REPSOL NO. 8.

LIBERTY, OR DEATH.

NORTHERN ARMY OF AVENGERS.

head Quarters the first year of Irish Liberty.

REPUBLICANISM

GENERAL J. N. TANDY,
to his COUNTRY-MEN.

UNITED IRISH-MEN,

WHAT do I hear? the british Government have dared to speak of concessions / Would you accept of them?

Can you think of entering in-to a treaty with a british Minister? a Minister too, who has left you at the mercy of an English soldiery, who has laid your cities waste, and massacred inhumanely your best Citizens . . . . a Minister, the bane of society, and the scourge of mankind . . . behold, Irish-men . . . he holds in his hand the olive of peace; be aware, his other hand lies concealed armed with a poniard. No, IRISH-MEN, no . . . you shall not be the dupes of his base intrigues. Unable to subdue your courage, he attempts to seduce you, let his efforts be vain.

Horrid crimes have been perpetrated in your country. Your friends have fallen a sacrifice to their devotion for your cause. Their shadows err around you and call aloud for Vengeance.

It is your duty to avenge their death. It is your duty to strike on their blood-cemented thrones the murderers of your friends.

Listen to no proposals, IRISH MEN, wage a war of extermination against your oppressors, the war of Liberty against tyranny and Liberty shall Triumph.

PART 1.

12½p.

REPUBLICAN MANUAL OF EDUCATION

PART 1: HISTORICAL

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This Manual "Historical" was first published in 1966. It has been edited slightly in the light of the changes over the past six years. It is primarily intended to give people an idea of the development of Republicanism and a starter to a more thorough study of Irish history.

A Pamphlet dealing specifically with the development and changes in Ireland and the Republican Movement over the past six years is being prepared.

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THE ORIGINS OF REPUBLICANISM

The association of national freedom with a Republican form of Government originated in the 1798 period. Previous national resistance was disunited and associated with foreign monarchy, apart from a brief period in 1641 under the Confederation of Kilkenny, which had the makings of a National Assembly.

There was a brief period, when Eoghan Ruadh O'Neill was negotiating with Cromwellian General Monks, in which an alliance between the incipient Irish nation and the democratic elements within the newly formed English Republic might have been formed; this might have changed the course of history. In the event however, Cromwell, though advanced enough by 17th century European standards to execute a monarch, found an imperialist solution for his internal problems and turned his discontented troops and wealth-hungry supporters loose on Ireland with the promise of free land. Irish nationalism was therefore forced into support of the Stuarts and condemned to over a century of sterility.

The 1782-1798 period was one of economic prosperity consequent on the trade laws passed by Grattan's Parliament. Catholics, raised from the mire slightly, began to gain confidence and demand their rights. Wolfe Tone's secretaryship of the Catholic Committee gave rise to two constitutional but revolutionary acts - *(1) the calling of the Catholic Convention and (2) the presentation of a petition to the king over the heads of the Castle authorities.* These were revolutionary in terms of the time because the former provided the skeleton of a national democratic structure capable of forming an independent government, and because the latter punctured the illusion that there was goodwill at Westminster frustrated by a corrupt Castle: the response was coercion acts. Thus the first act of open war came from the British; this ensured that the United Irishmen when they went underground had mass support. Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen were the first to raise the demand for an Independent Irish Republic.

The Society of United Irishmen with little international revolutionary experience to draw upon apart from the American

and French revolutions, succeeded in formulating a classic example of how to build a revolution. The leadership and members were all agreed and bound together by a basic ideology, Revolutionary Republicanism.

The early objectives which they set themselves to achieve were reformist in character and designed to unite the mass of the people behind a number of democratic demands which were clearly just and achievable. They were however, demands which, if conceded, would smash the power of the ascendancy class in Ireland which was the pillar on which British Imperial control in Ireland rested. Thus, when these reformist demands were resisted and answered with coercion Acts it became obvious that a Republican form of society could not be created in Ireland until British Imperial control of Ireland was smashed. *Connolly was later to emphasise again and again the need to smash British Imperial control in Ireland before you could begin to establish a Socialist society in Ireland.*

One of the greatest achievements of the Society of United Irishmen was to unite the urban and rural working class right across the religious barriers. The most politically conscious and revolutionary element were the Belfast workers, mainly dissenters. To a great extent they provided the leadership and also they gave clarity and cohesiveness to the whole movement. The prime unifying factor in the situation was a clear democratic Republican ideology. Of the many lessons which we can learn from this period perhaps that is the greatest.

One reason for failure was the indecision of the national leadership due to its being, in some cases, in the hands of individuals *who had too much to lose.* Wolfe Tone evaluated in political terms the scale of French aid necessary:- *5,000: it would be a hard battle, we would not have the initial support of the men of property. 10,000: it would be a relatively easy victory and we would have the immediate support of the men of property. 20,000: we would never get rid of the French!*

There was a time when if a rising had been initiated even without foreign aid, substantial sections of yeomanry - farmers and artisans - would have come over; foreign aid would

have been hastened as a result; the British navy would have been immobilised by mutiny. Resolute leadership was lacking.

The lessons of this period are -

1. A touch of economic prosperity whets the appetite for more freedom, it does not necessarily induce complacency.
2. Constitutional acts can be revolutionary in their effects depending on the implication of the demands put forward and the composition of the leadership.
3. Foreign aid should not be depended on for setting the pace, this in effect allows the enemy to set the pace.

BOOKS TO READ: JEMMY HOPE by Sean Cronin.

LIFE OF WOLFE TONE by Sean Cronin.

LABOUR IN IRISH HISTORY by James Connolly (published in LABOUR IN IRELAND by D. Ryan)

BEST OF TONE by P. MacAonghusa & Liam ORiagain.

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THE WAR FOR THE LAND: THE FENIANS: PARNELL

The basic social issue throughout the 19th century was the fact that the landlords who were Unionist to the core had arbitrary power to evict and raise rents over most of the country. In Ulster the Tenant Right, a bargain driven between planter and native centuries earlier which recognised the numerical strength of the latter, gave some measure of security, so that the land war in Ulster never became acute as in the south, and the Ulster tenants, relatively more prosperous, provided a home market for the developing industries in the North-East.

Despite the obvious priority, O'Connell in the 1820s and 1830s led the Irish into two agitations which were red herrings as far as the struggle for the Republic was concerned, which gave rise to no stable revolutionary movement, and which when they failed left no positive traces of which the threads might have been picked up later. (Catholic Emancipation and

Repeal). The main events of this agitation were mass meetings addressed by the Leader; this did not enable a national organisation to be developed with good local leadership.

O'Connell, who was a member of the Yeomanry in '98, became the prototype of the modern opportunist politician. Everything came through him to the people. He taught the Irish people to be subservient - *1) to himself; 2) to Britain; 3) to the Catholic clergy. He despised the Irish language and culture and encouraged the people to discard every vestige of Irish idendity. He helped to break the unity of the Irish people which was forged by the United men.* While Cooke was building bigotry and sectarianism in the North O'Connell was creating a Catholic bigotry in the South and originated the A.O.H. mentality. The origins of Free Statism and of the partition mentality can be found in O'Connellism.

