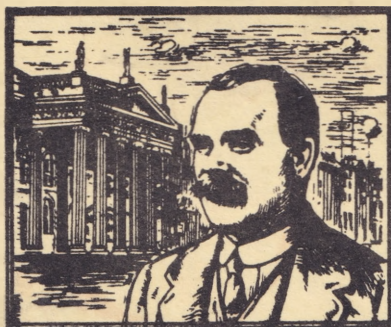


CONNOLLY'S SUPPRESSED ARTICLES VOLUME 2.

CONNOLLY



YELLOW UNIONS IN IRELAND

and other articles

PUBLISHED BY CONNOLLY BOOKS, 1968.

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(CONNOLLY BOOKS, AUGUST 1968)

2nd Edition.

INTRODUCTION

The writings of Connolly which are included in this second selection from the articles which have been suppressed by the bourgeoisie and the opportunists, deal with various aspects of the trade union movement.

In "The Problem of Trade Union Organisation" Connolly deals with a problem which has become more of a problem every year since the article was written. This article shows how completely his position has been distorted by those "followers" of his in high places who attribute the view to him that an increase in the size of the trade unions was enough to guarantee progress towards socialism.

Connolly opposes "the tendency...to mistake mere concentration upon the industrial field for essentially revolutionary advance". He shows that the amalgamations which were actually taking place, instead of facilitating the revolutionary struggle of the workers, were "becoming engines for...suppressing all manifestations of revolutionary activity". Furthermore, he showed that "unless carried out by men and women with a proper revolutionary spirit", the increase in size of trade unions would only result in "forging greater fetters for the working class".

The leadership of the I.T.G.W.U. holds that Connolly is out of date: that collaboration between "management and labour" and not revolutionary struggle by the workers against the capitalists (or "management", as the bourgeoisie now prefer to be called) is what is now required. But we venture to suggest that this article of Connolly's has not been suppressed because it is out of date, but because it exposes those "followers of Connolly" in the leadership of the trade union movement who have been one of the main props of capitalism in the Free State for almost 50 years.

In "Yellow Unions in Ireland" Connolly deals with the attempt by the Catholic Church to organise Catholic trade unions. Though the bourgeoisie and the opportunists have been working overtime to represent Connolly as a 'Christian Socialist', Connolly himself never made the slightest concession to 'Christian Socialism', either of the Catholic or Protestant varieties. He held consistently that a man's religion, or his irreligion, was his own private affair, and that it should not be brought into the working class movement. Scientific socialism was materialist, and was not derived from any religious principle. (See The New Evangel).

In their attempt to represent Connolly as a 'Christian Socialist', the bourgeoisie and their opportunist servants have to suppress "Yellow Unions" and other articles which gave the lie to their propaganda.

A man who "had been for many years working out a modus vivendi between scientific socialism...and Christian beliefs..." (as the revisionist Mr. C.D. Greaves alleges in his biography of Connolly, p.143); or a man whose social conscience was in harmony with the Encyclical, "Rerum Novarum" (as other "followers of Connolly" allege); would never have written such an article against "attempts in Ireland to introduce this evil spirit of religious discussion into the labour movement."

In 1934 the Labour Party leadership made Christianity its official ideology. Today Catholic Action dominates the trade union movement. And the careerist "Labour Party lefts" (including no doubt a goodly number of private atheists - not dialectical materialists, merely bourgeois anti-clerics and atheists) either publicly subscribe to or do not publicly challenge the validity of Christian socialism and Christian trade unionism. And the philosophical writings of the revisionist "Communists" are all theology. It is no wonder that "Yellow Unions in Ireland" has not seen the light of day for 54 years.

* * * * *

The third article, dealing with a strike in Larne, shows the influence of Presbyterianism on the working class movement.

It shows that the most effective religious control over the working class in Ireland was exercised by the Presbyterian Church and not by the Catholic Church.

