THE STORY of IRISH LABOUR

J.M. MacDONNELL

THE CORK WORKERS' CLUB
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HISTORICAL REPRINT SERIES

It is our intention to republish a series of pamphlets and booklets which, in our opinion, are of historical value to the study of the development of the Socialist Movement in Ireland.

All publications will be unabridged, and we would like to stress that in publishing them we do not necessarily agree with all the sentiments expressed.

We welcome suggestions from readers on works to be included in the series, and should anyone possess a pamphlet which they deem worth republishing, we will be glad to hear from them.

THE CORK WORKERS CLUB
9 St. Nicholas Church Place,
Cove St., Cork.
At that period mankind lived in family groups united by ties of blood and kinship. They fished and hunted together. They worked together and shared with all the tribe the results of their labour. To other tribes they presented a united front. In everything they carried out the motto "an injury to one is the concern of all." Greeks, Romans, Teutons, Gaels, and all the races that have a past record of progress went through this stage of primitive communism.

None of the historic races stopped at that stage, for during it, mankind steadily climbed up the thorny road to civilisation. In that period fire was made man's servant, pottery, the wheel, the plough, and other tool-conveniences were invented, many of them retaining their primitive form from the time of their invention by some unknown barbarian, down to the quickening of inventive genius in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The Gaelic race did not stop. Even in the period of upper barbarism it had attained in Ireland a high degree of culture, witnessed to by tradition and by the remains of dwellings and artistic objects. The latter are most significant, for only a race that is producing more than the bare necessaries of life can set apart members of the community to produce elaborate jewellery or stone carving. The presence of schools and scholars, who devoted their lives to study and teaching, and the existence of the bardic order, side by side with corps of famous fighting men in every clan, prove that the actual labouring members of the clans produced wealth far in excess of their own personal requirements.

All shared, however, in the results of the clan's labours. The consolation of the arts, bardic song, the tales of the seanachie, and the dances of the people were denied to none. Every clansman, and even the "unfree"—criminals and strangers—had the guarantee of food, clothing, and shelter. Rights and duties alike were allotted to every individual, but within the clan there was none of the cut-throat competition of modern civilisation.

Military conflict among the clans, and in resistance to foreign invaders, tended to increase the power of the chiefs, and to give special importance to the fighting men. Left to herself, Ireland would probably have developed as did other races, out of a clan ownership into feudalism. The invasions of the Danes and Anglo-Normans suspended the normal course of social progress and the Gaelic race had to devote all its energies to a struggle for self-preservation.

II.

THE REASON OF THE CONQUEST


We need not do more than glance, in passing, at the centuries of struggle from 1170 to the flight of the Earls in 1607. Dr. Alice Stopford Green has marshalled in her books the records of Irish missionary enterprise, Irish culture, and trade and commerce from the archives of Europe's great commercial cities of the middle ages. Ireland was then an important producing country with an exportable surplus of food-stuffs and manufactures—down to the time when the Tudors, Henry VIII., to Elizabeth, gave English pirates a free hand to destroy Irish overseas trade.

From the Battle of Faughart, 1318, to the end of the War of the Roses with the accession of Henry VII. to the throne of England in 1485, England was too busy elsewhere to pursue her plan of conquest in Ireland, and her power shrank so that even the Lords-Deputies could only remain in Dublin by paying "black rent" to the O'Byrnes, the O'Tooles, and the McMorroughs.

But circumstances arose which, during the next century, drove England to the conquest of Ireland. One factor was the final expulsion of the English from France, in which many of the English nobility had held extensive lands from the time their ancestors had fared forth with William of Normandy for the conquest of England. That source of wealth was now closed to them for ever. Another influence was the growing demand for English wool. The discovery of America, and the
opening up of trade with the East Indies, expanded the outlet for English wool and woollen goods. The European market became a world market, and as English long staple wool was essential to the woollen manufacturers of the Netherlands, France, Spain, and Italy, the increased demand from these countries for English wool coincided with a great development of woollen manufacture in England. More wool meant more sheep, and more sheep required a greater acreage of pasture. The eviction of small holders and the conversion of tillage to grazing gave only a small increase. England saw in Ireland a veritable Naboth's vineyard: rich pastures, a great trade in wool, and a manufacture that was actually a serious competitor.

The flight of the Northern Earls in 1607 destroyed the last hope of military resistance to English power. The English lawyer now completed what the English soldier had almost failed to accomplish. Ireland was parcelled out in shires. The rights of the people were ignored, and the territory of the clans given to undertakers and planters. Some of the tribesland was "granted" as personal property to Irish chiefs who accepted the new laws.

The plantation of Ulster and South-East Leinster, and the composition of Connaught under James, the Cromwellian confiscation and the final settlement after the siege of Limerick, completed the conquest of the soil of Ireland. The result was that about one-twentieth of Ireland was left in Irish hands, and even that was in the possession of landlords holding under English law and bound by their property interest to be as bitter oppressors of the common people as were the new landlords of English birth and origin. The soil of Ireland, which yielded its fruits freely to every clansman, was robbed from them, and the free clansman became the propertyless wage worker, the proletarian of to-day.

III.

WAGE SLAVERY BEGINS IN IRELAND

MONEY ECONOMY—WAGES REGULATED BY ENGLISH LAW—LABOUR LAWS IN TYRONE—WAGES FIXED BY EMPLOYERS—DR. COFFEY AND THE LOCK-OUT BY CAPITALISM.

In the early stages of feudalism, goods required for the sustenance of the inhabitants of the barony, from the lord down to the serf, were produced within the barony. Only the surplus was exchanged, and exchange was direct. Corn was given for iron, and so forth. Feudal dues were paid in labour or in goods; the serf gave so many days' labour to his lord, the farmer paid his rent in corn, cattle, and fowl. Money was only required for trade with foreigners and payment of taxes. In time, however, the convenience of money destroyed direct exchange. Money became the medium of trade and money payments replaced feudal services. This change had been fully accomplished in England by the middle of the fourteenth century.

The English serf became a wage-labourer, and after the Peasants' Rebellion of 1381 Parliament undertook the task of regulating wages. As the English Parliament consisted of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and a House of Commons composed of landlords and wealthy merchants, the Statutes of Labourers regulating wages and conditions of labour were framed entirely in the interests of the employing class. If no longer chattels to be bought and sold, the English labourers were bound to live in the parish of their birth and to compulsory labour at rates fixed either by Statute or by the local magistrates.
These laws never applied to Ireland, not even to the English Pale, but the first fruit of the conquest was the enforcement of similar conditions in Ireland without the warranty of law. Dr. O'Brien has published a document showing the application of the principles of this English legislation in County Tyrone in the year 1608. It illustrates vividly the fall in the status of the Irish worker that followed immediately upon the flight of the Earls and the occupation of their territory by the planters and the English grantees.

The free clansman, with his plot of land and his rights to pasture and woodlands assured to him and his for ever, was now become the serf of an alien master with no rights guaranteed by the immemorial Brehon customs, but with the sole duty of obedience to the will of the new ruler.

The "Note of Rates for Wages of Artificers, Labourers, and Household Servants set down within the County of Tyrone" consists of 49 clauses, the first of which are as follows:

1. All manner of persons being under the age of 50 years, not having to the value of £6 sterling of their own proper goods, shall be compelled to labour for their living.

