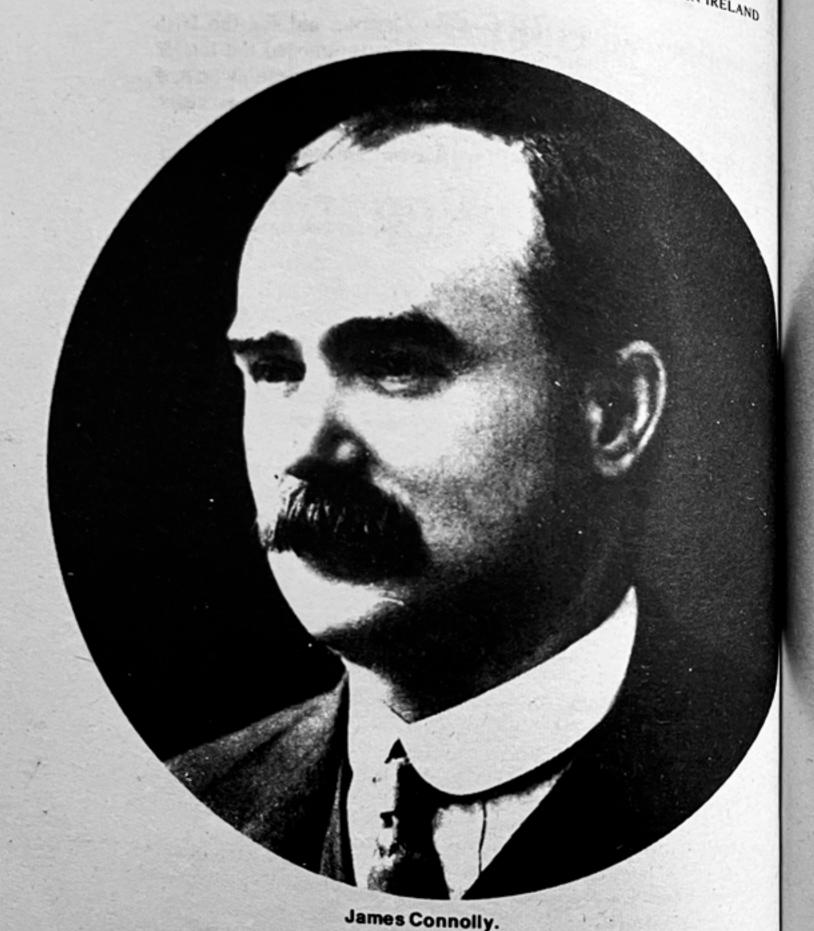
Of course, criticism can be levelled at James Connolly. Despite his enormous revolutionary fervour, he remained philosophically an idealist. This showed above all in his opportunist attitude to the Catholic Church. He took Holy Communion before his execution.

And in his writings on the Catholic Church he appealed to Catholics who had been 'repelled from socialism by the blatant and rude atheism of some of its irresponsible advocates'.140

'The Church does not put all her eggs in one basket,' he proclaimed, 'and the man who imagines that in the supreme hour of the proletarian struggle for victory the Church will definitely line up with the forces of capitalism . . . simply does not understand the first thing about the policy of the church . . .

The idea that 'a designing priesthood (was) intent on robbing and enslaving the credulous masses' belonged 'in the camp of the enemy (of socialism)'. 142

And Connolly concluded that 'it is a matter for congratulation that Irish socialists are free of such excrescences on socialist belief.'143



<sup>140</sup> Review by Connolly of 'Roman Catholicism and Socialism', by Patrick J. Cooney, published in 'The Harp' September 1908.

Quoted in MacAonghusa and O'Reagain, pp. 29-32.

<sup>141</sup> ibid.

<sup>142</sup> ibid.

<sup>143</sup> ibid.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND Thus, Connolly, despite being a great revolutionary, despite Thus, Connony, despite only a support for Liebknecht, his opposition to the War, his support for Liebknecht, his support for the 1905 Russian Revolution, was never a Bolshevik

Nevertheless, the Easter Rising was one of the most glorious events in revolutionary history, and Connolly is one of the great revolutionary heroes. As Lenin wrote at the time:

The centuries-old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interests, expressed itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty-bourgeois and a section of the workers after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of the

'Whoever calls such an uprising a "putsch" is either a hardened reactionary or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of picturing a social revolution as a living thing.

'For to imagine that social revolution is conceivable without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie, with all its prejudices, without a movement of politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against landlord, church, monarchal, national and other oppression—to imagine that means repudiating social revolution.

Lenin continued:

'The struggle of the oppressed nations in Europe, a struggle capable of going to the length of insurrection and street fighting, of breaking down the iron discipline in the army and martial law will "sharpen the revolutionary crisis in Europe" infinitely more than a much more developed rebellion in a remote colony. A blow delivered against British imperialist bourgeois rule in Ireland is of a hundred times greater political significance than a blow of equal weight in Asia or Africa. 144

James Connolly was a revolutionary. He challenged imperialism fearlessly: in industrial struggle, as in the organization of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union; in opposition to colonialism, as in his opposition to the British in the Boer War (he was jailed during Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin in 1900); in his support for the Russian revolutionaries in 1905; in his opposition to World War I and his

support for the anti-war stand of the German communist Karl Liebknecht; and in his leadership of the 1916 insurrection.

British capitalism had to murder such a man. His name, however, will always live in the memory of the working class.

Any critical assessment of James Connolly that is made by Marxists, therefore, is on the basis that he has to be recognized as an extraordinary working-class leader.

As such, he is done no service by so-called friends who misrepresent his weaknesses in order to further their own opportunist relations with backward elements in the Irish movement today.

One such false 'friend' is Raynor Lysaght, who wrote in 'International' (the magazine of the International Marxist Group) that Connolly was:

'A major scientific socialist thinker [albeit with reservations

as to the supernatural].'145

This nonsense is an unprincipled evasion of Connolly's practising Roman Catholicism by latter-day revisionists who do not possess one hundredth part of his revolutionary instinct, but who wish to preserve an uncritical relationship with religious Irish petty-bourgeois nationalists in the 1970s.

Connolly's belief in God, and defence of the Catholic Church, 146 while not preventing him from being a revolutionary fighter, certainly did prevent him from being a 'scientific socialist thinker', despite the value of such writings as 'Labour In Irish History', 'Ireland Reconquered', and his articles against the

To proclaim, as Lysaght does, that Connolly 'kept his religion to himself 147 and 'was able to put forward theory that is of decisive importance in leading Christians to scientific socialism'148 is not only seriously wrong, but thoroughly reactionary. It is designed to keep the Catholic Irish workers firmly tied behind their Catholic and nationalist leaders and split from the Protestant workers. It is completely in line with the IMG's policy of writing off every Protestant worker in the north of Ireland and thereby playing the game of British imperialism in keeping the working class divided.

<sup>144</sup> Lenin, On the Irish Rebellion of, 1916', in 'Lenin on Britain'. pp. 300-304

<sup>145 &#</sup>x27;Connolly', by Raynor Lysaght in 'International'. Jan-Feb.

<sup>146</sup> See, for example, 'Roman Catholicism and Socialism'.

<sup>147</sup> Lysaght. op. cit., p. 12.

<sup>148</sup> Lysaght. op. cit., p. 14.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND Another failure to deal correctly with Connolly's Catholicism was James T. Farrell's writing in 'The New International', organ of the American Socialist Workers Party, in 1948.149 Farrell—himself a Catholic—argued that the Catholic Church in Ireland was not the same as the Catholic Church in Europe, because it was 'not bound up with the system of oppression' in

And Farrell, too, claims that there was 'no glaring contradiction' between Connolly's socialism and his belief in

It has been shown again and again that the Catholic Church, not only internationally, but in Ireland too, systematically lined up with British imperialism against the Irish masses. Certainly, there were exceptions among the lower clergy, but individuals among the lower clergy have rebelled against the Catholic hierarchy in Europe as well.

And Connolly himself repeatedly showed that the discrimination against the Catholics in Ireland invariably hit the Catholic poor much more than it hit the Catholic rich.

Moreover, the issue is not just the role of the Catholic hierarchy, but the more fundamental question of whether a belief in 'the supernatural' is compatible with scientific socialism. The basis of scientific socialism (Marxism) is dialectical materialism which involves the complete, unqualified rejection of religion in all its forms.

This fundamental philosophical error was Connolly's main weakness. There has been much speculation about his 'over-emphasis' on trade unionism, at the expense of politics; the syndicalist influence of Daniel De Leon when Connolly was in America from 1903 to 1910; his concessions to pure nationalism in 1916; and his 'underestimation' of the English working class.

The conclusion has usually been that the 1916 rising was a terrible mistake. In a different context—that of the 'July Days' of 1917 in Petrograd-Trotsky wrote that those who are opposed to the seizure of power altogether are always ready to see 'pernicious adventures' in uprisings that fail. 150

Connolly strove to build a socialist party, helping to found the Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896 and declaring: 'If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag

over Dublin, unless you set about the organization of the socialist republic, your efforts will have been in vain.' 151

It was when this organization began to decline in 1903 that Connolly emigrated to the United States and stayed for seven years. (It is, incidentally, a big exaggeration to compare Connolly's stay in the United States with the exile of the Bolsheviks from Russia.152 Connolly left Ireland because of the effect on him of the decline of his party and because of the very real difficulties of providing for his family. These were serious problems, but in no way comparable to the legal exile imposed on the Bolsheviks by the Tsarist police.)

In the United States, Connolly joined de Leon's Socialist Labour Party, but subsequently broke from it and joined the Socialist Party of America. One reason for the break was a disagreement with de Leon over religion. He then became an organizer for the syndicalist Industrial Workers of the World. It is often argued-by Raynor Lysaght, for example-that it was this experience which turned Connolly into a believer in industrial unionism, instead of in socialist parties.

But Connolly was arguing as early as 1903 that 'There is only one remedy for this slavery of the working class and that remedy is the socialist republic, a system of society in which the land and all houses, railways, factories, canals, workshops and everything necessary for work shall be owned and operated as common property . . .

... There is only one way to attain that end, and that is for the working class to establish a political party of its own . . . every political party is the party of a class. 153

And in 1914 he wrote: 'In the modern state, the capitalist class has evolved for its own purposes of offence what it calls a Cabinet. This Cabinet controls its fighting forces, which must obey it implicitly . . . Can we trust our members with such a weapon as the capitalist class trust theirs? I think so.'154

In view of this, it hardly seems valid to argue that Connolly

<sup>149</sup> See 'Portrait of Connolly' in 'The New International'. 1948. 150 Leon Trotsky, 'Lessons of October', p. 27.

Ouver to Desmond Greaves, 'The Life and Times of James 152 See James Connolly, an Irish Rebel', by Albert Gates, a totally uncritical study in 'The New International', June 1942. 153 Connolly's election address for the Dublin Wood Quay Ward, 1903 in MacAonghusa and O'Reagain, 'The Best of Connolly'; 154 Connolly in 'Forward', May 23, 1914, quoted in Lysaght, p.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND created the Irish Army 'after the fashion of committees of the trade union movement.'iss It was, after all, a body of armed

To argue in retrospect that the failure of the Dublin rising was due to Connolly's involvement with the nationalist Volunteers is inadequate without an examination of the basis of that

Another criticism is that Connolly rushed into the Easter Rising with inadequate forces because of his belief that an insurrection could not possibly win once the war was over. This, it is said, underestimated the post-war radicalization of the British working class.

It is wrong to describe this reliance on the nationalists as either a tactical error or as 'using what was at hand,' as Lysaght says. In certain circumstances it is correct for workers to fight in alliance with nationalist forces against an imperialist enemy.

More fundamental, is the fact that Connolly's concept of a 'Workers' Republic' was a long way removed from the Leninist call for the dictatorship of the proletariat. As late as April 8, 1916, Connolly wrote in the 'Workers Republic': 'The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour. They cannot be separated. Ireland seeks freedom Labour seeks that an Ireland free should be the sole mistress of her own destiny, supreme owner of all material things within and upon her soil. Labour seeks to make the free Irish nation the guardian of the interests of the people of Ireland, and to secure that end would vest in that free Irish nation all property rights as against the claims of the individual, with the end in view that the individual may be enriched by the nation, and not by the spoiling of his fellows.'

Yet 'Ireland Free' could not be 'mistress of her own desinty and the individual could not be 'enriched by the nation' without the forceful suppression of the bourgeoisie. Connolly stopped short of this revolutionary conclusion, fought for by Lenin in 1917 in the teeth of opposition at the very top level of the Bolshevik Party (see Trotsky's 'Lessons of October').

It was because of this political confusion, and not practical errors', that Connolly failed to break the Irish working class decisively from bourgeois nationalism.

Yet it was indubitably correct to strive for the Irish insurrection during the imperialist war, when the British army of occupation was occupied elsewhere.

Of course, there were tactical and organizational errors. Those who wish to avoid all such errors will never start a revolution. But the attempt to present as a 'criticism' of Connolly a list of such 'errors', as Lysaght does, while avoiding the fundamental question of materialism or idealism and of Connolly's non-Marxist conception of the relations between classes is thoroughly anti-Marxist.

