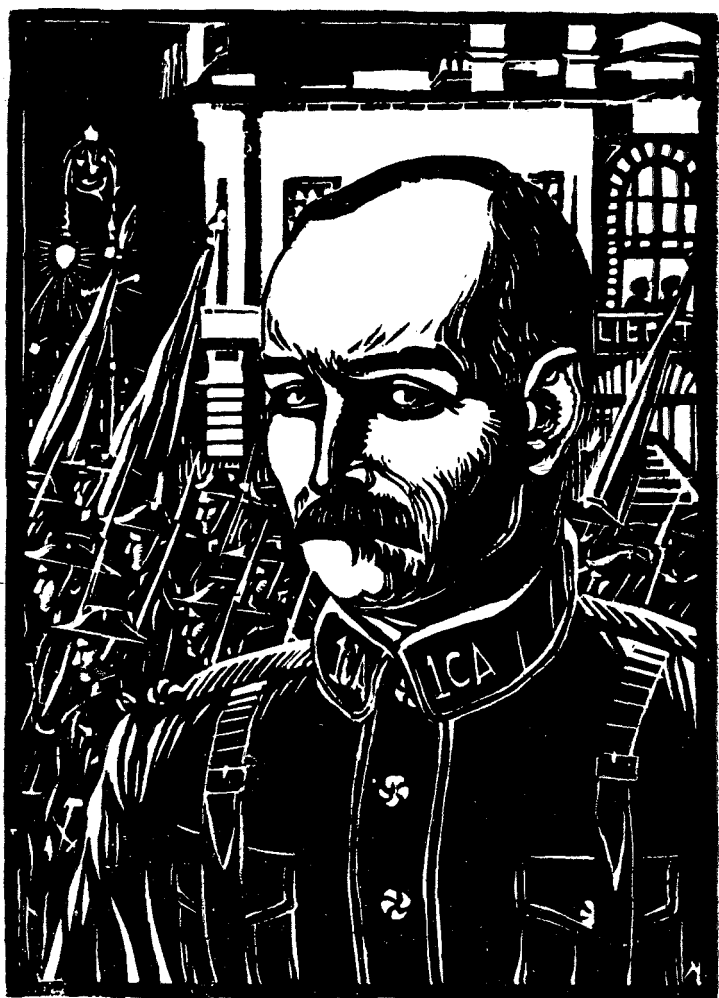


JAMES CONNOLLY:
THE FORERUNNER

BY
R. M. FOX

TRALEE:
THE KERRYMAN LIMITED



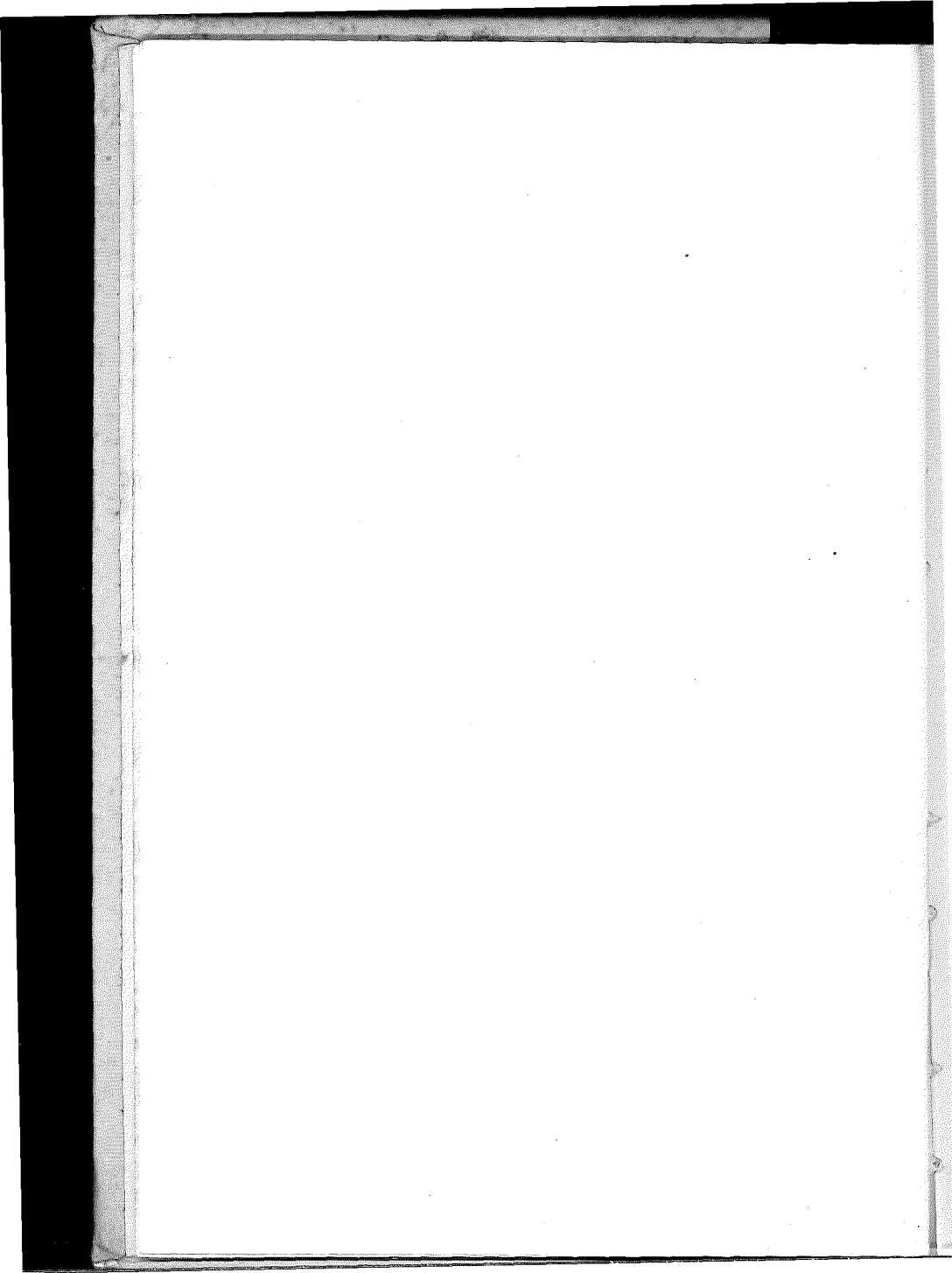
Woodcut of James Connolly by Harry Kernoff, R.H.A.

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*"Toll for the brave
Yet shed no tear.
Unflinchingly from birth to bier
He battled on his long career
To break Oppression's rod
And such as he need have no fear
To meet the freeman's God."*

—JOHN LESLIE
(*Proletarian Lays and Lyrics*).



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1. The Meaning of Connolly

THE IMAGE OF JAMES CONNOLLY which has stamped itself upon the minds of the Irish people is of a sturdy, heroic figure in the Easter Rising, clearly outlined against a background of smoke and flame. We see him bringing his Labour force—the Irish Citizen Army—into the National struggle and acting as Commandant-General of all the Republican forces in the Dublin area. When his ankle was shattered by a sniper's bullet, his tenacity was further evident, for he had his bed moved alongside the fighters in the G.P.O. so that he could still direct operations. After his courtmartial in Dublin Castle and his execution in Kilmainham prison yard, he took his place in the National memory, in that long line of men who have fought and died for Ireland.

Always the temptation is to see Connolly, as history placed him, at the apex of the struggle. Yet there are too many statues in O'Connell Street. And there is nothing sufficiently strutting and pompous about Connolly to fit him for a pedestal above the battle. His place was in the conflict. His part in the Rising was simply the culmination of his career and we shall not understand his life and work if we do not consider those years of experience and preparation that went before. He was not only a man of action—a military leader—but a student and original thinker, marking out new lines of social and national activity. He was not, primarily, a man of the study for he had little leisure and little ease of mind. The business of earning a living by rough, unskilled work pressed heavily upon him from his childhood. If he concentrated upon study it might mean missing the chance of earning a meal. But he was so built that in spite of all obstacles he had to acquire the knowledge he sought.

Gathering this knowledge painfully, by toil, by weary journeys and by study, he came to understand that words like "hunger" and "oppression" do not only form part of

sentences written in books. He saw that the reality underlying these words made the difference between people being happy and healthy or weak and wretched. He felt all this in his own life and in the lives of those close to him. So he became a voice of the people, urging that they should throw off their burdens and become masters of their own lives.

Why is it now that, thirty years after Connolly's death, his meaning and message are of such significance? It is just because he was an authentic voice of the mass of the people. The weaker the victims of oppression, the stronger was his indignation. When he found the mill girls of Belfast subjected to petty fines and persecution he encouraged them to strike. And, when they were beaten, he counselled them to march back in a body, singing. When the deep-sea dockers of Belfast were loaded to the point of exhaustion he organised them to put an end to the sweating system. Nothing infuriated him more than anything which he considered an outrage on human dignity. He encouraged victims of tyranny to make a stand for themselves. Not only was it necessary to gain economic advantages, he said, it was necessary to regain self-respect before any important advance could be made. For the toiler to cast out slavery from his soul was, in Connolly's view, precisely the same process as for a nation long used to subjugation, to grasp the right of self-determination.

When the first World War came, Connolly's immediate reaction was to call upon the working people of the world to band together and refuse to fight each other. Do not inflict misery and death in the interests of bondholders and Imperialists, he urged. Writing on the outbreak of war (*Irish Worker*, August 8, 1914), he said: "Should the working class of Europe, rather than slaughter each other for the benefit of kings and financiers, proceed tomorrow to erect barricades all over Europe, to break up bridges and destroy the transport service that war might be abolished, we should be perfectly justified in following such a glorious example and contributing our aid to the final dethronement of the vulture classes that rule and rob the world."

Connolly called for revolutionary action. He wanted Socialist leaders to make a stand for that international fraternity of the workers about which they had talked for so many years. He was ready to take an active part in any international movement with this aim. He believed in social revolution because he was the voice of those underneath, and he held that the social order which kept them poor must be broken. He stood for Irish independence because it appeared an essential step towards the mass of the people taking control of their own destinies by using the National Government in their own interests.

Unless Connolly's attitude as a social revolutionary—as well as a national liberator—is understood, his whole life's work becomes meaningless. But with this as a key, the pattern of his thought and activity is clear. Neither for social nor national purposes was Connolly asking for unnecessary bloodshed. His advocacy of the 1916 Rising was based on the fact of war conditions. He believed that it was an opportunity presented by history to strike an effective blow for national freedom. History has justified that belief. He thought, too, that there was an opportunity to strike a blow for social freedom if the International Labour movement would take an unwavering stand. Connolly was able to swing the balance in favour of the Rising. But he was not able to convince his Socialist colleagues elsewhere of the need for international action. Had international labour responded to his urging in 1914 humanity might have been spared much agony.

Since his boyhood the winning of independence for Ireland had been a cherished aim. A few foolish critics have written as though Connolly allowed himself to be dragged away from his Labour convictions and submerged in the National struggle. But no student of Connolly's earlier activities can accept this superficial view, Connolly formed the Irish Socialist Republican Party as long ago as 1896 and he declared that this group was the first to make militant Republicanism an open political issue. He was not a wartime convert to Republicanism. Yet, under the stress of war conditions, many men of more moderate views came to see, with him, that his decision to force the independence

issue to the point of armed struggle was right. "We believe that in times of peace we should work along the lines of peace," said Connolly. "But we also believe that in times of war we should act as in war."

It is important to realise where Connolly stood in the great social and ideological conflicts which have wracked the world during the present century of transition. Connolly had no doubt that the social order, against which he spent his life fighting, was destined to pass away because it could not give security and freedom to the mass of the people. He knew that much of the suffering of a war torn world was due to the refusal of the predatory forces to loose their grip. Always he was with the advancing order of democracy against Imperialism and privilege. Connolly would have rejoiced, in recent years, when the tide of invasion rolled back and the nations of Europe regained their independence. His ideas were for enlightenment and against reaction, for humanity against repression. He died long before the Nazi attempt to break the power of organised Labour and suppress the rights of self-determination of peoples. But that attempt struck at everything which Connolly felt had value for humanity. When he stood for the rights of women and for decent human standards, he upheld everything that the Nazis later wanted to tear down. There is no possibility of doubt as to this. But he knew well enough that British and American Imperialism could never be trusted to make the world safe for democracy. For Connolly the achieving of a decent order was bound up with the triumph of the working people within each nation. To his own Citizen Army men before they marched out to fight in 1916 he said "Hold on to your rifles! You may need them!"

In the years of war we have become used to all kinds of equivocations. Statesmen have given excellent reasons why the poor should suffer, why they should have to migrate in search of work, endure bad housing, low wages and conditions which foster ill-health and wretchedness. But the real reason for the suffering—at home and abroad—is that the Connolly teaching has not been accepted, nationally or internationally. Millions have died miserably in Europe by

bombs, bullets, starvation, sickness or torture. They have been the victims of soulless exploitation. If they had had that conception of self-reliance and freedom which Connolly taught, the tyrants could never have secured willing instruments. Connolly was a workman like these millions. But he could not be forced to dance to any tune. Before he stood for national self-determination and the rights of Labour, he maintained his own rights to think and act as a man. His message to-day is the same that was written in his blood and in the blood of his comrades in Easter Week—that the people should be free, free citizens in free countries, free nations in a free world. On the front of his journal *The Workers' Republic* he inscribed the words: "The Great Appear Great Because We Are On Our Knees. Let Us Rise!"