2. No labourers or servants shall depart out of one barony into another without leave of a Justice of Peace.

3. No persons not having an eighth part of a plough [ploughland—about 120 acres in extent] shall keep any servant in their house, but shall labour and do their work themselves.

No servant was to be hired for a less term than a year, nor to leave the service of a master without giving three months' notice before witnesses. Masters were to give certificates to servants leaving their employment, so that anyone harbouring or relieving a servant who had no certificate might be punished. By such means the entire Irish people, witnesses. Masters were to give certificates to servants leaving their house, but shall labour and do their work themselves.

The wage rates, like the labour conditions, are eloquent of the scarcity of labour brought about by the wars and English-made famines of the preceding years. They seem small, but having regard to the difference in money and in its purchasing power, they probably provided a standard of living not far short of that prevailing among agricultural labourers in 1914.

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<td>Every plough holder, with meat and drink, per quarter</td>
<td>6 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every plough leader</td>
<td>5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every beam holder</td>
<td>3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good servant girl, by the year</td>
<td>10 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cow boy for every cow, by the year</td>
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<td>Labourers hired by the day, with meat</td>
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Through such laws, imposed upon a helpless people by sheer force of arms, was the modern wages system brought into Ireland. The Rev. P. Coffey, Ph.D., of Maynooth, has vividly and accurately summed up the results of the conquest in these words:

"The despoiler said in effect to the despoiled: 'We, the small minority, have now succeeded in cornering possession of all the world's natural sources of wealth; we have locked you out, you, the vast majority, and we will keep you and your posterity effectively locked out, from all possibility of recovering ownership of any of this monopolised capital:

"You must by your labour exploit those sources of wealth for us on our own terms—or starve.'"

IV.

HOW LABOUR SAVED THE NATION FROM EXTINCTION


The eighteenth century found the Irish race at the lowest ebb of its fortunes, culturally, materially, and spiritually. It still retained its own language, for the gibberish spoken by such degraded creatures among themselves was no concern of their masters. So when all else was lost, there still passed from lip to lip the tales of Finn and Cuchulainn, of Brian Boru, of O'Neill and Desmond, the melancholy memories of a vanished and, it seemed, an irrecoverable past. Their situation could not be worse. The mass of the people were but little inconvenienced materially by the Penal Laws, although the town craftsmen was oppressed by the rules which forbade a Catholic entrance to the craft guilds.

The principal burden on the workers was provided by such regulations as that quoted in the last chapter, and by the necessity of invariable
and immediate submission to the will of the landlord or agent who controlled the parish. In the grip of such laws, administered by the most despotic breed of tyrants the world has produced, the labourers were powerless to better themselves.

With the increase of population, the restriction of the people to their native barony or parish, which was never sanctioned by the legislature, was abandoned, and great masses of the Irish people became wanderers. A labourer would make a bargain with a farmer for a potato patch. Out of a few sticks, furze, fern, etc., he would rear a shelter on the corner of the patch for his family, and having set his potatoes would leave them to live by begging or charity through the summer, while he set off to England to earn the money needed to pay the rent.

It is difficult to conceive the misery of the rural labourers of Ireland during the eighteenth century. The testimony of Irish and foreign writers is unanimous. As the century advanced the conditions worsened. When Irish cattle were admitted to the British market in 1758 the landlords were seized with a rage for grazing, and cleared their estates of tillage tenants and cottiers, and the common lands were enclosed. When, after 1770, tillage was extended to secure the bounties given by the Irish Parliament, once more the attacks was made upon the smallholder and cottier. Whatever change was made in the character of agriculture it was always carried out at the expense of the labouring poor.

There is a depth of misery below which humanity cannot sink without surrendering the divine quality that marks off man from the beast, and on the verge of that point the Irish people revolted. The year 1762 was marked by sundry efforts of the peasantry of North and South to retrieve their fallen condition and to gain some slight control over their means of life. In Munster, provoked by the enclosure of common lands, the peasants, small farmers and labourers, both classes tenants at will, took part in raids for arms and executed vengeance on their oppressors. They went out at nights disguised by wearing white shirts over their ordinary clothing, and by reason of their dress were known as the Whiteboys. There seems to have been no widespread organisation; outbreaks were sporadic, and in nearly every case could be accounted for by some act of tyranny on the part of the landlord or the Protestant parson. All the powers of the State were invoked to root out Whiteboyism.

Unable to convict the actual perpetrators of the "outrages," the local yeomanry, parsons, landlords, and middlemen wreaked their vengeance on any man of known spirit and courage. When the process of law was resorted to, the trials were farcical, for the victim was doomed from the moment the charge was laid against him. Many were slain out of hand. Horsewhipping and pitch-capping of men and outrage of women went on merrily throughout Munster, but the people, once inspired to revolt, could not be subdued, and the terror of an
V.
LABOUR IN ULSTER


One of the most glorious episodes in the history of the Irish working class, and one which no Gael of North or South will readily forget, is the Defence of Derry. When the banner of James II. was raised by Tyrconnel, the Protestant people of the neighbourhood flocked into Derry City. Finding the Governor, Lundy, lukewarm in the defence, they set him aside. “Those who undertook the defence,” says P. W. Joyce, “were merely the common working people; for with the connivance of Lundy and Cunningham the town had been deserted by most of the leading men”—an incident often paralleled in other places and at other times.

Throughout the province of Ulster the Protestant inhabitants, the majority of them being Presbyterian in religion and Scots in origin, rallied, as they believed, to the cause of Civil and Religious Liberty. To their adherence was due the success of William of Orange. Yet within twenty years of the defence of the Maiden City and the Battle of the Boyne, the religion of these men was proscribed and void. Such was the reward of their fidelity to the cause of the Protestant reformation. Under these trials, the Presbyterian aristocracy abandoned their church and became “Prelatical Episcopalians.” That Presbyterianism survives in Ireland is due to the suffering, sacrificing workers.

Like the Catholics, they submitted patiently to such tyranny for many years, but in 1762 the system of forced labour upon private roads brought about a revolt. Organised in secret societies known as the “Oakboys,” the men of Monaghan rose in arms and fought several battles with the Royal troops under Col. Coote (an ominous name). They were finally dispersed, but they won by their manly stand relief from forced labour.

The lowest depth of poverty plumped by the peasants of the South and West was never reached by the Ulster Presbyterians. When the enactment of 1698 ruined the woollen manufacturers of Ireland, large numbers of them emigrated. Those who held on benefited from the development of the linen trade that followed the lavish subsiding of Louis Crommelin, the Huguenot manufacturer. The linen manufacture was carried on by weavers, who held from 5 to 20 acres of land. Every member of the family did some part of the work, the wife and the children the spinning, the husband and the sons the weaving and finishing. From the produce of the soil they obtained part of their sustenance, but the rent had to be paid by the sale of the linen. The linen workers were independent in good times, but any slump in trade told severely upon them, reducing some to the condition of labourers, and forcing many to emigrate.

A crisis arose in 1770, when the leases on the great estates of the Irish Society, the Chichester and Upton families, ran out. The Marquess of Donegall, inheritor of the fraudulently acquired estates of James I.'s Viceroy, Sir Arthur Chichester, enjoyed a rent-roll of £20,000 a year, but when the leases fell in he demanded the cash payment of fines for renewal amounting to £100,000. It was in vain the tenantry offered to add the interest on the fines to their rental. The Most Noble Marquess was adamant; the small tenants had to find five times their ordinary rent, and the rent besides, or be evicted. Belfast capitalists took the leases over the heads of the tenantry, who were forcibly ejected from their holdings. They were not without their own secret organisation—the Steelboys—and they rose in the counties of Antrim, Derry, Down, Armagh and Tyrone to fight for the homes their forefathers had won by the sword.