CONNOLLY AND LARKIN AS REVOLUTIONARIES

Connolly did not create a Bolshevik Party and Lenin did. But Lenin achieved this, not because he was a better tactician or organizer, but because he devoted a lifetime to the struggle for dialectical materialism and the organizational concepts of the revolutionary party, based on democratic centralism and the unique revolutionary role of the working class.

This could only be done by absorbing and developing the theoretical and practical conquests achieved by Marx and Engels and applying them to the development of capitalism and the oppressed masses.

Connolly never did this. He never broke from philosophical idealism, from religion, and therefore, despite his enormous revolutionary fervour and courage, could never create the Marxist Party which is the prerequisite for successful proletarian revolution.

In this sense, despite his enormous courage and stature, Connolly left a legacy to the Irish working class that must be

fought against by Marxists. The Pabloite revisionists, themselves implacably opposed to the construction of such parties, are compelled to run away from this central question posed by the life and struggles of James Connolly and to concentrate instead on secondary questions of organization and tactics.

The fate of Connolly's comrade, Jim Larkin, is even more instructive than that of Connolly himself. It shows that militancy and courage alone are not enough. A refusal to struggle for revolutionary theory and, in particular, the failure to take up the fight against Stalinism destroyed Jim Larkin.

Lenin had seen Larkin's potential during the Dublin lock-out

The Irish proletariat that is awakening to class consciousness of 1913. He wrote: has found a talented leader in the person of Comrade Larkin, the secretary of the Irish Transport Workers' Union. Possessing remarkable oratorical talent, a man of seething Irish energy, Larkin has performed miracles among the unskilled workers—that mass of the British proletariat which in England

<sup>155</sup> Lysaght op. cit., p. 17.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND is so often cut off from the advanced workers by that cursed petty-bourgeois, liberal, aristocratic spirit of the British skilled

But Larkin was hit badly by the 1913 sell-out and the subsequent capitulation of the Second International at the outbreak of war. Late in 1914, disregarding the pleas of his comrades in the Transport Union, he left for a speaking tour of the United States, ostensibly to raise money for the union.

It was, of course, not necessary for a leader of his stature to carry out such a task and, in fact, the 'lecture tour' grew into a

While in the States, Larkin opposed the imperialist war and formed an organization called the Four Winds Fellowship which led a number of strikes. This Fellowship was open to trade unionists and socialists who were born in the British Empire and who pledged themselves to oppose the British government during the war.

He also addressed huge meetings—such as the 'Irish Race Convention' in New York in May 1918, attended by 2,500 delegates, 157

And he spoke to 5,000 mourners at Joe Hill's funeral in November 1915.

During this time Larkin was associated with 'Big Bill' Haywood of the Industrial Workers of the World, and after the war he joined the Socialist Party and worked closely with John Reed, when the latter returned to America with his eye-witness account of the Russian Revolution.

Fear of this revolution led to Larkin being denounced both by the right wing of the American labour movement and by the 'respectable' wing of the Irish movement in America.

And hysteria mounted with a massive witch-hunt against socialists (Reed was indicted on three charges) and a mass trial of a hundred IWW members in Chicago. 158.

Throughout the world, the ruling class was filled with alarm. One of its most far-sighted representatives, Lloyd George,

'The whole of Europe is filled with the spirit of revolution. There is a deep sense, not only of discontent but of anger and revolt among the workmen against pre-war conditions. The

whole existing order in its political, social and economic aspects whole existing by the masses of the population from one end of Europe to another. 159

Larkin became an enthusiastic supporter of the Third International of Lenin and Trotsky and worked in the Russian Soviet Recognition League. (This League organized a meeting in Madison Square Garden in June 1918, to hear Norman Thomas demand recognition for the Soviet Union.)

The Socialist Party numbered 110,000 members by January 1919, but the left wing was growing rapidly. By July the right wing had suspended or expelled more than two-thirds of the entire membership! The left then split itself, on the issue of whether to form a Communist Party immediately or whether to try to capture the Socialist Party, with Reed, Ben Gitlow and Larkin in the latter tendency. The outcome was the formation of the American Labour Party (claiming 60,000 members) and the Communist Labour Party, which Larkin joined (10,000 members).

That same year saw a giant strike wave in the United States, which began with the Seattle General Strike in February and culminated in huge coal and steel strikes in the autumn.

Congress armed the Justice Department with \$500,000 'to secure the nation against anarchist bomb plots.'160

A right-wing frenzy built up and the obvious target was the Union of Russian Workers, 200 members of which were arrested on November 7.

But the very next day, the target was the working class. 500 members of unions, socialist and radical organizations were seized — including Larkin, Larkin, described in the 'New York Times' as 'one of the most dangerous agitators in this country' was charged with violating the New York Statute on criminal anarchyisi and held on the astronomical bail of \$15,000

The magistrate declared that 'every member of the Communist Party in this state, numbering 75,000 or more, is guilty of criminal anarchy in becoming a member of the party. 162

<sup>156</sup> Lenin, 'On Britain', p. 128.

<sup>157.</sup> Sean Cronin, 'The McGarrity Papers', p. 70.

<sup>158</sup> For Larkin's work with Reed see Ray Ginger, The Bending

<sup>159</sup> E. H. Carr, 'The Bolshevik Revolution', Vol. 3, p. 128.

Emmet Larkin, 'James Larkin', p. 237.

<sup>161</sup> ibid, p. 237. 1@ ibid, p. 238.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND On May 3, 1920, Larkin was sentenced to 5-10 years and sent to Sing-Sing. Later, he was transfer. On May 3, 1920, Later, was sentenced to 5-10 years imprisonment and sent to Sing-Sing. Later, he was transferred prison in Dannemora, known as one of the crual. to Clinton Prison in Dannemora, known as one of the cruellest

Larkin was finally pardoned and released in January, 1923 (he had been briefly freed in 1922, pending an appeal which failed) and he received a telegram: 'The Communist International sends its warmest greeting to the undaunted fighter released from the "democratic" prisons. Zinoviev,

In April 1923, Larkin was arrested, placed on Ellis Island and sent back to Ireland, where he was only too anxious to go. James Larkin arrived back in Ireland on April 30, 1923, and

was greeted in Dublin by 5,000 supporters.

The Republican side in the Irish Civil War was by this time unable to continue the unequal struggle and its soldiers were being disarmed, arrested and imprisoned without trial in large

The ceasefire ordered by Eamon de Valera, President of the Republican Government, and Frank Aiken, of the Irish Republican Army, in fact, took effect only five hours before Larkin landed in Ireland.

At the same time, employers throughout Britain and Ireland were on the offensive against the working class. On April 15, 1921 — 'Black Friday' — the employers called the bluff of the union leaders' Triple Alliance.

Leaders of the British railwaymen's and transport workers' union reneged on their pledge to take strike action with the miners to defend the latter against wage cuts.

Not only the miners, but other sections of workers were forced to accept wage cuts which one estimate puts at a total of £10m.164

Irish employers were quick to follow the lead of their British counterparts. Before Larkin's return, the Irish Transport Workers' Union executive had capitulated to farmers in the Waterford area and accepted wage-cuts for agricultural workers after a five-month strike.

In July 1913, the Dublin employers announced a cut of 25 a day in the wages of dockers whose average earnings were 16s a day. Without waiting for the union executive, Larkin led 1,500 men out on strike.

163 ibid, p. 246. 164 K. Hutchinson, Decline and Fall of British Capitalism 'p. 214

After three months, the Transport Union Executive accepted a government mediation offer and a cut of Is a day. This went a government and also to a ballot of the men which had decided by 687 votes to 443 to continue the strike.

Larkin was by this time in complete conflict with the right-wing leadership of the IT&GWU under William O'Brien and Thomas Foran. Only a few weeks before the dockers' strike these officials had suspended Larkin as general secretary of the union and obtained a court injunction to prevent him and his supporters interfering with their operations as officials of the union.

Immediately after the sell-out of the dockers, the employers imposed a 1s-a-day wage-cut on 500 workers in the coal trade. The grain men were next, then the carters, seamen and firemen. The core of resistance was broken and wages were slashed throughout Irish industry.

Meanwhile, Larkin was invited by the Communist International to represent Ireland at its Fifth Congress in June 1924. (He had, in fact, been elected to the Moscow Soviet in 1922 while he was in Sing Sing jail, by a group of Russian tailors who had returned to the Soviet Union from America.)

At this Congress he declared his support for the position taken by Lenin, before his death, on the British Communist Party in relation to the Labour Party. He was elected to the Executive Committee of the Communist International and, on his return to Dublin, led a march behind a banner inscribed 'To the Revolutionary Transport Workers of Dublin, Greetings from the Moscow Transport Workers' and 'Proletarians, Unite in the Soviet Federated Republics. 165

But in Ireland, the right wing was gaining ground in the Transport Union. In March, 1924, Larkin had actually been expelled from the union by a unanimous vote of the executive committee after a legal action brought by him against changes in

While Larkin was in Russia his supporters (including his the union rules had failed. brother Peter) broke away from the IT&GWU and formed the Workers' Union. They won over 16,000 Dublin workers (about two-thirds of the Dublin membership) but only 20 of the 300

The Workers' Union was then greatly weakened by a branches outside Dublin: lock-out imposed by the Coal Merchants' Association in July

<sup>165</sup> Emmet Larkin, 'James Larkin', p. 279.

1925 — with the employers being assisted by the Transport

The employers made good use of the divisions in the workers' ranks and by 1926 there were only 95,000 trade union members

Larkin's decline has usually been described as synonymous with the decline of trade unionism in Ireland at this time. Several writers —such as Emmet Larkin—have argued that right-wingers like William O'Brien were more in tune with the

This was obviously a period of decline in the fortunes of the working class, but the source of Larkin's political degeneration goes deeper than that.

In February 1928, he attended an executive meeting of the Communist International in Moscow. The witch-hunt against Trotsky was in full spate. At a full session of the Comintern, at which both Stalin and Trotsky spoke, Larkin was asked by Bukharin (who had replaced Zinoviev as President of the Comintern) if he wished to speak. According to Emmet Larkin, Larkin replied that the issue was 'one between the men and women of Russia' and that it would be 'an impertinence in his part to take sides'.166

But according to the same source—quoting an eye-witness called Jack Carney—Larkin spoke to an audience of 2,000 people at a meeting of the Moscow Soviet and appealed to them to 'hold up the hands of Stalin' .167

Then Larkin, despite his support in 1924 for the Leninist line, went along with Stalin's Third Period policy brought in after 1928. This policy was disastrous for the Irish working class. Reduced in numbers, divided, and short of funds, the Irish labour movement was unable to resist further wage-cuts imposed by the employers, backed up by coercive legislation in the form of Public Safety Acts. (One of many bans was that imposed in November 1931 on a public meeting to mark the anniversary of the Russian Revolution.)

In 1934, the year of the Kirov assassination, Stalin's murder machine moved into top gear. At no time did Larkin ever issue a single statement on the crimes of Stalin. His own fortunes were in decline. His paper 'Irish Worker' had collapsed in 1932 from lack of funds. That same year he received a derisory 1,200 votes in what used to be his personal stronghold of North Dublin when he stood for parliament. (In 1928 he had polled over 8,000

The Communist Party of Ireland was relaunched in 1933 with its own paper 'Irish Workers' Voice'. Though the Party treated Larkin as an elder statesman, he took no part in its activities and never wrote for its paper.

While never making a public recantation, Larkin in practice dissociated himself from the international communist movement around 1934. Yet, although a word from him against the murders, purges and trials would have carried great weight among workers throughout the world, it was never forthcoming.

In fact, there is no escaping the conclusion that Larkin was moving to the right. And this went as far as an undeniable bending before the pro-Franco feeling in Catholic Ireland during the Spanish Civil War. (Bukharin in a special discussion with Larkin in Moscow in 1924 had failed to break him from his Catholicism.)

In 1936, under pro-Franco pressure and with General O'Duffy and his Fascist Blueshirts on the streets, the Executive Committee of the Workers' Union-with Larkin's tacit approval-passed a resolution forbidding any official of the union from appearing on any but a trade union platform.168 This was directed at union officials - particularly Larkin's fellow delegate to the 1928 Congress of the Communist International, Jack Carney, who had been speaking in Ireland in support of the Spanish Republicans. Carney appealed to Larkin for support and got none.

To keep silent on Stalinism, as Larkin did, could only mean decline. In Spain, the Stalinists were collaborating with the national bourgeoisie. In Ireland, the dominant bourgeoisie was Catholic. And Larkin bowed before them.

At the end of 1941, Larkin joined the Irish Labour Party and in 1943 was nominated as candidate for North Dublin in the General Election. The executive of the IT&GWU, led by Larkin's old enemy O'Brien, objected to his candidature. And Larkin did his utmost to placate the men he had spent a considerable part of his life in fighting.

He wrote to the Labour leaders: 'I assure you most sincerely that I am willing to work loyally with any member of the Party regardless of any previous differences and antagonisms, and I shall at all times accept the judgement of the Administrative Council.

<sup>166</sup> op. cit., p. 290.

<sup>167</sup> ibid.

<sup>168</sup> Emmet Larkin, op. cit., p. 298.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND When this was not enough, he wrote again: 'If, in the heat of when this was not chough, the made by me, I regret having past conflicts, statements, if today they appear as obstacles. made those statements, if today they appear as obstacles to a

Larkin died on January 30, 1947.