When the Famine in the 1840s came and Lalor raised the banner of agrarian revolt, there was no one to heed him. The Confederate Clubs, which in some areas had attempted to pick up the threads dropped in 1798, were weak and disorganised. The leadership in Dublin was remote from the common people and their needs.

The Young Irelanders under Davis saw the damage being done by O'Connell and they set out to counter it. This is probably why they concentrated so much attention on Culture and National pride and identity. But it was a time for revolution. The people wanted food. Lalor saw that the revolutionary demand was *"The Land for the People."* Mitchel saw the immediate issue on which the fight could be begun - *"Stop the export of grain", "refuse to pay rents".* But there was neither organisation or leadership to heed them.

Lalor's message was not picked up either by the Fenians who were organised as a tight conspiracy in the 1860s aiming to organise a military coup to win independence from Britain. The secret military tradition of the Republican movement goes back to the Fenians and the I.R.B. The very tightness and secretiveness of the organisation proved to be its undoing, as when the call to arms came in 1867 the nation as a whole did not respond; accepted local leaders were wanting. After that in

the 1880s the struggle against the evictions developed into the Land League, which was under the moderate Parliamentary leadership of Parnell and the extra-Parliamentary leadership of Davitt. Had a virile Fenian element been combined with this, it would have been an irresistable force. As it was, 'spent' Fenians were the backbone of the Land League.

Parnell's parliamentarianism had a revolutionary purpose: *to make it impossible for the Westminster Parliament to function, unless Irish demands were conceded.* Had the movement held together - *the Home Rule Party agitating in parliament, the Land League championing the social needs of the people through agrarian agitation, backed by the physical force Fenians* - its main objectives might well have been achieved without Partition. The national aims would have been evolved, inside the framework of a United Ireland, towards complete separation, possibly on the issue of neutrality in the 1914-18 war.

The action of the Invincibles heavily influenced by continental anarchism and expressing the desperation of a section of the towns-people however forced Parnell into the Kilmainham compromise, the first step towards his downfall and the break-up of the promising alliance that was 'the New Departure'.

The main lessons of this period are:

1) *Agitation without organisation is useless (O'Connell).*
2) *Economic crisis does not bring revolution unless an organisation exists which can effectively get support for a credible alternative.(the Famine).*
3) *A conspiratorial organisation has an inherent difficulty in establishing links with the people sufficient to ensure that the latter follow the lead given when the conspiratorial organisation acts (the Fenians).*
4) *An organised mass movement with both social and national objectives can be effective but is liable to compromise if it lacks a revolutionary 'hard core' and leadership clear as to its objectives, politically mature and with strict discipline.*

BOOKS TO READ: Last Conquest of Ireland Perhaps; Lalor: Collected Works; John Devoy's Postbag.

LABOUR AND 1916

The 1890s and the early part of the present century saw the rise of the Labour Movement for the first time as a significant force in the political life of Ireland. More and more people were coming in from the country areas to work for wages in manufacturing industry, processing and distribution, particularly in the two main urban centres, Dublin and Belfast. Labour -the section of the people who work for wages or salaries, as distinct from those who employ others or who are self-employed (as most farmers are, for example) - is today the numerically largest social group in Ireland and is continually growing both in relative and absolute size.

Trade union organisation among the Dublin and Belfast skilled craft workers goes back to the middle of the 19th century. Trade union organisation of the more numerous and continually growing general labourers awaited the advent of Jim Larkin to Ireland and his organisation of the Belfast and Dublin labourers in the Irish Transport and General Workers Union.

The first Irish based political party to champion the interests of Labour was Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party, founded in 1896. It held that the working class could only be freed from exploitation in a free Ireland, ruled not in the interests of Britain but of the Irish people. Connolly's definition of the Irish people excluded the Ascendancy landlords and those owners of capital whose economic interests were linked with Britain or who depended on British support to maintain their social position. The two main divisions of Irish capital in the early part of the century were - *1) The Unionist merchants and industrialists of the North and 2) the merchants and manufacturers of Dublin and the South.* The majority of these in turn supported John Redmond's Home Rule Party, but a minority of them backed Arthur Griffith's "Dual Monarchy" Sinn Fein Party. Both these sections of Irish business had differing policies and conflicting interests among themselves, though they had a common interest in opposing Labour trade union and political organisation, as this would lead to improved wages and working conditions at the employers' expense.

The Unionist industrialists of the North, primarily engaged in shipbuilding and the linen trade, wanted to retain free trade

with Britain, which was the main market for their products. They were not interested in protecting Irish home industry by tariffs and quotas as the southern businessmen were. This was the economic basis of Ulster Unionism and the reason why the industrial and business classes of the North did not take the same anti-British line in politics as their southern counterparts. Moreover, from the point of view of the Ulster manufacturers the policy of Union with Britain could be used to divide the working class movement in Belfast, which united, would have been the most potentially powerful social force in Ireland. Catholic and Protestant workers, at one another's throats, over sectarian religious issues, could not unite against their common masters. It was no surprise therefore to find that the Unionist employers used the sectarian violence and pogroms of 1919 and the 1920s in Belfast as an opportunity to make slashing cuts in wage rates in the city, which affected all workers, Protestant and Catholic, but which they were too disunited to successfully resist.

The merchants and manufacturers of the south in general wanted an Irish Government which would protect the Irish home market against foreign competition. Those who followed John Redmond and the Irish Party thought that they would get the power to do this under a Home Rule Government established by the British Parliament. The smaller traders and merchants who backed Arthur Griffith and his Sinn Fein Party had more radical political views: *they proposed to abstain from Westminster altogether, and to set up an independent Parliament in Ireland similar to that of Grattan's day.* They wanted equality of status with England under the English crown - the Dual Monarchy. They even had colonial ambitions themselves! Griffith said in 1905 that a strong and ambitious business class in Ireland would be *"in a position to influence the cultivation and progress of less advanced nations and to form colonies of its own".* His dream was of a native Irish capitalist class becoming a partner of the British in the imperialist colonisation of Africa and Asia!

Redmondites or Griffithites - they both saw themselves threatened by the rising power of Labour. The 1913 lock-out was the attempt of the Irish employers to put Labour in its place, using the help of England's army and police, before

Home Rule which they thought was on the point of being granted, became law and they would have to deal with Labour on their own. Both Redmondites and Griffith's Sinn Fein opposed the workers of Dublin as they fought to wrest decent wages and conditions from the employers during 1913. Griffith's paper "Sinn Fein" attacked the Larkin-Connolly Labour Movement very bitterly in 1913.

The workers, on the other hand, were supported in 1913 by Pearse, Tom Clarke and the I.R.B. leaders. Not one of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation was opposed to the Larkin-Connolly Movement in that fateful year and most of them gave it their full support.

During the 1913 lock-out the Citizen Army was formed as a workers' defence corps against the attacks of the police. James Connolly saw it as a trained military force which would be used when the opportunity came to wrest freedom from imperialism.