It will be clear from the two last articles that there is no truth in the view that Connolly favoured the influence of the Catholic Church and opposed the influence of the Presbyterian Church on the working class movement. While taking note of the different roles played by the two Churches in Irish history (and drawing attention to the anti-British as well as the pro-British period of the Protestant Church) he opposed the influence of both Churches on the working class movement with equal vigour. If his "followers" in influential positions in the Free State have been Catholic socialists that is not due to Connolly's influence.

It is due to the fact that they have not been followers of Connolly or representatives of the working class, but opportunist agents of the bourgeoisie: labour lieutenants of capitalism.

Even though they have failed in their attempt to suppress these writings of Connolly, the modern revisionists (the latest breed of opportunists) are still trying to obstruct their circulation. Shortly after the I.C.O. had drawn attention to the suppression of these articles, the "Connolly Association" brazenly announced that "all the works of Connolly" could be purchased in the Irish Democrat Bookshop in London (Irish Democrat, June 1968). Various publications of the Communist Party of Great Britain carried the same announcement.

But the "Connolly Association", which circulates a wide variety of bourgeois literature, refused to stock the first volume of Connolly's suppressed articles, published by the I.C.O., "Press Poisoners in Ireland".

It is clear that, in the revisionist vocabulary, "all the works of Connolly" means "all the works of Connolly which we consider it advisable to make available to the working class". Connolly too must be submitted to censorship: and unlike the

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official Free State censors, the ~~censore~~ (and bowdlerisers) of Connolly's works did not publish an Index of the suppressed items: that would have given the game away. Until 1968 the unacknowledged political censorship of Connolly was a hundred times more effective than the loudly proclaimed moral censorship of Hank Janson and Mary Stopes.

Such an ~~effective~~ censorship could only have been exercised by those people who actually did exercise it: the Willie O'Briens, the Cathal O'Shannons, the Desmond Ryans, and the Desmond Greaves - in short the "followers of Connolly". Here is a fact which clearly reveals the vital functions which the opportunists, the labour lieutenants of capitalism, play for the bourgeoisie.

The attempt by the revisionists to obstruct the circulation of the I.C.O. editions of Connolly's suppressed articles are, of course, pathetically ineffective. As soon as the fact of suppression became known the situation was already outside their control. As things now stand, the more they try to obstruct the more they expose themselves. May their efforts at obstruction increase!

(Irish Communist Organisation, August 1968)

Also published by Connolly Books

CONNOLLY'S SUPPRESSED WRITINGS, VOLUME 1.

P R E S S P O I S O N E R S I N I R E L A N D

Available from the address below at 1/9 post free:

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THE PROBLEM OF TRADE UNION ORGANISATION

Recently I have been complaining in this column and elsewhere of the tendency in the Labour movement to mistake mere concentration upon the industrial field for essentially revolutionary advance. My point was that the amalgamation or federation of unions, unless carried out by men and women with the proper revolutionary spirit was as likely to create new obstacles in the way of effective warfare, as to make that warfare possible. The argument was reinforced by citations of what is taking place in the ranks of the railwaymen and in the transport industry. There we find that the amalgamations and federations are rapidly becoming engines for steam-rolling or suppressing all manifestations of revolutionary activity, or effective demonstrations of brotherhood. Every appeal to take industrial action on behalf of a union in distress is blocked by insisting upon the necessity of "first obtaining the sanction of the Executive", and in practice it is found that the process of obtaining that sanction is so long, so cumbrous, and surrounded with so many rules and regulations that the union in distress is certain to be either disrupted or bankrupted before the Executive can be moved. The greater Unionism is found in short to be forging greater fetters for the working class; to bear to the real revolutionary industrial unionism the same relation as the servile State would be to the Co-operative Commonwealth of our dreams.

This argument of mine which to many people may appear as far-fetched, gains new strength from the circumstances related by our friend Robert Williams of the Transport Workers' Federation, in the weekly report of that body for the 9th May. After describing how the Head Line Company played with the

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above Federation in connection with its protest against the continued victimisation of the members of the Irish Transport Workers Union, and how he was powerless to effect anything as the other Unions involved still continued to work the scab ships, he goes on to tell of a similar state of affairs in the Port of London. The quotation is long, but it is so valuable an instructive lesson to all your readers that I do not hesitate to give it as an ample confirmation of my argument.