Writing about another workers' leader who was subsequently destroyed by Stalinism, Lenin declared:

People who can give expression to this temper of the masses, who can rouse such temper, must be prized and every assistance must be given to them. At the same time we must openly and frankly tell them that temper alone is not sufficient to lead the masses in the great revolutionary struggle.

'The writer of the letter (Gallacher's letter against parliamentary activity) is imbued with noble proletarian hatred for the bourgeois "class politicians". (This) is the beginning of all wisdom, the very basis of every socialist and communist movement and of its success.

But the author fails to take into account the fact that politics is a science and an art that does not drop from the skies, it is not acquired for nothing, and that if it wants to conquer the bourgeoisie, the proletariat must train its own proletarian "class politicians" who will be as skilled as the bourgeois politicians.

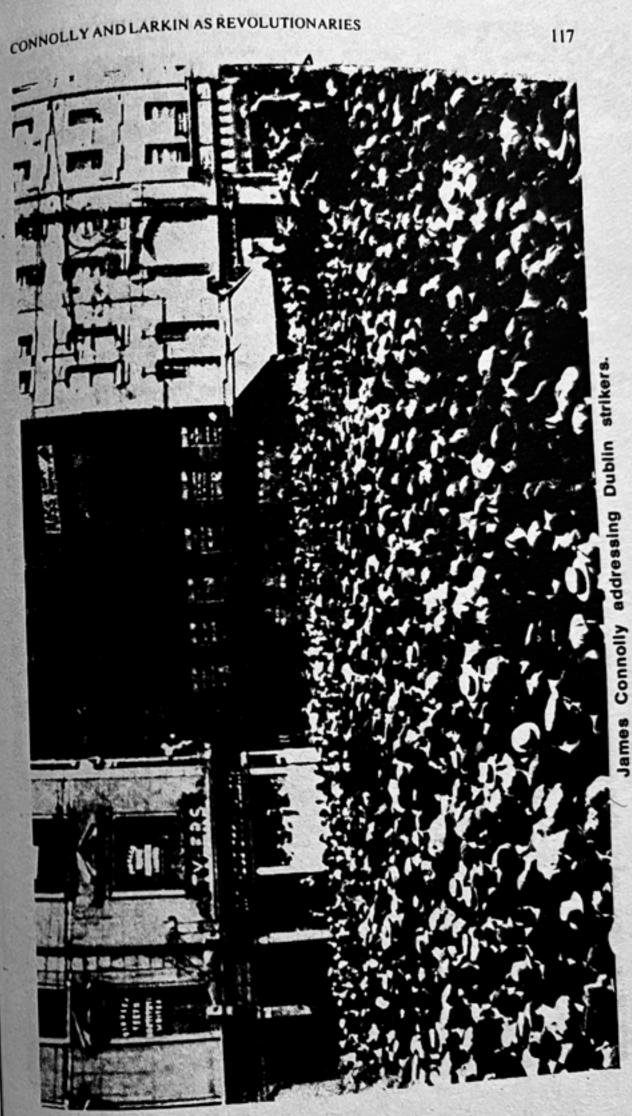
Lenin's method was to welcome and assist workers who wanted to be communists, but to fight for their political development against the bourgeois conceptions that they brought with them from outside the Communist Party.

Larkin possessed the same 'proletarian hatred' for bourgeois politicians, the same-indeed, greater-ability to arouse and express the temper of the masses, as did Willie Gallacher. 170

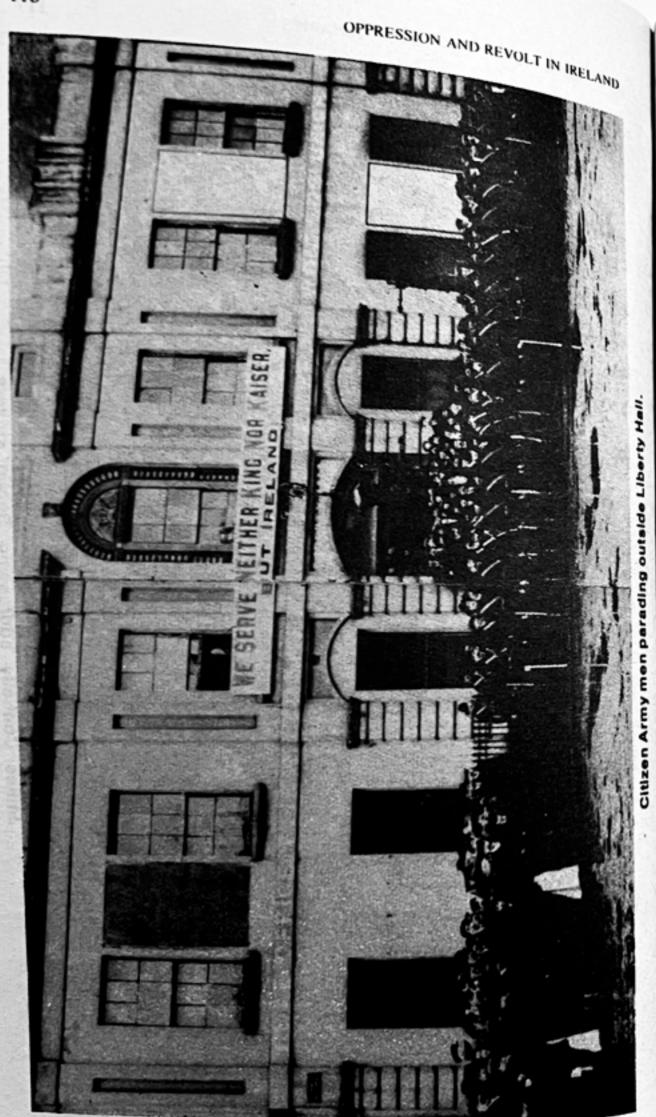
But Stalinism was not just the physical liquidation of Bolsheviks. The physical liquidation was necessary in order to liquidate the theory and method of Bolshevism. It amounted to a world-wide attempt to end the struggle to train proletarian revolutionary fighters in theory and practice.

To a considerable extent, Larkin's fate was one of the fruits of Stalinism.

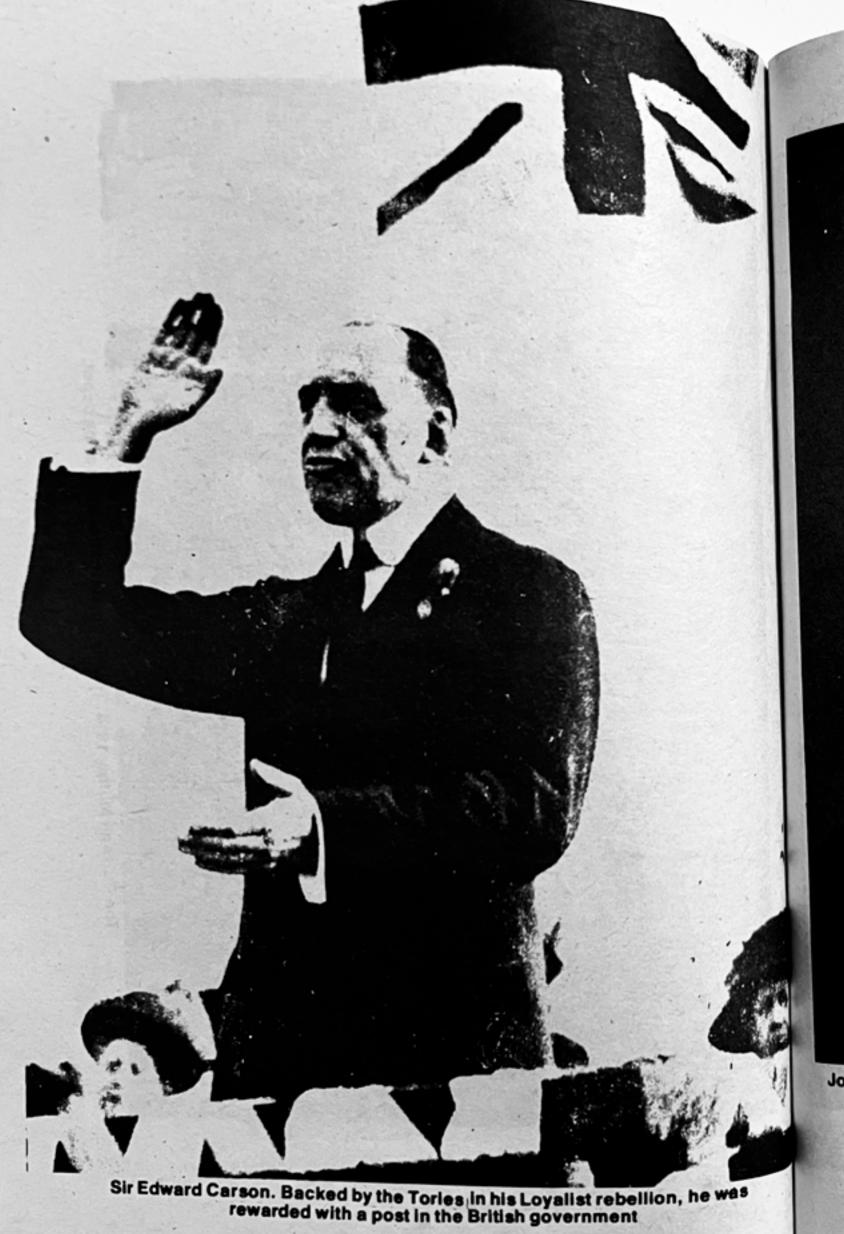
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<sup>169</sup> Emmet Larkin, op. cit., p. 300. 170 Lenin, 'Left Wing Communism'.