One of the Steelboys was arrested on a charge of felony, and conveyed to Belfast. His comrades assembled, and on December 23, 1770, they triumphantly released him from the barracks. For two years the North-Eastern Counties were actively disaffected, despite the system of local espionage maintained by the great landlords and the Episcopalian rectors. In 1772 another daring rescue took place when the assembled Steelboys of Antrim and Down invaded Belfast and took six of their sworn brothers out of custody. Troops scoured the country, and “on information supplied” arrested the alleged ringleaders. A Belfast jury refused to convict them, and when the venue was changed to Dublin the Crown authorities still failed to secure a conviction.

That these troubles in the Protestant North were due to landlord greed and to the perversion of law by the magistrates, themselves always landlords or rectors, has never been in doubt. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, visited Belfast in 1773 in one of his evangelical tours and found the greatest distress among the evicted tenants, and records the following in his diary:—

“Multitudes of them, with their wives and children, were turned out to the wide world. It is no wonder that, as their lives were now so bitter to them, they should fly out as they did. It is rather a wonder that they did not go much further; and, if they had, who would have
been most at fault? Those who were without home, without money, without food for themselves and families, or those who drove them to this extremity?"

This palliation of direct action and violence by the peaceful missioner may well be commended to the consideration of the Irish Methodists of to-day. But even stronger evidence is afforded by this letter from King George III. to his Viceroy, Lord Townshend:

"His Majesty's humanity was greatly affected by hearing Your Excellency's opinion that the disturbances owe their rise to private oppression, and that the over-greediness and harshness of landlords may be a means of depriving the kingdom of a number of His Majesty's most industrious and valuable subjects."

The Lord Lieutenant proclaimed pardon to the "wicked and dangerous insurgents" in November, 1772. But it was too late to avert the injury done to the British Empire. The evils wrought on the peasantry of Ulster produced their due sequel in Ireland and in America. The emigrants "formed a principle part of that undisciplined body which brought about the surrender of the British Army at Saratoga" in October, 1777, the turning point of the revolt of the American colonists. Between 1771 and 1773 over 30,000 Irishmen, mostly Presbyterian, left Ulster ports for America, and in the councils and armies of the new Republic paid off part of the debt of revenge they owed to British tyranny. Such was Protestant Ulster before the rise of the United Irishmen.

VI.

THE TOWN WORKERS AND THEIR TRADE UNIONS

SMALL INDUSTRY—ENGLISH CONTROL RUINOUS—LABOUR FORBIDDEN TO ORGANISE—TRADE UNIONS DEFY LAW—DUBLIN'S LEADERSHIP—JAMIE HOPE AND UNITED IRISHMEN—THE SOCIAL QUESTION FUNDAMENTAL—CONNOLLY'S AIM THAT OF '98 MEN.

While the rural workers of Ireland were awakening from their apathy and asserting their right to share in larger measures the fruits of their labour and to control their own destinies, the workers of the towns were moving also. Industry was still conducted in small workshops, and the employer was in daily contact with his work people. Machinery was simple, hand-tools still predominating. But a complex of causes combined to produce unrest. Britain's wars artificially stimulated for a time some Irish industries, and ruined others by cutting off hitherto profitable avenues of trade with foreign countries. No Irish institution, not even Parliament, could control these conditions. The reaction, too, was being felt of the Industrial Revolution going on in England. Every new method or new machine brought into use in

England increased the handicap of Ireland's handicraft industry. As always, the employers tried to pass on the disadvantages to the workers, who, with promptitude and thoroughness, organised Trade Unions to preserve their standard of life.

The employers had recourse to Parliament, from which most of them were excluded, by their religion if they were Catholics, or by the narrow landlord franchise. But anything like combination among the workers was sedition, and Acts of the Irish Parliament were passed making Trade Unions illegal. Miners and Colliers were forbidden to combine in 1756. Workers in linen and other manufactures were, by Act of Irish Parliament in 1763, made liable to six months' imprisonment and whipping for combination. Tailors and Shipwrights were forbidden to unite in 1771; in 1779, to save further trouble, all combinations of master manufacturers or journeymen were declared to be a nuisance. The inclusion of the masters in the Combination Laws was a master stroke of hypocrisy. No employer was ever punished, although their combinations, both against the workers and the public, were frequent and flagrantly open.

Meetings of workmen to regulate the conditions of labour, being a member of a society, or having a ticket from one, were offences. Combination in itself, without any overt act of violence, was punishable by whipping. The simple oath of an employer that a man had quitted work or had refused to work with a scab was sufficient to send him to prison for six months. Men were committed to prison on warrants granted on an employer's oath, without the formality of a trial. No personal service of a warrant was necessary; it might be left at the victim's address. If a man failed to appear at the hearing of a charge against him he was convicted in absence and a warrant issued for his arrest and committal to prison to serve the sentence. English legislation against Trade Unionism was admittedly based upon these Irish Statutes, but the latter created more "crimes" and inflicted more severe penalties.

The Unions held their committee meetings on the premises of friendly publicans, but their general meetings had to be held secretly in fields outside the towns, scouts being posted to prevent surprise. How, in these circumstances, the merest skeleton of organisation could be maintained it is difficult to understand, but these sturdy craftsmen not only kept their organisations alive but used them effectively to increase wages, conducting strikes, sometimes a little roughly, to attain their ends. When Trade Unionism was legalised in 1824 the Unions of Dublin, in spite of fifty years' persecution, were the strongest and best organised bodies of workers in these islands. Dublin was a stronghold of labour in the 18th century. The oldest Union which still exists is the Ancient Guild of Stonelayers, which was founded by Charter under Charles II. The Carpenter's Society existed before 1764. The Saddlers' Union had a long existence before it was registered in 1791 as the "Halifax Society" for mortality benefit. The Cabinet-makers' Trade
Union was likewise concealed behind the "Samaritan" Friendly Society, and was in existence before 1760. The Plasterers' Guild was established in 1762, and reformed as a Trade Union in 1832.

It was to these Dublin workers that James Hope, the Co. Antrim weaver, came in the spring of 1796 to introduce among them the Society of United Irishmen. He obtained freedom to work in the Liberties, and soon completed his task. To Dublin he returned time and again as a fugitive after '98, and received shelter and aid from his fellow-workers. Hope was no narrow politician. In a passage in his autobiography he strikingly anticipates Pintan Lalor's assertion that it is not a new political but a social constitution that Ireland needed. "It was my settled opinion," said Hope, "that the condition of the labouring class was the fundamental question at issue between the rulers and the people, and there could be no solid foundation for liberty till measures were adopted that went to the root of the evil, and were specially directed to the restoration of the natural right of the people, the right of deriving a subsistence from the soil on which their labour was expended."