"This week, again, there has been a recrudescence of the trouble existing between the Seamen's Union at Tilbury and the Anglo-American Oil Company. This Company has a fleet of oil-tank steamers running between America and various ports in this country.

As a result of the protest made by the crew of the S.S. "Nar-ragansett" against the chief steward, who acted in the most inhumane manner towards one of the crew who received a severe injury, this Company displaced Union men and took on Shipping Federation scabs. Further than this, they have replaced all Union men by obtaining Federation scabs in ship after ship since the commencement of the trouble. On Sunday last the "Nar-ragansett" arrived once more at Purfleet, on the lower reaches of the Thames, and the Tilbury Secretary of the Seamen's Union, Mr. E. Potton, naturally commenced to hustle. He communicated with Mr. Harry Gosling, Mr. Havelock Wilson, and the Secretary of this Federation, in order, if possible, to bring pressure upon the Company by preventing the ship from being bunkered.

After consultation with Messers. Gosling and Wilson, the Secretary telephoned, and further, wrote the Anglo-American Oil Company asking them to confer with one or more of these three, in order to avoid a possible extension of the dispute to the "coalies" and the tugboatmen, etc. (Purfleet steamers are bunkered from lighters). As in the case of the Head Line, the Secretary specifically drew the attention of the Anglo-American Oil Company to the nature of the complaints, and also sent a written request, following upon a telephone message, by a special messenger for the purpose of saving time. It

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should be remembered that the bunkers would all be aboard by Tuesday, and this was written on Monday. The Secretary was not very much surprised, however, to receive a reply asking him "what exactly the complaints are, and on whose behalf they are made". The reply was strangely in keeping with the replies received from the Head Line Company. The inference is that both these replies received inspiration from the same source.

We are writing these words in the hope that they will be read by all those responsible for the guidance and control of the Transport Workers in all our seaports. On the face of it, it seems that the one course of action was to call off the men who were working on this ship. If the Company are asking for a fight, what earthly use is it to fight with a portion of your men, leaving all the others to render service to your enemy? This Company has made an open attack on all their employees who are members of the Seamen's Union. At the same time the cargo of oil was being pumped into reservoirs ashore by Trade Union engineers, the men employed ashore are members of an affiliated Union in the Federation, the ship is bunkered by members of an affiliated Union, the tugboats and lighters are staffed by members of an affiliated Union, and still we are powerless.

We are not so fatuous as to suggest that continuous warfare shall be waged by general strikes whenever a member considers he has a grievance, or whenever an official encounters a difficulty, but we feel that we are drifting back to the position we were in prior to 1911. A Federation with 29 Unions as its constituents, but with no ties more binding than the payment of 3d. per member per year, will not, and cannot, meet the requirements of modern industry. We are responsible to a quarter of a million men, and the existing methods are utterly incapable of protecting them from the insidious attacks of the employers. The organisation that is afraid of making a massed attack will experience a series of isolated disasters. The workers' organisation secures respect and consideration in proportion to the extent to which it can hamper and embarrass the employers against whom it is pitted.

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When co-operation is sought from one Union by another, the men involved say - Consult an official. The official says - get the consent of my E.C.. The Executive officers say - Communicate with the Transport Workers' Federation. The Federation waits on the decision of its own Executive, and by this insequent fiddling of time and opportunity, a thousand Romes would have burned to extinction.

The employers move, strike, move, and strike again with the rapidity of a serpent, while we are turning about and contorting with the facility of an alligator. We have at once to determine whether the future is to mean for us efficiency, aptitude, capacity and life, or muddle, incompetence, decay and death."

Just what is the real remedy for this state of matters, it would be hard to say. But it is at least certain that the organisations I have been speaking of have not discovered the true methods of working-class organisations. They may be on the road to discovering it; they may also be on the road to foisting upon the working class a form of organisation which will make our last state infinitely worse than our first. It is the old story of adopting the letter but rejecting the spirit. The letter of industrial concentration is now accepted by all trade union officials, but the spirit of working class solidarity is woefully absent. Each Union and each branch of each Union desires above all things to show a good balance sheet, and that that might be done every nerve is strained to keep their members at work, and in a condition to pay subscriptions. Hence the pitiful dodges to avoid taking sympathetic action in support of other Unions, and hence also the constant victories of the master class upon the industrial field.