Since Ireland was liberated from outside political control new sources of energy have been tapped. The Shannon has been harnessed. But hardship and disease still menace the poor. New houses have been built but thousands have still to huddle into gaunt tenements or dark little cabins. Light, heat and power can be obtained by the touch of a switch but how far have these benefits reached down to the mass of the people?—those working people whom Connolly called the inheritors of the struggle for Irish liberty. Connolly believed that the real freedom of the country and the salvation of the world, economically and socially, depended upon the workers taking control. He did not believe in the "amelioration" of poverty, in the "relief" of distress by doles or charity. He believed in the sweeping away of poverty, in the solving of the problem of economic distress by a new order in which Labour would rule and use all the powers of production—those powers that are increasing tremendously with every new invention and discovery—not for profit but for human benefit. The force of that idea could be more powerful than the atomic bomb, though it is creative, not destructive.

Most of Connolly's contemporaries in the International Labour movement had to serve the cause of workers demanding economic justice without other issues interfering with their struggle. Connolly had a more complex task. He

was also a leader in the movement of a nation which for generations had been denied the elementary rights of freedom. Some—mainly outside Ireland—see Connolly's sole worth, as a Socialist pioneer. Others give him full credit for his National activities but do not want to be reminded of his part in the Labour struggle. Yet we cannot get a true picture of the man without realising that his enthusiasm for liberty embraced the claim of Ireland to National freedom and the claim of Labour to a free social order.

Connolly cannot be measured by any petty yardstick of dogma, either National or Labour. The little men of the Marxian textbooks, mumbling their favourite incantations, have not known what to make of Connolly. He irritated them by his unorthodoxy. Yet he had read widely and thought deeply on social matters. He knew their theories and he took as much as he wanted to explain social and national struggles. But he also knew that theory can only be an approximation to reality for man is greater than any theory and the more rigid this becomes, the more it fails to make allowance for life. Connolly believed in the human spirit. He refused to accept any explanation of the world that treated men and women as ciphers, as undifferentiated masses whose individual strivings and sufferings were of no account. With his sense of the value of life he was constantly endeavouring to raise this to a higher level of conduct, of comfort and of culture. Because he was a practical man who had gained experience as a worker he knew that the question of the control of production, of the building of houses, of regulating working conditions, of providing better education and a bigger income for all workers, would have to be dealt with by any Government that really represented the people. So he stressed social and economic aims.

Never did Connolly despise life, even when it dealt him the hardest blows. He was serene in the conflict. Quiet, sturdy, confident that the power of truth would win. His level eyes held a twinkle, though they could harden when he faced his enemies. Imprisoned during the 1913 Labour struggle, he wrote humorously of his fellow prisoners

walking round and round the Mountjoy ring. From whispered conversations he judged that he was the only one there who was guilty.

Connolly's life brings its own message. As we measure him against his contemporaries or against the needs of our own time we do not find his shadow diminishing. Courage, endurance, knowledge—all these qualities he possessed in abundance. Those who have held the stewardship of the world have turned its fertility into a waste. Labour is reaching out strong hands hesitantly for the handle of the plough. If the workers are to drive a straight furrow let them look up to those stars of courage, humour, common-sense, endurance and knowledge which shine so brilliantly in the life and character of James Connolly.

2. Childhood and Youth

THE STORY of the poor boy who becomes rich and successful has always made a strong appeal. But this is a story of far greater splendour—of a boy who did not become rich and yet his career remains an inspiration to all who strive for social justice. James Connolly did not seek to raise himself upon the shoulders of his fellows. He wished them to rise and so he became the voice of revolutionary discontent. Bursting through the barriers of poverty, painfully equipping himself for his self-imposed task, he continued that struggle until the day he died.

No one could have foretold from the unpromising circumstances of Connolly's early childhood that he was destined to become a leader both of Labour and of the Irish nation. His father was a farm labourer and Connolly was born in a little gloomy cabin in the neighbourhood of Ballybay on June 5, 1870. The labourers of this Northern county of Monaghan were wretchedly poor—like those of the rest of Ireland. Agricultural wages at that time varied from 1/- to 1/6 per day and it was upon this wage that the Connollys had to exist.

The Connolly family could not afford such luxuries as tea, coffee or cakes. Meat was a rarity. They considered themselves lucky when they could get bread, milk and potatoes. James Connolly's earliest memories were of toiling for long hours in the fields, working for surrounding small farmers almost as poor as the labourers themselves. This was before he was ten years old.

Journeys into Ballybay or Monaghan were only undertaken by the family when absolutely necessary. Labourers had neither money nor leisure for idle travelling. Under such cramped conditions they lived. But James had no narrow or cramped spirit. So even as a child he turned to reading, which pushed out his horizons. He was always an eager reader, liking poetry and stories of action. There was no money to buy books or even papers. But sometimes

a borrowed journal or a book drifted into the cabin. When young James dragged himself home at night after the hard field-work, he piled up brambles and sticks on the hearth and, crouching alongside, read a poem or a stirring tale by the flickering light of the fire.

For books to have entered the cabin at all indicates that, under the labouring conditions of the time, the Connollys were an unusual family. And this figure of the boy poring over his book, feeling the magic of words reaching beyond his own harsh, narrow existence is one of the earliest glimpses we have of James Connolly. This reading by the leaping blaze of crackling furze helped to kindle a flame in his mind. Always he kept that intense love of reading and it was coupled all his life with a sense of the difficulties he had had to battle against and overcome.

He learnt to read in a country schoolhouse which he attended with other barefoot lads when he was not working in the fields. In 1879 these Ulster children gathering at the school were thinner and paler than usual for the potato harvest had partially failed. Ireland was experiencing yet another of those famines which had been recurrent since the black year of 1847 and even before. It was the hunger due to the 1879 famine which drove the Connollys out of Ireland in 1880 when James was ten years old. First they travelled to Belfast where they stayed a few days. Then they journeyed across to Scotland where they joined a group of Donegal harvest workers over for the potato picking.

These migratory workers headed southwest and the Connolly family stayed with them long enough to earn sufficient money to take them to Edinburgh where they had relatives. They were welcomed in the Scottish capital by James Connolly's uncle, an old Fenian who soon became a firm friend to the boy, deepening his love of Ireland by telling stories of old heroic struggles in the past. But the first thing they had to do was to secure an economic foothold, to make a living in the city, for it was just as necessary to get enough potatoes in Edinburgh as it had been in their old home near Ballybay.

Connolly's father had to take a job as Corporation dustman. Young James helped the family exchequer by working

as a printer's devil in the office of the Edinburgh *Evening News*. He was under the legal age for this work but his elder brother, who found work there first, brought him in when the opportunity offered. For over a year James worked in this office. He gained experience which was useful to him later when he ran his little Socialist Republican journal in Dublin—writing it, setting it up, printing it and selling it on the streets. The most dangerous time for him was when the factory inspector appeared. Then he would be placed up on a box in front of a "case" so that he would look bigger. One day an inspector more shrewd than the others came in and saw that James was only a small child. He made inquiries and Connolly was dismissed.

An ironical feature of this measure of child protection was that James had to find another job as soon as he left the printing office. And his next job—in a bakery—was much harder and more unhealthy. Work began at six in the morning and went on till late at night. The hours at such arduous labours were far too long for a growing boy. Connolly was by turns fascinated and terrified by his bakehouse drudgery. For a sensitive child it was a nightmare experience and he had many nightmares in which the bakery appeared grotesque and lurid. Sometimes in his dreams he saw the bakery going up in smoke and flames and he had a great sense of relief at this end of his daily slavery. But then he would be overwhelmed with grief and anxiety, thinking of the loss of bread not only to himself and his family but to all those whom the bakery served. Everywhere hands would be outstretched for the bread and eyes were pleading. Tossing restlessly, after these dreams, he would tumble out of bed in the cold grey mornings at about five o'clock and hurry away shivering to another day's toil. Mingled with these fevered imaginings—the result of a brooding sense of responsibility and physical weakness—may have been some tradition of famine horrors gleaned from his Irish background.

This bakery tried Connolly sorely in body and in spirit. In his impressionable years, Maxim Gorky, the Russian revolutionary writer, also worked in a bakery. Gorky saw

the bakers as prisoners confined to a gloomy cellar, overwhelmed with heat and ugliness. It was a place of pity and terror. The Edinburgh bakery was not so fantastically horrible—except perhaps in Connolly's dreams—as Gorky's cellar but it proved too much for Connolly. His health broke down and he had to leave. By way of convalescence he found work in a mosaic tiling factory—a job he held for two years.

These early experiences reveal a revolutionary in the making. Agitators and books are sometimes blamed for creating discontent. This is quite wrong. All that the spoken or written thought can do is to direct discontent into certain channels. The feeling itself springs from those conditions of hardship or injustice which may be the result of economic or national servitude. Often it is both, for a country that is enslaved is likely to be poor just as an individual who is oppressed is stripped of worldly goods. Connolly, high-spirited, sensitive, thoughtful, acquired—by the drudgery of his early youth—that relentless hostility to injustice which he expressed wherever he found it. He reacted strongly against repression. He did not need to read books to become discontented. Life hammered discontent into him. He was both hammered and tempered by bitter experience. Reading could only give his discontent a more definite purpose by making it the basis for thought. Those who imagine that Connolly could ever lose his passion for social justice do not allow for the strength of the blows which life gave him in his youth. Karl Marx may have taught him facts about social evolution but he did not need Marx to teach him that slavery and hunger were bad.

If Connolly's social discontent can be explained by his experience that same explanation also serves to indicate his national stand. In Ireland, during the nineteenth century, famine and emigration went on like the monotonous tolling of a funeral bell. The population declined from 8,196,597 in 1841 to 4,704,750 in 1891. When Connolly spoke about Ireland he did not speak in the academic tones of those who take down the books from the shelves to study this remarkable shrinkage of population without understanding what it means in human terms. Neither of course did he echo the

gleeful cry of the *London Times* that the Gaels were going with a vengeance.

Connolly spoke as one of those emigrants, one of a family that was part of these tragic statistics telling of the ruin of a nation. Through Connolly the voice of the emigrant spoke, the voice of hunger and of the oppressed. And it was always the emigrant who wanted to return. His experience justified both social and national discontent. Early in his life we see that double thread of authentic experience. This experience gave a burning indignation to his words. It also supplies the key to his conception of Irish freedom, not as a romantic fancy but as the taking of power into the hands of his countrymen so that they would not suffer the oppression or misery which he and his forebears had to endure.

Scottish industrialism gave Connolly some hard blows to add to the earlier lessons of his childhood in Ireland. He assimilated these new experiences and his reading widened rapidly under the influence of his uncle and of John Leslie, a remarkable precursor of Connolly, who became a close friend. Leslie was an Irish exile and one of the most active and brilliant propagandists for the new Socialist ideas in Scotland. He had written a pamphlet entitled *The Present Condition of the Irish Question* which stressed the social character of the Irish struggle, marking out faintly those lines which Connolly was to cut deeper as Irish Labour historian and Republican propagandist.

Leslie endorsed Michael Davitt's indictment of the Irish landlords and wanted to widen the Land League movement to make it anti-capitalist as well. He urged that rural and urban workers in Ireland should unite in one movement to co-operate with the workers in Britain. John Leslie was also a man of genuine poetic gifts. His *Proletarian Lays and Lyrics* is one of the best collections of revolutionary verse of that early idealistic period. Besides being sensitive to suffering he brought colour and glamour to the service of the oppressed. He had that feeling for words which propagandist writings often lack. Connolly, with his own sure instinct for the value of rebel songs—he was to write a number himself—could not be irresponsive.

While John Leslie was a formative influence, Connolly also read the writings of John Mitchel, Wolfe Tone, Thomas Davis, Tom Moore—all the men who fought and wrote and sang for Ireland. Like many others he thrilled to the defiant declaration of young Robert Emmet made in the dock on the eve of his execution. Every proud assertion of the right of the Irish nation to freedom secured his eager assent. And when he came to read the Socialist books making similar claims for social freedom, the two lines of thought easily blended in his mind, one reinforcing the other.

Connolly was won by the militancy of Fintan Lalor. He understood that Lalor did not see the Irish struggle as something detached and isolated from the world but as part of the great struggle of oppressed humanity everywhere. Lalor's cry of revolt was strengthened by his knowledge of the 1848 movement which had built revolutionary barricades in many European cities and had scared the ruling powers. In earlier days Tone was influenced by the French Revolution and the Fenians had close contacts with revolutionary movements abroad. Only reactionaries in Ireland—afraid of progress and of knowledge—strove to build up little barriers of detachment which were swept away whenever any real movement rose. Knowing this there was nothing to prevent Connolly linking his ideas of social and national revolt.

This was the period of Socialist pioneering in Scotland when such contrasting personalities as William Morris and H. M. Hyndman were bringing the poetry and the prose of revolt to the people. William Morris—the eager poet-craftsman of the tumbled hair, not unlike the burly, bearded George Russell of later years in Dublin—was an active Socialist propagandist. Hyndman, with his frock coat, silk hat and white cuffs, seemed an anachronism on the Socialist platform, especially in those days. But his sartorial conventionalism was accompanied by dogmatic pronouncements on Socialist theory.