It has been the desire of politicians of all kinds since 1798 to picture that rising as an effort of Irishmen to end the connection with England, and nothing else. That misconception is unjust to the generous spirits of the men who fought and bled in the revolt. Irish they were, of England not only as the foe of Irish independence but also as the weaver, came in the spring of 1796 to introduce among them the Society of Separatists, but, like James Connolly, they saw the imperial power as the fundamental question at issue between the rulers and the people. They could, and did, prevent a revival of the Society of Whiteboys, the law and the Lords, middlemen, rectors and tithe proctors could subdue the spirit of rebellion it was felt they had added the more heinous crime of treason to their own social order. In Antrim and Down, Kildare, Wicklow and Wexford, and in the West, it was the common people, the small farmers, the labourers and the craftsmen who composed the armies of the Irish Republic.

VII.

REPUBLICAN LABOUR

WOLFE TONE AND THE GLORIOUS REVOLUTION—GRATTAN
THE TOOL OF TYRANNY—DANGERS OF MIDDLE-CLASS
LEADERSHIP—EMMETT AMONG DUBLIN WORKERS—LABOUR
ORGANISATION INSUPPRESSIBLE—COMMUNIST IDEAS OF
WHITEBOYS—O'CONNELL'S SLANDERS—INDUSTRIAL
REVOLUTION—DECLINING STANDARD OF LIFE—WORKERS
REACT AGAINST OPPRESSION.

In these pages no mention has been made of that event which fills so large a space in all our histories—the repeal of Poyning's law and the recognition of the Independence of the Irish Parliament; for that institution, powerful as it was for evil to the entire nation, was incapable by the laws of its own being of conferring any substantial advantage upon the workers of Ireland. It was, to begin with, the Parliament of the Protestant minority and of a half only of that minority; its franchise was narrow and illiberal, the House of Commons, like the House of Lords, representing only the landed interest. It was against that Parliament as much as against the British Crown and the British connection that the United Irishmen revolted.

Theobald Wolfe Tone set down in his "Argument on behalf of the Catholics of Ireland" his candid opinion of the Great Revolution of 1782. It "was the most bungling, imperfect business that ever threw ridicule on a lofty epithet, by assuming it unworthily." It "was a revolution which enabled Irishmen to sell at a much higher price their labour, their integrity, and the interests of their country . . . and left three-fourths of our countrypeople, as it found them." The architect of the revolution, Henry Grattan, is pointed out by James Hope as the man who framed the Insurrection Act and used information, obtained through taking the test of the United men, to back his call for strong government to meet what he called the "French party" in the country. He was not alone in his betrayal. "The conduct of public men and of popular men in those times convinced me," said Hope, "that so long as men of rank and fortune lead a people they will modify abuses, reform to a certain extent, but never will remove any real grievances that press down the people."

That was borne out by the experience of the United men. The power of the people organised in the Society grew, and as the moment for action drew near, the few aristocrats and the more numerous lawyers and merchants who had taken the foremost rank in it withdrew, became traitors in the service of the Government, or served it equally well by clinging to their commands so that their refusal to act would paralyse the counties they controlled. The exceptions in these classes received the full measure of the Government's vengeance, for to the sin of rebellion it was felt they had added the more heinous crime of treason to their own social order. In Antrim and Down, Kildare, Wicklow and Wexford, and in the West, it was the common people, the small farmers, the labourers and the craftsmen who composed the armies of the Irish Republic.

Of their defeat and cruel punishment, and of the fearful vengeance wreaked upon the entire nation, without distinction of age or sex, it is not our purpose to speak, except to say that it was unexampled in its severity and calculated to end for ever any attempt at self-assertion on the part of the Irish workers. Yet it was to the craftsmen of Dublin that Robert Emmett returned in 1803, and it was the faithful and courageous among them that followed him.

Not all the armies of Hessians, Scotch Fencibles and Yeomanry, nor the manifold treasons of hired spies, recruited and supervised by landlords, middlemen, rectors and tithe proctors could subdue the spirit of the people. They could, and did, prevent a revival of the Society of United Irishmen. They crushed every possibility of public agitation and political organisation. They intimidated the Catholic Associations and made the Bishops echo their denunciations of secret societies. But
nothing could prevent the continued activities of the Trade Unions in the towns and the Whiteboys in the country, for during the twenties and thirties of the nineteenth century the activities of both continued to engage the attention of the authorities.

Sir George Cornewall Lewis described the Whiteboy Associations “as a vast Trade Union for the protection of the Irish peasantry.” Small tenants were protected, wages kept up—they could hardly have been lower—tithe exactions resisted, and Catholic Church dues lowered by the combined action of the people. Aubrey de Vere told a Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1847 that over-population tended to “abolish the very idea of property, making the people believe that the produce of the land belongs virtually to all on the land, and that they have the right to legislate as they think best as to the mode of its distribution.” These shocking notions, he added, were put forward by “great leaders of Whiteboys, in whose countenance you could trace no mark of ruffianism.”

The Trade Unions of the towns were the first to rally to the repeal banner of Daniel O'Connell and the first to break away when it was discovered that he did not mean business. But before the cleavage O'Connell attacked his Trade Union allies, and denounced them as the destroyers of Irish Industry. Dublin was not a comfortable place in which to preach such doctrines, except in the select circle of sycophants who posed as the National Movement, so Dan carried his slanders to Westminster. He succeeded in having a Committee appointed. It took evidence, but as the conclusions desired could not be based on it, no report was forthcoming.

The continued unrest was accentuated by the complete development of the Industrial Revolution, which, beginning in England, was fast covering the world. Steam power was harnessed to the machines, and countries without a developed coal and iron production were hopelessly outstripped in the race for markets. The net effect in Ireland was to set the handicraft workers competing feverishly with England's machines, first by extending the working day and then by reducing wages. This is vividly illustrated by some figures regarding linen trade wages in Drogheda quoted by W. P. Ryan in his “Irish Labour Movement.”

“...In 1812 the price for weaving a piece of linen 78 yards long was 15s.; in 1816 it was 16s. In 1820 five yards were added to the piece, and the price was reduced to 10s. In 1828 the length was further increased to 88 yards, and the price for weaving reduced to 7s. 6d. In 1834 the length was increased to 93 yards, and the price for weaving reduced to 7s.” The earnings of the weavers in these circumstances did not exceed 3s. or 3s. 6d. a week. In Belfast wages ran from 3s. 6d. to 6s. 6d. a week, and the weavers worked 14 to 18 hours a day. Similar conditions obtained in other towns. In the rural parts things were worse even; 2d. a day was a common wage, 4d. was high. That people should be satisfied and peaceful under such conditions was not to be expected. Even at the worst period of the Industrial Revolution English labour did not experience the privations suffered by the Irish in town and country. But the latter rose sooner. The tradition of organised resistance is continuous from the eighteenth century, and from these obscure associations of the workers sprang the recruits for every movement working for the freedom and independence of Ireland.

VIII.

TRADE UNIONISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Ireland has suffered during the past hundred and twenty years under a system of laws which makes it illegal for Irishmen to do most of the things that free citizens of other countries do, not only with impunity, but none daring to call them to account. To meet together in public assembly is, at the discretion of the local police sergeant and the Removable Magistrate, a crime, punishable by fines and imprisonment. A more subtle form of punishment, available when no conviction is possible, is to put the prisoner under a rule of bail. If, through poverty or contempt of this immoral jugglery with human rights, the prisoner cannot or will not find bail, then he must go to prison. He has infringed no law, no crime can be proven against him, his honour and repute are, by the mouths of all his fellows, beyond reproach, yet unless he lodges a sum of money—the amount usually fixed to be far beyond his and his friends' resources—he must go to jail and consort with criminals.