Connolly wanted a society in Ireland where the machines and factories and means of producing wealth would be owned and run for the benefit of the people as a whole and for satisfying the needs of the people rather than for the profit of a few. Only in such a society, he held, would workers no longer have to sell their labour to those who wanted to make a profit out ofthem. But at the same time he saw that the Irish people could not choose such a socialist form of society until they were a free people first, free from foreign domination, and had established an independent Republic. For as long as Ireland was not free Britain would back every reactionary social element in the country against the interests of the majority of the common people. Likewise, all those within Ireland - *such as those interests represented by Redmond and Griffith - who feared the demands of the workers and farmers,* would lean on Britain for support and would compromise with imperialism rather than support a radical popular independence policy which might damage their economic interests.

The policies of compromise with imperialism pursued successively over the years by Redmond, Griffith, De Valera and Lemass subordinating the interests of the mass of the people to the interests of large property, have shown Connolly's

estimate to be a true one. It was, after all, the estimate of Tone as well, who saw that the "men of no property" - *i.e. those who had to work for a living and did not own large amounts of capital* - as the most reliable fighters for the Republic. It corresponded too with the view of Henry Joy Mc Cracken, in 1798, who said that *"the rich always betray the poor."*

By 1915 Pearse and the I.R.B. leaders held the same political position on the Irish question, though they did not express themselves in exactly the same political vocabulary. The final political writings of Pearse - "Ghosts", "The Separatist Idea", and particularly "The Sovereign People" show how similar in view he and his colleagues were to the Labour leader (v. "Labour and Easter Week" by James Connolly, edited by DesmondRyan). Their common programme, which still remains the programme on which all patriotic Irishmen can unite in the struggle for the Republic, was the 1916 Proclamation....*"the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies...equal rights and equal opportunities to all citizens... cherishing all the children of the nation equally".*

The 1916 Proclamation and the later Democratic Programme of Dail Eireann remain still the basic political documents of the Irish national struggle, embodying our political and social objectives, on which all sections of the Irish people injured by the "connection" can unite in the struggle to win full political and economic independence and a united country.

The lessons of this period are:

1)The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour, the cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland. In other words, Irish Labour can only obtain full social emancipation in a country that is politically and economically independent of British imperialism.

2)Labour has a common interest with all other Irish people who are injured by the "connection" in struggling for national unity and independence.

3)The 1916 Proclamation and the Democratic Programme constitute a common political platform on which the Labour movement and

the mass of the Irish people - excluding only those who have a stake in the "connection" - can unite.

4) The partition of Ireland, which disunites politically the working class of north and south, is the main obstacle to the advancement of Irish Labour in the political and social fields.

5) A "purely" political or military movement for independence will not obtain the support of the broad ranks of labour unless the latter are educated and organised to see that their economic and social needs can never be satisfied until they have a united and independent country, and until the independence movement champions them day-to-day economic and social demands as well as their long-term political ones.

6) The most nationally minded and politically mature people in the Labour Movement, and particularly the trade unions, must be organised in a political organisation, republican in outlook, disciplined and intelligently led, as the Citizen Army and the leading sections of the Transport Union were in Connolly's day, if Labour is yet to play its vital part in the achievement of the Republic.

7) Unless the Labour movement plays a leading role in the struggle for full independence the leadership of the national movement is likely to pass into the hands of individuals and social groups whose property interests make them lukewarm fighters against imperialism and who are more likely to succumb to imperialist pressure in times of stress and danger.

BOOKS TO READ: The works of PEARSE and CONNOLLY referred to.

R.M. HENRY: The Evolution of Sinn Fein.

C.D. GREAVES: The Life and Times of James Connolly.

Dr. JOHN DE COURCY IRELAND: Revolutionary Movements of the Past.

1916 AND AFTER

The 1916 Rising was the first Irish rebellion in which organised Labour, as such, played a leading role. It is questionable if the disillusionment amongst Nationalists with Redmond's Home Rule policy would have been sufficient to produce a revolt if Connolly's militant Trades Unionism had not been forcing the pace. It is noteworthy that when representatives of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce were questioned by the Royal Commission investigating the causes of the rebellion they gave as their view that, despite their many protests and warnings, the government had permitted an insurrectionary situation to develop. 'Larkinism', they said, had been allowed to get out of hand.

That was, of course, a typically Chamber of Commerce viewpoint. There were other forces, too, working towards a bolder national policy than Redmond's --and that faces us immediately with the question of objectives. We have had it dinned into us, deliberately and persistently, that the objective of the leaders of the Rising was a recognised national identity - *"There goes a man who is different from other men. He is Irish."* But was it?

Uncle Tom did not wear out his life in anxiety lest his master should forget that one of them was a black man. His concern was for freedom - to live his own life as a man. The objective of the 1916 Rising was, not national identity, but national independence - the reconquest of Ireland by its people. A free nation does not need to strain after an identity.

The 1916 leaders drew much of their inspiration from the original Irish Republicans, the United Irishmen of 1798. In spite of differences of emphasis, at the very least, in some of them, none of them would have denied Tone and Emmet and McCracken as their political fathers. Those United Irishmen had based their independence movement squarely upon the social revolutionary ideas of their day. They stated their objectives frankly and clearly in their original manifesto: *The Rights of Man in Ireland - the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers in this island, the inherent and indefeasible claims of every free nation to rest in this nation."* That

manifesto was the people's answer to the hitherto unchallenged claim of the landed aristocracy to dominate their lives. It broke through the old traditional differences, racist and religious, that kept people still fighting the battle of the Boyne, and created a new concept of Irish nationhood that has struggled on through the years right down to our own day.

Not one of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation would have repudiated the United Irishmen or their basic principle,but it was the Labour organiser, James Connolly, who most clearly understood their historic significance, and who, because he was a Labour organiser, was in a position to relate that political principle to the conditions of his own time. He saw Ireland ruled and dominated, not any longer by landlords depending on the British connection for support but by moneylords depending on the British connection for support.

Disillusionment with Redmond's Home Rule poli was growing considerably for years before the outbreak of the 1914 war, and when, on its outbreak, his emergence as a recruiting campaigner for the British forces shocked large numbers of his traditionally rebel-minded followers into seeking a less imperially-minded leadership, there were three distinct such leaderships competing for the task of moulding those vaguely defined Irish loyalties into an effective force.

Of the three, the one best placed strategically to gather to it the disillusioned followers of Redmond was the Irish Republican Brotherhood which was working by secret conspiratorial methods to win control of the Nationalist Volunteer force. It became the real, though unofficial, governing body of the Irish Volunteers when they split away from Redmond's National Volunteers. It gained control in a disciplinary sense, but its conspiratorial methods could do little to clarify political thought and so, while the I.R.B. was creating an army of courageous men dedicated to "Irish Freedom", it was an Irish freedom without definition, and it was only a question of which of two clearly defined political leaderships - Griffith's Sinn Fein or the Larkin-Connolly Labour movement- would dominate the coming struggle and decide its outcome.