I have often thought that we of the working class are too slow, or too loath to take advantage of the experience of our rulers. Perhaps if upon all questions of industrial or other war we followed more closely after them we would be able to fight them more successfully. Here is one suggestion I make on those lines. I am not welded to it, but I would like to see it discussed:

In the modern State the capitalist class has evolved for its own purposes of offence what it calls a Cabinet. This Cabinet controls its fighting forces, which must obey it implicitly. If the Cabinet thinks the time and opportunity is ripe for war, it declares war at the most favourable moment, and explains its reasons in Parliament afterwards.

Can we trust any of our members with such a weapon as the capitalist class trusts theirs? I think so. Can we not evolve a system of organisation which will leave to the Unions the full local administration, but invest in a Cabinet the power to call out the members of any Union when such action is desirable, and explain their reasons for it afterwards? Such a Cabinet might have the right to call upon all affiliated Unions to reimburse the Union whose members were called out in support of another, but such Unions so supported would be under the necessity of obeying instantly the call of the Cabinet, or whatever might be the name of the board invested with the powers indicated.

Out of such an arrangement the way would be opened for a more thorough organisation of the working class upon the lines of real industrial Unionism. At present we are too much afraid of each other. Whatever be our form of organisation, the spirit of sectionalism still rules and curses our class.

(FORWARD. May 23rd 1914)

Also published by Connolly Books:

T H E N E W E V A N G E L

BY JAMES CONNOLLY

With an introduction by the I.C.O.
Available at 1/6 from the address below:

~~E. SPENCE, 25 Dickson Street, BELFAST (West)~~

YELLOW UNIONS IN IRELAND

Our readers who have read in the Socialist press of the doings of the "Yellow Unions" of the Continent know that the said Unions are organisations of workers under the control of the Catholic Church, as distinct from the ordinary non-sectarian Unions which the experience of the workers everywhere have proven to be the only safe and effective form of industrial combinations. If they are conversant also with the industrial history of these yellow Unions, our readers will also know that they for the most part have acted the part of blacklegs or strike-breakers in every great conflict, and that under the cover of protecting religion, they have ever been the first to betray the cause of Labour.

There have been several attempts in Ireland to introduce this evil spirit of religious discussion into the Labour movement, all happily unsuccessful. On two occasions the Ancient Order of Hibernians was the moving force in the dirty work. An attempt was made to establish a railway servants' Union under the aegis of the A.O.H., but although supported eagerly by the Home Rule press, and endorsed by several Members of Parliament, the effort was a complete failure. At the beginning of the tram strike last year, the Hibernians were again at their fell work organising a Tram Men's Union with one of their head office clerks as General Secretary, but apart from helping to disorganise the strike at its inception and so prevent the necessary complete tie-up, it also failed, or at least has since sank into its well-deserved oblivion.

Now another attempt is being made this time not directly by the Hibernians, but directly under the control of the priests. We reprint from the Dublin Evening Telegraph passages in a report of the meeting held in Kingstown to establish this Yellow Union under the title of the "Kingstown and South County Dublin General Workers' Union" :

"Rev. Father Flavin, C.C., Kingstown, presided at a most en-

thusiastic meeting of labourers held in the St. Mary's Hall, Kingstown, in connection with the establishing of the Kingstown and South County Dublin General Workers Union. Bands from Cabinteely, Newtown Park and Kingstown attended, and many men were unable to gain admission. Amongst those on the platform were:- Rev. Father Lockhart, C.C., Rev. Father Healy, C.C., Rev. Father Sladen, C.C., Rev. Father Hogan, C.C., Rev. Father Sheehan, C.C., Messrs. J. J. Kennedy, Chairman, Kingstown Council, J. Walter, U.D.C., James Smyth, C. Reddy, solicitor, etc. Letters of apology were received from Mr. Field, M.P., Mr. M. F. O'Brien, U.D.C., Rev. Father Ryan, C.C., Westland Row, and Mr. M. J. McAllister, Co. C.