Although the laws of 1824 and 1825, and many another since, have expressly legalised Trade Union organisation, Irish employers have, with the ready connivance of the British police and magistrates, regularly invoked the special coercion and crimes acts against Trade Unionism. Laws designed for the oppression of Nationalists, mostly "Papists," have been employed to crush movements for industrial freedom with complete indifference to the religious persuasion of the victims. A notable instance is the case of George Kerr, the Belfast cabinet-maker, who carried the message of Trade Unionism to Derry in 1833. The Mayor of that city had warrants issued for the arrest of Kerr and two companions on a false charge of "administering unlawful oaths"—a crime invented to destroy the United Irishmen. To obtain evidence against Kerr, His Worship arrested two cabinet-makers who had been at the Derry meeting, and when they refused to swear against the truth they were committed to prison. Kerr was arrested in Belfast and marched in the custody of four armed policemen to Antrim the next day. So
marching, with relays of policemen from barracks to barracks, he was at length brought to Derry and before the Mayor.

A happy proof of the solidarity of English and Irish Capitalism was the Mayor's first question: Was Kerr the chairman of the meeting that petitioned the British Government to show clemency to the six Dorchester labourers (lately convicted of the offence with which Kerr was charged)? Kerr was badgered and bullied, then committed to prison, for, although bail was allowed, all the bailees were objected to by the Mayor. In prison he was stripped naked and dressed in prison clothes, and, an untried prisoner, given convict labour to perform.

While Kerr was undergoing his ordeal the Protestant Mayor of the Maidan City was persecuting a large number of Protestant Sawyers for the crime of "illegal assembly," another offence expressly constituted to suppress Irish political movements. It mattered nothing to the Mayor that the law permitted George Kerr to form a cabinet-makers' Trade Union and allowed the Sawyers to meet as a Trade Union to discuss the conditions of their trade. Another law existed under which any meeting was an illegal assembly. The law liberating Trade Unions was ignored; the special laws applied. Down to the present day the co-existence in Ireland of ordinary British statute law and coercion acts has given the employers alternative weapons which they have not hesitated to use.

Hampered thus, Irish Trade Unionism made but little progress during the nineteenth century. The ruin and boycott of Irish industry and the law-made famines, aided and abetted by the preaching of submission from the pulpits, State-endowed in the Protestant Church, the Presbyterians bribed by the Regium Donum and the Catholics by Maynooth grants; a preaching endorsed out-of-doors at O'Connell's mass meetings; these factors conspired to starve the Irish people out of the country or into the workhouse and the grave. A declining population in a ruined country was unlikely to stand upon its rights.

In the first half of the nineteenth century the Unions were mostly local organisations confined to their own city, although the printers had an All-Ireland Alliance and the bakers a National Union. The Printers' Federation was ruined by strikes and lock-outs until only the Dublin Typographical Provident Society was left. The bakers carried on an agitation against night and Sunday work in the 'sixties, and had branches in most of the towns. In the country emigration and "the fatal cant of moral force" had almost completely destroyed the sturdy Whiteboyism of the preceding generations, but enough "ribbon-men" remained to form the nucleus of the Fenian movement.

With the failure of the insurrectionary effort of 1867 the eyes of Ireland were turned by skilful politicians to Westminster. The physical conquest of Ireland was assured after 1691; the moral conquest was almost completed by the genial, well-meaning Isaac Butt. Trade Unionism took on the same complexion as the political movements of the day. As the Home Rule Party was but an extension to Ireland of British Liberalism so the Labour Movement of Ireland became an outpost of British Trade Unionism.

From the 'sixties onward the local Craft Unions in England were being swallowed up by Amalgamated Societies covering a particular craft in the entire "United Kingdom." The Amalgamated Society of Engineers and the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners are types of what were called the New Model Trade Union. Many of the local Unions in the Irish towns were merged in these amalgamations. Commanding large funds, these Unions were able to dominate their trades in the then state of industrial development, but although they ensured that certain Irish craftsmen were paid standard rates, their organisation did not cater for the growing number of "general labourers." Democratically governed, these amalgamations were controlled by the English majority of their members. As the population of Ireland declined it became more and more difficult for the Irish branches to secure direct representation on the executive committees, which, in consequence, cared much less for Ireland than for Lancashire.

As the local branches of the Amalgamated Unions were the most numerous and the most powerful units in the Irish Labour Movement during the latter half of the nineteenth century, the entire movement took on the appearance of a foreign organisation spreading its tentacles over the country. It suffered from the ever-recurring prejudice against everything English. We have not yet escaped from the latent hostility to working-class organisation arising from the suspicion that it is of alien origin.

IX.

TRADE UNIONISM AND THE ONE BIG UNION

NARROW SCOPE OF TRADE UNIONS—DAVITT AND THE LABOURERS—LAND LEAGUE—DAVITT'S SERVICE TO ENGLISH LABOUR—THE NEW UNIONISM—LARKIN IN BELFAST—FALLS ROAD MURDERS, AUGUST 12, 1907—ORANGE AND GREEN UNITED.

Trade Unionism in the nineteenth century was nowhere a movement of the entire working-class. Until the last decade it was an organisation of men practising a particular craft which required special training and skill. The members of Trade Unions were, in fact, the aristocracy of labour. Each craft had its own Union, and had little concern about the welfare of other crafts. When the right to organise was threatened they combined to resist, but there was no permanent link except the British Trade Union Congress. At the Annual Congress opinions were exchanged and resolutions adopted, and a Parliamentary Committee appointed to watch the legislature during the ensuing year. The great
Trade Unions of England were, and are yet, jealous of the Parliamentary Committee, and have given it no authority that would limit the independence of the separate Unions.

Narrow in organisation and outlook, and full of pride in their superior skill, the Trade Unions, if they did not despise, at least neglected to organise the labourers. Michael Davitt, released from his long imprisonment as a Fenian, brought a fresh mind to bear upon the problems of Ireland. He saw, like Mitchel and Lalor before him, the necessity of dealing with the case of the labourer. He had some perception of the truth which Connolly was afterward to enunciate so clearly that the struggle for freedom of a subject nation must perforce keep pace with the struggle for freedom of the most subject class within it. He believed that the nation must control the entire physical resources of the country, but the fatal compromise of the New Departure led him to sacrifice principle to expediency and the hopes of the labourers to the class interest of the farmers.

Davitt raised the platform cry of "the land for the people," and the rural labourers of Ireland joined in the campaigns of the Land League, National League and the United Irish League, which resulted in the Land Purchase Acts, or the land for a greater number of landlords. The labourers were rewarded with promises in plenty. They were formed into Land and Labour Associations, and 17,000 cottages were built to replace the old mud hovels, which, however, continued to shelter inefficiently the rest of the 140,000 rural wage-earners.

Limited as Davitt's service was, he was the only prominent politician of his time who had the will to help the labourer. As the Editor of the Labour World (London) he stirred up the English labourers to activity, and took part with Ben Tillett, Tom Mann and John Burns in founding Trade Unions for the unskilled workers of Great Britain between 1889 and 1891. These Unions in time spread to Ireland, and endeavoured with some success to enable the dock labourers, gas workers and Corporation employees to raise their standard of living. The founders of the Labourers' Union were men inspired by the message of Socialism. They knew that Socialism can come only through the will of the proletariat expressed through class organisation, disciplined by the experience of the struggle for better conditions.