Hyndman was the leading influence in the Social Democratic Federation which accepted Karl Marx as its teacher, though Marx did not accept Hyndman. This was

the group which carried on propaganda at street corners and in draughty little halls in Edinburgh, Glasgow and other Scottish cities. Connolly attended many of their meetings, especially when Leslie spoke. He added to his reading of books on Irish history and affairs, the study of such works as Marx's *Capital*; Engels' *Condition of the Working Class in England*; *Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*; Motley's *Rise of the Dutch Republic*; Lewis Morgan's *Ancient Society*, and all the current theoretical literature of the Socialist movement. Connolly accepted the Socialist outlook though—as an Irishman—he no doubt appreciated Marx's acknowledgment that William Thompson of Cork had anticipated much of his own teaching. Connolly read the poets, the essayists and the historians. He shared Burns' feeling for humanity, he read Carlyle—that Victorian prophet who lit a smoky torch—and he turned to Mazzini's *Essays* for a clearer light of freedom.

These early questionings and ferments in Connolly's mind were not worked out under tranquil conditions. At eighteen he left Edinburgh and took to the road. He wandered through England and Scotland staying in various towns and districts where he could find work to keep himself alive. His course was uncharted. He went where he could get work and a meal. Among the cities he came to know in this way were Liverpool—with its huge dock area and swarming Irish population—and Newcastle where engineering works attracted many from distant towns. Connolly was ready to do any kind of unskilled labouring work and if there was none to be had he went on. This mode of life called for adaptability. He was tramp, pedlar and navvy by turn.

Travel—in another social sphere—is often regarded as the finishing touch to education. The student who makes the grand tour when his formal schooling is over, may learn a great deal if he keeps his eyes and his mind open. This was Connolly's grand tour. But his method made for a much closer acquaintance with the important facts of life than is possible for those who stay in standardised hotels and enjoy cosmopolitan amusements. The outlook of poor men who travel—earning their living on the road—is bound to be very different from that of the tourist travelling for recreation.

A sense of insecurity is always with the man who is without any resource except his strength or skill. He must be ready to seize opportunities and to exercise his judgment.

With all its drawbacks this mode of life has made a strong appeal to the young and vigorous who detest staying in a rut. Vagabondage is the barometer which marks the pressure of circumstances on people and the degree of resistance they possess. Vagrants either emphasise the desire for freedom or their failure to find a place in organised community life. The social organisation or the individual may be to blame for difficulties of adjustment. Yet it would not be true to describe Connolly as a vagabond during this time, even though he had no visible means of subsistence except his hands. Under the Elizabethan laws he could quite easily have had his ears cut off or have been branded as a "sturdy rogue and vagabond" wandering abroad without a lord.

Apart from those men who are broken by harsh conditions and form a pitiful half-floating, half-submerged population of whom Jack London wrote in *People of the Abyss*, there are, too, many men of an uncommon force of mind driven—it is true, partly by economic need but more strongly, whether they know it or not—by an urge for adventure and wider horizons. Patrick MacGill, Bart Kennedy, Jack London, W. H. Davies, Maxim Gorky are typical. Exceptional vitality, and curiosity, drives such men to break out of the narrow rut in which they are confined. If they travel under the compulsion of hunger they are also impelled to endure hardship in their exploration of life. They set out with an indefinable longing to get closer to that mystery and freedom which they feel in the world about them. James Connolly must be numbered amongst these.

In Germany—during the time of Connolly's Odyssey—there was a young wood-worker named August Bebel who journeyed through the towns and villages, working at his trade and staying in the trade union hostels then available for travelling workers. He became the leader of German social democracy just as Connolly became the foremost figure in the Irish Labour movement. Gorky—like Connolly—was driven to obtain a living by doing rough, unskilled

work until he was able to write of his experiences and express his passion for freedom, in vivid, pungent stories, as Connolly did in his revolutionary activities.

Not only was Connolly an unskilled worker but he belonged to a country which had been under outside domination for many generations. Irish industries had been deliberately crippled. The country was left in a backward and undeveloped condition. So Irish workers had far less chance of earning a living in their own country. A double weight of economic and national servitude came down with crushing weight upon the shoulders of the Irish labourers. If there was rough, hard, dirty work to be done at home or abroad they were expected to do it as a matter of course. The Irish navy was a feature of industrial Britain in the nineteenth century. Gangs of these navvies drifted from one big constructional job to another. Housed like animals in tin shacks, they were used to dig out canals, to construct railways and bridges, to build roads and docks.

When their job was done these Irish navvies had to move on to re-enact their perpetual role of human atomic bombs elsewhere, tunnelling through rock, burrowing the hillsides, doing constructional work everywhere except in their own country which needed it most. They were alien to the social life around them. Dragged away from their own surroundings, from the ways, customs and ties which meant everything to them they were herded in rough shacks, compounds or lodging houses. Their only relief from sub-human toil was too often drink and quarrelling. No one gave them much opportunity for anything else for they were regarded as a strange, inferior type. Patrick MacGill has written the epic of the Irish navy in *Children of the Dead End* and in his songs, for he was one of them. Working like moles, they drank and quarrelled recklessly, placing as little value on themselves as society did. They were of use only as workbeasts, as human shovels, and no one cared to know if they had any finer characteristics.

Among such men, Connolly—a sturdy, silent youth—lived and worked for months. Already he was a social student—a reader—supplementing his experience with whatever information he could gain from books. He was an avid

reader to persevere under these conditions. A bare, barn-like building was the common room or dormitory. On each side was a row of beds and a paraffin oil lamp hung in the centre, giving a dim light. Big men in dirty, working clothes gathered under the light or round the stove. Here they smoked, yarned or played cards. On the edge of the shadow Connolly sat, reading; shutting his ears and mind to distractions. How many times a noisy card game, a boisterous interlude or his own fatigue, prevented him from going on with his study no one can say. But the obstacles only intensified that dogged perseverance which his enemies in later years came to know so well.

Sometimes, instead of a big common room, there were small cubicles divided by wooden partitions. Each cubicle accommodated two men. Candles were used and Connolly provided his own. Now and then he was able to settle down to a good night's reading after work. But he was dependent on his room-mate who—as likely as not—objected to the candle burning when he wanted to sleep or else spent the precious hours in garrulous talk.

These were the conditions in which the young man who was to write the foundation study of Irish history from a Labour standpoint had to prepare for his work. Yet he persisted. And he was not soured. He learnt from his companions just as he learnt from the books. Afterwards when he spoke of these Irish navvies it was to commend their qualities of loyalty and comradeship. These men—generous, hot-tempered, crude, quick to quarrel but equally ready to make amends—made a deep impression on Connolly. Always he saw them in relation to their Irish background, torn from poor homes, compelled to seek a living as victims of an alien industrialism into which by temperament and tradition they did not fit.

Connolly shared their experiences just as he also knew from actual experience what it meant to be driven from Ireland by famine. When some British Socialists tried to tell him—out of their profound ignorance of Irish realities—that Irish freedom was not a cause with which he—as a worker—should concern himself, Connolly had only to measure such empty talk against these experiences of himself

and his fellows. There was a core of commonsense and shrewdness in Connolly. He knew that it was imperative for Irish independence to be won, not only because Irish workers could then be masters in their own land if they so determined but also because without political independence the way for social and economic progress would never be clear. He did not live to see the stalwart figures of Irish navvies outlined against the sunset on the huge mountain ridge of earthworks when the dam was created and the canals dug for the Shannon Power electrification scheme. But he understood that, without control of their own country, Irishmen like himself would always be driven to work for the stranger.

Very early Connolly acquired a habit of reasoning from the facts. In order to live he had to be practical. And his knowledge of migratory work and workers was invaluable when he came to organise workers of many nationalities in America. Lumber men, harvesters and others were swept into that fiery organisation, the Industrial Workers of the World, which was for some years the best loved and most hated Labour body in the United States. Connolly acted as organiser for this union when he went to America. Life in his youth was already shaping him for the task.

As a youth the life of a foot-loose wanderer, snatching at adventure in spite of hunger and discomfort, did not content Connolly. The true wanderer has no idea of citizenship. The vagrant may be at war with society but he does not want to change it. He has no plan or scheme for the settled life of a community. Connolly was a worker—wandering not so much from choice as from necessity—though he had his streak of adventurousness. So when opportunity offered he settled in Glasgow. He grew in knowledge and self-confidence. But he was still the silent and studious young man, attending Socialist meetings, reading, thinking how society might be changed so that workers in general and Irish workers in particular, could have a fairer deal from life. He saved money to send to Ireland for books and pamphlets—history, poetry, essays. He told a friend that this was his own special way of going on the spree.

"I always remember the first time I sent over a few pence for a bundle of *Penny Readings* and how delighted I was when they came," he said. "It was always so difficult for me to get anything to read as a boy that I thought it wonderful to receive a parcel like this!"

Connolly took great care of his books and could not bear to see them handled carelessly. He regarded them as most precious, the tools of the mind. Though he read widely he was still more of a listener than a speaker. Occasionally he asked a question to help the lecturer bring out a point. More rarely he intervened in a discussion. Once when he did so his vehemence electrified his hearers. He put such a passionate energy into his words that it was long remembered. But usually he spoke with restraint. He was a thoughtful rather than an emotional speaker, one of those individuals who feel deeply and speak calmly. It was a matter of temperament as well as training. For this reason his utterances—like his writings—have more in them than appears on the surface.

While on a visit to Dublin he met Lillie Reynolds, a quiet, unassuming, home-loving girl who became his wife. They were married at Perth when he was twenty-one. She was his companion and helper till the day of his execution. They had more than the common share of working-class privation. His wife took no part in public life but it never occurred to either of them that his marriage should make the slightest difference to his outspoken assertion of Socialist opinions.

About this time his father was permanently disabled by an accident, so Connolly left Glasgow and returned to Edinburgh where he took over his father's job under the Corporation. Soon he had a young family of his own and had it not been for the strength of his Socialist convictions he would probably have remained there, helping his father and providing a home for his wife and young children. But this Irish labourer was marked out for a bigger if more troubled destiny.

In Edinburgh Connolly resumed his friendship with John Leslie, who had a reputation as a brilliant exponent of Socialist ideas and Irish discontent. Connolly walked in his footsteps. The young man began to speak at Socialist

meetings—those little gatherings of the faithful held under the lamps at street corners — where men with red ties and slouch hats gave expression to social discontent. He was soon known as a forceful speaker, winning respect and converts to his cause but—because of this—he roused bitter opposition too.

Staid City Councillors asked each other what the world was coming to when an Irish labourer—a common dustman and their own employee—ventured to criticise their conduct of civic affairs in Edinburgh and even to call into question the deeds that made the Empire. A whispering campaign was started. They could not strike directly at James but a pretext was found to dismiss his elder brother who was also an employee of the Corporation. In earlier days it was James who had to leave the printing office while his brother remained. Now the position was reversed.

The flying shuttle is unconscious of the pattern it weaves and these stiff-necked Edinburgh worthies had no idea what they had started when they gave a push to Connolly's career. If they imagined that their action would silence or intimidate him they were woefully mistaken. He was not the man to be silenced in a struggle. He leapt to the challenge. The Socialist group in Edinburgh nominated him as a candidate for the Corporation so that he could carry the war against the City Fathers into their camp. But before Connolly could stand he had to resign his job. He did this and was put up to contest the St. Giles Ward, fighting his first municipal campaign.

Meetings were held all over the area. Connolly led the assault on the royal and ancient city. When the votes were counted, he had received 300 against his opponents 1,200. Socialism was in its pioneering days and Edinburgh was not an industrial city. Considering this, his supporters felt that the result was creditable. It may have been but Connolly was now unemployed with a wife and children to maintain. Family responsibilities meant that he could no longer take to the road. He had made his opinions so well known in Edinburgh that no employer would engage him.

Friends adopted the expedient of setting him up in a cobbler's shop to try his luck as a shoe mender, traditionally

the last stand of the village malcontent. Connolly stood by his last. But paying customers were few. The district and the premises, it is said, were unsuitable. Perhaps most of Connolly's friends mended their own boots. They dropped in frequently to talk to him but he found the business prospects more glum each day.

One morning he took off his apron, rolled it up and laid it on the counter.

"Where are you off to, James?" asked a friend who was in the shop.

"I'm going out to buy a looking glass so that I can watch myself starving to death!" said Connolly, with that grim humour which always came to his aid when he reached a tight corner.

He could joke about it. But he had to shut the shop.

3. Assault on a City

WHEN THE COBBLER'S SHOP CLOSED, Connolly and his wife had anxious discussions over what they should do next. Something had to be done at once. Connolly was inclined to try his luck as a farmer in Chili. Under a land settlement scheme the Chilian Government was ready to pay his passage, to make him a grant of land and tools—to do much in fact that was not done for the working farmers in Ireland. He was attracted by the idea of settling down on the land and even went so far as to get a passport and make arrangements for the journey.

His wife did not care for this and she had a strong ally in John Leslie who added his influence to persuade James to go to Dublin as a pioneer of Socialist ideas in Ireland. No one could say that the Dublin of 1896, a city of ill-paid unskilled labour, of festering poverty and squalid overcrowded tenements offered good material prospects for Connolly and his family. Leslie did not even try to convince Connolly of this. He spoke as a visionary and an exile about the Ireland that both carried in their hearts. He urged Connolly to return and found the first Irish Socialist Republican Party.