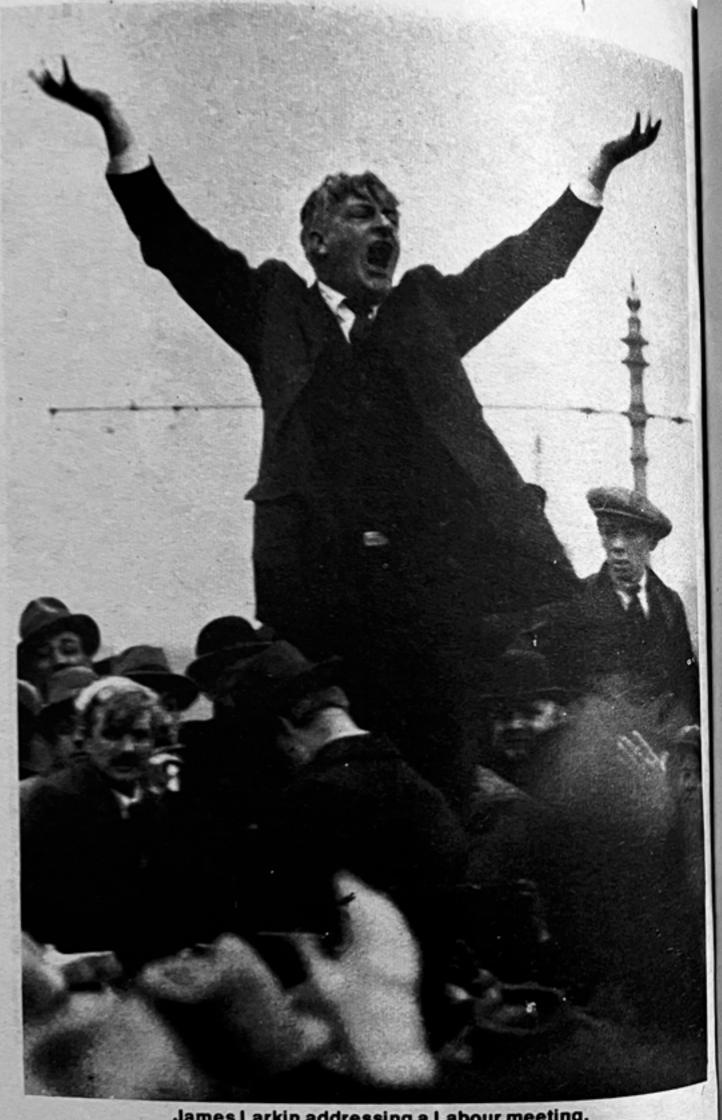




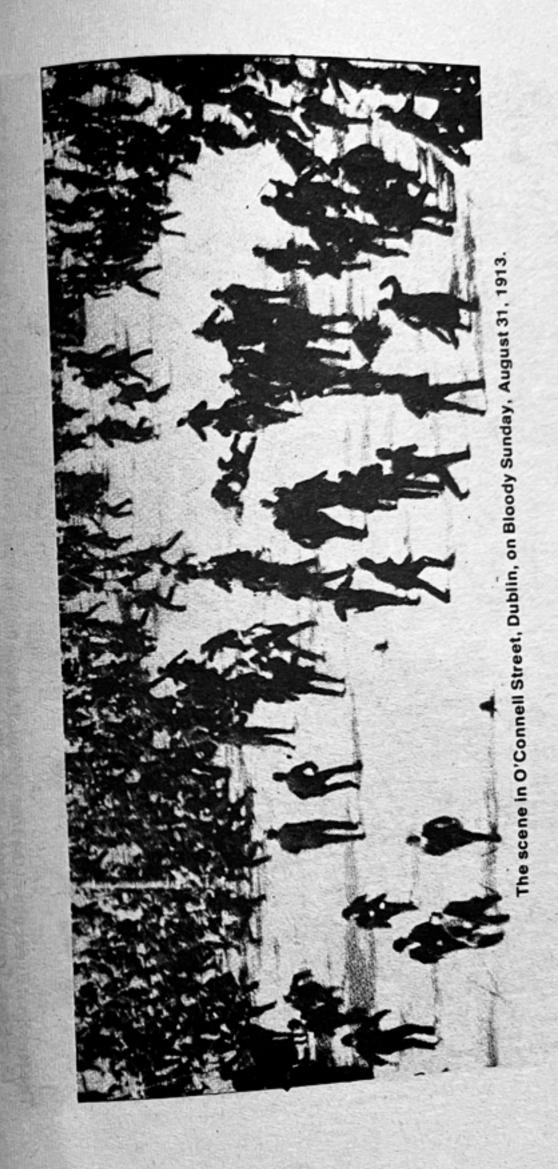


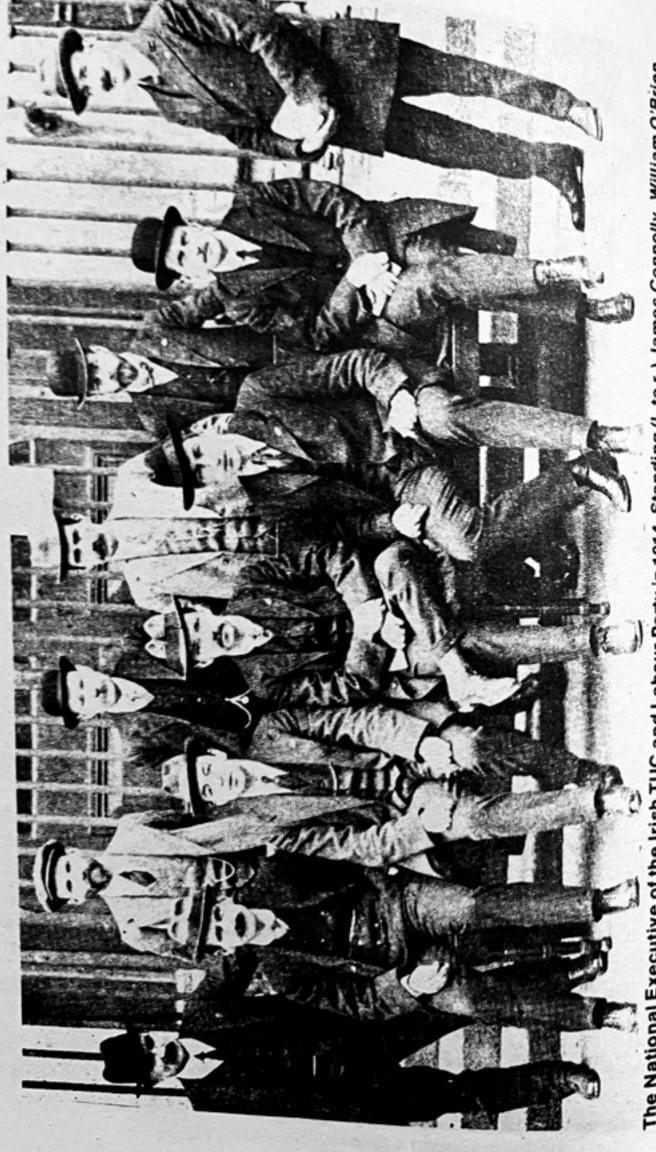


John Redmond, Nationalist leader who opposed the building of trade unions and supported the British in World War I.

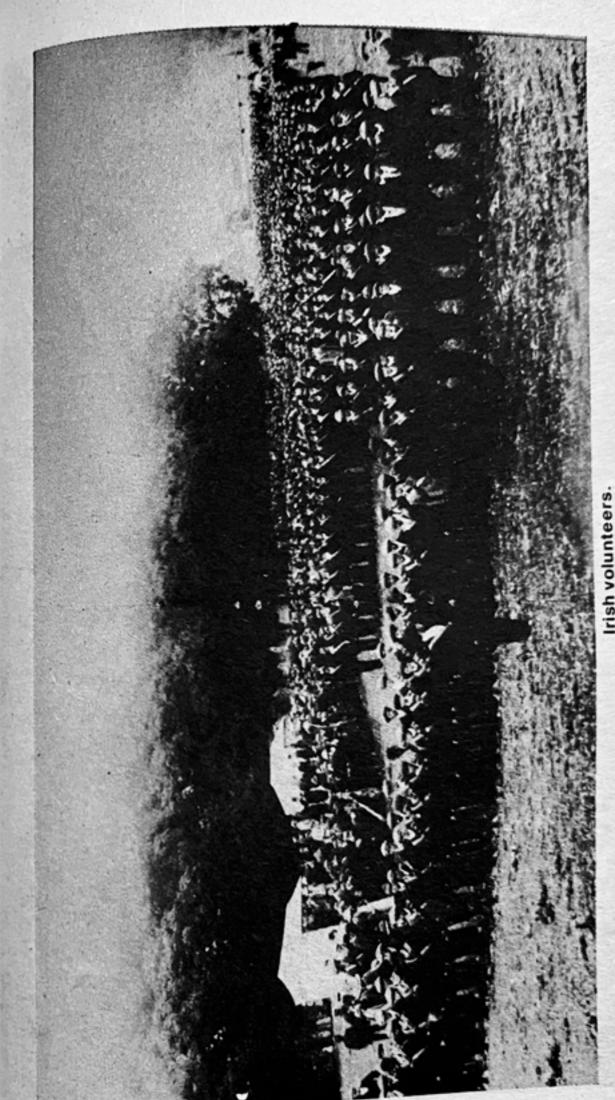


James Larkin addressing a Labour meeting.

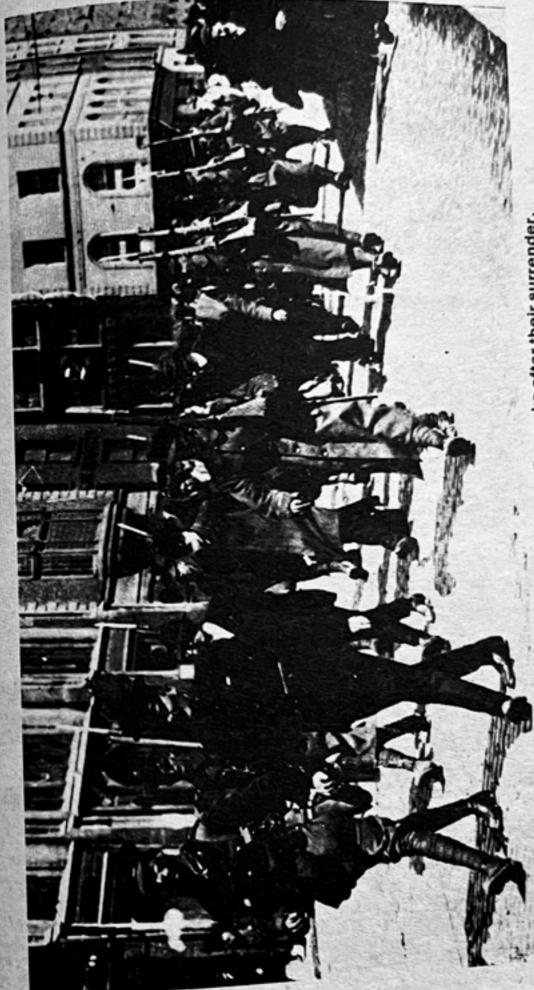




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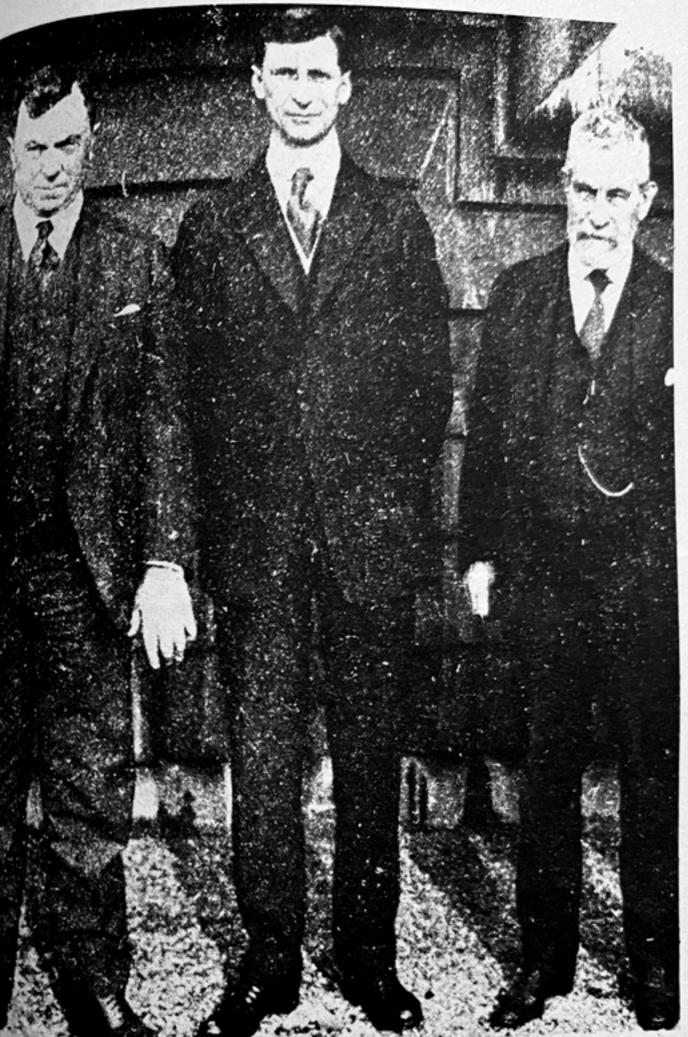