Griffith's Sinn Fein Party had been in existence since 1905. Its objective, like Redmond's, was a Home Rule parliament for Ireland within the imperial system, but Griffith sought for wider powers than would have satisfied Redmond, and instead of agitation at Westminster he advocated a boycott of Westminster as a method of obtaining them. He placed especial emphasis upon freedom for Irish capitalists to develop industrially behind a wall of protective tarriffs. He saw the Larkin-Connolly Labour movement, then rapidly developing as a leadership of the working classes, as the greatest danger to his plans, and was as hostile to them as William Martin Murphy's Federated Employers were. While the Murphyite press strove to connect 'Larkinism' in the public mind with 'Satinism', Griffith appealing to a more vigorous nationalist spirit, dubbed it 'Diarmuid MacMurchadhism'. There was sufficient connection by dual membership between the Irish Volunteers and the Sinn Fein Party to link them together in the public eye, and they were often referred to, especially in the British press, as the "Sinn Fein Volunteers".

The Larkin-Connolly Labour Movement also had clearly defined objectives. Connolly saw to that. He has left behind him so much political teachings in his papers, *"The Irish Worker"*, *"The Workers' Republic"*, etc., and in such books as *"The Reconquest of Ireland"* and *"Labour in Irish History"*, that there is no excuse for ignorance on that score. The essence of his teaching is that the freedom of the Irish people (the nation) can only be achieved through a break with the British Empire (under any name), and that the only power capable of achieving and maintaining that freedom is a national movement led by the Irish working class. It involved the assumption of ownership of Ireland by its people - and effectual ownership at that.

It is easy to see the general pattern so long after the event. We need only glance through the newspapers and periodicals os the years before the Rising to see that, with all the vagueness and lack of definition that there was in the public mind, those two clearly defined concepts of Irish freedom were hardening into two rival leaderships - *defining themselves by their hostility to each other, and setting the stage for the events that followed - for the Proclamation of the Republic in 1916, and for its overthrow in 1922.*

The bitterness of that hostility in its early stages is not always realised. There has been a good deal of papering over of fissures, and we hear a lot of sentimental stuff from propagandists for the present State about different approaches leading to the same goal.

In "The Irish Worker" of May, 1911, Larkin, discussing definitions of "Freedom", described Griffith's party as: *"A party, or rump,which, while pretending to be Irish of the Irish, insults the nation by trying to foist on it, not only imported economics based on false principles, but which had the temerity to advocate the introduction of foreign capitalists into this sorely exploited country. Their chief appeal to the foreign capitalists was that they (the imported capitalists) would have freedom to employ cheap Irish labour! No, friend, Arthur, the Irish capitalist has too much freedom to exploit the worker!"*

If the sharpness of that clash is not always realised, still less is it realised how close the I.R.B. leaders of the Irish Volunteers were, in their sympathies, to the Larkin-Connolly movement, and how sharply at variance they were with Griffith. It is commonly known that Pearse grew very close to Connolly in his political thought as their acquaintance developed. It would be difficult, after reading Pearse's last pamphlet, "The Sovereign People", with its enthusiastic approval of James Fintan Lalor's role in 1848, to doubt that he would have stood with Connolly in the inevitable reorganisation of society if their revolt had been successful. The lack of clarity of thought that is so apparent in much that he wrote has been a joy to his detractors. His glorification of the carnage in Europe in 1915, which O'Casey used so effectively to lampoon the Rising, drew from Connolly the retort -*"Blithering idiot"*.

Pearse's interpretation of the still passion-charged history of Irish involvement in the British civil wars of the 17th century may even have caused some embarrassment to Connolly, whose interpretation had been so different, when he came to sign the Proclamation, but still, even though he made it easy for people to call him by that unpleasant term *"Separatist"*,he did leave on record his conviction that *"Separation from*

England would be valueless unless it put the people - the actual people, and not merely certain rich men - of Ireland in effectual ownership and possession of the soil of Ireland", and nothing that he wrote would allow us to place him with the supporters of the money-grabbing society that he so obviously despised. His sympathy with the working-class struggle did not begin in his association with Connolly. He had announced it publicly at least as early as 1911, when Connolly was still organising Trade Unions in Belfast.

In that year of strikes and lock-outs Griffith's paper, "Sinn Fein", was attacking the Labour movement very bitterly. Larkin was described editorially, not only as a "Communist"and an "Anarchist", but, for even greater variety, as "An English Agent". An article in a September issue, not an editorial, called upon the British armed forces to break a strike of railwaymen: *"We are forced"*, it ran, *"to pay for a very large force of police, and Dublin overflows with English soldiers. Yet, when a real emergency arises, the police and military together are not able to cope with so small a matter as ensuring the delivery of foodstuffs to their consignees in a great city threatened by starvation by irresponsible fomentors of sympathetic strikes."*

The breaking of a strike by military intervention could be a pretty bloody business. A short time before that incitement was written a strike in Liverpool had been met by military action. a number of people had been shot and bayonetted, and an eleven year-old boy had his head split open with the butt of a rifle. William Martin Murphy's paper, "The Irish Catholic", edited at that time by a man named Dennehy, prominent on the "Citizens' Reception Committee" to welcome King George V to Dublin, could not forbear to cheer, and to deprecate any more soft-handed treatment of men on strike. *"Volleys fired over the heads of mobs"*, he wrote, *"has always been a useless performance"*.

That incitement to military intervention in the rail strike published in Griffith's paper was a bit too much for some members of Griffith's party. W.T. Cosgrave sent a letter to the next issue of Larkin's paper, "The Irish Worker", dissociating himself from it in general terms. Eamonn Ceannt,

afterwards a signatory of the 1916 Proclamation, sent a long, and very angry, letter to "Sinn Fein", and if anyone likes to compare that letter with the newspaper reports of Mr. De Valera's recent tribute to Eamonn Ceannt in Ballymoe, he will, I think, see how enthusiasm for national identity can be used to cover a retreat from national independence.

Mr. De Valera told us that if Eamonn Ceannt were alive today he would urge us to speak Irish. The letter quoted here will suggest to us that if Ceannt were alive today he would have some other things to say besides that. *"Permit me"*, he wrote, *"as an individual Sinn Feiner, to dissociate myself from the general tone of your recent pronouncements on the Wexford labour trouble, and most emphatically from the humbug written by some anonymous hero calling himself Boyesen of Kollund dealing with the railway strike. You appear to see Larkin at the bottom of all the trouble. You do not condescend to analyse any of the principles for which Larkin professes to stand. Sufficient for you is that Larkin is the agitator causing trouble between employer and employed. In similar manner the English Tory and his Irish allies described Irish politicians as vile agitators who caused trouble between the good kind landlords and their willing slaves, the tenant farmers of Ireland. It is an open secret that Parnell, who was an aristocrat, had no desire to tack on a land agitation to his political programme, but Davitt and Kettle induced him to do so. Would it not be wise to take a leaf out of Parnell's book if you will not take it out of Larkin's book, as gravely suggested by Padráig Mac Piarais to the Gaelic League on Language Sunday?"*

Griffith hit back at Ceannt in his next issue. *"Some of the strike orators"*, he wrote, *"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 the reconquest of a soil that had been theirs and had been confiscated. The landlord did not make the soil, but the industrialists made the industry."*

The same issue carried an editorial: "In Dublin the wives of some of the men that Larkin has led out on strike are begging in the streets. The consequences of Larkinism are

workless fathers, mourning mothers, hungry children, and broken homes. Not the "Capitalists" but the policy of Larkin has raised the price of food until the poorest in Dublin are in a state of semi-famine, the curses of women are being poured on this man's head, Mr. Larkin's career of destruction is coming to a close, but when it has closed it will have established his name in the memory of Dublin as the man who did the maximum of injury to trade-unionism and the industrial revival."