Together they had studied the course of Irish history and had brooded over the present problems. As they argued it out now, the project of Connolly's return bearing a torch of revolutionary thought must have brought an excitement and glow into their minds. How far the older man was conscious of Connolly's powers we do not know. But he succeeded because Connolly was really on his side and could not resist doing what his whole nature prompted him to undertake. The Chilian scheme was abandoned and Connolly decided to go to Dublin. Leslie must share some of the credit for that decision.

Although Connolly was a young man—in his twenty-sixth year—he was beyond the stage of mere emotional enthusiasm. Already he had suffered for his beliefs. When he

rejected Chili and chose Dublin he knew that he was going to be a pioneer for the Socialist and Republican cause in Ireland. For him this was the one cause and he knew it would not be an easy task. Perhaps if he had known the difficulties that awaited him he might have been dismayed. But once he was sure of his course he never wavered.

So the Connolly family—himself, his wife and four little girls, left Edinburgh and arrived in Dublin where James secured work as a navvy on a main drainage scheme. He worked at many jobs mainly of a casual labour character. For a time he was a proof reader on the *Sunday World Weekly*. But his real work was to launch the movement in which he believed. In this city from which he could see the Dublin mountains rising out of the mist, he felt that he had an enthusiasm that could move mountains. He needed all his enthusiasm and a stout heart. Without money and with a young family dependent upon him, he chose to back two most unpopular causes—the cause of the poor and of the Irish Republic. Wealthy and respected citizens would not dream of supporting Connolly in a Socialist Republican crusade, especially in the far-off year of 1896 when Socialism was new and strange.

All he could do was to gather a handful of workmen as poor as himself and with them he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party. The I.S.R.P. was never very big but it has an importance disproportionate to its size in the history of the Irish struggle. Connolly himself wrote of its contribution in an American edition of *Erin's Hope*. He said :—

It is no exaggeration to say that this organisation and its policy completely revolutionised advanced politics in Ireland. When it was first initiated, the word 'republic' was looked upon as a word to be only whispered among intimates; the Socialists boldly advised the driving from public life of all who would not openly accept it. The thought of revolution was the exclusive possession of a few remnants of the secret societies of a past generation, and was never mentioned by them except with heads closely together and eyes fearfully glancing round; the Socialists broke through this ridiculous secrecy, and in hundreds of speeches in the most public places of the metropolis, as well as in scores of thousands of pieces of literature scattered through the country, announced their

purpose to muster all the forces of Labour for a revolutionary reconstruction.

The Socialists of Dublin conceived and organised the Great Jubilee Protest of 1897, which startled the world and shattered all the elaborate efforts of the British Government to represent Ireland as 'loyal.' They held the first meeting of protest against the Boer War, and at that meeting over 2,000 people at College Green passed the first resolution calling upon the Irish in the Transvaal to take up arms against the armies of the British capitalist Government; they conducted the first campaign against enlistment in the army; they were the first to contest elections upon a platform openly declaring for a revolution, and they were the first to point out all the immense ameliorations of the conditions of life in Ireland which could be realised without waiting for Home Rule. In short the I.S.R.P. has to itself the credit of having opened up practically all the new fields of thought and action, now being exploited by other and less revolutionary organisations.

When Connolly started the I.S.R.P. in 1896, he became its Organiser at a salary of £1 per week. Small as this salary was, it should be remembered that in comparison with the wages then being paid to Dublin workers it was not low. Not many years later when Arthur Griffith was establishing his paper *The United Irishman* he aimed at getting a clear 25/- a week to enable him to live. These pioneers did not expect munificent salaries. They knew how poor the people were.

Mr. D. A. Chart in a paper on *Unskilled Labour in Dublin* read to the Statistical and Social Enquiry Society of Ireland on March 6, 1914, estimated that of 90,000 adult males in Dublin, about 24,000 were unskilled, receiving an average wage of 18/- a week, many getting 15/- or 16/-. His figures were based on the 1911 census. Conditions in earlier years were worse. In his pamphlet *Labour Revolt and Larkinism* Mr. W. P. Ryan tells of men in Dublin receiving 14/- for a 90 hr week while women were paid 11/- for working from 50 to 90 hrs. These figures cover a period when the workers in Ireland as well as in Britain had begun to get restive. But in Connolly's early years in Dublin the workers endured terrible exploitation with passive resignation and despair.

In 1906, Labour in Britain began to be a force politically and an era of social legislation commenced. To this period

belongs insurance against sickness and unemployment. Old age pensions were also granted although grave fears were expressed that workers who reached seventy years would be 'pauperised' if they were given five shillings a week. This social legislation was introduced in Britain and there were fainter stirrings of the social conscience in Ireland because organised labour was weaker. The whole of that era of Liberal legislation—applying to Britain and Ireland—was as much an insurance of the wealthy against Revolution as a gain to Labour. The desperate workers got something, as a bone might be tossed to a growling dog.

But in 1896 when Connolly began his work in Dublin there was no insurance against unemployment or sickness, no old age pensions, nothing to stand between the worker and the black abyss of poverty except a harsh Poor Law, which in Ireland had always been pitiless in dealing with famine victims and the swarming horde of destitute which the famine years had left in their train.

Under such conditions Connolly carried on his activities. The party was too poor to pay him his £1 a week regularly and there were weeks when he came home empty-handed.

"But they promised it," said his wife indignantly.

"I know, Lillie, but if they haven't the money, they can't pay me!" he said patiently.

"And then we haven't enough to eat," added his wife.

This talk is revealing. Still more revealing is the account given in Nora Connolly's *Portrait of a Rebel Father*, the first part of which is a record of hunger and anxiety. On the first page we are told how the children had to go short of bread. Connolly himself often went without food and worked at heavy labouring jobs too strenuous for a half-starved man. There were times when they pawned almost everything they had of value. The time came when Mrs. Connolly had to part with her only remaining treasure—a little gold watch. Some years later—when the family had gone to America—Connolly arrived home with presents for all of them including a lovely gold watch inscribed "For Lillie" to replace the one she had given up in Dublin.

Hard as the life was, this family was happy. His wife never questioned that his sacrifice for what he believed in

was necessary and right. His children, even before they were old enough to understand anything about his ideas, thought there was no one to compare with their father. Perhaps their hardships brought them closer and gave the family a cheerful solidarity. Connolly was no weakling though at times he was weak from hunger. He was no idler either for his life was spent in toil. But the one thing that gave meaning and purpose to it was the task that he set himself to accomplish.

Connolly's first publication—which appeared in 1896—was a reprint of Fintan Lalor's *Rights of Ireland* and *The Faith of a Felon*. Lalor had come forward in 1848 with a ringing affirmation of the rights of the Irish people and a call to militant struggle as part of the revolutionary upheaval in Europe. Lalor sounded the call to arms less successfully than Connolly was destined to do. But no one who reads Lalor's defiant words can doubt Connolly's affinity with him. Lalor wrote: "Any man who tells you that an act of armed resistance—even if offered by ten men only—even if offered by men armed only with stones—any man who tells you that such an act of resistance is premature, imprudent or dangerous—any and every such man should at once be spurned and spat at. For remark you this and recollect it, that *somewhere*, and *somehow*, and by *somebody*, a *beginning must* be made and that the *first* act of resistance is always, and must be ever, premature, imprudent and dangerous. Lexington was premature, Bunkers Hill was imprudent, and even Trenton was dangerous." Connolly did more to make the writings of Fintan Lalor known to his generation than any other man. They had much in common both in social approach and militant spirit. In his introduction to Lalor's work, Connolly declared that the I.S.R.P. stood where Lalor had stood in his generation against the conservative national forces and for the real fight to lift the people of Ireland.

How the I.S.R.P. proposed to assert the claims of the Irish people was outlined in its "object and programme" which read as follows:—

The establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic based upon the public ownership by the people of Ireland of the land and

instruments of production, distribution and exchange. Agriculture to be administered as a public function under boards of management elected by the agricultural population and responsible to them and to the nation at large. All other forms of labour necessary to the well-being of the community to be conducted on the same principles.

The following immediate measures were advocated to restrict the tide of emigration by providing employment at home and to palliate the evils of the present order :—

1. Nationalisation of canals and railways.
2. Abolition of private banks and money-lending institutions and establishment of State banks under popularly elected boards of directors issuing loans at cost.
3. Establishment at public expense of rural depots for the most improved agricultural machinery to be lent out to the agricultural population at a rent covering cost and management alone.
4. Graduated income-tax on all incomes over £400 per annum in order to provide funds for pensions to the aged, infirm, and widows and orphans.
5. Legislative restriction of hours of labour to 48 per week, and establishment of minimum wage.
6. Free maintenance of all children.
7. Gradual extension of the principle of public ownership and supply to all the necessities of life.
8. Public control and management of the national schools by boards elected by popular ballot for that purpose alone.
9. Free education up to the highest university degree.
10. Universay suffrage.

Although the chief idea of the I.S.R.P. was to urge a new system of economic control in the interests of the public in place of the competitive scramble, the detailed measures as listed, contain many so immediately practical that the Irish Agricultural Society, working on co-operative lines, has attacked the problem of rural credit and the provision of agricultural machinery while other demands have been adopted by the State.

As a sign of the changed attitude towards the idea of public services since this early propaganda by Connolly it is interesting to note the advertisement issued by C.I.E. (Coras Iompair Eireann) in the public press on March 2, 1946, dealing with the period when the Government

organised the railway and road services to deal with war-time difficulties. This advertisement was headed *Bureaucrats in Mayo* and read :—

It is fashionable in some quarters to label Civil Servants and C.I.E. officials as bureaucrats and attribute every evil to them. So we present the story of the bureaucrats who brought food to North Mayo when the private supply system broke down . . . Travelling shops formerly sold such foodstuffs as flour, sugar and bacon at the crossroads and villages, often in exchange for butter, fowl and eggs. When the country's petrol supply was cut, travelling shop owners only traded in and near towns, while retaining the ration books of customers far afield . . . Civil Servants solved rationing puzzles on the spot. All available petrol was given to C.I.E. Our lorries brought in regular supplies, brought out local produce to competitive markets. Village trade revived, rations reached the remotest farms. . . . We scheming bureaucrats not only fed the people and gave them a free market, but we did it on little more than half the petrol previously used.

This official advertisement concedes very much that Connolly urged in his I.S.R.P. programme, back in 1896. Still more is conceded in a second official notice issued on March 5, 1946, headed *Private and Public* which read :—

The trader may sometimes consider it cheaper to run his own transport, even when C.I.E. services are available. In the end it is unprofitable for him . . . The real cost of carrying his goods cannot be clearly shown in his ledger, because the real cost includes many indirect payments for public transport. . . . There must be a transport system that serves the whole community . . .

Connolly would add to this claim for the efficiency of a public transport system, the demand that any profit or return on its working go to the community and not be the subject of Stock Exchange gambling as happened when the State took over the direction of transport. But on grounds of efficiency both the facts and the official statements support Connolly's case for public control.

Connolly developed his point of view in *Erin's Hope : The End and the Means*—reprinted from Alice Milligan's Republican journal *The Shan Van Vocht* and from Keir Hardie's *Labour Leader*. This was issued in March, 1897. Here is the Connolly outlook in concrete terms. He indicated the importance he attached to history and tradition as

well as to the economic facts of his day. His conclusion was that the Irish struggle was primarily social, that it was a battle against a privileged economic group which had dispossessed the Irish people. Having stolen the land and the wealth, this group—or their descendants—most certainly did not want that conquest challenged. Connolly called for a re-conquest of Ireland by the Irish and a recognition that the flag of Imperialism stood for property and privilege which the mass of the Irish people did not share. Rallying the forces of tradition on his side he urged that the old Gaelic clan system was essentially democratic—embodying the idea of common right and communal heritage—while feudalism—under which the lord held property and passed it to his son—was an alien and imposed system, just as capitalism was in a later day.

Thinking along these new lines Connolly made a base from which Irish Labour could take the lead in the National struggle without abandoning its own struggle against economic privilege. In an American edition of *Erin's Hope*—issued many years later—Connolly contributed an introduction which put his view clearly in the following terms:—

The I.S.R.P. was founded in Dublin in 1896 by a few workingmen whom the writer had succeeded in interesting in his proposition that the two currents of revolutionary thought in Ireland—the socialist and the national—were not antagonistic but complementary, and that the Irish socialist was in reality the best Irish patriot, but in order to convince the Irish people of that fact he must first learn to look inward upon Ireland for his justification, rest his arguments upon the facts of Irish history, and be champion against the subjection of Ireland and all that it implies. That the Irish question was at bottom an economic question, and that the economic struggle must first be able to function freely nationally before it could function internationally, and as socialists were opposed to all oppression, so should they ever be foremost in the daily battle against all its manifestations, social and political.

Dividing his time between historical study, Socialist agitation and seeking a living by any work which came to hand, Connolly faced a formidable task. Hard pressed by hunger in this tenement setting, he called up his heroes from the shadows to give him strength. Perhaps they seemed less

shadowy when he communed with them in the National Library in Dublin, sitting at his desk, the shaded lights making the print stand out clearly, so that the men themselves appeared to stand before him. He could see Mitchel in the dock, his lip curling as he faced his accusers and looking with almost the same contempt at his supporters who let him be led away to transportation without striking a blow. He could see the bold Robert Emmet, young, impetuous and eloquent. And he could see Wolfe Tone—filled with courage and energy—drinking his toast to that Irish independence for which he was to die.