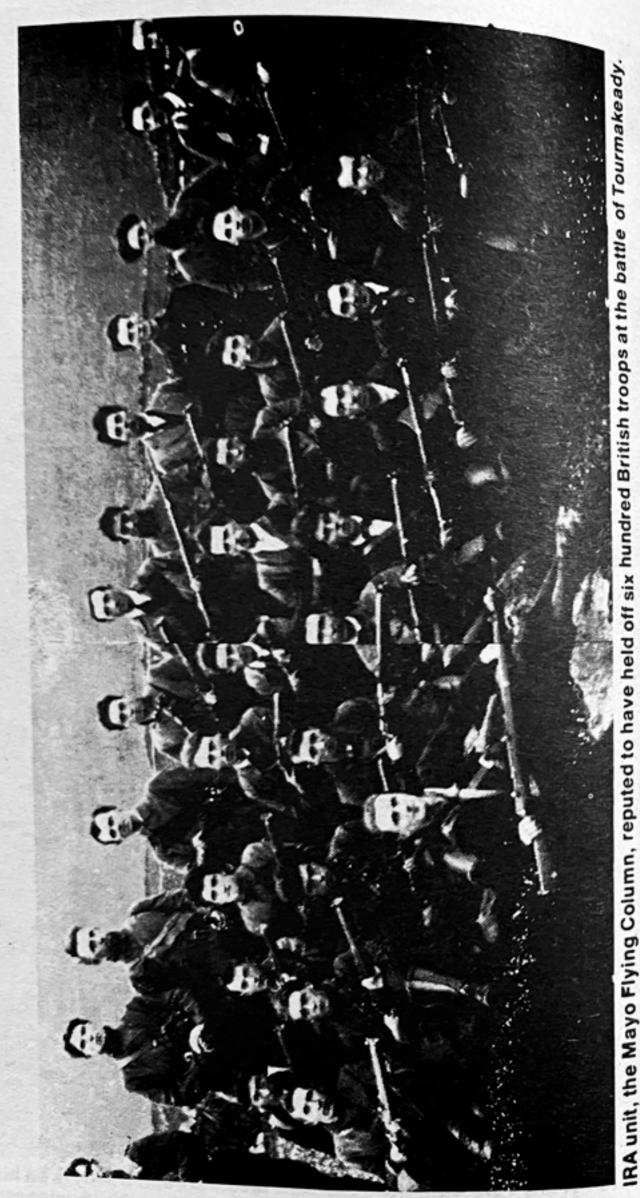


Rebels being marched to Richmond Barracks after their surrender





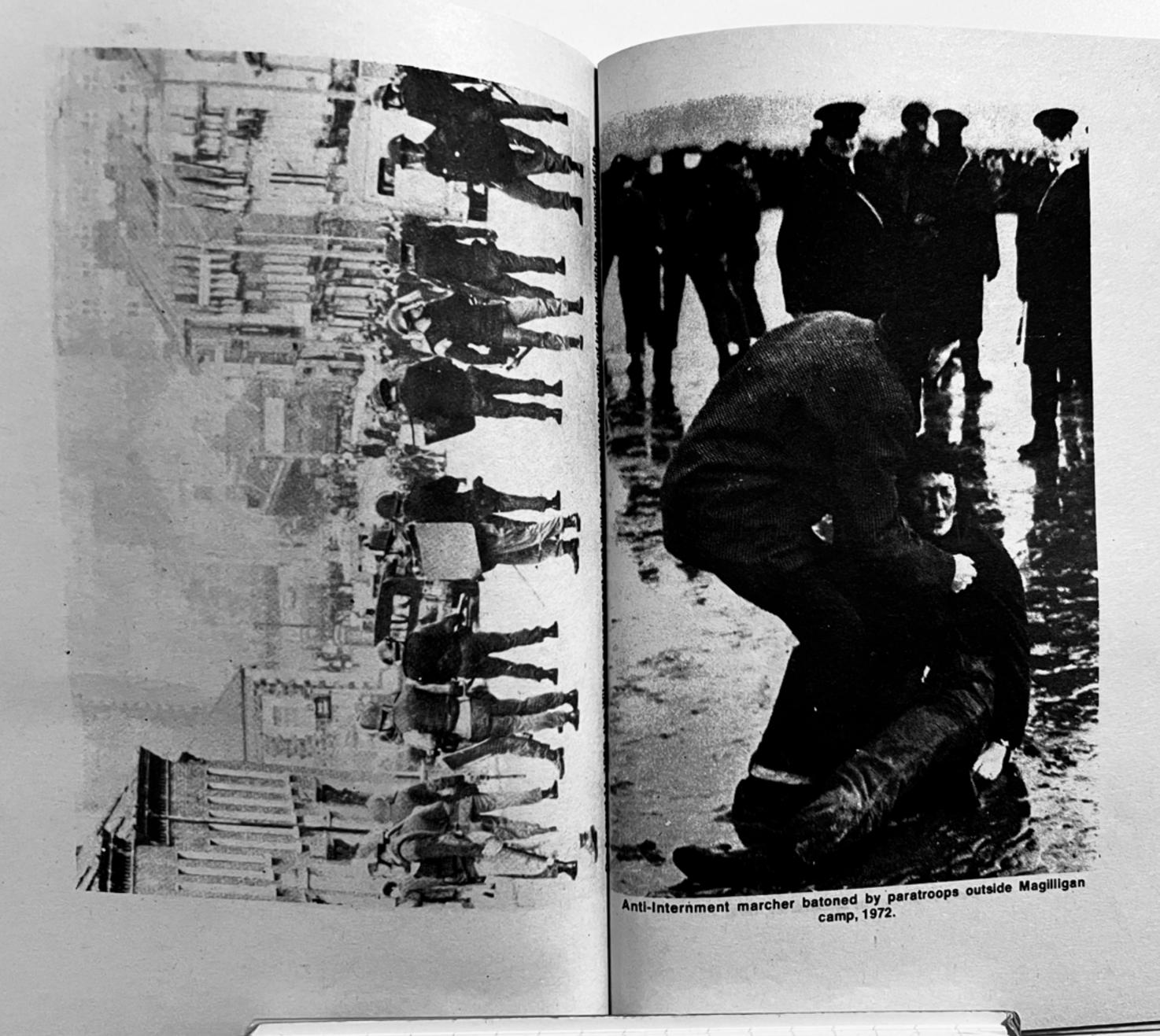
De Valera in New York with Irish American leaders. John Devoy is on his left.
De Valera placed his hopes on President Wilson and wealthy businessmen.



IRA unit, the Mayo Flying Column, reputed to have



for the death of a British soldier, on the town of Balbriggan.





# 'What we did was contrary to everything we stood for.'

Ireland was partitioned in December 1920, following months of the bloodiest suppression even by the standards of British Imperialism in Ireland.

Since December 1919 recruitment for the Royal Irish Constabulary had been taking place in England. Recruits were for the most part brutalized ex-soldiers, recruited after a proposal by Winston Churchill to set up a corps of gendarmerie.

(There is evidence that some members of the ruling class—such as the military chief Sir Henry Wilson—entertained the idea that they might be used in England as well. Wilson expressed the fear that in the event of industrial trouble in England we shall be boiled.') 171

Between January 1, 1920 and August 1922, when recruitment ended, over 12,000 men were recruited into this force which took the name, significantly, of a pack of hunting hounds in Tipperary—the Black and Tans.

Even some establishment figures expressed nervousness at what this gang would do. '[General] Macready proposed to draft these mobs over to Ireland at once', wrote Sir Henry Wilson.

There would be no hope of forming and disciplining this crowd of unknown men'. 172 Macready was head of the British forces

The main strategy of the Black and Tans was that of reprisals. Nationalist activity, real or imagined, was followed by shootings, burnings, looting, large-scale arrests and

<sup>171</sup> Sir Henry Wilson's Diary, quoted in D. G. Boyce 'Englishmen and Irish Trouble', p. 49.

172 Ibid, p. 54.

destruction on a mass scale. This happened at Thurles (January 1920), Limerick (April), Fermoy (June), Tuam (July), Limerick again (August), Templemore (August) and Galway (September).

Meanwhile Lord French, the general who had sent hundreds of thousands of men to a futile death in the World War, urged that Ireland be 'on a war basis, as had been done in the Boer War, when the rebels were seized and put into concentration camps'. 173

Martial law was imposed in Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, Limerick, Clare, Kilkenny, Waterford and Wexford.

The Black and Tans were backed by an equally sinister force, the auxiliaries, under the command of Brigadier-General Frank Percy Crozier, who had fought with the White Armies in Lithuania in 1919 and in the wars of intervention against the Soviet Union on the Polish front in 1919-1920.

The auxiliaries were composed of ex-officers and were paid £1 a day — a princely sum when thousands of ex-officers, not to mention private soldiers, were out of work.

One Auxiliary officer, a certain Major King, put a bucket over a 13-year-old boy's head in Drumconda, and shot him through it. And the case of Ernest O'Malley, tortured in Dublin Castle by Auxiliaries with a red-hot poker, was only one of many.

An international storm of protest was aroused in September, 1920, when the Black and Tans committed extensive destruction in Balbriggan and burned down the hosiery factory of Deedes Templar and Co, the town's main source of employment.

On November 21, the Black and Tans opened fire on a football crowd at Croke Park, Dublin, killing 14 people, including children, and wounding 60.

Following this incident Winston Churchill told the Cabinet that he could not feel it right 'to punish the troops when, goaded in the most brutal manner and finding no redress, they take action on their own account'.

On December 12, the centre of Cork was burned down and fire engines immobilized by drunken Black and Tans. After this incident, the Essex Regiment, who also had a hand in it, adopted a burnt cork as their unofficial emblem.

The sole purpose of all this brutality was to force the Nationalist leaders to accept Partition.

173 ibid, p. 47.

This they did, despite the fact that a Home Rule Bill had already been passed by Parliament in 1914—with no exceptions. Lloyd George's Government of Ireland Bill, 1920, contained provisions for the establishment of two parliaments and governments in Ireland, each having very limited powers. Home Rule, indeed, had been promised to Ireland during the War, in return for conscription, but Lloyd George would have had no scruples at all in breaking such a pledge.

The British Prime Minister's record on Ireland had been devious in the extreme. In 1912 he had been one of the principal authors and advocates of the Home Rule Bill which contained a provision for one national parliament for all Ireland. In 1914 he was responsible for an attempted compromise to enable four Ulster Counties to obtain exclusion from Home Rule for 6 years. In 1916 he had proposed immediate Home Rule, with exclusion for six Ulster Counties—an arrangement which he told the Unionists would be permanent, and the Nationalists would be temporary.

In 1917 he had promised that the Irish Convention as a constituent assembly should frame a new settlement by agreement for all Ireland. In 1918, under pressure from the United States, he insisted that Ulster must acquiesce in any settlement that the Convention proposed.

In 1920 he was still under pressure from the United States, with its considerable Irish lobby, and the Easter Rising of 1916 had been a grim warning. In addition the Irish results in the 1918 'Khaki Election' (when Lloyd George promised soldiers 'a land fit for heroes') had virtually wiped out Redmond's moderate Nationalist Party. Almost every Irish constituency returned a Nationalist Party. Almost every Irish constituency returned a Sinn Fein member pledged not to sit at Westminster.

Indeed, the Sinn Feiners pronounced themselves the first Dail Eireann (Parliament of Ireland) in January 1919, and issued the 'Democratic Programme of the First Dail' which proclaimed 'the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland 'and to all its material possessions'.

The Dail's first president was Eamon de Valera, who had commanded one of the insurgent units in 1916 and barely escaped execution at the hands of the British. The proclamation of the Dail was followed by intensified guerrilla action against of the Dail was followed by intensified guerrilla action against

Needless to say, most of the elected Dail members were either under arrest or being hunted by the British. For the Dublin Parliament set up by Lloyd George was simply a farce. It

had fewer powers than those granted under the abortive Home Rule Act of 1914. It had no control over peace or war, national defence, external relations or external trade. Westminster also

The British Government deliberately gave the impression, indeed wrote it into the Act, that partition would be temporary. Establishing a separate parliament for six Ulster counties, it also provided for a Council of freight representatives of both Irish Parliaments, for the declared purpose of 'terminating partition'. In practice, this Council

The Orangemen were, in fact, ready to sacrifice the Ulster counties of Monaghan, Cavan and Donegal once direct rule from Westminster ceased, because there were considerable Nationalist majorities there. (Two other counties-Tyrone and Fermanagh—also had Nationalist majorities, but the Unionists felt they could swamp these.)

But they made it clear from the start, that as far as they were concerned, there was never going to be a united Ireland. Carson's successor as Ulster leader—Sir James Craig—actually said while the Bill was being debated: 'It has been said that this Bill lends itself to the union of Ulster and the rest of Ireland. I would not be fair to the House if I lent the slightest hope of that union arising within the lifetime of any man in this House. I do not believe it for a moment. 174

The British were still facing difficulties, however. The Sinn Feiners refused to collaborate with the 'Southern Ireland' Parliament, which met only once-attended by the four members elected by Dublin University and by no one else. Also, the Black and Tan brutalities had failed to crush the Irish.

(The problems of the British were intensified by the great upsurge of feeling, both in Ireland and England after the Lord Mayor of Cork, Terence MacSwiney, went on hunger strike to the death in Brixton prison.)

Accordingly, Lloyd George informed Carson that 'the game was up' and that the British would have to go some way towards meeting Sinn Fein demands because 'the government could not get the troops to go on in Ireland. 175

This involved attempting to come to terms with de Valera, at that time on the run after escaping from Lincoln jail.

De Valera, though a hero to many Irish men and women, did 174 ibid, p. 110.

not see the Irish people, let alone the Irish working class, as the means of winning Ireland's cause. Throughout this period, he pinned all his hopes on the Paris Peace Conference and on intervention by President Wilson of the United States, 176

Typical of his outlook was his willingness to negotiate through mediators chosen by Lloyd George, who included Archbishop Clune of Perth, and General Smuts of South Africa. together with the Unionist leader Sir James Craig!

Even de Valera, however, could not stomach the Anglo-Irish Treaty which Lloyd George foisted onto Ireland in December 1921, by a mixture of lies and threats. (The British Prime Minister told de Valera that there was a big concentration of troops in England and 'it is immaterial whether they are quartered in Great Britain or Ireland, they will be sent to the latter country, where a great military concentration will take place with a view to the suppression of the rebellion and the restoration of order', 177

While de Valera and his supporters stood firm, other Irish leaders - notably Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins - signed a treaty with Britain on December 6, 1921, after being told by Lloyd George that they faced 'immediate and terrible war' if they refused. 178

To sweeten the pill, they were given to understand that a boundary commission would be set up to draw the dividing line between 'Northern Ireland' and the so-called 'Irish Free State', and that areas in the north-east with a nationalist majority would be allowed to join the Free State.

The Treaty actually stated: 'A Commission . . . shall determine in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographical considerations, the boundaries between N. Ireland and the rest of Ireland.

Not only did this include a substantial 'get-out clause', but the boundary commission fell through before it really got started, the Six Counties remained in 'Ulster', and the nationalist section of the population - which included many Protestants — was never given the choice of joining the Free The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 led directly to the Irish Civil

<sup>175</sup> Denis Gwynn, 'The History of Partition', p. 195.

<sup>176</sup> The Earl of Longford and T. P. O'Neill, 'Eamon de Valera',

<sup>177</sup> Carlton Younger, 'Ireland's Civil War', p. 156.

<sup>178</sup> Gwynn, op. cit., p. 222.

War, The Irish delegation which signed it did so without authority from Dublin and the storm over this was intensified when it was discovered that the Treaty required all members of the Irish Provisional Government to take an oath of loyalty to the English King. This, of course, meant recognizing the ultimate sovereignty of Britain over the 'Free State'.

Sinn Fein was ripped apart. Collins, Griffith and E. J. Duggan were convinced that if they did not accept the oath, Lloyd George would carry out his threats ('If that is your last word, your answer means war, as desired by you', he had told them.) 179

The agreement, as eventually signed, included an oath which read: 'I... do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State as by law established, and that I will be faithful to HM King George V, his heirs and successors by law, in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership of the group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations.'

This Treaty was then endorsed by the Dail by 64 votes to 57 and de Valera resigned as President (to be replaced by the pro-Treaty Arthur Griffith).

De Valera formed a new Republican organization called Cumann na Poblachta (The League of the Republic) and proclaimed that there were rights which a minority could justly uphold against a majority.

By March, 1922, armed clashes had already taken place between supporters and opponents of the Treaty. But Civil War could have been prevented.

Instead, it was deliberately provoked by the British.