That was in 1911. Not tactical differences, but realities deep-rooted in Irish life, were shaping things to come.

It has been attempted, by qhoting extracts from Arthur Griffith's paper, "Sinn Fein", and the Larkin-Connolly paper, "The Irish Worker", to indicate the forces that were gathering for the declaration of the Republic in 1916 and for its overthrow in 1922. "Irish freedom", to Griffith, meant freedom for Irish industrialists to manoeuvre to greater advantage within the imperial system. An independent Republic had no place in his plans.

We fail to give him the credit for consistency that is his due when we think of him as a man who "weakened" and signed the Articles of Agreement for a Treaty. On the issue of Partition he was tricked by Lloyd George, but, apart from that particular issue, the abandonment of the Republic and the acceptance of a place in the Empire represented very closely his own views on Irish and on world politics. He considered that, by the Act of Union, Ireland had been cheated out of her fair share of the fruits of Empire. He had written of Pitt as *"No Imperialist"*, but *"An English Absolutist"* who, by destroying Grattan's Parliament, had destroyed the hope of the development of *"An Anglo-Hibernian Empire"* that would be *"master of the world today"*.

A sincerely 'patriotic' man, he saw the development of industrialism within the imperial economy as the basis of all the goods that people mean when they speak of freedom, and he used the same words in his propaganda as other nationalist propagandists use, and so, among those who gathered round him in the Sinn Fein party there were some who were shocked to find that his unquestionable patriotism and his very volubly

expressed hatred of all things English did not prevent him from calling upon the British military forces to come to the rescue of the Irish employers when their interests were threatened by the railway strike in Dublin.

The Larkin-Connolly Labour movement, as early as that, had a higher aim than merely improving the lot of the working class within the established order. In that year James Connolly and P.T. Daly were organising Trade Unions in Belfast. Larkin, in "The Irish Worker", referred to them as *"Building up an organised working class, the work we set ourselves to accomplish, the resurrection of the Irish nation."* That objective did necessitate a break from the imperial system, and it was only when Connolly realised that Eoin MacNeill, a non-Republican Home Ruler, was not the real leader of the Irish Volunteers, and that the I.R.B. leadership that did control them was determined to make that break, that he joined forces with them. The sympathy of most of them, however openly declared, with the Labour movement would not have been enough.

I hope I have quoted enough of Connolly's and Larkin's own words to show that their aims were unattainable without the building of an Irish economy based upon the needs of the Irish people and upon their effective ownership of Ireland. I hope I have made it clear that Connolly realised that that could only be done by an independent Irish Republic.

As the 1914 war crisis developed he proceeded to act according to that belief - *to claim for organised Labour a vanguard position in the struggle for national independence.* Ever since the formation of the Irish Volunteer force he had been urging its members to press past the Home Rule leadership and to take their stand for an independent Republic. In an open letter to the Irish National Volunteer Provisional Committee in 1914 he wrote: *"The triumvirate which guides the destinies of the 'other house' (Redmondites) has adopted as its official motto the words 'Defence, not Defiance'; a very proper sentiment for any loyal son of Empire to express."*

In November, 1914, Robert Monteith, then an Irish Volunteer organiser, was ordered out of Ireland by the British government. The Citizen Army and the I.T. & G.W.U. held a meeting of protest. *"He is not"*, Connolly wrote, *of our counsel, he is not of our*

Union, he is not of our Army, but as he was struck at by our enemy because he held the same high ideal of National Rights as we had, we sprang to offer our all for his aid. That was the true spirit of militant Irish labour."

Connolly was determined that the 1914 war should not pass without an attempt being made by the Irish nation to gain its independence. That is a fact with which we are all familiar. It is also a fact, though it is not so widely disseminated, that he saw that attempt, not only as an assertion by the Irish people of their ownership of Ireland, but also as part of the revolt of the oppressed people of the world against what he described as *"a war of royal freebooters and cosmopolitan brigands."*

In August, 1914, at the outbreak of war, he wrote: *"What ought to be the attitude of the working-class democracy of Ireland in face of the present crisis? In the first place we ought to clear our minds of all the political cant which would tell us that we have either 'natural enemies' or 'natural allies' in any of the powers now warring."* His advice was to see that the food necessary to feed the Irish people would not be taken away to feed the warring nations. Farmers would be tempted by high prices. Provision must be made for the Irish working class before food should be allowed to go. *"Let us not shrink from the consequences"*, he wrote. *"This may mean more than a transport strike, it may mean armed battling in the streets to keep in this country the food for our people. Whatever it may mean, it must not be shrunk from. It is the immediate feasible policy of the working-class democracy, to answer to all the weaklings who, in this crisis of our country's history, stand helpless and bewildered crying for guidance, when they are not hastening to betray her. Starting thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord."*

The I.R.B. leaders of the Irish Volunteers were, of course, as determined as Connolly was that what seemed to them the opportunity presented by the war should not be allowed to pass without an armed uprising. As Connolly's determination

became more certainly known to them they became anxious lest his plans should clash with their plans, and so they sought an understanding with him. It has been said that he was kidnapped and held until that understanding was reached. If that did happen it seems strange that it would have been thought necessary. What is certain is that Connolly was co-opted on to the military council and appointed to command the joint forces, Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army, in the Dublin area.

The story of the actual Rising does not need retelling here, but there is one detail that is not usually stressed and that has especial significance in any examination of the role of the Labour movement in 1916. It concerns the manner of Connolly's death. He had been severely wounded in the fighting in and around the General Post Office, and, after the other leaders had been executed, there was a long delay. It seemed likely that his life might be spared. The newspaper that was virtually the mouthpiece of the Dublin Employers' Federation took fright and called in unmistakable terms for his death, pointing out to the British authorities how unjust it would be to leave that most dangerous man alive. So Connolly was taken from his bed, strapped to a chair, and carried before a firing squad. It was no lone voice that demanded his death.

Within a week after the crushing of the Rising the Chamber of Commerce called a special meeting and passed this resolution: *"The Council of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce hereby assure His Gracious Majesty of the loyalty of the commercial community to his person and his throne. They also do record their abhorrence of the dreadful scenes of murder, carnage and destruction resulting from the action of a section of the community in the city."* Their souls revolted, you will note, from the murder, carnage and destruction in Dublin, while they were sacking their employees to force them through starvation, to enlist for the fun and games in Flanders.