The formation of Labourers' Unions was a necessity of the moment, but the pattern of the Craft Union was too faithfully followed in building up the structure of the Unions. There was no organic connection between the Craft Unions and the Labourers' Unions. Out of the independent action of the labourers, which compelled the crafts to stop work or to work with scab labour, arose ill-feeling and jealousy. The Craft Unions, on their part, went on strike and threw the labourers idle without concern for their sustenance during the dispute. Thus the addition of separate Unions of general labourers to the motley battalions of the Craft Unions did not realise the hopes of the founders. The greater number of Unions did not result in class organisation, but rather, by adding to the vested interests of officialdom and by respecting the privileges of Craft Unionism, increased the obstacles to working-class unity.

It was as an organiser of one of these Unions of unskilled workers—the National Union of Dock Labourers—that James Larkin returned to Ireland, settling (if that is the right word) in Belfast as local organiser in 1907. Born near Newry in 1876, he went to work at the age of six, putting in forty hours a week for a wage of 2s. 6d., with a penny bun and a glass of milk on Saturday nights. Painter, french polisher and tramp before he was fourteen, he became later a dock labourer, a stowaway and a seaman. He returned again to the docks at Liverpool, becoming a foreman, and losing that job through taking part in a sympathetic strike. He had thus a harsh experience of the struggle for existence before he came in his 31st year to rouse Belfast labour to a pitch of excitement and unity never equalled in its previous history.

Belfast was then a strong Trade Union centre; at least, the skilled trades in the shipbuilding and engineering industry were strongly organised, and impressed themselves upon the life of the city. But the multitude of labourers in the yards and factories and on the quays were without any protection from the grasping individualism that dominated the employers of Belfast. Attempts had been made to organise the labourers, but had always been baffled by the intrusion of the Orange and Green controversy. (As far back as 1835 Alexander Moncrieff, a Belfast manufacturer, told a Select Committee that wages were lower in Belfast than in Scotland because Trade Unionism was weak in the textile trade on account of the differences between Catholic and Orange workers.)

For a few glowing months Larkin fused Orange and Green together in the white heat of a manful struggle by the under-paid and over-worked labourers for better conditions. Dockers, coalmen and carters went on strike. The entire resources of the Royal Irish Constabulary were placed at the disposal of the employers. So harshly were the policemen driven—and so properly handled by the strikers—that they, in turn, went on strike. The military were then called in.

With the subtle cunning of people long accustomed to rule by dividing and conquering, the authorities, although the principal scenes of tumult and violence were on the riverside, sent the military, on August 12, into the Falls Road district—the Ghetto in which Protestant Belfast would faint intern all its Catholic citizens. The officers were in the plot—one of them is now an R. M. in Leinster—and provoked the crowd by stone-throwing. That is a game in which a Belfast (or any other) crowd will always join. Kidney stones rattled on the soldiers. The order to fire was given, and three persons were slain, one of them a girl, who dashed into the road to rescue a little child, and all of them innocent of riot or intend to riot. It was in Belfast, under a Liberal Home Rule Government, that the first Irish blood was shed by Capitalism in a modern industrial struggle.
This calculated collision between the people and the soldiers in the Catholic quarter of Belfast unleashed once more the passions of party men. The industrial disputes were hurriedly compromised. Larkin was excluded from the negotiations, which were carried on by James Sexton, of Liverpool, on behalf of the men. A trusty Labour Leader of the “safe” kind, Sexton made peace and delivered up once more the workers of the Northern city to be the prey of faction. A wider sphere and a greater work were waiting for Larkin, but never in the history of Irish Labour was cleaner and more effective work accomplished than in the summer of 1907, when he set out to show that

“Orange and Green will carry the day.”

X.

THE LABOUR WAR IN DUBLIN

BELFAST’S BIG INDUSTRY—CLASS DIVISION IN DUBLIN—
CONNOLLY’S FIRST CAMPAIGN, 1896-1903—LARKIN AND THE
I.T.W.U.—THE CORK FRAME-UP—CONNOLLY IN ULSTER—THE
SACRIFICES OF TRANSPORT OFFICIALS—WM. MARTIN MURPHY—
MURDER OF JAMES NOLAN—POLICE BATTUES—PYRRHIC
VICTORY FOR BOSSES.

After 1907 Dublin became the centre of Larkin’s Trade Union efforts, and the measure of the man is best obtained by contrasting the magnitude of the job he undertook with that which he had accomplished in Belfast. In the Northern city the life of the people centres around the great industries—shipbuilding and linen manufacture. Unemployment is not more common than in similar centres across the Channel, and in booming trade the margin of workless people tends to disappear. In these conditions it is comparatively easy to establish and maintain a union.

The Capital has no industry on the great scale except brewing. Small workshops and small shops and much casual work characterise its industrial aspect. In 1905 the population was thus analysed as to occupation by Sir Charles A. Cameron, the city’s medical officer:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional and Independent</td>
<td>17,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>87,186</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisans and Petty Shopkeepers</td>
<td>110,423</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawkers, Porters, Labourers, etc.</td>
<td>89,861</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is difficult to understand Sir Charles Cameron’s classification, but one fact stands out. The class of hawkers, porters, labourers, etc., i.e., the people without constant employment and regular occupations, far outnumber the artisans. It is in Dublin that the most unfortunate and poorest of the dispossessed peasantry of all Ireland fall when driven from the rural districts by the encroachment of graziers, the abandonment of tillage and the collapse of rural industry. The more fortunate obtain a deck passage to Liverpool. They were to be envied who could muster the steerage fare to America. Thus Dublin became a social jungle, in which the competition for work was almost literally a battle with tooth and talon. Wages and the standard of living of Dublin workers at the beginning of the twentieth century were below the worst imaginations that the British labourer could conjure.

Between 1896 and 1903 James Connolly had tried to awaken the spirit of revolt against these appalling conditions. “He came unto his own, but his own received him not.” When the crowd was roused by him it was only to stone him and his comrades. Wood Quay Ward twice rejected him as a municipal candidate. His work was to bear fruit later, but its failure did not heighten the prospects of Larkin’s success.

And yet success did come, at first almost solely as a triumph of personality. Bold speech, fearless action and an occasional resort to fisticuffs, gave Larkin a following in Dublin and Cork. Disputes with employers arose, and trouble with the Liverpool Executive of the N.U.D.L. was frequent. At last, towards the end of 1908, the Irish members sought freedom of action in the formation of the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union.

The weapon of law was seized by the Capitalist Government and a charge of malversation of funds brought against Larkin in connection with moneys remitted from Cork to Dublin at the moment when the I.T.W.U. was freeing itself from the bondage of the English Union. A creature was found ready to swear that he believed that money paid to Larkin was paid to him as an agent of the English Union, and that Larkin defrauded him by paying it into the accounts of the new Irish Union; and this when all Ireland and Great Britain was watching with fear or hope every movement made by Jim. It was admitted that Larkin himself obtained no benefit from the transactions, and that his character had never been sullied by any act of meanness or stain of crime. A hand-picked jury of Cork Capitalists gave the verdict required by the British Government and agreeable to their own interests. Larkin was convicted and sentenced to a term of imprisonment which, in face of the clamour against the manifest “frame-up,” was afterwards remitted by the Lord Lieutenant. This dastardly attempt to ruin Labour by blasting the personal character of its chief protagonist failed. The trick was too transparent. The game had been too often played before by England in the sphere of national politics to succeed in the industrial struggle. The fact that Judge, High Sheriff, and other officers of the State had prostituted themselves in league with Dublin Castle to overthrow this man, raised him to the highest esteem in the eyes of the workers of the world.