The differences between de Valera and Griffith were not all that great. De Valera was certainly not a revolutionary. He had, indeed, himself proposed an oath that read: 'I do solemnly swear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State to the Treaty of Association and to recognize the King of Great Britain as Head of the Association.'

On May 20. 1922, Collins and de Valera concluded a pact in an attempt to avoid civil war. This involved a National Coalition Panel for the third Dail. All candidates would stand as Sinn Fein and the number for pro- and anti-Treaty factions would be in proportion to their existing strength in the Dail.

But the British wanted to crush all opposition in Ireland.

Churchill told the Cabinet the pact was 'an arrangement full of disaster.' 180

Churchill declared that ratification of the Treaty would be withheld by Britain if the Irish drew up a constitution which was 'unsatisfactory' or if the Irish Government included ministers who had not taken the oath of allegiance to the British Crown.

Collins then repudiated his agreement with deValera not to include the oath in the Irish constitution. In the ensuing Irish election, 58 solidly pro-Treaty members were returned plus a further 35 who were committed to it in some degree. 35 anti-Treaty members were ranged against them.

After the election de Valera waited for Collins to honour his coalition pledge.

But on June 22, 1922, Sir Henry Wilson — one-time Director of Military Operations at the War Office and notorious Orange Order supporter — was shot dead, not in Ireland but in London.

His assailants — Joseph O'Sullivan and Reginald Dunne — were ex-soldiers in the British Army (O'Sullivan had lost a leg at Ypres) who proclaimed their allegiance to the IRA.

The British Government placed responsibility on the anti-Treaty republicans, though there was no evidence at all of any such connection. (Indeed, the man who had been responsible for ordering the assassination of British political figures was Michael Collins, now leading the pro-Treaty faction.)

In fact, as far as terror goes 80 Catholics had been killed and 188 wounded in the north of Ireland between December 6, 1921, and June 1, 1922.

Yet Churchill wrote to Collins blaming 'irregular elements of the IRA'—i.e., the anti-Treaty forces—and stating:

'Assistance has on various occasions been given to Dominions of the Empire in cases where their authority was challenged by rebellion on their soil; and His Majesty's challenged by repeated to place at your disposal the Government are prepared to place at your disposal the necessary pieces of artillery which may be required, or otherwise to assist you as may be arranged.

'I am to inform you that they regard the continued toleration of this rebellious defiance of principles of the Treaty as incompatible with its faithful execution. They feel that now you are supported by the declared will of the Irish people in favour of the Treaty, they have the right to expect that the necessary

<sup>179</sup> Carlton Younger, op. cit., p. 195.

<sup>180</sup> Carlton Younger, op. cit., p. 295.

action will be taken by your government without delay. 181

This letter was dated June 22. On June 28 forces of the Irish Provisional Government, using British Army artillery, opened fire on the headquarters of de Valera's Irish Volunteers, in the Four Courts. The Irish Civil War had begun.

It seems almost certain that the assassination of Wilson had been ordered by Collins, the terrorist who now favoured the Treaty with England. Yet the murder was seized upon by Churchill and the British Government to arm the very same Collins and set him against the opponents of the Treaty. The convenience of the Wilson murder is so glaring, that it is difficult not to draw some very sinister conclusions.

The life of Eamon de Valera proves conclusively that bourgeois nationalism has nothing to offer the working class of Ireland. De Valera was for a long time a hero to many Irishmen. A commandant in the Easter 1916 Rising, he was sentenced to death and taken to London in chains.

He was released in June 1917, and the following year won a resounding victory in the General Election on the programme of the Irish Republic proclaimed by Pearse.

Later he became president of both Sinn Fein and the Irish Volunteers. In May 1918, he was rearrested for opposing the British government's plans to force through conscription in Ireland, but he staged a daring escape from Lincoln jail.

In April 1919, he became President of Dail Eireann and two years later declared that a state of war existed between Ireland and Britain. He refused to sanction negotiations with Britain until Lloyd George agreed to release an IRA commander, Sean MacEoin.

He then broke from Griffith and Collins when they signed the Treaty with Britain and re-enlisted as a private in his old Volunteer battalion in the ensuing civil war.

But he refused to commit himself to any social or political programme beyond the establishment of an independent Irish Republic. As early as 1917 he told a joint conference of Volunteers and Sinn Fein:

The only banner under which our freedom can be won is the Republican banner. It is as an Irish Republic that we have a chance of getting international recognition . . . Some might have faults to find with that and prefer other forms of government . . . This is not the time for discussion on the best form of government. This is the time to get freedom. Then we can settle what particular form of government we may have. 182

CONTRARY TO EVERYTHING WE STOOD FOR

For de Valera, 'international recognition' meant recognition by the Paris Peace Conference, and particularly by the US President Woodrow Wilson. He sent numerous appeals to this conference, receiving only the most cursory replies. Lying to the working class about 'defending brave little Belgium' was one thing, actually supporting a small nation fighting a major imperialist power was quite another.

Yet in a letter to one of his supporters, de Valera declared: 'I am trying to get Wilson to know that if he goes in for his 14 points and a true League of Nations, men or women of Irish blood will be behind him. 183

What this actually meant was that if Wilson supported de Valera's aims, he in turn would urge Irish people in the United States to support the Democrats!

Unfortunately for him, this attempted bribery was not enough. The victorious powers had already written into Article 10 of the League of Nations Covenant an undertaking to preserve the existing territorial boundaries of member nations'-and that, needless to say, included the territorial boundaries of British imperialism in Ireland.

This did not prevent de Valera going to the United States, where he stayed from June 1919 until December 1920 striving desperately to enrol the Irish-American bourgeoisie behind the cause of Irish nationalism, and also to raise money. (He aimed, he said in a letter home, 'to interest wealthy men of the race in the industrial development of Ireland'.)

Here, he ran into some difficulty. Prominent Irish-American businessmen certainly loved the old country. The trouble was, they loved their old dollars even more . . .

That doesn't mean the American bourgeoisie didn't recognize who they were dealing with. While Larkin was thrown in jail, de Valera was given the freedom of New York City. He was greeted with acclaim at the conventions of both the Democratic and the Republican Parties-they both wanted the Irish vote.

At the Democratic Convention a proposal to recognize the independence of Ireland was actually moved by a Californian oil magnate, Edward L. Doheney, but it was substantially defeated.

It was also going to be moved at the Republican Convention by a certain Judge Cohalan. But Cohalan was given to

rst Carlton Younger, op. cit., p. 313-314.

<sup>182</sup> The Earl of Longford and T. P. O'Neill, p. 68.

<sup>183</sup> ibid, p. 99.

understand that there might be a place for him in a Republican administration if the Party's candidate became President—only it would be tactful to moderate his support for the Irish cause. The judge then decided that his burning love for Ireland would be better expressed through a vague 'statement of sympathy' rather than actually recognizing its right to independence!

Still, de Valera wrote to the American President pleading that 'the standards and principles approved by United States practice' entitled Ireland to recognition. Whether they did or not, they didn't entitle de Valera to a reply because he got none.

Back in Ireland, de Valera continued to plead with those who were turning their backs on the Irish masses. During the Civil War he became head of a self-proclaimed 'Republican Government', backed by the IRA, which tried to rival the Provisional Government whose leaders had signed the Treaty with Britain.

Although the Provisional Government, in collaboration with the British, had started the Civil War, the Catholic bishops of Ireland issued a Pastoral Statement, in October 1922, denouncing de Valera's supporters for introducing a system of murder and assassination. All who remained members of his forces were prohibited from receiving the sacraments of the Church.

De Valera retorted that the oishops' statement was 'unfortunate' but 'prompted by good intentions'.

Meanwhile the Provisional Government, with no protest from the Catholic hierarchy, authorized the army to execute without trial all prisoners guilty of possessing firearms or taking part in an attack on the army or on property—that is, all prisoners.

The Irish Free State Government came formally into existence on December 6, 1922. In January 1923, the first batch of IRA prisoners—34 of them—was executed without trial.

Yet, in the same month, de Valera declared in the 'Irish World' that those who had signed the Treaty had done so 'for the highest motives'!

When, in May 1923, the Republican forces could fight on no longer, de Valera appealed not to the workers of Ireland, but to the Catholic Church which had been busy excommunicating the Republican soldiers.

Writing to the papal emissary, Monsignor Luzio, he appealed: Please give to the Holy Father my dutiful homage. Though nominally cut away from the body of Holy Church [i.e. excommunicated for fighting British Imperialism] we are still

mystically and spiritually of it, and we refuse to regard

He appealed to the Vatican to persuade the Free State Government to adopt 'an open-minded generous policy'.

Instead, the government kept thousands of Republicans in jail. Over 2,000 more were forced into hiding. And the nick-name earned by the Irish Free State CID speaks for itself—it was known as 'the murder gang'.

This was official policy. As the Free State Minister for External Affairs, Desmond Fitzgerald, said: 'As long as we are in power, de Valera and every other enemy of the country will have to be on the run.'

De Valera, however, was to become as respected a friend of British imperialism as those who preceded him in the government of the Irish 'Free' State.

On August 15, 1923, de Valera was arrested and served 11 months' imprisonment without trial. While in jail, he was elected to the Free State Dail. This represented a break with some of his Republican colleagues who regarded this step as a recognition of the Free State Government set up by the British, even though the Sinn Fein deputies—by March 1925, there were 48 of them—refused to take the oath and remained disbarred from taking their seats.

De Valera was, in fact, moving towards compromise. He proposed that Republicans should take their seats in the government if the oath of allegiance to the British crown were withdrawn. This, indeed, did amount to recognizing the parliament set up by the British.

When he could not carry this line, he broke from Sinn Fein and set up a new organization, Fianna Fail.

This was a purely nationalist organization, firmly opposed to any political independence for the working class. Its aims, laid down by de Valera, were:

- 1. Political independence of a united Ireland as a Republic.
- 2. Restoration of the Irish language, and the development of a native Irish culture.
- 3. A social system in which, as far as possible, equal opportunity would be afforded to every Irish citizen to live a noble and useful Christian life.
- 4. Distribution of the land so the greatest number possible of Irish families would be rooted in the soil of Ireland.
- 5. Ireland to be an economic unit, as self-contained as possible,

<sup>184</sup> ibid, p. 220.

with a proper balance between agriculture and other essential industries.

By now, de Valera was totally opposed to revolutionary action in any form. He told the first Ard Fheis (congress) of Fianna Fail in November, 1926: 'If the road of peaceful progress and natural evolution be barred, then the road of revolution will beckon . . . and when the fight is over it will probably be found out once more that the problem has remained and that force is not the solution . . . if we cannot win an election, then we are not, in the present situation, likely to win any other way.' 185

In the Irish elections of 1927, Fianna Fail won 44 seats compared with the government party, Cumann na Gaedheal, which won 46. Sinn Fein declined from 25 to five seats, and 22 Labour deputies were elected.

Even if Sinn Fein boycotted the Dail, the government party was in a minority—if de Valera's followers took their seats. But the hated oath was still there.

Then followed on of the most bizarre, not to say farcical, incidents in Irish history. De Valera and his followers took the oath—but covered up the words!

First de Valera demanded the right of Fianna Fail deputies to take their seats without taking the oath. He backed this with legal proceedings and a campaign for a referendum. Then came another of those murders which crop up so frequently at convenient times in Irish public affairs. This time the victim was vice-President Kevin O'Higgins, shot dead in the street. His murderers were never caught, but a grateful government immediately re-established military dictatorship.

In this situation, de Valera decided that the oath was an 'empty formality'. It had, of course, been an empty formality over which an entire civil war had been fought, but Fianna Fail didn't bother to go into all that.

On August 11, 1927, de Valera and his followers took the oath. In order not to offend his religious conscience, however, the Fiann Fail leader removed the bible from the table and placed it on a couch at the other side of the room where, presumably, it lost its spiritual powers.

Then, like the proverbial monkey, he signed the document in the appropriate place—but covered up the writing on it so that he didn't actually look upon the offensive words.

Nevertheless, as he admitted, 'what we did was contrary to all our former actions, and to everything we stood for—contrary ibid, p. 249.

to our declared policy, and to the explicit pledges we gave at the

You can't get much more contrary than that.

Yet this raises the question of the whole nature of the Civil War. Never once were the class interests of the Irish workers and peasants brought into it. It was a bourgeois nationalist struggle, waged largely with forces recruited from the petty-bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia,

These forces were bound to be defeated by the superior military strength of their opponents. And since the class strength of the oppressed masses was not invoked, military defeat meant the end.

There is therefore no fundamental contradiction between the de Valera who was prepared for fratricidal conflicts over religious oaths and parliamentary legality, and the de Valera who subsequently signed the same oath to enter the same parliament.

His class outlook was such that, once he was militarily defeated, he could see no alternative to forwarding his aims within the state apparatus which had tortured and murdered his followers.

He became a 100 per cent convert to the British-imposed parliament against which he had fought. He declared: I want to reply to the suggestions now being put forward that our purpose in entering the Free State Dail is to destroy it. This is a falsehood. We are entering in the hope of helping to make it develop to what it should be ultimately—the sovereign national assembly of the Irish nation . . .

Our purpose is not to destroy but to broaden the Free State Assembly . . . and make it so truly representative of the whole people as to secure for it the necessary authority and influence to have its decisions readily accepted and its laws willingly obeyed.