In the awakening of national spirit that followed the Rising there was, inevitably, a considerable period of mixing around of different groups and organisations before the forces aiming in their different ways at Irish freedom were coordinated into an effective shape.

Count Plunkett, who had been elected as a non-party Republican in a by-election in Roscommon, had, at an early stage, organised "Liberty Clubs". The Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army kept their military formations. Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein Party still remained, and some volunteers, though not a big number, were members of it. The I.R.B. was extending its influence amongst the various groupings.

There was a great deal of confusion still as to the political objective. Griffith's Sinn Fein Party had supported Count Plunkett's election campaign, but Griffith continued to oppose the reorganisation of the national forces on a Republican basis. There was argument as to whether Count Plunkett's victory represented a popular verdict for an independent Republic or for Arthur Griffith's policy of Home Rule under a dual monarchy. This part of the history of the times is dealt with in great detail by Dorothy Macardle in her book, "The Irish Republic". Her account is accurate as to detail although she would be the first to confess that she had little understanding of the social forces working below the surface.

When, eventually, a great convention of those different groups was held it appears to have been called together as a Sinn Fein Ard Fheis, but it became a mobilisation of all those advanced nationalist forces seeking an effective organisational form.

By that time the prisoners of the Rising had been released, and by their presence they strengthened the elements within that convention that were hostile to Griffith and favoured a republican stand. Many of the volunteers resented the term, "Sinn Fein" that had been pinned onto them by the British pressmen, and wanted a complete break with Griffith who was still unwilling to campaign for an independent Republic. De Valera, who had recently been elected in Clare on a programme which, though vaguely stated, was popularly understood to be republican, but who himself approved of Griffith's economic ideas, found a formula: *"Sinn Fein aims at securing the international recognition of Ireland as an independent republic. Having achieved that status, the Irish people may by referendum freely choose their own form of government."*

It would be hard to find fault with that formula for what is in it, unless we notice what is not in it. The form that a struggle takes is bound to have a determining effect on its outcome, and that formula gave no indication whatever of any kind of popular struggle that must necessarily lead to a break with the Empire. It left, as we may suppose it was meant to do, a door wide open for the return of Griffithism as a dominating influence, and Griffith seized his opportunity. He threw in his lot with the general voice of the convention and became Vice-President of the new Sinn Fein Party. After the declaration of independence by Dail Eireann in 1919 he became Minister for Home Affairs, and for the greater part of the pre-truce portion of the war for independence he was Acting President of the Republic.

When Eoin MacNeill was proposed as a member of the executive body of the newly constituted Sinn Fein Party, he too was opposed by many of the volunteers who had not forgotten the countermanding order that had broken the back of the Rising, and again De Valera found a formula. MacNeill, he said, might have made an error in judgment, but *"I am convinced,"* he added, *"that John MacNeill did not act otherwise than as a good Irishman."* That, undoubtedly, was true, but good Irishmen, unfortunately, do not always have the same political objectives, and both Eoin MacNeill and Arthur Griffith took their places in the government of a Republic in which they did not believe. They used the Republic as a stepping-stone to Home Rule in which they did believe.

Peadar O'Donnell, in his book, "There will be another Day" has discussed this portion of our history with great penetration. Describing the re-entry of Griffith into a position of leadership, he wrote: *"The country saw high drama in the incident at a Republican delegate meeting in the Mansion House when Father O'Flanagan reporting on a backstage conference with Griffith, announced that 'Griffith has thrown in his lot with us'. The delegates got to their feet and cheered. But nobody noticed that Connolly's chair was left vacant, that the place Connolly purchased for the organised Labour movement in the leadership of the independence struggle was being denied; or reneged."*

It is easy to explain the failure of the new I.R.B. leaders to bring into the reorganised independence movement the pro-Connolly attitude of Pearse and Ceannt and Plunkett. Their attitude had been one of sympathy, not of agitational involvement, and sympathy leaves no heirs. It is not so easy to explain the failure of Connolly's successors in the Labour movement to claim a place in the newly formed leadership. It ought to be remembered, though, that the position of Connolly and the Citizen Army in Liberty Hall had not been altogether so unchallenged as we have since been encouraged to believe. It was pretty precarious at times. Anyway, whatever the reasons may have been, there was no revolt among Labour leaders when De Valera issued his edict: *"LABOUR MUST WAIT"*.

I have tried to show how consistently hostile Griffith had been to the Larkin-Connolly Labour movement before the Rising. I have tried to show, too, that those I.R.B. leaders who, with Connolly, were responsible for the Proclamation of the Republic, leant towards Connolly's politics and not towards Griffith's. When Connolly was co-opted to the military council and appointed to command the Republican forces in the Dublin area no one had suggested that *"in the interests of national unity"* Connolly should stand aside and allow Griffith to lead. No one suggested then that *"Labour must wait"*. But now, at the reorganisation, Griffith, who had been persuaded with difficulty to take his stand with the Republicans, was installed in a position of leadership while Labour was told to wait. Labour waited, and that was the great failure of our generation. I do not think it is too much to say that it was the determining factor in causing the collapse of the independence movement.

This can be most easily seen in relation to the situation in the North. Like O'Connell's old slogan, *"Repeal of the Union - God Save the Queen!"*, Griffithism faced the hostility of Belfast Conservatism without offering any attraction to anything that was left of the old Radicalism of the Northern workers. It provided a welcome funk-hold for quite a lot of pseudo-radicalism. The Tories had "played the Orange Card", and the only card that might have beaten it was never played, not yet.

As a result of the general election of 1918 the Republic was established by popular vote. It was immediately attacked by the forces of the Crown, and the war that developed in its defence was fought in a political atmosphere dominated, not by Connolly's mind, but by Griffith's mind. Ernie O'Malley has described the attitude of the I.R.A. volunteers as being, generally speaking, vaguely sympathetic towards the cause of Labour, and that was about the size of it. Whatever gestures were made towards Labour by the Government of the Republic were kept well within the bounds of the social system that prevailed.

The *"Rights of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland"* claimed by the 1916 Proclamation, and itself an echo from the Citizen Army constitution, was not made to mean the right of the people of Ireland to the possession of Ireland. Both in the slums of Dublin and in the countryside landlords were protected by Republican Courts anxious to be "fair to all sides". In certain areas where landless men tried to move in on the ranches and demesne lands the I.R.A. was used to prevent them from doing so.

A pamphlet called "Constructive Work of Dail Eireann", issued by the Minister for Home Affairs in 1921, describes that development: *"While the I.R.A. were establishing their authority as a national police, a grave danger threatened the foundations of the Republic. This was the recrudescence in an acute form of an agrarian agitation for the breaking up of the great grazing ranches into tillage holdings for landless men and 'uneconomic' small holders....There was a moment when it seemed that nothing could prevent wholesale expropriation. But this crisis was surmounted, thanks to a patriotic public opinion, and the civic sense of justice expressed through the Arbitration Courts and enforced by the Republican police."*

Another similar pamphlet tells how *"terrified landowners flocked to Dublin to beseech protection from the Dail"*, and goes on to tell how they got it. A number of men had taken over some ranch land, and had defied the order of the court to vacate it. "One night, about a fortnight after the issue of the judgment, the captain of the local company of the IRA descended upon them with a squad of his men, sons of very

poor farmers like themselves, arrested four of them, and brought them off to that very effective Republican prison, an unknown destination."