Yet in 1920, despite the release of Larkin on “free-pardon” by the Lord Lieutenant, who subsequently sought the aid and advice of Larkin when his own narrow policy has produced confusion as its natural
result, the British Government supplied the Capitalists of New York with records of this Cork conviction to aid them in jailing him. From the moment of the verdict being given Larkin became a figure of national importance, a hero to the workers and a dread portent of coming evil to the canting, well-fed classes. Connolly was appointed Ulster organiser of the Union in 1911, and drew together the shattered fragments of organisation that had been sundered by the plotting of the Catholic officials of the N.U.D.L. to represent the I.T. and G.W.U. as a “Mickey’s” Union, while theirs was the one for “true blue William Johns.”

Henceforward Ireland was in a ferment. The Transport Union extended from the docks. It became the hope and strength of the helpless in every industry. Its policy and methods were not argued about; they were applied. The sympathetic strike and the doctrine of tainted goods were not new in Ireland. Their employment had won the Land League’s battles, but those who applauded such tactics in the farmers condemned them as immoral and anti-Christian when the town workers had resort to them. For the first time in a century the workers of Ireland heard a message of hope, and saw the way to social salvation pointed out to them by men who meant business and were prepared to do as well as say. Brought to the test of action, the leaders of the Transport Union did not fail. Sincerity in the leaders invoked confidence among the rank and file. Self-confidence and self-reliance was the keynote of the new movement. It was upon this reserve fund of working-class solidarity that the Union made its fights, for, financially, it lived from hand to mouth. During the Wexford strike every penny that could be raised in Dublin was sent to support the strikers, and when Jim came to look for his wages all that could be found was £1. Walter Carpenter and he split it between them, but even Jim shrank from offering Mrs. Larkin 10s. for her weekly housekeeping, and begged Carpenter to call round and leave the money with her.

“Servants, obey your masters!” was a command to which the Dublin employers had always exacted obedience. Faced by the new spirit in the labouring ranks, and hearing the revolutionary doctrine of workers’ control, they prepared to crush labour ruthlessly. At their head was a representative of the new financial control of actual industry, Wm. Martin Murphy, a banker, draper, hotel proprietor, tramway and railway director, and newspaper owner. A Nationalist in politics, Murphy was Capitalism personified, and his natural allies were the Unionist businessmen and the beneficent protector of private property in social necessities—the British Government. Lord Aberdeen was in the confidence of the employers and, true to his Liberalism, tried first to establish Conciliation Boards. The Union was willing, but the employers were bent on breaking it by direct action. Irritation tactics were used—the dismissal of Union men from the tram service and other occupations, and the prohibition of Union labour. The Union responded to the challenge, and the fight was on.

“Swift and relentless use of Government forces” had been promised the employers, and the police were an aggressive front line. Street battles between the armed constabulary and the unarmed people were of daily occurrence during Horse Show Week of 1913. James Nolan was killed on the Saturday evening, and a battle of peaceful citizens, providentially photographed for the picture papers, took place after Larkin’s arrest at the Imperial Hotel on Sunday. Drunken policemen invaded the tenement houses and battoned men, women and children. That was but the beginning. Four hundred and four employers resolved not to employ any members of the Transport or of any other Unions. The British Trade Union Congress intervened, but failed to soften the hard hearts of the Dublin Pharaohs. Hunger was to smash labour organisation once and for ever in Ireland. A Royal Commission, presided over by Sir George (now Lord) Asquith, endeavoured to compose the differences, but merely provided an arena in which Larkin and T. M. Healy, K.C., engaged in a brilliant but inconclusive duel. The Commission reported against the employers’ attempt to enforce non-unionism. They were condemned by a court of their own friends. George W. Russell (A. E.) now indicted them in a famous open letter before the bar of mankind. The arrogant insolence of wealth, the haughty pride of a class born in ascendancy over the common people, the scorn of those who had infinite reliance on material might, ignored alike the dictates of law and reason and the contempt of the spiritually-minded.

For eight months the struggle raged—the accumulated wealth produced by the workers of Ireland against the hungry bellies of the Dubliners. In some cases it continued longer. By every rule of the game the workers were beaten, but the exhaustion of the employers prevented them taking advantage of the victory. For the workers, the moral value of the struggle was infinitely more precious than victory. These Dublin workers learned their own worth and their worth to the world of Capital that had enslaved them. They are yet in the bonds of wage-slavery, but their souls are free.

XI.

THE INDUSTRIAL UNION AND EASTER WEEK

UNITY IN ORGANISATION AND ACTION—BASED ON THE WORKSHOP—ORGANISING ROUND THE MEANS OF PRODUCTION—THE GREAT WAR—CONNOLLY AND REVOLUTION—I.C.A.—PEARSE AND THE WORKING CLASS—DUBLIN SIGNALS REVOLT TO EUROPE—WAS IT DEFEAT?

The industrial lesson of the struggle in Dublin was the need for One Big Union. A fighting army, in which battalions, companies and corporals’ files are under the orders of separate sovereigns and controlled by jealous army councils, is an impossibility. In the fervour excited by the employers’ simultaneous attack on all the Unions,
Dublin labour rose above the barriers of disunion. But as the struggle dragged out the bonds of loyalty were frayed. Larkin and Connolly, men of dissimilar genius, had worked out the same result for the problem of labour organisation. They were working to the same end—control by the workers of the world's wealth production. Both as a means to that end and for efficiency in the daily struggle for justice, a new method of unionism was needed.

It was their plan to organise round the means of production, whether in the small workshop, the great industrial plant, or in the rural areas now being reorganised by farmers' co-operatives or the new alignment of agricultural capitalism. In the process of wealth-production the superior skill of the artisan requires the co-operation of the labourer and the clerk. Indeed, there is no superiority of skill in the matter; there is only difference of function. The inter-dependence of all labour has been brought about by the development, on one hand, of the instruments of production, and, on the other, of distant sources of raw material and the creation of the world-market.

Effective organisation demanded that in a country dominated by agriculture there should be an all-embracing Union for workers directly or indirectly concerned with agriculture, so the labourer, ploughman, herd and drover, carter and motor-driver employed in and around the farm are brought into the I.T. and G.W.U. The country-town shops are essential to the life of the farm; therefore, their staffs are organised. Along every avenue the output must travel—stock to the markets, milk to the creameries, crops to the mills, poultry products to the quays. Organised labour in times of peace facilitates the farmers' business, or in strife combines, through the militant activities of the One Big Union, to make the recalcitrant farmer a prisoner in the midst of his acres. For every other industry the same plan must be adopted. Each industry will work out the plan in its details to suit its own circumstances, and in its own sphere will be self-governing, but the Industrial Union of each well-defined industry will be a component of the One Big Union.

In an industrial dispute such an organisation can at once exert the maximum pressure, but what is of more significance to society is that it organises the workers in the place where they serve society, and makes itself the controller of the indispensable element in wealth-production. No substitute has yet been found for human brain and muscle. Without the magic of the exertion of human labour-power machines are silent, raw material remains crude, and service is not. When the owners of labour-power make up their minds to make the world's wealth for the good of society, the Capitalist system of private property will collapse. Connolly and Larkin organised the I.T. and G.W.U. with that final purpose of the Union always in view.