Connolly knew them all intimately. But when he closed the books and went out seeking a job or even a scanty meal at the Penny Dinners, he had need of their strength as well as his own. These men had fought the fight before he came. They had faced imprisonment, abuse, transportation, hunger, ill-health, execution. Yet they had stood firm. This must have been some consolation to James Connolly who now stood in line for his own hour of trial. Thinking and brooding over these others, he decided it was time to bring to the notice of the Irish nation or at least to such of the Irish nation as he could reach, some knowledge of their work. And so the *Ninety-Eight Readings*—issued in fortnightly parts—came into being. With the help of these earlier fighters Connolly prepared to strike his blow. The spirit in which he entered the lists is revealed by the title of his pamphlet *The New Evangel*. The popular view of Connolly's martyrdom or sacrifice is that it took place in 1916. But his real martyrdom was during those early years in Dublin when, poor and unknown, he endured hunger and hardship rather than give up the right to propagate his national and social beliefs. It was in this work that Connolly's character was tested and strengthened, that he revealed that cold, steel-like tenacity which he brought into battle.

When he was engaged in working out the social relations between the various classes and the effects of the Conquest, he found his material as much in his own life and in the lives of those around him as in the books. He dug out the appalling facts about the infantile mortality in Dublin—the

highest of any city in Europe, higher than Calcutta, even with plague and cholera. He traced this back to bad housing and living conditions, to the cynical and callous indifference of the ruling powers. He was in a good position to judge for he was familiar with those gaunt Dublin tenements, their mouldering stairways, broken fanlights, the mingled grime, decay and grandeur of centuries.

Apart from these relics of the eighteenth century which were—and still are—well-known characteristics of working class housing in Dublin, there were too the tumble-down rookeries of the Coombe and the huddled ruins in the shadow of Christ Church and St. Patrick's. Many of these dens have been cleared away as insanitary, dangerous and uninhabitable. Others remain propped up by huge buttresses, so that the houses look as if they are leaning on gigantic crutches. This housing problem has been aggravated by centuries of neglect and many people have come to acquiesce in the existence of these human rabbit warrens.

Even at the present time the housing position is tragic and terrible, though much has been done. If we consider what it was like when the Connolly family struggled for a foothold in Dublin we can understand his clear intellectual conviction that a clean sweep of the old order would have to be made.

4. Dublin Detonations

WHEN IN 1897 Connolly began the publication of those remarkable *Ninety-Eight Readings*—he timed them to fit in with the Centenary celebrations of the 1798 Rising. His avowed purpose was to show the alignment of the National forces in earlier years with the progressive movements of the world. He described the *Ninety-Eight Readings* as a series of reprints of the most important literature current in Ireland a hundred years ago, including the chief official documents of the United Irishmen, and their writings in prose and verse. They took the form of sixteen page pamphlets issued fortnightly, comprising five numbers in all.

Following his issue of Lalor's writings in November, 1896, and his own *Erin's Hope* which appeared in March, 1897, the publication of this series was of great importance. These pronouncements of Wolfe Tone and others showed the influence of the French Revolution, of the widespread ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity. The French revolutionaries were described as "patriots" and the Irish patriots were shown as responding to the same ideas of popular national sovereignty—the will of the people against despotic rule. Whether this domination was exercised by a privileged group within the country or an alien ascendancy, the believers in democratic nationalism, were equally opposed to either for they wanted the nations ruled by the people. When Dr. Johnson, the English Tory, denounced patriotism as "the last refuge of a scoundrel" it was democratic nationalism he was abusing, with aims common to Irish, French and other revolutionaries.

Connolly never believed in any narrow idea of nationalism that would detach Ireland from the wider currents of human progress. He never thought of Ireland as a stagnant pond but as part of a living stream. He was eager for Ireland and for Irish workers to take a full part in the forward movements of the world. So he drew attention to those writings of Irish leaders which stressed the contacts of the

Irish movement with every movement for human freedom. The Fenians—he pointed out—did not accept any position of isolation in the world but were abused by their enemies just because they had strong links with their comrades abroad.

Fenian leaders found a refuge in Paris as did Wolfe Tone in the days of the United Irishmen. In the century that elapsed since the struggle of the United Irishmen, reactionaries had attempted to distort and falsify that movement. They even tried to capture the word "patriot" from those who believed in the revolutionary idea of the sovereign popular will. In place of a generous idea of human brotherhood which the earlier conception of patriotism involved, the reactionaries advanced the view that a patriot was a man who, at the command of his own ruling class, was ready to fight the people of another country. To prevent distortion of the liberty-loving Irish movements of the past, Connolly lost no opportunity of reprinting and emphasising the teachings of Lalor, of Mitchel, of Tone and of others.

His thesis was that the best and most militant of Irish National leaders have stood for a wide interpretation of freedom reaching beyond Ireland. Connolly was an Internationalist. And he believed that National freedom would give the Irish people a chance to use their power to strengthen the forces of Labour and democracy abroad. Before any man can be an internationalist, he urged, he must first be a nationalist, for it is absurd to shout for freedom abroad and be content with slavery at home.

It has become a matter of twisted pride to boast that Irishmen have fought in all the battles but their own in every corner of the world whether these battles were good or bad. But it was left to Connolly to present the picture of Irishmen fighting their own battle for national freedom side by side with those who were fighting the same battle of humanity in other lands. Wolfe Tone—fired with Republican zeal—helped to fire Ireland and became the Father of Irish Republicanism. Not the least of Connolly's services to Ireland is that he resisted every attempt to make the Irish struggle an affair of narrow parochialism which would serve the ends of ignorance and reaction.

While Connolly was scrutinising the Irish movements of the past and working out his own attitude to national and international movements, he did not neglect any opportunity for spreading his ideas. A wave of national feeling was rising. People were becoming disgusted with the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster after the Parnell betrayal. The Gaelic League began activities in 1893 and influenced political thought. Arthur Griffith established his weekly journal *The United Irishman* in 1899. The burden of his teaching was that Ireland should not look to Westminster or to armed insurrection for salvation but to a renaissance of national strength and feeling at home.

In June, 1897, Queen Victoria's Jubilee was celebrated with fervour in Britain and this event was seized on by the Ascendancy in Ireland to demonstrate the loyalty and contentment of the people under British rule. The impudence of this claim was hotly resented by those who knew the bitter facts of famine, eviction and emigration which had marked her reign and had halved Ireland's population.

Throughout the country young men were forming "Ninety-Eight Clubs" under the inspiration of the Irish Republican Brotherhood. Exiles in America kept the flame of insurrection burning. In the clubs, Irish ballads, literature, history and language were read and studied. Underneath these activities an underground physical force movement with Separatist aims advanced. Alice Milligan and Ethne Carbery had started their monthly Republican journal *The Shan Van Vocht* in Belfast. But its tone was literary rather than actionist. In 1897, Connolly brought out his *Ninety-Eight Readings* and carried on energetic propaganda to build up his Irish Socialist Republican Party. He talked at street corners in Dublin, in small halls and meeting rooms. But, like Davitt in his earlier days, he was suspect in the more conservative national circles. They did not like his talk of Socialism or his open propaganda for an Irish Republic. The correct thing, they felt, was to whisper these seditious utterances in the ears of the faithful few. Connolly ignored the hush-hush policy and issued his journal *The Workers' Republic* on August 13, 1898, to bring

Socialist and Republican ideas into the open, as matters for discussion and decision. At the head of the front page he printed the defiant words: *The Great Appear Great Because We Are On Our Knees, Let Us Rise!*" Small though his paper was, it was the channel through which the new ideas gained expression and it heralded a new epoch.

The preparations for the celebration of the Queen's Jubilee in Dublin roused general indignation. Connolly decided that a counter-demonstration must be made to express the popular feeling. So he drafted a manifesto which set out the wrongs suffered by the Irish people in Queen Victoria's golden reign. This read:—

During this glorious reign Ireland has seen 1,225,000 of her children die of famine; starved to death whilst the produce of her soil and of their labour was eaten up by a vulture aristocracy—enforcing their rents by the bayonets of a hired assassin army in the pay of the 'best of the English Queens'; the eviction of 3,668,000; a multitude greater than that of the entire population of Switzerland; and the reluctant emigration of 4,186,000 of our kindred, a greater host than the entire people of Greece.

At the present moment 78% of our wage-earners receive less than £1 a week, our streets are thronged by starving crowds of unemployed, cattle graze on our tenantless farms and around the ruins of our battered homesteads, our ports are crowded with departing emigrants, and our workhouses are full of paupers. Such are the constituent elements out of which we are bade to construct a National Festival of Rejoicing!

Ten thousand copies of this manifesto were scattered broadcast. Besides its value as anti-Imperialist propaganda it is a revealing document as to the conditions and wages then current in Ireland. Connolly wrote out of a full and exact knowledge. A huge protest meeting was held in College Green—in June, 1897. Connolly, Maud Gonne and other speakers addressed the crowd. The meeting was marked by wild baton charges and fierce fighting with the police. At one critical point Connolly grasped the reins and whipped up the horses, making a moving demonstration through the city streets while the police followed. Maud Gonne, sitting alongside the driver, tells how, passing Dublin Castle, Connolly asked her if he should drive the lorry

through the Castle gates. Even then he had an instinct to storm the Castle.

Next evening—as a reprisal for the police interference the night before—an immense procession streamed through the city streets headed by Connolly. A coffin labelled “The British Empire” was borne in front, attended by mock mourners with twelve black flags. Battles with the police marked the progress of this demonstration in which 30,000 people are estimated to have taken part. The police snatched torches from demonstrators and used their batons recklessly. At O’Connell Bridge the fight became so furious that Connolly gave the order to hurl the coffin into the Liffey and so complete the mock funeral.

Scores of people were batoned and many arrests were made. Not far away a crowd gathered to watch a magic lantern display of famine and eviction scenes thrown on a screen at a window. In the street outside an old woman was killed in a baton charge. Angered by the police attacks the crowd proceeded to break every plate-glass window in which a ‘loyalist’ emblem was displayed. The damage was estimated at £1,500.

Newspapers were loud in their denunciation but as a demonstration it was a decided success and left no doubt about opinion in Dublin. The *Daily Express*—a Dublin Unionist organ—after deploring the damage said: “Nor can it be supposed that the Dublin corner boy is so well informed on the subject of the British Empire as to take any intelligent pleasure in playing at attending its funeral. The designers of the treasonable exhibition cannot have been mere street rowdies, and the deliberate insult to loyalty smacks of some perverted form of education.”

Many had been arrested. Connolly was left alone. So he accepted full responsibility and invited the authorities to arrest him. Not only did they fail to do this but the band instruments seized by the police were returned to him. Yet during the Boer War he was arrested and fined for addressing a proclaimed meeting of protest. This meeting was held in Beresford Place and the speakers included Arthur Griffith and Maud Gonne. On this occasion his fine

was paid by Maud Gonne though he had to spend one night under arrest.

Another great demonstration was held on the occasion of Queen Victoria's visit to Dublin in 1900, which event excited much feeling. Maud Gonne arranged special treats for the children to keep them away from school and from Loyalist festivities during the visit. Connolly gave this his backing and issued a trenchant manifesto:—

Monarchy is a survival of the tyranny imposed by the hand of greed and treachery in the darkest and most ignorant days of our history. It derives its only sanction from the sword of the marauder, and the helplessness of the producer, and its gifts to humanity are unknown save as they can be measured in the pernicious examples of triumphant and shameless iniquities . . . The future of the working class requires that all political and social positions should be open to all men and women; that all privileges of wealth be abolished, and that every man and woman born into this land should have an equal opportunity to attain to the proudest position in the land.

The Socialist demands that the only birthright necessary to qualify for public office should be the birthright of our common humanity. Believing as we do that there is nothing on earth more sacred than humanity, we deny all allegiance to this institution of royalty . . . The mind accustomed to political kings can easily be reconciled to social kings—capitalist kings of the workshops, the mill, the railway, the ship and the docks.

The case against monarchy—it should be noted—is not made from any exclusively Irish national standpoint. Connolly takes his stand upon Socialist opinion common to every land.

Besides holding big demonstrations on burning questions, which attracted masses of people and brought Connolly into contact with others representing various sections of the national movement, he carried on continuous open-air propaganda, often speaking in Foster Place off College Green, just outside the Bank of Ireland.

When Connolly launched *The Workers' Republic*, Keir Hardie gave the paper his backing to the extent of a £50 loan. Connolly entered that field of revolutionary journalism in which he was engaged for the rest of his life. *The Workers' Republic* struck a militant note even in its

title. But the lasting interest of these early numbers is that Connolly began the opening chapters of his historical analysis *Labour in Irish History* in its columns. This was destined to become the foundation book of the Irish Labour movement. Members of the I.S.R.P. gave their spare time as voluntary workers to work the hand press and to set up the type. Trade unionists in the printing industry criticised them for this but Connolly attended a meeting of the Dublin Typographical Association and defended them, asking whether the private use of razors involved blacklegging on the barbers.