The Rev. Chairman said that there were one or two things that he wished to say at the beginning, before he dealt with the Union proper. As they were aware, a provisional committee had been formed to take charge of the destiny of this Union until January, when a general meeting would be held, and each one would have an opportunity of voting for the committee, who would continue the work which they had begun that evening. In making this provisional committee and committee of management, he guaranteed that in the name of the priests of the locality, that he would be responsible for the initial expenses. Very honourably at first, the men declined the offer, but on the second occasion he persuaded them to allow him to be responsible in the name of the priests for the initial expenses, and so he was in the position to command £10 ----- (Applause.) Of that amount he got £2 from Canon Murphy, Kingstown; £2, Canon Murray, Glashule; £1 each, Father Hogan, Father Sladen, Father Ryan, Westland Row; Father Lockhart, Glashule; Father McGeogh, Father Healy, Dalkey; and Father Dwyer, Dalkey.

'The Union shall be governed by an Hon. President, a Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary, and a Committee of Management. It shall have at least four trustees. The entrance fee for the first six months shall be 6d., and their contribution would be 4½d per week (½d. being to the burial fund), and 2d. per quarter to the contingent fund. The conditions of entrance, after the first six months, shall be: First, that you be men of good conduct, character and health. Second, you must not

belong to any other Trade Union without the sanction of the Committee of Management. They were not going to have backsliders in that Union. Every man must be a man, because if they allowed backsliding, it simply meant that men who were in as good a position as they were put their hands down into their pockets. They were not going to allow that. Members in arrears shall be suspended from benefits as follows :- 8 weeks in arrears, suspended from sick and accident benefit for 2 weeks; 13 weeks in arrears, excluded from all benefit. The sick benefits would be 7/- per week for the first week, and every additional week up to twelve, 4/-. On the death of a member the sum of £8 would be paid, and on the death of the wife £3 would be paid; if a child under three years, £1-10-0, and over three but under twelve years, £2-10-0. Strikes and lockouts --- A strike may be declared only when all other means of redress had failed and when, by a ballot of a specially convened meeting of all the members, and two thirds of those present declare for it. The society shall always be willing to submit their cause to arbitration, and shall abide by the award. The Union is an exclusively Irish organisation. It may open branches in any part of Ireland, but not outside of it, and shall not be associated with, nor affiliated to, any Union of an irreligious or Socialistic character.' (Applause.) He was glad they had applauded that, as he was sure they had been taught a wise lesson in recent times.

Mr. James J. Kennedy, Chairman of the Kingstown Urban Council, proposed - - - 'That the Kingstown and South County Dublin General Labourers' Union deserves the sympathy and support of all honest Irishmen, and that this meeting pledges itself to carry it triumphantly to success.' The band outside, he said, had played "A Nation Once Again", and by the grace of God and the votes of the Irish Parliamentary Party, their nation was a nation once again - - (Applause.) - - but to preserve it and make it a lasting and creditable nation that would be respected, every man was required to do his duty. How could they make their nation successful and prosperous, or make their homes comfortable and happy? By joining together as brothers, and by being honest Irishmen. (Applause.) This was going to be an organisation of their own.

Did they not think that Irishmen were well able to mind their own business and carry an organisation of their own to success? Where was the use of sending their money across the Channel to be distributed for them? Didn't they know, looking back over the century that had passed that their truest friends and best advisors were their priests? (Applause). Their fathers in dark days, they stood behind the people. Were they going to be wise - were they going to pin their fate to somebody they know nothing about, and send their money away, while their priests were by their side, and wanted them to do the right thing for Faith and Fatherland. (Applause). They knew their Chairman. He had nothing to gain, and he was going to give them the best advice he could possibly give to the undertaking. He had done so in the past. It lay with the workers of Kingstown, fathers of families, and young men, who wanted to be respected and hold their heads high, to render the organisation a success, and make their country what it should be, a nation. (Applause). It rested with them, and the best advice he could give them, as Chairman of the district in which they lived, was 'Follow the lead of your priests.' (Applause)."