The coming of the world war brought other factors clearly to the minds of the people of Ireland. From the beginning James Connolly foresaw the bearing of the struggle upon the people of Ireland. Ireland was John Bull's farm. England ringed round by the submarines of Germany would feed herself even at the expense of another Irish famine. The historic policy of the '48 men—"hold the crops"—would come into operation, and then Irishmen must fight the British army for food. He, at least, was preparing to fight. One of the by-products of the great strike was the Irish Citizen Army organised by Larkin, Connolly and Capt. J. R. White, D.S.O., a son of the great soldier, Sir George White, V.C. Larkin's departure for America left Connolly in command. The manful struggle of Dublin had won the sympathy and support of all that was best in the growing Republican movement which had built up its fighting force in the Irish Volunteers. Pearse, travelling along another road than Connolly's, had come to accept the same social gospel and the same faith in the militant proletariat as the liberators of Ireland and of society. "It is in fact true," said Pearse, "that the repositories of the Irish tradition, as well the spiritual tradition of nationality as the kindred tradition of stubborn physical resistance to England, have been the great, splendid, faithful common people . . . Let no man be mistaken as to who will be lord in Ireland when Ireland is free. The people will be lord and master."

These twain, one the scientific interpreter of social evolution, the other with the beatific vision of the seer, saw with unflinching eyes that the tyranny that ruled the destiny of Ireland would not surrender to reason, to votes or to the silent compulsion of the strike. Hating it, they knew it to be strong as well as cunning and wary, and they did not underestimate its brute courage. From August, 1914, Connolly prepared to fight. He looked for the signal to be given by the revolt of the great Socialist forces of Germany, and he hoped for a revival of the French Revolutionary Initiative in a new and more glorious commune. Circumstances conjoined that made him and his comrades-in-arms the herd of the new world. When the handful rose in arms in Dublin and in scattered bands elsewhere in Ireland in Easter Week of 1916, their high pride that measured their courageous hearts against the force of empire inspired the revolutionaries of every country with a new hope. The old, simple, human virtues of the bold heart and the strong hand had not disappeared in the age of machinery, and what was destined to fail at the moment on the banks of the Liffey was to blaze three years after from the Baltic to the Pacific Ocean.

But was it defeat? For one of the minor consequences of Easter Week, the opening of the Irish mind to the message of Socialism, Connolly would have willingly died—as indeed he lived, sacrificing himself and his talents in a continual struggle to win his people to the cause of the Workers' Republic during the twenty years that lay between his return from Edinburgh in 1896 and the final scene of 1916. These years of unrequited labour have had no biographer. Among his writings there is no complaint, no note of whining or of grievance. But for these years of Gethsemane it is ours to repent, as it is ours to avenge his murder by fulfilling his will in the establishment of the Irish Workers' Republic.
IN THE RAPIDS OF WORLD REVOLUTION

AFTER THE INSURRECTION—REVIVAL AND SPREAD OF TRANSPORT UNION—GIVES SOLIDARITY TO IRISH LABOUR—MANSION HOUSE CONFERENCE—THE GENERAL STRIKES—LABOUR'S LEADERSHIP—THE WORKING-CLASS AND THE NATION—IRISH LABOUR'S MISSION.

Since 1916 the advance of the Irish working-class in consciousness of its mission and its power has been unmatched in swiftness. Trade Unionism has extended, but more rapid has been the spread of the Industrial Unionism represented by the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. When Thomas Foran, William O'Brien, Cathal O'Shannon and others were released from their internment to begin rebuilding, the great tradition of the Union was embodied in five or six branches with a membership of about 5,000, no funds and no organisation. That the members held together in the crisis was in itself a wonderful proof that the true spirit of labour's solidarity had dwelt in them.

Within four years the Union attained a membership of 130,000. The majority of the agricultural workers came into its ranks, gaining thus for themselves and for labour the control of the fundamental basis of Irish wealth-production. Growing up within the Irish Labour Party and Trade Union Congress, the I.T. and G.W.U. gave to the entire body of Irish labour a consciousness of unity and solidarity it never before possessed.

The political reflection of this power gained and consolidated in the sphere of industry was manifested strikingly by the entry of Labour into the Mansion House Conference of 1918 on a basis of equality with the historic political parties. To the outside world it showed, by its general strike on April 23 of that year, its purpose to resist conscription. In the international annals of labour there had been no example of solidarity so thorough and complete.

The independent action of the Irish Labour Party on the occasion of the Mountjoy hunger-strike displayed even more plainly the identity of the Irish working-class with the historic Irish nation. Their boundaries are coterminous, their mission and aim identical, their enemy many-faced but one in essence and in form.

At this revolutionary epoch in the world's history Irish labour is called to a high destiny. The scourging of centuries, the human needs of the people now, the hopes of generations unborn, urge our response to the call of destiny. When the classic society was overwhelmed by barbarism in the first millennium of Christianity it was from Gaelic Ireland that healing was borne to a world in distress. In the flux and change of to-day it is our manifested duty to make intelligence arbiter in social problems, to master the material resources of Ireland for the common good of the whole people of Ireland; thus, while thrones are falling and the political bonds of civilised society decaying under its manifold corruption, rebuilding here and now the commune of the Gael.

In that task we shall refuse no aid, nor shall we neglect to profit by the lessons of the efforts and struggles of the Slav peoples embraced in the Federated Soviet Republic of Russia, for, as their revolution proceeds, its unfolding gives ever renewed proofs that the way to the national independence and social freedom of the Irish race is that forecast with scientific accuracy by James Connolly.
HISTORICAL REPRINTS
Reprints of pamphlets, booklets and newspaper articles of historical
to the study of the Socialist Movement in Ireland.

No.     Title                                    Author
1        James Connolly and Irish Freedom           G. Schuller
2        British Imperialism in Ireland            Elinor Burns
3        Marx, Engels and Lenin on the Irish Revolution Ralph Fox
4        The Irish Republican Congress              George Gilmore
5        The James Connolly Songbook                James Connolly & Others
6        Workshop Talks                              James Connolly
7        The Irish Question (1894)                   John Leslie
8        The Historical Basis of Socialism in Ireland Thomas Brady
9        The Connolly—Walker Controversy on Socialist Unity in Ireland
10       The Story of Irish Labour                   J. M. MacDonnell
11       Ireland Upon The Dissecting Table — James Connolly on Ulster & Partition. Jim Larkin, Irish Labour Leader
12       Convict No. 50945                           “Ronald”
13       Irish Labour and its International Relations in the era of the 2nd International and The Bolshevik Revolution.
14       Freedom's Road for Irish Workers            William Paul
15       The Connolly — De Leon Controversy — On Wages, Marriage and the Church. Tom Bell
16       The Irish Crisis, 1921 — The C.P.G.B. Stand “Gerhard”
17       The Struggle of the Unemployed in Belfast, 1932.
18       The Irish Free State and British Imperialism Sean Murray, Jim Larkin Jun., Seamus Mac Kee & the C.P.I.
19       Sinn Fein and Socialism
20       The Irish Case for Communism

THE CORK WORKERS' CLUB
9 St. Nicholas Church Place, Cork, Ireland.