Fintan Lalor, who had been so eulogised by Pearse, had been described by Griffith as a man who had tried to throw the agrarian struggle across the nation's road to freedom. With Griffith as Acting President of the Republic it is not to be wondered at that Fintan Lalor's teaching played no part in the conduct of that war.

It is not difficult to imagine what Fintan Lalor, or Connolly, would have had to say of a Ministry of Home Affairs that described such police work as "The Constructive Work of Dail Eireann", safeguarding "the foundations of the Republic". But Connolly's chair was vacant.

The business interests that have dominated the Treaty State since its foundation did not only seize power after the defeat of 1922. They had been building their position within the Republican movement ever since the general election of 1918 had made it obvious that Redmond's Home Rule Party was finished as a protecting force. It was in the crisis of the Treaty that they showed their teeth.

The courage of the guerilla fighters, backed by the loyalty of the people, forced a truce and a parley, but they had built no new pattern of life around them that could make the people understand what was happening when their struggle to undo the conquest became, to their leaders, a wrangle over symbols of subjection - Treaty versus Document No. 2.

When the Treaty settlement came to be debated in Dail Eireann there were many speeches made against it that were admirable for their courage, and for their devotion to the ideal of Irish independence but there was only one that showed much understanding of the realities behind that settlement. Madame Markieviez, speaking as a disciple of James Connolly, pointed out that English Imperialism was working "by a change of names". *"It is the capitalist interests in England and Ireland"*, she said, *"that are pushing this Treaty to block the march of the working people in England and Ireland"*. That

policy, with up-to-date streamlining, has since become familiar to the world under the name of "Neo-colonialism".

Arthur Griffith's part in the Treaty settlement was logical and consistent. He had always supported the capitalist interests, even to the extent, in 1911, of putting aside temporarily his "Irish Rebel" attitude and calling upon the British forces to break a Larkin-Connolly strike. Now, in the sharper crisis of 1922, he again called upon the British forces, and this time, when the borrowed guns were roaring around the Four Courts, there was no protest from Mr. Cosgrave.

There had been that much clarification of ideas on one side of the barricade. On the other side there had been no such clarification. The Larkin-Connolly leadership was gone. The I.R.B., beheaded of its pro-Connolly leadership, and, by reason of its conspiratorial methods unpredictable, threw its disciplinary influence behind Griffith and against the Republic. The Labour leaders, without vision and with their sights drastically lowered from Connolly's objective blundered into support for Griffith's State, and a politically leaderless I.R.A. fought a rearguard action in defence of the Republic until it could fight no longer.

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THE TREATY AND THE CIVIL WAR

With the Treaty, Arthur Griffith and his supporters, having successfully prevented the Labour movement from playing a leading role in Sinn Fein, assisted in this by the spinelessness of the Labour leaders, William O'Brien and Cathal O'Shannon, who had abandoned Connolly's conception of Labour having a major role in the struggle against imperialism, did a deal with the British government. In effect what happened at the Treaty was that Griffith took over John Redmond's policy of Home Rule, except that this time it was for a partitioned country, the representatives of Irish business, particularly that section of it with commercial links with England, and the big ranchers, doing a deal with British Imperialism. De Valera sought a compromise with imperialism (Document No.2) which

was not acceptable in 1921. Eleven years later he adopted Griffith's old Sinn Fein programme of protection for Irish industry and, backed by the smaller Irish manufacturers and traders who wanted the Irish home market to themselves together with the farmers who were won over by his promise to retain the land annuities he came to power as leader of Fianna Fail. But neither Document No. 2 nor the Fianna Fail 1932 programme was a republican programme.

In the months following the Treaty, Collins used his control of the I.R.B. to swing substantial sections of the I.R.A. and the Sinn Fein Party on to the side of support for imperialism, showing the way in which a conspiratorial movement, once its leadership has taken the path of compromise with imperialism, can be used to swing large numbers of politically inexperienced men on to the same path through the use of organisational discipline.

The anti-Treaty I.R.A. saw the Republic was betrayed and tried to maintain it by arms, to return to the position of 1919 and 1920. But their leadership was primarily a military leadership, not a political one. They had little conception of how they would convince the mass of the people of what was happening and organise them to oppose the Free State Government. They did not know how they could identify the cause of the defence of the Republic with the economic and social needs of the people, and linking with the Labour movement.

The I.R.A. leader who most clearly saw the need to give a strong social base for the defence of the Republic was Liam Mellowes, who expressed his views in a number of letters smuggled out of Mountjoy Jail to his I.R.A. colleagues when he was imprisoned in August 1922 after the fall of the Four Courts.

Mellowes saw that without the support of the working class, in particular the trade unions, the Republic was lost. *"We should certainly keep Irish Labour for the Republic"*, he wrote. *"It will probably be the biggest factor on our side. Anything that would prevent Irish Labour from becoming imperialist and respectable will help the Republic... We are back with Tone - and it is just as well - relying on "the men of no property".*

"The unemployment position is acute. Starvation is facing thousands of people. The official Labour movement has deserted the people for the flesh-pots of Empire. The Free State Government's attitude towards striking postal workers makes it clear what its attitude towards workers in general will be. The situation created by all these must be utilised for the Republic. The position must be defined: Free State Capitalism and Industrialism = Empire; Republic = Workers = Labour".

He suggested the programme of Democratic Control (the Social Programme) adopted by the Dail in 1919 should be translated into something definite. *"This is essential if the great body of workers are to be kept on the side of independence."*

If this had been done or done early enough, by the anti-Treaty I.R.A. leadership, there would almost certainly have been greater support for the Republic than there was. The Free State might have been defeated, or at least the Civil War would not have been lost so easily by the anti-Treaty side. If the economic power of the trade unions had been thrown on the side of the Republic and against the Free State the outcome of the struggle might have been very different. But it was not to be. The conflict was primarily a military one.

Apart from the lonely voice of Mellowes there was nobody to explain what needed to be done to save the Republic -i.e. the need for a political leadership and the social base in the interests of the mass of workers and small farmers. There was nobody on the official Labour side to give a lead after the death of Connolly.

The military struggle to defend the public inevitably ended in defeat. Mellowes earlier had pointed why: *"The reason for many young soldiers going wrong (i.e. I.R.A. volunteers taking the Treaty side) is that they never had a proper grasp of fundamentals. They were absorbed into the movement and fight - not educated into it. Hence no real convictions."*

The lessons to be drawn from this period are:

1. The need to identify the cause of the Republic with the economic and social needs of the people, particularly the workers and small farmers. The inevitability of defeat in a "purely" military struggle against the property interests (Griffith and the Free State, later De Valera)who compromised with imperialism.