How well the enemies of the advanced Labour movement know how to utilise the spirit of religious bigotry against the hopes of those who wish to unite Labour is well exemplified in the foregoing report. Never did the priests of Kingstown attempt to organise the labourers of Kingstown in all the weary years of the past when the Capitalist class ground them to the dust, and when the landlord robbed them, and every agency in the country conspired to make the labourers' life a hell. It was only when the Irish Transport Workers' Union had taught them the value of organisation, had raised them from the dust of self-abasement, taught them to rely upon their own efforts, and had put heart and hope into their lives that the clergy came along to endeavour to disrupt and destroy the organisation which found the labourers of Ireland slaves, and made them men and women fit for great deeds. How little difference there is at bottom between such priests and the Ulster Orangemen in their hatred of Labour may be judged from the following report of part of the proceedings of the Irish Trades Congress. I extract this from the chief Orange organ in this

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city - the Belfast Evening Telegraph:

"Before the Irish Trades Congress concluded, Mr. James Connolly called attention to a circular which, he said, had been issued to their employees by the firm of Messrs. Davidson & Co., Ltd., Belfast, who were Government contractors. It was much on the same lines as that which had been issued to their employees by the employers of Dublin, and which had caused so much trouble in the city last year.

The employees were asked by Messrs. Davidson to sign a declaration that they were not members of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, or any similar unskilled Union, and that they should not become members of any such Union while in their employment.

That Congress Mr. Connolly contended, could not adjourn without taking action upon this matter. In the firm of Davidson & Co. they had contractors carrying out Government contracts; the circular was in direct contravention of the spirit under which Government contracts were given out.

This circular had been issued by a man who had been displaying great zeal in recent times for civil and religious liberty. For the last few days they had been discussing the question of Home Rule there, and when it was being considered it was well to remember that in the yards of this firm of Messrs. Davidson & Co., drilling for the defence of civil and religious liberty was going on every night; but here they had in this circular the conception of this firm of civil and religious liberty, and could better proof be afforded to them of the littleness of their action?

He moved - "That this Congress condemns the attempt of Belfast employers to introduce a ban upon the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union and all other Unions of unskilled labourers, calls upon trades unionists everywhere to take action against all employers taking such action against their fellow members, and demands that all firms taking this course against trade unions should be at once be struck off the list of contractors for public bodies."

Mr. Johnson (Belfast) said this circular was no new thing with this firm, and on that ground it was sought to be excused. He held in his hand a copy of a similar form dated 29th April, 1906. Perhaps Mr. Davidson was the most virulent and unrelenting antagonist of Home Rule in Belfast. Deputations of trades unionists coming from England and Scotland were got hold of and brought to his works, and there introduced to his anti-Home Rule workers, and he sent abroad to trades unionists and others the statement of the industrial case against Home Rule in Ireland. That was the man who had issued that circular to his workers in Belfast in 1906, and repeated it in 1913 and 1914.

The motion was put and carried unanimously.

A reporter from the Telegraph called upon Mr. S.C. Davidson, of the Sirocco Works, in reference to the statements by Mr. Connolly and Mr. Johnson, published above.

Mr. Davidson said he thought Mr. Connolly could not have had before him a copy of the resolution passed by the House of Commons, on 10th March, 1909, which applied to contractors for the Government. If he had he would have seen that this resolution was applicable, not to the class of labour that Government contractors employ, but only to the rate of wages which workers engaged upon Government work shall receive.

The question, he said, was raised by one of the Labour Members of Parliament some years ago, when a representative of the Government was sent over to Belfast and fully investigated the matter at the Sirocco Works. The result of this report was that the Government were entirely satisfied that everything was perfectly in order and in accord with their requirements.

Mr. Davidson informed our representative that the firm has always, and at present, employs a very large number of trade unionists in different departments of the works, but while strictly recognising all real trade unionists societies and rules, the firm do not recognise a society which would foist on to them, as trade unionists, men who have aquired no knowledge of any trade whatever."