If those superficial critics who are worried over Connolly being a Socialist and an Irish Republican as well, would only read his own statement—made in the very first issue of his journal—they would find their questions answered and Connolly's life-long consistency made plain. He wrote :—

We are Socialists because we see in Socialism not only the modern application of the social principle which underlay the Brehon laws of our ancestors, but because we recognise in it the only principle by which the working class can in their turn emerge in the divinity of FREEMEN, with the right to live as men and not as mere profit-making machines for the service of others. *We are Republicans because we are Socialists, and therefore enemies to all privileges; and because we would have the Irish people complete masters of their own destinies, nationally and internationally, fully competent to work out their own salvation.*"

That statement is simple and unequivocal. Connolly's whole career and later activities are seen here in the bud. Eleven issues of this journal appeared before it was suspended for a time owing to lack of funds. But it reappeared in May, 1899, as a half-penny weekly. By May, 1903, 85 numbers had been published. Then it ceased publication. But a new *Workers' Republic* sprang to life in 1915, with just the same teaching as the earlier numbers had contained.

The I.S.R.P. was not content to mark time. It contested municipal elections in Dublin. Connolly himself stood, without success, for the Wood Quay Ward, Dublin, in 1902 and 1903, his candidature being endorsed by the Dublin

Trades Council. Arthur Griffith, who was a bitter critic of Labour, penned his tribute to Connolly in his journal *The United Irishman* (Jan. 10, 1903). He wrote: "The able and honest men who are going forward as candidates can be counted on the fingers of one hand. Foremost amongst them is Mr. James Connolly, the Irish Socialist Labour Party's candidate in the Wood Quay Ward. He is opposed by the shoneens, the tenement house rack-renters of the poor, the publicans, and we regret to say, the priests. We are not Socialists, but we would be intensely gratified to see a man of Mr. Connolly's character returned to the Dublin Corporation, to let the light in on the corruption that sits enthroned on Cork Hill, and we trust every Nationalist voter in the ward will register his vote for the man who is fighting against the Free Drink and Fever Party."

Both Griffith and Connolly respected each other's dogged and honest qualities. They were similar in temperament, though they differed widely in social opinions. Frequently they found themselves on the same platform when a defiant declaration of Ireland's independence was needed. But that Griffith—the conservative Sinn Féin leader—should give such whole-hearted support to a man who was regarded in conventional circles as a dangerous, if obscure, social revolutionary, was a sign of the respect which Connolly's qualities of character and intellect were gaining.

5. Contemporaries and Events

GRIFFITH WAS A PARADOXICAL FIGURE. He returned to Dublin in 1899 after spending some years in South Africa and—almost at once—he became the voice of the growing movement against the Irish Parliamentary Party. He was a short, stocky man with a quiet manner and an aggressive chin. Never a Republican, he would have been satisfied with a state of dual monarchy such as obtained in Hungary and Austria where both countries shared the same king. He did not want any revolutionary social change but was quite content to see Irish industries develop on ordinary capitalist lines. He thought that Irish workers should be ready to make all kinds of sacrifices to ensure the prosperity of Irish industry. That this might mean increasing prosperity for the owners while the workers remained poor did not strike him as important. Even while Ireland was under British rule he was ready to criticise Irish workers who went on strike to obtain better conditions. Though he disliked militant Labour organisation intensely, he could unite with Connolly on National issues. While Connolly was easily kindled by a struggle against social injustice anywhere, Griffith had a cold fury directed only against British domination of Ireland. Both men were completely honest and not at all self-seeking. They represented in clear-cut fashion two contrasting outlooks. Yet the situation was such that it was possible for them to join forces on occasion. Griffith was able to gather round him many writers, poets, economists and others who were with him in demanding Irish independence though many of them were increasingly critical of his anti-Labour views which became more bitter as time went on.

An outstanding contemporary during Connolly's early years in Dublin was Maud Gonne who had endeared herself to the people by her work for evicted tenants in the Land League days, and for the 'Treason-felony prisoners—men who had been so long confined in the English gaols that they

*Maud Gonne MacBride, associated
with Connolly's early Dublin
activities.*



*Nora Connolly, eldest daughter of
James Connolly.*

were almost forgotten. She turned from Vice-Regal functions, from ballrooms and social festivities to serve the people. She spent wild, stormy nights on the hillsides, encouraging bewildered small farmers and their families faced with eviction and persecution. She visited Dartmoor and Portland in an attempt to bring news of Irish prisoners to the world and to get news of the world to the isolated prisoners. Her beauty, which inspired Yeats to write his play *Cathleen ni Houlihan* and some of his loveliest poems, helped to give her activities more prominence until she became a legendary figure in the Irish movement.

Maud Gonne, elegant, high-spirited, courageous—and impish—took a leading part in the '98 Centenary celebrations throughout the country. Her tall queenly figure helped to make a pageant of these gatherings, especially as she was usually accompanied by the distinguished-looking poet, W. B. Yeats, who—under the influence of Maud Gonne and of the picturesque old Fenian John O'Leary—allowed himself to be pressed into service at these meetings, though he was never at home in excited crowds. Yeats, the willowy poet with a stray lock of dark hair over one eye, was dragged by Maud Gonne into all kinds of turmoils and tumults for which he was temperamentally unsuited. Yet, even in his old age he gloried in belonging to the "indomitable Irishry."

When Maud Gonne was asked by Connolly to speak at his meeting in Foster Place to protest against Queen Victoria's visit, she accepted with delight, though many counselled her to have nothing to do with this wild revolutionary. Her own special effort in connection with that visit was to organise a great picnic and treat for hundreds of Dublin children in the Phoenix Park designed as a counterblast to the official celebrations associated with the visit.

The day of the Royal visit Maud Gonne scandalised her Imperial-minded neighbours in a suburban residential area by flaunting a black flag on a pole from an upper bedroom window. It was an impromptu flag—instigated by the appearance of so many Union Jacks — for it consisted of a black petticoat. It aroused such feeling that soon an

Irish police sergeant arrived to request her to be so good as to remove the flag.

This she refused to do and the sergeant retired for further instructions to the police barracks. Excitement increased and crowds began to gather. The sergeant came back again with a squad of men. He parleyed with her in the front garden.

"We don't want any trouble," he told her, "and if you will only be sensible and take the flag away, nobody will be hurt and no damage done."

Maud Gonne insisted that she was as anxious to avoid trouble as himself and that if her flag was unmolested, like the Union Jacks around, there would be no trouble at all.

"I have orders to remove the flag," said the worried sergeant. "But I don't want to use force."

The police retired for further consultation and the crowds grew bigger. Nothing happened and Maud Gonne went inside.

Suddenly a woman shouted excitedly,—

"Madame! Madame! They are taking your flag!"

Maud Gonne rushed out again to see a policeman climbing up the side of the house—with the assistance of the drain-pipe—on the way to the window. As she watched he reached the roof and started across it. Suddenly he lost his foothold, staggered, slipped and fell. He broke a leg. An ambulance was sent for and he was taken off to hospital.

All the time the black flag waved and, towards evening, a band of Republican stalwarts marched up, prepared to defend the flag. Rumours of the struggle had spread through the city. This incident illustrates the agitation and turmoil which was always close to the surface in those days. Connolly's activities must be seen against this background.

After one of their meetings Maud Gonne visited Connolly's home to tell his wife that he had been arrested. But she assured Mrs. Connolly that he would be home in the morning as his fine would be paid.

Maud Gonne was one of the earliest links between Connolly and the Irish Republican Brotherhood with whose

activities in Ireland—through the Ninety-Eight Clubs—she had become associated. Part of the time she lived in Paris where she served the Irish cause by running *L'Irlande Libre* which drew attention on the Continent to Irish prisoners, and to the claim for Irish independence. As early as 1897, Connolly, writing in this journal, speaks of the possibility of appealing to “the arbitrament of the sword.”

By 1900 Connolly had so far established his party in Ireland that he was able to go to the Paris International Socialist Congress as its representative. Here he received credentials for the I.S.R.P. as a separate national unit. Usually, on the Continent, Irish delegates were included in the British delegation at any function they attended. So this recognition of Ireland as a separate nationality by the international workers' movement was hailed as an endorsement of Ireland's national claims.

At this Congress, Connolly met the leaders of International Socialism—Karl Kautsky, August Bebel, Jules Guesde, Jean Jaures and others. Already he knew the British representatives, H. M. Hyndman and Keir Hardie. There were stormy scenes at the Congress because the French party was fiercely divided over the question of entering a Capitalist Ministry. Reformists and revolutionaries struggled over this issue till finally Karl Kautsky—leading Marxian theorist on the Continent—drafted an omnibus resolution in an endeavour to restore unity. Connolly consistently supported the revolutionary section in the international controversy.

Conscription was always discussed and denounced at the International Congresses, for young workers on the Continent were dragged from their homes, segregated in barracks and used either for Imperialist schemes of profit and conquest or else to put down discontent at home. The Social Democrats in countries where conscription was imposed, favoured the substitution of a Citizen Army in place of a standing force—the chief difference being that the citizen soldiers would live at home instead of in barracks and would receive training each year for a period similar to that of volunteers or territorial forces.

This Citizen Army is of special interest because of Connolly's own use of a voluntary Labour force in Ireland in later years. In 1900, however, English-speaking delegates did not take much interest in these proposals because conscription had not yet been introduced into Britain. Keir Hardie and the Independent Labour Party for whom he spoke, favoured a General Strike against war, carried out on an international scale whenever war threatened. Connolly, too, was in favour of direct action by Labour to preserve international solidarity and to prevent Imperialist war. It must be emphasised here, however, that Connolly never accepted the pacifist view which the I.L.P. advanced at that time. He had no objection to fighting so long as the working class interests needed defence. But he wanted the people of all countries to act resolutely against Imperialism and militarists.

The German Social Democrats—led by August Bebel—proclaimed their love of Fatherland, although for many years in Germany it was a Socialist practice not to vote credits in the Reichstag. A minority—afterwards led by Dr. Karl Liebknecht — favoured definite action against militarism at home. In France, Jean Jaures opposed militarism—his opposition in 1914 was to cost him his life—but he affirmed his patriotism. As against this, Gustave Hervé declared that propertyless and oppressed workers had no business with patriotism, for the country did not belong to them. Hervé served several sentences in France for his fierce flamboyant anti-militarist speeches. But suddenly he developed a rabid Jingoism which he propagated for many years, altering the name of his journal from *La Guerre Sociale* to *La Guerre* to fit in with his changed outlook.

Connolly was familiar with the trend of Socialist thought and must have heard tactics and policies hotly discussed in Paris and in Socialist circles elsewhere. He was anti-militarist but not pacifist, and the controversy at this stage had no immediate interest for him. Believing in the independent status of Ireland as a nation, he could never have accepted any armed defence force organised by Britain, on any basis, as worthy of support by Irishmen.

Connolly continued his historical studies and his agitational work. Sean O'Casey in his autobiographical volume *Drums Under The Windows* gives an impression of one of Connolly's open-air meetings held in Foster Place at which Arthur Griffith—stocky and grim-jawed—was an interested if unsympathetic onlooker. At this time Connolly was harassed by many anxieties. He had a large family and a small irregular income. To help pay his way—as well as to spread his ideas—he visited England and Scotland on lecture tours during the summers of 1901 and 1902. By now he had achieved a reputation as a Socialist lecturer, especially in Scotland where his earlier work was remembered and where he had many friends.

At the beginning of the century there was a movement among the Scottish branches of the Social Democratic Federation for a more revolutionary and uncompromising policy. Under the influence of Daniel De Leon, the brilliant but doctrinaire leader of the American Socialist Labour Party, who was also the editor of *The Weekly People*—the party organ—these branches decided to secede from the parent body and to form a Socialist Labour Party in Britain, closely linked with the American S.L.P.

When the new party was formed, Connolly was chosen to preside at the inaugural conference, a fact which not only indicates the respect which he commanded among his colleagues but also gives a clear idea of where he stood. The Scottish S.L.P. was one of the most active groups concerned with Socialist propaganda during the first twenty years of the present century. In the columns of *The Socialist*—its monthly organ—to which Connolly contributed articles and verses, there was a fierce spirit of social discontent. Connolly's *The Legacy*—dedicated to his son—was typical of this:—

'Thy father is a poor man', mark well what that may
mean,
On the tablets of thy memory that truth write bright and
clean,
Thy father's lot it was to toil from earliest boyhood on,
And know his latent energies for a master's profit drawn.
Or else, ill-starred, to wander round and huckster-like to
vend

His precious store of brain and brawn to all whom fate
 may send
 Across his path with gold enough to purchase Labour's
 power,
 To turn it into gold again, and fructify the hour
 With sweat and blood of toiling slaves like unto us my
 son;
 Aye, through our veins since earliest days, 'tis poor
 man's blood has run. . . .

It is easy enough to find fault with this as verse. But when one comes to consider the truth of his indictment, based on bitter experience, it is another matter. De Leon and his Scottish followers spread Marxist ideas by means of pamphlets, books and meetings. Later the Scottish S.L.P. brought the teachings of Industrial Unionism into Britain from America just as Connolly was to take them to Ireland in his constructive work for the One Big Union there. His *Socialism Made Easy* — a pamphlet published by the Socialist Labour Party—discusses the relation of Socialism to Nationalism as well as the case for Industrial Unionism. Its importance merits fuller treatment later. What emerges at once is that while Connolly was busy building up the I.S.R.P. in Ireland, he also found time—as an Internationalist—to help launch a vigorous Socialist movement in Scotland.

His work both in Ireland and Britain was curtailed in 1902 by his first American lecture tour. He spent four months in America in that year on a tour arranged by the American S.L.P. He was anxious to raise sufficient money and get sufficient support in America to enable *The Workers' Republic* to appear regularly.