2. The need for members of the movement to have a thorough political education so that they will understand the reasons for the different attitudes of different sections of the people to the Republican struggle. The need for them to identify themselves by active participation and leadership, as Republicans, in the economic and social struggles of workers and small farmers, so that the latter will be with them in the time of military struggle.

3. The dangers of what can happen to a secret conspiratorial organisation when its members are held together by organisational and disciplinary bonds only rather than by a coherent social and political philosophy and identity of economic and social interests *(what happened to the I.R.B. between 1916 and 1922, when the leadership passed from Pearse to Collins).*

BOOKS TO READ: LIAM MELLOWES: Notes from Mountjoy Jail (reprinting).
DOROTHY MACARDLE: The Irish Republic.

GREAVES: Liam Mellowes and Irish Revolution.

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WHY THE CIVIL WAR WAS LOST: PARTITION

Britain divided Ireland by the Government of Ireland Act 1920, which set up separate Parliaments and governments north and south of Ireland. This was done before the Truce and before the Treaty. The Six County Government was a *fait accompli* and was well established in the North even before the Truce. *It is important to bear in mind that Britain never handed over authority and power in Ireland to the republican Dail. She first of all established the Six County state and*

then handed over power in the Twenty Six Counties to Griffith, Collins and the pro-Treaty section of the Dail, recognising the Ministers the pro-Treaty appointed as the "Provisional Government" of the south of Ireland.

The Civil War was thus fought between this British recognised Provisional Government, with its army, police force and administration on the one hand, and the anti-Treaty section of the I.R.A. and the Dail on the other. The republican side who saw partition accepted and the republic betrayed by the Treaty, were defeated in the Civil War. What were the main reasons for this defeat?

1. The Provisional Government, armed and advised by the British, was able to mass more numerous and better equipped troops in the field than the Republicans and were therefore militarily stronger.

2. While masses of the people were sympathetic to the Republican side, this did not extend into active involvement. The Republicans gave the people a military leadership, not a political one. de Valera, the main political figure on the Republican side, had nothing to contribute in the way of political leadership while the Civil War lasted. There was no political leadership or organisation in existence to explain to the people what had happened and why Griffith and Collins had compromised with Britain.

The "betrayal" of the Treaty was generally understood by Republicans in terms of individual moral fault-*Griffith or Collins and the others had "sold out" because of some defects in their moral fibre* - rather than in terms of the social and economic interests Griffith and Collins represented, that is, business, commerce, shopkeepers, the ranchers and the "gombeen" nationalists in general, whose business was suffering badly as a result of the war with Britain and the depredations of the Black and Tans. These people now thought that they had got a good bargain from Britain and they were unwilling to continue the fight for the sake of the Republic because this would have thrown them into the arms of the small farmers, the workers, the landless men, the "men of no property", who were enthusiastic for the Republic because they saw in it the opportunity for winning social

and economic as well as political freedom, but who got nothing from the Treaty settlement.

3. Significant masses of the common people, workers and small farmers in particular, could have been swung on the side of active support for the Republic if Mellowes' programme had been carried out, or had been adopted by the I.R.A. at an earlier stage when this was still feasible, before the Civil War actually broke out. Such a step would have given the cause of the Republic a visible social content which would have attracted the support of the most radical elements in the country, the men who had nothing to lose in a fight to the finish with Britain, unlike the business elements who supported the Treaty. But this was not done.

If the Mellowes programme had been adopted the trade unions in particular could have been involved in the defence of the Republic. *These were organisations which had the economic power and ability to cripple the Provisional Government.* If they had been active on the side of the Republic the refusal of the workers to work could have stopped the trains and transport system and the entire civil administration, making prosecution of an effective war impossible for the Free State. Political strikes in industry and distribution could have held the Government to ransom. But the Trade Unions were not involved as organisations, as Labour had been in 1916 when led by Connolly.

As it was, the Republican ranks in the Civil War were manned by individual workers and small farmers in the main, and the strongest and toughest resistance to the Free State troops was put up in the small farm areas of the south and west, where the poorest and economically hardest hit people in the country lived. Likewise many workers and trade unionists were active in the I.R.A. But individual participation is vastly different from organisational involvement.

The organised power of Labour and the trade unions remained unused and the Labour leaders, William O'Brien, Cathal O'Shannon and Tom Johnston attempted to adopt a position of "neutrality" which in effect played into the hands of the Free State. Official Labour sat on the fence. Responsibility for this rested not just with the I.R.A., for failing to give

the fight for the Republic a social content which would appeal more to the workers and small farmers as Mellowes had advocated; it rested primarily with the leaders of the Labour movement, the Trade Unions and the Labour Party themselves, who were in general timid, shortsighted men, with little vision, concerned primarily with protecting their union funds, and in not appreciating that the interest of the workers could only be served by a genuinely anti-imperialist Republican Government, based on the support of the men of no property, whereas the Free State was ruled by the same business interests which had tried to suppress the Labour movement during the 1913 strike.

Moreover, they did not appreciate that Britain feared nothing more than the emergence in Ireland of a real anti-imperialist Government, based on championing the interests of the workers and small farmers, and not committed by its ties with finance, commerce, industry or ranching to a policy of compromise with imperialism. The 1920s were to hammer home the truth of this to many of the Labour men when the Free State Government revealed clearly the economic and social interests it served by introducing slashing wage cuts, cuts in social security benefits and anti-trade union and small farmer legislation.

Connolly, if he had lived, would have involved organised Labour on the side of the Republic. But there were no men with the Connolly outlook in the top leadership of Labour in the early 1920s. And in general this has remained true of the Trade Union and Labour Movement in Ireland ever since. While the membership of the Republican Movement during the various phases of its development over the past four decades has consisted primarily of workers in the towns and small farmers and labourers in the countryside, no attempt has been effectively made to involve labour organisationally on the side of the Republic and against the pro-imperialist policies of successive Cumann na nGael, Fianna Fail and Coalition Governments.

This has been the main reason, moreover, for the political weakness of Labour in Ireland over the past four decades. The trade unions have been strong in the economic field, and

they continue daily to grow stronger - in numbers, membership, funds and power over the economy. But politically the leadership of the working classes in the towns and cities has never been: *a) Republican, b) Anti-imperialist or c) With a social content which identified the fight for the Republic with the economic and social needs of the workers and small farmers.* As a result the urban workers - and much of the countryside too - have had little alternative but to support the nearest thing to such a programme, namely the Fianna Fail platform in the 1930s and 1940s.

Today, as Fianna Fail is increasingly revealed as a proim rialist party, with the integration-with-Britain policies of Lemass and Lynch, the urban workers, who numerically are stronger in Ireland than ever before, are looking for an alternative political leadership.

It can be safely be predicted that the Revolutionary Party, able to provide such a leadership must be Republican in outlook and policy, anti-imperialist, willing to tackle the property interests that are linked to and dependent on imperialism, linked to the workers' organisations and able to explain to the workers that their economic and social interests can only be served by a genuinely anti-imperialist programme.

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