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Here is an exact copy of the declaration above alluded to as being enforced upon the labourers employed by this firm:

DECLARATION

"I, the undersigned, hereby state that I am not a member of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, or any similar Unskilled Labourers' Society or Union; and that so long as I am employed by the firm of Davidson & Co., Ltd., I will not join or become a member of any such Unskilled Labourers' Society or Union."

Date.....

Signed.....

Here you see the Catholic priest and the Orange employer meeting upon common ground, brothers in the hatred of our Union. And to complete the picture, I need only mention that at the recent annual national conference of the National Transport Workers' Federation at Hull, when I sought permission to appear before the delegates and explain that their affiliated Unions -- the Seamen and Firemen's Unions, and the Ardrossan branch of the Scottish Union of Dock Labourers -- were still working the boats of the Head Line which is victimising our members in Belfast and Dublin, I was refused permission to state our case, or to appear before the delegates at all.

What a mix-up of a world!

FORWARD, 20th June 1914.

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BRITISH ALUMINIUM CO. AGAIN

STRIKE AGAINST 12 HOURS PER DAY, 7 DAYS PER WEEK.

At Larne, in the County Antrim, a place noted for its irreproachable loyalty, there has been a slight break in the monotony of the relations between the slaves and the slave-drivers. The principal industry in the district is the manufacture of aluminium, the name of the company being the British Aluminium Company. The men in the service of this company in the production of the commodity in question have been compelled to work, as their normal routine, a weekly total of 84 hours' labour, or 12 hours per day, 7 days per week.

After an uninterrupted run of 17 years there has at last come a strike for a reduction in the hours of labour. The strike took place with dramatic suddenness, following a refusal of the management to consent to an interview with officials of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, under whose banner the men in question have recently organised themselves.

The day shift decided half-an-hour before commencing work to strike to compel the management to consent to an interview and in another half-an-hour they were joined by the full force of the day shift. The strike had lasted ten days, when the first distribution of Strike Pay took place on the 14th inst. and the men were as determined as ever. But as they were only three weeks in the Union when the strike took place, their Committee had decided to issue an appeal for funds to enable them to supplement the sums granted out of the Union exchequer.

Any reader of Forward who can afford any help to assist in this uprising against such intolerable conditions as I have mentioned - a normal working week of 84 hours - should send along their mite to the Secretary, 122 Corporation Street, Belfast.

The Belfast press when chronicling the strike stated that the management felt aggrieved at the precipitate action of the men, as it "had always been ready to listen to and remedy the grievances of the employees."

For cool, unblushing effrontery that statement would need some beating. Always ready to remedy grievances and yet compelling its poor unfortunate slaves of employees to work 12 hours a day, 7 days a week, and, to make matters worse, no regular meal hours, but the worker compelled to snatch his meals as best he could, whilst keeping up his labour under the most wretched conditions of physical toil.

I am informed that this company has another branch in Scotland at Kinlochleven. If this is true, can some reader inform me what are the conditions of labour, and will some industrial rebel in that vicinity agitate among the Aluminium slaves there to make a move for greater freedom now.

Talking about the Belfast press moves me to mention that that arch exponent of the vilest Ulster Toryism, the Belfast Evening Telegraph, publishes every Saturday, a so-called Labour column, supposedly devoted to chronicling of happenings in the world of Labour.

Anything more utterly reactionary or opposite to everything the Labour Movement stands for than the writings in this Labour column would be hard to find, even in the organs of the Shipping Federation, or of the Liberty and Property Defence League. The writer positively gloats in every opportunity to pour cold water upon every forward move. In no single case that I can recall has he ever approved of any strike. No matter how horrible may have been the conditions, how revolting the slavery, how atrociously small the wage, the strike has always been unjustifiable, deplorable, and a menace to the prosperity of the nation. No Labour candidat-

ure is ever anything but anathema, and the whole industrial world is treated as one would expect it to be treated by a slave currying favour with a slaveowner.

When I am inclined to be angry in my estimate of Belfast human nature, I am often brought back to sweet toleration by remembering that a people who have been brought up on such mental pabulum as to fit them to believe that such writings represent the Labour Movement, cannot be expected to believe as a progressive people would.