Connolly very nearly succeeded in this aim. He secured money and subscriptions for the paper and arrived home confident that it would go on. But the group decided that the money he collected should be spent on other things. He pleaded and stormed but to no purpose. In desperation he resigned and, knowing that the paper was doomed, went home and told his wife that after all his efforts he would not be able to stay in Ireland. They held another family council, similar to the one in Edinburgh when he decided to abandon the prospect of farming in Chili. Only this time he had to

leave Dublin for New York. Both Connolly and his wife realised how desperate their situation was. There was no hope of a living for the family in Dublin. He had been struggling along since 1896 fighting the battle of the poor and now, in September, 1903—after years of unselfish effort—he had to leave Ireland once more. They talked of his going first and leaving his wife and children—five girls and the youngest, a boy—until he could send for them.

"If we go," said his wife, with unusual bitterness, "we will never come back. We won't give them a chance to break your heart again!"

"Ah," said Connolly, searching for the comforting phrase, "all that is in the heart of the future!"

Just then the future looked bleak and uncertain as James Connolly and his wife surveyed it from that gloomy Dublin tenement setting in the autumn of 1903. He had fought a bitter and courageous battle to keep his foothold on Irish soil. He had never weakened in his beliefs or wavered in proclaiming them. His service to the poor had not endeared him to the wealthy. Influence and friends who might have helped him to stay in Dublin were lacking. Just as he had had to leave Edinburgh, driven out by hunger, so now—when he thought his American tour would give him a more stable position in Dublin—he found that this was not to be. Connolly and his gentle wife had a great love for Ireland and they needed all their resolution.

6. Connolly in America

CONNOLLY'S DEPARTURE for America did not arouse any great excitement in Ireland. His friends in the I.S.R.P. held a farewell banquet on the eve of his sailing. But—when that was over—he just dropped out of the life of the city like any other poor man compelled to seek his living abroad. His reflections must have been bitter as the ship bore him away. He and his family starved and suffered in Dublin though he had worked at every kind of occupation. He had handicapped himself by becoming a Socialist and Republican pioneer.

They had lived in a characteristic Dublin tenement—one of those bare, gaunt, overcrowded ruins of eighteenth century splendour. The great front doors hung open on broken hinges, the glass in the graceful fanlights was smashed, the wide rotting staircases led to interiors damp and discoloured. All the grand, noble lines of the original buildings were overlaid by crumbling decay. Thousands of families in the city lived under these conditions which he was leaving behind. If he had been given the chance to maintain his family in reasonable comfort, free from actual hunger, he would never have wanted to leave Dublin. Too much of his life and thought had been spent in the service of these people for him to give it up without a wrench.

Although he had taken a leading part in huge demonstrations in the city yet, temperamentally, Connolly was not a demonstrative man. He had learned to restrain his emotions. But it was only the most superficial observer who would conclude from his quiet manner that Connolly was lacking in feeling. His emotions were not on the surface. For that very reason they had a greater depth and a stronger influence on his fellows when he was roused. It has been said that the track across the Atlantic to New York was marked by the white bones of famine victims driven out of Ireland to die miserably on the ships where

they were packed together for the sake of the passage money that could be squeezed out of them. Connolly knew the history of Ireland's poor and was conscious of their wrongs. The ship bearing Connolly to America approached the Statue of Liberty looking out impassively across the ocean. Yet if ever that stony face could light up with enthusiasm it should have been when James Connolly—self-dedicated to the service of human liberty—passed by on his way to another venue of battle.

During his earlier lecture tour Connolly had gained friends in America. He had won the respect of leaders and the approval of the rank and file whom he had reached. Very soon he was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Socialist Labour Party in the United States. He resumed his activities as a revolutionary leader and teacher. His message was the same as he had given in the streets of Dublin, in Glasgow and Edinburgh, in a score of English cities. The people themselves, he maintained, must achieve their own liberty, breaking chains that hold them in economic or national servitude.

W. P. Ryan, in his book *The Irish Labour Movement* remarks that:—

... in a sense there is no evolution in Connolly's teaching: his voluminous writings, in book and pamphlet and journal, as well as his speeches, all turn on some phase or bearing of the central facts that he had realised at the outset. They are emphasis, illustration, elucidation, not further discoveries. All was explicit or implicit in the programme and teaching of 1896 when he founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party."

Connolly's life-work does make a singularly consistent and harmonious whole though this has not prevented muddle-headed charges of inconsistency. When a man tests his view of life by his own harsh experience of reality he has a fairly reliable compass and one that enables him to steer a straight course whatever tangled circumstances he may have to contend with.

It was always his pride that he stood for the poor, for the mass of ordinary people. Once when he was lecturing in America, a reporter came to the hall in search of a bright news story. He had listened to talk from Irish emigrants about their grandeur in the old country, their

descent from ancient kings and chiefs. So he sharpened his pencil and turned to Connolly hopefully.

"Tell me," he said, "Where did your ancestors come from? Had they estates or castles in Ireland?"

Connolly chuckled.

"I have no ancestors," he said. "My people were poor and obscure like the workers I am speaking to now!"

He laughed at the attempt to give him a romantic, aristocratic background. There were plenty of Irish-American politicians ready to claim descent from ancient Irish kings if this meant more votes and influence. Connolly scandalised the Irish-American bosses of the day by declaring that they were the descendants of the serpents that St. Patrick had banished from Ireland. Such remarks were not calculated to win rewards and favours.

As soon as he was able Connolly sent the passage money for his wife and children. To scrape up the money meant hard work and much economy. As in Ireland he worked at many occupations—linotype operator, machinist, insurance agent. But he never forgot to devote his energies in speech and writing to the advancement of his Socialist ideals. Not only did Connolly wire the passage money to his family in Ireland, but he made a home for them in Troy, a house which the neighbours and friends made ready and decked with flowers for their arrival. Yet this pleasant home-coming was marred by tragedy.

In Dublin their last few days were filled with hurry and confusion. Mrs. Connolly had to pack their belongings, to get the children ready, to attend to many small details. The children were too young to be of much help. One of these—Mona—was sent to her aunt's house while the aunt and her mother finished packing. Mona wanted to be helpful so, while she was waiting for her aunt's return, she filled a big black kettle and put it on the fire, to be ready for tea.

When it boiled Mona tried to lift the kettle off and the handle was so hot that she took the corner of her pinafore to it. As she held it—pre-occupied with the big kettle—the other corner of her pinafore caught fire. In a moment her clothes were blazing. She ran screaming into the garden. A neighbour dashed out and flung a blanket round

the child, rushing her off to hospital. But it was too late to save her life and she died from the effect of the burns.

This tragedy cast a gloom over the joyful reunion. It delayed their departure and Connolly was worried at their non-arrival. He did not know the truth until he met them at Ellis Island where he went to claim his family. In those days the poorer emigrants who arrived from Europe were subjected to a tiring and rigorous examination and were then put in great cages in Ellis Island to await the coming of whoever would be responsible for them in America. The Connolly family occupied one of these cages. There was some delay when Connolly asked for his wife and six children. The officials could not understand why there should be only five. But Connolly was brought along to the cage and everything was explained.

They had a further journey before they reached Troy where Connolly had settled down. Here they entered their new home. Connolly was proud of it and the comments of the family throw light upon the housing conditions they had left in Dublin. They were delighted with the carpet, with the furniture, with the rooms and with the garden. Nora Connolly—his daughter—records their amazed wonder at these simple amenities, just as later, she records their dismay at seeing the grimy horror of the tenements again when they returned to Dublin.

James Connolly was working as an insurance agent in the town. But most of the townspeople lived by making collars. Some of the work was done in factories but the finishing touches were added at home. The wooden horse of Troy recalls a battle in ancient Greece. Helen of Troy persists as a symbol of beauty. Yet in the American town of Troy the only significant fact appears to have been those bundles of white collars. If anything happened to them, the whole town was undone. Every evening boys and girls could be seen trundling truck loads of collars to and from factories and homes. The town lived on collars and when there was a collar slump the town went limp. A slump came along, for these slumps are an old American custom bound up with private enterprise and free competition. Connolly knew this would happen before it did. When this

slump struck the town the Connolly family found that no one could afford to pay for insurance. So there was no place for an insurance agent. They had to leave and Troy was a dream that vanished like the ancient glory of Greece.

Owing to the slump and a strike in the collar factories, the family moved on to Newark. They had stayed in Troy long enough to become acclimatised to America. The girls had become part of the community, moving up from class to class. But life had been comparatively uneventful. Now Connolly obtained work in Singer's factory but he gave much time to his Socialist activities, travelling about and addressing meetings organised by the Socialist Labour Party.

This organisation was mainly composed of emigrés from Europe who kept aloof from the struggles of the American workers and so developed a highly-theoretical, sectarian outlook. Daniel De Leon took himself with great solemnity as the leading theoretician of the party and he used *The Weekly People* as the vehicle for imposing his dogmatic interpretation of Marxist teaching, the importance of which he exaggerated because he had nothing to do with the real developments of American life and industry. Connolly had a keen interest in Socialist theory and was an omnivorous reader. Yet his deeper experience of everyday life gave him a more practical outlook than De Leon.

Theory divorced from experience is never a sound guide. De Leon, in spite of his undoubted brilliance, was condemned to futility. The S.L.P. in America dwindled because it engaged too much in Rabbinical disputation over revolutionary texts instead of turning to the pressing tasks confronting the people they set out to serve.

With Connolly's more practical outlook it was inevitable that he would clash with De Leon. Connolly's attitude to books and theories was that of a workman interested in the best tools for his job or an engineer who studies a blue-print in the workshop for guidance as he proceeds with his work. De Leon was a detached man of the study, interested in theory for its own sake. If he could score a dialectical point or browbeat an opponent in the columns of *The Weekly People* he was satisfied. As the spokesman of an

unorthodox minority standpoint he became more imperious and bitter with the years.

The break came on the question of religion. Connolly was a Catholic and had to fight on two fronts. He had to defend his social views against clerical opposition and criticism and also to meet the materialist arguments of De Leon and his school. He did this in an article on *Wages, Marriage and the Church* which the *Weekly People* published. His general thesis—worked out more thoroughly in his *Labour, Nationality and Religion* published later in Dublin—was that Socialist theory properly takes no account of a man's religious beliefs, that it is purely a matter of which social and economic order best serves the interests of the mass of the people.

De Leon argued fiercely for a materialistic interpretation which excluded religious belief and it was this theoretical foundation which formed the basis for the criticism of Socialism by Fr. Kane S.J. in his Lenten Lectures delivered in Dublin in 1910. Connolly's reply to Fr. Kane is a reasoned statement of his own view in both controversies. As this will be considered in detail later there is no need to go into it fully here. Connolly argues that every political thinker sets out to discover the economic principles which underlie the activities of the material order and that there is no more reason for declaring Socialism anti-religious than for calling arithmetic irreligious. He wanted all workers to come together, whatever views they held on religion, and agree as to the best economic policy.

De Leon would have none of this. He even went to the length of denouncing Connolly as "an agent of the Jesuits" thus giving a more comic turn to the controversy than De Leon could ever realise.

When August Bebel wrote his book *Woman Under Socialism*—a study of the influence of the social order upon sex relations—this was widely discussed in Socialist circles. Connolly affirmed his belief in monogamy and protested against Socialism being associated with any propaganda against monogamous marriage. "I believe," he declared, "that no matter what may have been the force that gave birth to the institution, its permanency will and

must be tested not by its origin, but by its adaptability to the economic institutions of the future." Socialist opinion has supported Connolly's view since his death and very few Socialists would not agree that the highest relationship of men and women in marriage is that of monogamy.

Although Connolly used Bebel's book as the text for his affirmation, he was far from endorsing the abuse that was showered on Bebel's work. In *Labour, Nationality and Religion* he defends Bebel as an honest social thinker who maintained that the test of a civilisation was the place occupied by women. Connolly urges that immorality can be traced very largely to bad social conditions and that by providing a remedy for these conditions Socialism would improve both individual and social morality.

The controversy which raged round these points in the *Weekly People* was abstract and theoretical. Instead of accepting Connolly's exposition of his views as a matter of legitimate discussion among Socialists, De Leon closed the columns of his paper to Connolly while denouncing him to the branches as an enemy. Undaunted by this, Connolly sent out copies of his replies to the local branches. His daughter Nora talks of spending evenings drifting out as many as thirty copies of his statements for distribution in this way. But though he fought on, Connolly became increasingly dissatisfied with the narrow, doctrinaire spirit of the S.L.P. which De Leon personified.

In April, 1908, Connolly decided to leave the S.L.P. with which he had been associated since he entered the States in 1903. He joined the Socialist Party of America and became National Organiser for this body from May, 1909, to June, 1910, travelling over the country, lecturing and agitating on its behalf. The Socialist Party made a wider and more human appeal than the S.L.P. Eugene Debs—its best-known leader—embodied its spirit, and its appeal was to the best impulses of humanity.

Little importance can be attached to the controversy with De Leon except as indicating that immature phase of the American Socialist movement when excessive theorising took the place of practical work. Connolly had grown beyond this and when he stepped forward into the Socialist

Party of America it was a sign that his period of conning over Socialist theory had come to an end. He was no longer content to lecture a small group of the faithful. Having learned his Socialist principles he now wanted to apply them to life, not to stand apart in conscious rectitude.