Then, he explicitly disavowed any revolutionary aims:

'The sinister design of aiming at bringing about a sudden revolutionary upheaval, with which our opponents choose to credit us, is altogether foreign to our purpose.'

He granted the right to his former enemies in the government to 'preserve order': 'There must be somebody in charge in the community to keep order and by virtue of your de facto

<sup>186</sup> ibid, p. 257.

<sup>187</sup> ibid, p. 260.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND position, you are the only people who are in a position to do

In 1929 and the succeeding years, the IRA again became In 1929 and the succeeding years, the IRA again became active. De Valera went out of his way to denounce them: 'I do not want to, or be said to give any encouragement to them at all. I say again, there is no authority in this country to take life except in so far as the present ruling authority is entitled to take

In 1931 the Cosgrave government introduced the infamous article 2A, which set up a military tribunal of five members with power to impose the death sentence, and from whose decisions

In the ensuing revulsion, Fianna Fail swept to victory in the elections of 1932. De Valera formed a government with the support of the seven-strong Labour Parliamentary group-to which he gave no Cabinet seats.

One outcome of the Fianna Fail victory was that some right-wing members of the Free State Army formed a body called the Army Comrades' Association. In this they were supported by the Commissioner of Police, General Eoin O'Duffy. De Valera was forced to remove O'Duffy from his post—though he offered him another of equal status and salary, which O'Duffy refused.

Then the former government party, Cumann na Gaedheal, merged with the Centre Party and with O'Duffy's followers-the fascist 'Blue Shirts'-to form the United Ireland Party (Fine Gael) with O'Duffy as President.

De Valera used the military tribunal set up by Cosgrave against the Blue Shirts—then he used it against the IRA as well.

In 1933 the Republican Congress, consisting of delegates from Republican groups, the Communist Party, the Unemployed Workers' Movement, the Tenants' League and the reconstituted but short-lived Irish Citizens' Army called for a Workers' Republic. Subsequently, De Valera banned its weekly paper 'The Irish Republican Congress.' In 1936 he banned the IRA itself.

During World War II Ireland remained a 'friendly neutral, on Britain's aid abortive negotiations to enter the war on Britain's side in return for a pledge by the British government to end partition after the war. These negotiations

fell through, but there is no doubt that de Valera was prepared to bring Ireland into the war.

He was, indeed, friendly with imperialist nations all over the world. When Hitler's death was reported on April 30, 1945, de Valera paid a formal visit of condolence to the German attache in Dublin. When Roosevelt died, de Valera described him as a man who could have saved the world from recurring calamities'.

After the war, Ireland, like every other capitalist country. faced a social crisis. By 1948 de Valera was out of office. He came back in 1951, only to lose power again in 1954. In 1959 he became President of Eire, with Ireland a divided, bourgeois country, dependent economically and politically on British imperialism.

In his last years, de Valera was the friend and admirer of Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson and Harold Wilson.

The one-time commander in the Easter Rising, one-time political prisoner, one-time civil war fighter, had devoted his life to making Ireland safe for the Green Tories and for capitalism.

<sup>188</sup> ibid, p. 263.

<sup>189</sup> ibid, p. 263.



The Black and Tans—named after a pack of hunting hounds.



### **Postcript**

Irish capitalists did well out of World War II. Between 1938 and 1946 the money value of bank deposits rose by 103 per cent.

The rich certainly had little to fear from the government whose fearless ventures into the realm of 'making the wealth of Ireland available for the people of Ireland included state ownership of the National Stud (1945) and of the seaweed processing industry (1949).

During the war, also, the IRA declined, having launched a futile campaign in England which resulted in two of their members being executed, 23 being sentenced to 20 years in jail, 34 to 10-20 years, 25 to 5-10 years, and 14 to under 5 years.

In the post-war years the Irish Labour Party moved steadily to the right, and in 1948 entered a colaition government with Fine Gael with the former fascist sympathizer John A. Costello as Prime Minister.

Meanwhile, so far had the nationalist movement degenerated that an all-party campaign against partition was launched. But all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agreed on the need for foreign capital to shore up all parties also agr

Economic dependence on Britain was so complete that when the British Labour government devalued its currency in September, 1949, the Irish government was compelled to follow suit immediately. And by 1951 Ireland was spending three times the dollars it was earning—and bread rationing had been

The political crisis was intensified by the powerful campaign launched by the Catholic Church against Eire's very limited launched by the Catholic Church against Eire's very limited Health Service. This service was 'un-Christian,' the Church

POSTSCRIPT

said. The employers, also, were on the offensive, demanding cuts in direct taxation and big reductions in state welfare

Instability continued, and by 1956 Fianna Fail was back in office—with 70,000 unemployed and the largest emigration figure

In December 1956, the IRA issued a declaration of war throughout the whole of Ireland. The government reintroduced the Offences Against the State Act and IRA suspects were rounded up. The IRA activists at this time numbered only a few hundred, but in the north alone the forces mustered against them included 5,000 regular soldiers, 5,000 territorials, 10,000 B Specials, 3,000 Royal Ulster Constabulary and 2,000 special security guards.

Meanwhile, the north of Ireland was the most poverty-stricken part of the United Kingdom. In 1966 unemployment there was 6.1 per cent, compared with 1.5 per cent in the rest of the United Kingdom. And this masked the real position among Catholic workers, where unemployment was around 12 per cent.

Yet this did not prevent close links being established between the governments of the south and the north. The first steps towards economic co-operation had occurred as early as 1950 with a joint scheme for the drainage of the Erne basin and for a hydro-electric station. Joint control of the Great Northern Railway, linking Dublin and the north, followed the next year. Then joint control of the Foyle fisheries.

More important that the actual economic co-operation was its political implication—that the government of Eire recognized the government of the north. That is, it recognized partition in practice.

In 1963 the Dublin Prime Minister, Sean Lemass, could say: 'We recognize that the government and parliament there [in the north] exist with the support of the majority of the people of the Six County area—artificial though that area is. We see it functioning within its powers and we are prepared to stand over the proposal that they should continue to function within those powers within an all-Ireland constitution for so long as it is desired to have them.

Recognition of the realities of the situation has never been a difficulty with us. 190

So close were relations between the Ulster rulers and the

190 Liam de Paor, p. 138.

government in the south, that in 1966 Captain Terence O'Neill, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, actually permitted restrained celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising to be held in the north!

But this altered neither the economic nor the political oppression of the Catholic workers. The political gerrymandering which ensured Unionist rule was clearly shown in the 1966 re-division of wards in Derry. They were re-arranged as follows:

> 'South Ward' (Which includes the Bogside) 14,125 anti-Unionist voters 1,474 Unionist voters 'North Ward' 3,173 anti-Unionist voters 4,380 Unionist voters 'Waterside Ward' 2,804 anti-Unionist voters 4,420 Unionist voters

This handy arrangement ensured that 20,102 anti-Unionist voters in Derry returned eight members to the city council, while 10,274 Unionist voters returned 16! 191

Truly, God worked in mysterious ways, His wonders to perform.

It was this situation which produced the Civil Rights movement, a conglomeration of petty-bourgeois democrats and political revisionists, who thought that protest marches could end nearly a thousand years of British domination over Ireland.

It could not. Immediately there was a right-wing back-lash led by the Rev. Ian Paisley who formed Ulster Protestant Action and declared: 'I have hated God's enemies with a perfect hate.

When the tricolour flag of the Republic was flown from the headquarters of the Republican candidate in the 1964 General Election, the Stormont Minister of Home Affairs, Brian McConnell, sent a force of RUC with sten-guns, revolvers and riot equipment, backed with armoured cars, to tear it down.

By the summer of 1966 a programme of violent action was announced by the adjutant of the First Belfast Battalion of the Ulster Volunteer Force. IRA members, he told the newspapers, would be 'executed mercilessly and without hesitation'.

<sup>191</sup> ibid, p. 150.

OPPRESSION AND REVOLT IN IRELAND In this situation the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association was formed in February 1967, and blandly announced that it

To define the basic rights of all citizens. To protect the rights of the individual. To highlight all possible abuses of power. To demand guarantees for freedom of speech, assembly and associations. To inform the public of their lawful rights.

It was on the basis of this liberal democratic programme that the Civil Rights leadership led their followers into the most

On October 5, 1968, Eamon McCann led a march of a few hundred through Derry along a traditional Protestant route. defying a ban by William Craig, Minister of Home Affairs. Eventually the police moved in and, while the Stalinist Betty Sinclair urged the crowd to disperse peacefully, these police went berserk charging and batoning not only marchers but everyone they could see.

A few days later 'People's Democracy' was formed, mainly centred on Belfast University, but with Eamon McCann and Michael Farrell in leading positions.

On November 4, the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson, stressed his support for the Northern Ireland Prime Minister, Captain O'Neill.

Marches and demonstrations were increasing-but when Derry dockers and factory workers marched on November 18, the chairman of the Derry Citizen's Action Committee, Mr Ivan Cooper, immediately announced that he wanted no more demonstrations like that.

People's Democracy, however, organized a march from Belfast to Derry beginning on January 1, 1969. About seven from Derry. Burntollet at Bridge, marchers-numbering about 500-were ambushed and brutally beaten. Police made only a token attempt to halt the brutality, though they had been well aware that an ambush was waiting.

Later, the remnants of the marchers were held up by a cordon of police in Spencer Street on the outskirts of Derry, while more missiles were hurled at them. The police then joined in with the reactionary mob, and in the early hours of the following morning hordes of drunken police invaded the Catholic Bogside area.

The hope of gaining civil liberties by peaceful protest demonstrations was shown for the criminally dangerous farce

O'Neill issued a statement supporting the police and

POSTSCRIPT

139

threatening further use of the B-Specials. Despite his highly 'liberal' pronouncements of May 1969 (he actually said 'If you treat Roman Catholics with due consideration and kindness, they will live like Protestants'!) O'Neill was revealing himself as as a true Orangeman.

On August 12-the chief Orange day in Derry-the Catholic population of the Bogside was subjected to a siege that carried on for two days. Barricades blazed and hundreds of canisters of CS gas were poured into the area. The Free State Government announced it was sending army units to the border, and the workers of Bogside confidently expected them in Derry-but they were to be disappointed. Instead, they got Chichester-Clark's B-Specials. Bernadette Devlin called for the suspension of the constitution of Northern Ireland, as if anyone was paying any attention to it anyway.

On August 14, the Wilson government sent the British army into the north of Ireland. This imperialist move was ecstatically supported by the left of the Parliamentary Labour Party, by the Communist Party and-most enthusiastically of all-by the International Socialist Group.

The British army, all these people said, had suddenly ceased to be an instrument of the capitalist state. It was no longer an imperialist army. Marx, Engels and Lenin were all dead.

The British capitalist army, they told the besieged workers of Derry, was there to help and protect them. It was a force for democracy and peace.

The Socialist Labour League, forerunner of the Workers Revolutionary Party, insisted that the British army was not in Ireland to protect the workers, whether Catholic or Protestant, but to protect Irish capitalism and British imperialism.

Now, more than five years later with hundreds of innocent victims of that 'liberating army' lying in their graves, with more rotting in jails and concentration camps, with others physically and mentally destroyed by torture, the Trotskyists have been proved to be 100 per cent right.

Ireland will never be free until capitalism in overthrown. Not protest, not individual terror, but revolutionary Marxism will win the emancipation of the working class of Ireland, of Britain, and of the world.

That is the responsibility of the Workers League in Ireland, the Workers' Revolutionary Party in Britain and the International Committee of the Fourth International.

192 In Belfast Telegraph, May 10, 1969.



Loyalist gangs attack People's Democracy march at Burntollet, January 1969.

#### **CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS 1154-1945**

- Pope Adrian IV authorizes Henry II of England to invade
- 1169 'Strongbow' invades Ireland.
- Henry II assumes the lordship of Ireland. 1171
- Poyning's Law-the King's Council in England rules over 1494
- 1541 Henry VIII pronounces Ireland 'annexed forever'.
- 1553-58 The Catholic Queen of England, Mary Tudor, launches 'plantations' policy.
  Phelim O'Neill's 'Great Rebellion'.
- 1649 Cromwell invades Ireland.
- 1653 Cromwell's Act of Settlement-the 'final solution'.
- 1690 William of Orange, backed by the Pope and Catholic Europe, defeats James II at the Battle of the Boyne.
- 1704 Test Act bans Presbyterians from holding office in Ireland.
- 1704-24 Introduction of the Penal Laws against Catholics.
- 1740 400,000 die in Irish famine.
- 1760 Whiteboys Society founded.
- 1778 First Catholic Relief Bill-Catholics permitted to buy property.
- 1782 Poyning's Law repealed. Act of Renunciation by English Parliament of its legislative rights in Ireland,
  - 80,000 armed Volunteers force Dublin Parliament to pass Declaration of Independence.
- Rightboys peasant society emerges as a powerful force. Wolfe Tone forms Society of United Irishmen, under influence of French Revolution.
- Catholic Relief Act gives Catholics vote on same basis as Protestants.
- Irish Defenders and United Irishmen join forces. English Parliament passes Insurrection Act. Revolutionary French Directory agrees to send troops to aid Irish rebellion.
- 1797 Martial law in Ulster.
- Rising of Defenders and United Irishmen put down by 1798 30,000 British troops.
- 1800 Act of Union of Great Britain and Ireland.