* * * * *

LATER.

THE LARNE STRIKE

CLERICAL DICTATION IN IRELAND

STRIKE BROKEN BY CLERGYMEN

The first strike broken in Ireland by the direct intervention of the clergy has recently ended in Larne, County Antrim. At that port the workers in the Aluminium works, to the number of over 300, lately joined the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, and came out on strike for an improvement of their conditions. The overwhelming majority of these workers are Protestants, and on Sunday 15th June, they took advantage of their strike holiday to attend their respective places of worship. As they have been working 12 hours a day 7 days a week, this was the first occasion upon which a good many of them had had the opportunity to attend divine services. The Belfast papers upon Monday 16th June, announced that at all the Protestant churches on Sunday the strikers were asked to remain after services until the minister had an opportunity of speaking to them in private.

It is understood that at these private conferences in the

Protestant churches after service, the clergymen urged upon the men to return to work and trust to the goodwill of the manager. As a result, upon Monday, the work gates were besieged by a mob of men clamorously begging for leave to return at any terms the manager chose to impose. The Irish Transport Workers' Union upon the Saturday had paid half strike pay to all the men on strike, none of whom were more than three weeks in the Union, and had promised more substantial aid for the ensuing week. But the fires of sectarian and political bigotry had been let loose, the chief argument used being that as the headquarters of the Union are in Dublin it is a "Fenian" and "Papist" organisation, and by this specious devilry the strikers were whipped back to their work, and the twin forces of scabbism and Carsonism won a glorious victory.

Clerical interference in industrial disputes has been common in Ireland, but it is a matter of bitter comment in Labour circles here that the only occasion upon which this clerical dictation succeeded in acting the part of strike breaker should be among and with Protestants, in an Orange community, in the most Orange part of the North-East of Ulster.

During the six months' lock-out of the foundry workers in Wexford almost all of the clergy used their influence from the altar, in the confraternities, and in the homes of the workers, to coerce them into giving up the Union, but although that was the only point at issue, the men resolutely but respectfully told the clergymen to mind their own business, and despite all that these gentlemen could do, the Boys of Wexford fought on, and suffered on, until they won.

But in Larne! It is to laugh!

I have often said, to the scandal of my hearers here, that the North-East corner of Ulster is the only priest-ridden part of Ireland. And it is true if by "priest-ridden" we mean a part of the country where by appeals to theological hatreds the populace can be got to act contrary to their material interests. In other parts of Ireland the populace compel the priests to become their leaders or to remain powerless to command political or social obedience; here at the

command of sectarianism the interests of trade unionism, of social progress, of material wellbeing are all forgotten, and in the midst of a battle against abominably slavish conditions, the workers are induced to abandon their trade organisation, to bite the hand that fed them, and to throw away the only weapon that could protect them.

For 17 years they slaved 12 hours per day, 7 days per week, and were loyal and submissive and true blue. The agitators of the Irish Transport Workers' Union succeeded in lighting in their breasts the divine spark of rebellion and in keeping it alight for a whole week. But the returning wave of sectarian bigotry guided by the hands of God's ministers has again drowned the spark, and peace reigns once more in Larne.

And the irony of it all lies in the fact that the strike was practically won when the collapse took place. Internal arrangements had been made for a start on the basis of an Eight Hour Day, or 56 hours per week, and this has in fact been adhered to from the start. But whereas the output for gang or for men for eight hours would have remained as before the strike, now the gangs have been re-shuffled, with the end in view of compelling the Eight Hour's shift to produce as nearly what a 12-hour shift formerly did, as scientific slave-driving operating upon disorganised men can do. This and a reduction in wages averaging from 2/6 to 3/- per week, sum up the glorious achievement of our clergy in Larne.

Net result of the strike - A reduction of hours to eight per day.

Net result of clerical dictation - Victimisation of men made possible, increased slave-driving of a merciless character, average reduction of wages from 2/6 to 3/- per week, and smashing up of the local branch of the Union.

A great victory for the apostles of "civil and religious liberty" in the very home of their apostolate!

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