- 1802 'Emmet conspiracy' crushed.

  1828 Daniel O'Connell elected to English parliament.

  1829 Act of Catholic Emancipation—Catholics can sit in English House of Commons.
- 1833 Irish Coercion Bill to suppress peasant movement.

  1835 Lichfield House Contract—O'Connell does a deal with English Whigs.
- 1840 O'Connell forms Repeal Association. 1845-48 The Great Irish Famine 'kills poor devils only'.
- 1847 'Young Irelanders' form Irish Confederation.

143

1848 Mitchel's rising suppressed. 'Crimes and Outrages' Act.

1849 Encumbered Estates Act creates the 'gombeen' men.

1850 Tenants' Right movement formed.

1858 Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood (the Fenians) formed.

1865 Fenian 'Year of Action'.

1866 Members of the Irish-American Brotherhood invade Canada.

1867 Abortive Fenian attack on Chester. Fenian rising betrayed by informers. Manchester Martyrs executed.

Abortive rescue attempt of Fenian prisoners in Clerkenwell

jail.

Fenianism driven underground. Protestant Defence Association formed.

1869 O'Donovan Rossa elected MP for Tipperary.

1870 Gladstone's Land Act.

1871 Isaac Butts, leader of Home Rule League, elected MP for

1879 Charles Stewart Parnell becomes leader of Home Rule movement. Land League formed.

1880 'Boycotting' begins.

1881 Parnell signs Kilmainham Treaty with British government to restrain 'outrage and intimidation'. Gladstone's second Land Act.

1882 Phoenix Park assassination of Secretary of State for Ireland.

'Crimes Act' passed.

1886 Gladstone's first Home Rule Bill defeated. Witch-hunt against Parnell. Irish Party splits.

1887 and 1891 Further inadequate Land Acts passed by

1893 Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill passed by Commons and rejected by Lords.

1894 Irish TUC formed.

1895 Irish labour electoral association formed.

1896 James Connolly helps to form Irish Socialist Republican

1899 Connolly launches 'Workers Republic' newspaper.

1903-10 Connolly in United States.

1907 James Larkin arrives in Belfast as organizer of National Dock Labourers' Union.

1908 Larkin sacked and founds Irish Transport and General

Dublin Employers' Federation formed.

1912 Liberals introduce third Home Rule Bill. Carson launches Unionist Covenant.

1913 Ulster Volunteer Force formed.

Bonar Law calls on army officers to refuse to enforce Home Rule.

Irish Citizen Army formed. Dublin lock-out begins.

1914 Dublin workers betrayed. Curragh mutiny. Home Rule becomes law—and is suspended for duration of war with Germany. Connolly opposes the War and calls for revolution. Larkin leaves for United States.

1916 Easter Rising. Connolly and other leaders shot. Sir Roger Casement hanged.

1917 Eamon de Valera pardoned.

CHRONOLOGY OF MAIN EVENTS

1919 Sinn Feiners pronounce themselves the Parliament of Ireland with de Valera as President. Larkin joins Communist Labour Party in USA.

1919-20 de Valera in United States appealing for support from wealthy Irish-Americans.

1920 Ireland partitioned. Larkin sentenced to 5-10 years' jail in USA. Black and Tans go to Ireland. Black and Tans burn Cork.

1921 Anglo-Irish Treaty signed. Sinn Fein splits. 1922 Irish Free State Government officially formed.

British provoke Irish Civil War. 1923 Republican forces defeated.

de Valera arrested. Larkin freed and returns to Ireland. Is suspended as general secretary of Irish Transport and General Workers Union.

1924 Larkin attends fifth congress of Communist International. Irish T&GWU splits and Workers Union formed by Larkin supporters.

1925 de Valera forms Fianna Fail.

1927 de Valera and followers take oath of allegiance to British

Crown and enter Irish Parliament.

Larkin attends executive committee of Communist International and calls for support for Stalin.

1929 de Valera denounces IRA.

1931 Cosgrave government sets up military tribunals to impose death sentences without appeal.

1932 de Valera forms government with Labour support. Fascist 'blue-shirt' leader General O'Duffy becomes President of new United Ireland Party (Fine Gael).

1936 de Valera bans IRA. Larkin collaborates in ban on union officials speaking against Franco.

1939 Irish Free State a 'friendly neutral' in World War II.

1941 Larkin joins Irish Labour Party and seeks reconciliation with right wing of Irish T&GWU.

de Valera expresses condolences on death of Hitler.

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#### INDEX

Adrian IV, Pope 1.
Agar-Robartes, W. G. 73.
Aiken, Frank 112.
Alexander III, Pope 2.
Allen (Manchester Martyr) 40.
Applegarth, Robert 50.
Arne, Earl of 57.
Asquith, Herbert Henry 70, 71, 73, 88, 99, 100.
Astor Waldorf 74.
Aylesford, Earl of 62.

Bakunin, Michael 57.
Balfour, Arthur 66, 67, 69, 71.
Barry, Father Thomas 21.
Beales, Edmond 49.
Bedford, Duke of 74.
Boycott, Charles S. (Captain) 57, 58.
Breslin (Jailer) 39.
Brett, Police Sergeant 40.
Broghill, Lord 4.
Burke, family 7.
Butt, Isaac 55,56.
Byrne (Jailer) 39.
Byrne, John 88.

Caernarvon, Lord 60. Carey, Martin 51. Carney, Jack 114, 115. Carrington, Lord Intro 2. Carson, Sir Edward 65, 71-76, 88, 93, 99, 122. Casement, Sir Roger 100. Cavendish, Lord 57. Ceannt, Eamonn 98, 99, Charlemont, Lord 10. Churchill, Randolph 60, 62, 63, Churchill, Winston 62, 119, 120, 125, 126, 133. Clairvaux, Abbot of 1. Clanrickarde, Earls of See Burke family . Clarke, Thomas 98, 99. Cluseret, General 37. Cohalan, Judge 127. Colbert, Con 99. Collins, Michael 123-126.

Condon (Manchester Martyr). Condon, Patrick See Massey, Gordon. Connolly, James 5, 16, 57, 64, 73, 81, 85, 89, 93-99, 103-109. Cooke, Father 43. Cooper, Ivan 138. Corrigan, Alderman 77. Corydon, John Joseph 40. Cosgrave, W. T. 132. Costello, John A. 135. Craig, Captain Sir James 71, 122-123. Craig, William Intro 1, 21, 138. Cromwell, Oliver 4. Crozier, Councillor 77. Crozier, Brigadier-General Frank Percy 120. Cullen, Archbishop 30. Cullen, Cardinal 38, 43.

Daly, Edward 99.
Davis, Thomas 32.
Davitt, Michael 47, 56, 70.
Deasy, Captain 40.
De Leon, Daniel 106-107.
De Valera, Eamon 112, 119, 121-133.
Devlin, Bernadette 139.
Devoy, John 43-46, 48.
Dillon, John Blake 32, 70, 100.
Doheney, Edward L. 127.
Dufferin, Lord 31.
Duffy, Charles Gavan 32, 35.
Duggan, E. J. 124.
Dunne, Reginald 125.

Elizabeth I 3. Emmet, Robert 20-21. Emmet, Thomas 20. Engels, Frederick 24, 25, 27, 29, 38, 40, 41, 43, 48, 49, 52, 55, 70, 80, 109, 139.

Farrell, James T. 106.
Farrell, Michael 138.
Fitt, Gerry Intro 3.
Fitzgerald, Desmond 129.
Fitzgerald, Lord Edward 19.

INDEX

Flood, Henry 9.
Foran, Thomas 113.
Franco, Francisco 115.
French, Sir John 75, 120.

Gallacher, William 116.
Gallagher, Thomas 80.
George IV 24.
George V 72, 75, 124.
Gibbons, Cardinal 44.
Gitlow, Ben 111.
Gladstone, William
Ewart 49-50, 55, 57-61, 65, 67, 69-70.
Gough, Brigadier-General
Hubert 75.
Gratton, Henry 9-10, 17.
Griffith, Arthur 85, 123-124, 126.

Haywood, 'Big Bill' 110. Henry II 1-2. Henry VIII 3. Hill, Joe 110. Hitler, Adolf 133. Huston, Sean 99.

Iveagh, Lord 74.

James 1 3.
James II 4-6, 74.
Jenkins, Roy Intro 5.
Jenkinson, Noel Intro 3.
Johnson, Lyndon B. 133.
Johnson-Smith, Geoffrey Intro 2—Intro 3.

Kelly, Captain T. J. 40.
Kennedy, John F. 133.
Kent, Thomas 99.
Keogh, William Nicholas 36.
Kickham, Charles 43, 45-46.
King, Major 120.
Kipling, Rudyard 74.
Kirov, Sergei 114.
Knox, General 63.
Knox, Thomas 63.

Lake, General 64.
Lalor, James Fintan 34.
Larkin, James 80-82, 85-86, 88, 92-94, 96, 109-116.
Larkin (Manchester Martyr) 40.
Law, Andrew Bonar 71, 73-74.
Lemass, Sean 136.

Lenin, V. I. 88, 104, 108, 109, Lichfield, Lord 26. Liebknecht, Karl 95-96, 104-105. Liebknecht, William 95. Littlejohn, Kenneth Intro 2-Lloyd-George, David 110, 121-124, 126. Louis-Philippe 33. Luby 45-46. Lucraft, Benjamin 49-50. Luzio; Monsignor 128. Lynch, Jack Intro 2. Lysaght, Raynor 105, 107, 109.

MacBride, John 99. MacCarthy, Justin 63, 70. MacCumhail, Fionn 36. MacDermot, 'Red Jim' 39. MacDiarmada, Scan 98. MacDonagh, Thomas 98, 99. MacEoin, Sean 126. MacManus, Terence Bellew 38. MacNeill, Eoin 98, 100. Macready, General 119. MacSwiney, Terence 122. McCafferty, Captain John 40. McCann. Eamon 138. McConnell, Brian 137. McNally, Leonard 21. Maguire (Manchester Martyr) 40. Mallin, Michael 99. Malthus 31. Marlborough, Duke of 71. Mary Tudor 3, Marx, Karl 30-31, 36-37, 41, 45, 47, 49-53, 55, 82, 109, 139. Marx-Aveling, Eleanor 51, 80. Massey, Gordon (alias Condon, Patrick) 40. Maxwell, General 100. Milner, Lord Alfred 751 Minto, Lord 35. Mitchel, John 33-35. Mottershead 50. Mountjoy, Lord 3. Mulcahy 51. Murphy, William Martin 81-82,

Napoleon, Louis 36.

O'Brien (Manchester Martyr) O'Brien, Smith 34. O'Brien, William 113-115. O'Casey, Sean 94. O'Connell, Cardinal 44. O'Connell, Daniel 23-27, 30. 32-35, 37. O'Connell, John 35. O'Connor, Arthur 18. O'Connor T. P. 58. Odger, George 49-50. O'Duffy, General Eoin 115, 132. O'Hanrahan, Michael 99. O'Higgins, Kevin 130. O'Leary, John 43-46. O'Mahoney, John 36-37, 39. O'Malley, Ernest 120. O'More, clan 3. O'Morgair, Maelmaedoc 1. O'Neill, Phelim 3. O'Neill, Captain Terence 137-O'Reilly, Alderman 77. Orme, Stanley Intro 3. O'Shea, Mrs Katherine 61-62. O'Shea, Captain W. H. 62. O'Sullivan, Joseph 125. O'Toole, Lawrence 2. Owen, Robert 49.

Lieutenant-General Sir Paget, Arthur 75. Paisley, Ian Intro 1, 21, 137. Palmerston, Lord 36. Parnell, Charles Stewart 56-62, 69-70. Pearse, Padraic 98-99, 103, 126. Pearse, William 99. Pembroke, Earl of ('Strongbow') 2. Petty, Sir William 4. Pitt, William 17. Pius IX, Pope 35. Plunkett, Joseph 98-99. Potter, George 50.

Redmond, John E. 73, 76, 95, 97, 99-100, 121.
Reed, John 110.
Rees, Merlyn Intro 3.
Richardson, Lieutenant-General Sir George 74.
Rossa, O'Donovan 36, 51.
Rothschild, Lord 74.
Russell, Lord 32.

Sadleir, John 36.
Salisbury, Lord Robert 59, 62, 66.
Saunderson, Edward 65.
Sexton, James 81.
Sinclair, Betty 138.
Smith, F. E. (Lord Birkenhead) 101.
Smuts, General Jan 123.
Spenser, Edmund 3.
Stalin, Joseph 114.
Stephens, James 36, 38-39, 45-46.
'Strongbow' see Pembroke, Earl of.
Swift, Jonathan 7.
Swinburne 62.

Thatcher, Margaret 4.
Thomas, Norman 111.
Tone, Theobald Wolfe 10, 16-19, 21, 46, 63.
Trotsky, Leon Intro 4, 106, 108, 111, 114.

Vaughan, Cardinal 43. Victoria, Queen 24, 58, 61, 104.

Whitelaw, William Intro 1—Intro 3.
William of Orange 5-6.
Wilson, Harold Intro 1, 138-139.
Wilson, Major-General Sir
Henry 74-75, 119, 125-126.
Wilson, President Woodrow 123, 127.

Zinoviev, Gregori 112, 114.

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