During his S.L.P. period—in 1907—Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Federation in New York. The next year he started its tiny official paper *The Harp* published monthly. Irish workers in the States at that time were often called “harps” in a spirit of good humoured, slangy derision. Connolly took up the word and used it as the title of his journal to give it a new dignity, a dignity which he felt belonged to the Irish race. He began, as well, to work out that synthesis between the Irish national movement and the aims of international labour, which it was his special task to explain and inculcate. As a keen Irish nationalist and an internationalist, he wanted all Irish workers in America to accept these views.

It would have been easy for Connolly to expound a vague cosmopolitanism and to forget all about the Irish struggle when he was in America. But his intellect and his honesty—his sense of fitness—would not let him take this easy course, “Continue to be Irish,” he told his fellow emigrants. “Don’t mind if they call you ‘harps.’ Never forget the economic and social wrongs which forced you to leave your own country. Never lose a chance of striking a blow at your enemies back at home. But do not forget either—he told them—that you are part of the great international army of Labour and that you cannot really free Ireland unless Labour advances, both in Ireland and outside.”

In the first number of *The Harp* he affirmed his faith:—

We propose to show all the workers of our fighting race that Socialism will make them better fighters without being less Irish; we propose to advise the Irish who are Socialists now to organise their forces as Irish and get again in touch with the organised bodies of literary, educational, and revolutionary Irish; we propose to make a campaign among our countrymen and to rely for our method mainly on imparting to them a correct interpretation of the facts of Irish history, past and present; we propose to take the control of the Irish

vote out of the hands of the slimy *seonini* who use it to boost their political and business interests to the undoing of the Irish as well as the American toiler.

He had begun his greatest task—the survey of Irish history from the Labour standpoint—before he left Ireland. In *The Harp* he resumed this and proceeded with the publication of further chapters of *Labour in Irish History*. The idea of such a study he had carried about with him for years, working at it with relentless tenacity. He did not find it easy to express his thoughts, for his literary training was picked up in the intervals of earning a living. But gradually he bent and shaped the words until that tough and intractable reality which he grasped took on a literary form. Much of his time and energy were spent in propaganda, speaking or scribbling hurried articles. His hands were the hands of a manual worker, grasping a pen clumsily, and he had little leisure to cultivate grace or style. The audiences he spoke to demanded propaganda with the florid flourishes inseparable from popular political oratory. But because he was a student and a thinker, he gave his readers social analysis, history and concise judgment. Every now and then a burning phrase burst white-hot out of his reading, his constant thought, his love for Ireland and for his fellow workers. At such moments Connolly achieved the finest of all styles, the words which formed the natural vehicle for the thought he wanted to convey.

America is a vast continent and a nation of tremendous power but it could not assimilate Connolly's Irish brain and heart. In New York he was still the Irish thinker, dreaming and planning for the future of his own land, calling upon other Irishmen to retain their national sympathies as part of their service to the world movement for human liberty.

Connolly, out of his indignation at the plight of the poor, poured scorn upon those who talked about their love of Ireland and were indifferent to the wrongs of Irish men and women. In *The New Evangel* he wrote :

Ireland as distinct from her people is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for "Ireland" and can yet pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation wrought upon the people of Ireland — ayé,

*Countess Markievicz, Second-in-
Command, Stephen's Green
Garrison, 1916.*



*Michael Mallin, Connolly's Chief of
Staff, commanded at Stephen's Green
during Rising. Executed.*

wrought by Irishmen upon Irish men and women, without burning to end it, is, in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call "Ireland."

Incidentally this indictment of the fulsome 'patriot' is equally true of other countries and so bears witness to Connolly's international faith. Ireland as distinct from her people was nothing to him. He could not conceive of the land apart from the people. Yet there was something about Ireland—and the Irish people—that made a special claim on his affections.

The Irish Socialist Federation issued a comprehensive declaration of principles which explained that it was composed,—

of members of the Irish race organised to assist the revolutionary working-class movement in Ireland by a dissemination of its literature; to educate the working class of this country (America) into a knowledge of Socialist principles and to prepare them to co-operate with the workers of all other races, colours and nationalities in the emancipation of Labour. It affirms its belief that political and social freedom are not two separate and unrelated ideas, but are the two sides of the one great principle, each being incomplete without the other.

The course of society, politically, has been from warring but democratic tribes, within each nation, to a united government under an absolute monarchy. Within this monarchy, again, developed revolts against its power, revolts at first seeking to limit its prerogatives only, then demanding the inclusion of certain classes in the governing power, then demanding the right of the subject to criticise and control the power of the monarch, and finally, in the most advanced countries, this movement has culminated in the total abolition of the monarchical institution and the transformation of the subject into the citizen.

In industry a corresponding development has taken place . . . In industrial history the culminating point to which all efforts must at last converge lies in the abolition of the capitalist class and not in the mere restrictions of its power . . . the Irish Socialist Federation recognises these two phases of human development, pledges its members to fealty to the principles resultant therefrom, politically rejecting the domination of nation over nation, as of man over man, it, in the field of Irish politics, is organised against every party recognising British rule in Ireland in any form or manner, in all its moods and modifications, and, as the final solution of the

Irish, as of every other struggle for freedom, it seeks the Workers' Republic: the administration of all the land and all the instruments of Labour as social property in which all shall be co-heirs and owners.

Here is Connolly's characteristic plan of demanding national freedom for Ireland as a basis of co-operation with workers elsewhere so as to build a commonwealth of free nations in which the working people shall rule their own destinies. This simple comprehensive idea was one which Connolly hammered at unceasingly for he believed it was fundamental to the progress of Ireland and the world.

When Connolly founded the Irish Socialist Federation in New York this action left no doubt as to his position as an Irish nationalist. Soon he was to prove with equal certainty that he was also an internationalist. As far back as 1905 at a big Convention held in Chicago, a remarkable organisation known as the Industrial Workers of the World (I.W.W.) was launched. The I.W.W. sought to unite the industrial workers in every land—though primarily in America—not only to fight for their immediate interests but also to take control of industry. At its inception the I.W.W. adopted a *Preamble*, the final clause of which read as follows :—

It is the historic mission of the working class to do away with capitalism. The army of production must be organised, not only for the everyday struggle with capitalists, but also to carry on production when capitalism shall have been overthrown. By organising industrially we are forming the structure of the new society within the shell of the old.

One of the foremost leaders and agitators of the I.W.W. in America was "Big Bill" Haywood of the Western Federation of Miners. He was prominent in all the turmoils, strikes and disputes of the period. Big Bill Haywood came to Dublin during the great Labour struggle of 1913 and also visited London to speak for the Dublin strikers. He had a forceful personality and a way of compressing ideas into pungent phrases which he described as "Blanket Stiff" philosophy. A blanket stiff was a migratory worker and he secured the name from the custom of carrying a rolled-up blanket on his back when he hiked from one job to

another. It was men like Haywood who popularised such ideas as the "One Big Union" and "An Injury to One is the Concern of All" which were taken up in Dublin by the militant Irish Transport Union under the leadership of Jim Larkin and James Connolly.

Connolly became an organiser for the I.W.W. He travelled around, speaking to great crowds of immigrant workers of various nationalities. He picked up words and phrases of various languages and was able to talk to an excited throng of Italian workers in their own tongue. Soon the I.W.W. became the bug-bear of American capitalism. It spread like a crusade, bringing great strikes and free speech fights in which hundreds took part. A spirit of fanatical devotion and martyrdom was roused in its supporters but, by its enemies, it was fiercely denounced and savagely repressed. It gathered support from seasonal workers, lumber men, harvesters—all those without settled homes or ties of citizenship. For some years the I.W.W. gave a great sense of strength to such workers. The I.W.W. had its roll of martyrs and poets like Joe Hill, who wrote rugged chants of Labour similar in spirit to Connolly's own songs of discontent. The I.W.W. not only fought against American capitalism but was bitterly opposed to the conservative American Federation of Labour.

Connolly appealed to workers of all nationalities to join together in industrial solidarity. In aspiration, at least, the I.W.W. was an international union though outside the States its sections, which held charters from the parent body were not able to do much more than act as propagandists for its ideas. One of the earliest workers for the I.W.W. was Fr. Haggerty, a Catholic priest, who helped to draw up its scheme of organisation in which all the industries were supposed to fit. Fr. Haggerty wrote a brilliant pamphlet justifying the revolt of Labour which he entitled *Economic Discontent*. He incurred the wrath of Samuel Gompers, leader of the A.F. of L., who contemptuously dismissed the whole I.W.W. scheme as "Father Haggerty's Wheel of Fortune."

The I.W.W. has left its mark on the American trade union movement. Developments such as the C.I.O. of more

recent days owe a great deal to the I.W.W. pioneers. They helped to break down that exclusive spirit of the A.F. of L. Skilled American workers paid high initiation fees and regarded their union as a vested interest, keeping the poorer foreign immigrants out. The I.W.W. attacked all this and made it possible, later, to bore from within while they had to bombard from without. More to our present purpose, the I.W.W. left its mark on Connolly who imbibed its teachings of industrial unionism and expressed these in many writings and speeches.

In Ireland during these years there was much talk of industrial solidarity for Jim Larkin was busy welding the Irish industrial movement together by hammer blows in Belfast, Dublin and Cork. He did not bother about theory. He hadn't time. When he saw an evil he hit it and he encouraged the rank and file to do the same. So their organisation grew like a clenched fist.

Connolly was largely responsible for the theoretical side of this One Big Union development in Ireland for his pamphlets—written in America—are excellent summaries of industrial unionism, then in its pioneer stage. This is doubly important for it reveals Connolly's own development away from narrow sectarianism to a wider, practical industrial movement. In following this line Connolly lost none of the early militancy of his beliefs or of his conviction that side by side with the struggle for national freedom in Ireland there must also be an international struggle of the world's workers to achieve a larger freedom. The Irish Socialist Federation and the I.W.W. represented at this time his two lines of thought. He did not lose sight of any essential factor in the struggle but he was learning by experience and developing into a leader capable of exercising a decisive influence upon the events of his time.

7. Crucible

DURING THE SEVEN YEARS, from 1903 to 1910 that Connolly spent in America he had many and varied experiences. He worked in different towns at different jobs and travelled America as a Socialist propagandist. One tour included Mexico. Over several years he was bound to meet many of the personalities in the American Labour movement and to become familiar with currents of thought and feeling. Probably the biggest single contribution which the American years brought was to give him a complete grasp of the theory and practice of industrial unionism in its early militant phase.

In Connolly's mind there was always a strong streak of practicality which led him to be dissatisfied with the idea of merely theorising about wrongs, whether industrial or national. He usually concerned himself with the "next step." In this case it was with the forging of an industrial weapon. When Tom Mann began his propaganda for industrial unionism in Australia he adopted Connolly's writings as the best exposition of the One Big Union idea. He also circulated these writings in Britain.

Daniel De Leon had been associated with the I.W.W. in its early days. But this inveterate theorist drew back when he got closer to the actual Labour struggle. The S.L.P.—under his guidance—had advocated the building up of a Socialist trade union Movement and had started the Socialist Trades and Labour Alliance. This body had a high-sounding name but, in practice, it was quite futile for all it meant was that the small number of Socialists organised in the S.L.P. duplicated their membership in an industrial organisation sponsored by the political group. A Socialist branch composed of a handful of carpenters, engineers, teachers, clothing workers and unskilled labourers might do political work but the same people in a trade union had no power at all.

So, when the I.W.W. was formed, the S.L.P. seized the opportunity of merging their industrial organisation in the new body. But the De Leonites were uneasy. The I.W.W. made an appeal to men who had never had much opportunity to theorise, whose experience of life, as seasonal or migratory workers inclined them to violent measures. The men who held the little red card of the I.W.W. were often wandering hoboos working for a spell in the hop fields, at harvesting or as lumber-jacks, hiking their way along the roads or jumping rides on the railway. They developed a fierce loyalty, even a kind of religious devotion to their union, the only tie of a social character which many of them had. These I.W.W.'s or "Wobblies"—as they were called—were the fighting vanguard of unskilled labour in the States. Every newspaper and journal, representing privilege, attacked them. They were lampooned and ridiculed. Statesmen called them "undesirable citizens" when they were imprisoned or beaten up. Company guards—called "Pinkertons" after the detective agency which supplied them—fought fierce battles with I.W.W. zealots, bitter conflicts in which no quarter was given or asked.

Not until the period of the first World War did American reaction get the opportunity it wanted of crushing out this militant organisation. It was easy then because the I.W.W. declared against the war. This was a time when I.W.W. agitators could be tarred and feathered or lynched with impunity—in Ku Klux Klan fashion—or, if that method failed, they were given ferocious sentences of imprisonment for ten or twenty years on charges such as "criminal syndicalism" or sedition. At the time of the fiercest onslaught against the I.W.W., Connolly was back in Ireland. But it should be noted that Jim Larkin—Connolly's co-worker in the Irish Transport Workers' Union who went to America in 1914—received a long term sentence for "criminal syndicalism" which he served in Sing Sing. And the industrial battles of the Irish workers in the early years of the century were marked by the same bitterness as the I.W.W. fights in the States. Their slogans were the same—*One Big Union—An Injury to One is the Concern of All.*

The I.W.W. was specially noted for its agitational quality. Its propagandists descended on a town, such as St. Lawrence, proceeded to mobilise the discontented workers in the mills, declared an I.W.W. strike, enrolled the strikers in the union and—for the period of the strike—all the mill workers would hold the union card. After the strike these travelling missionaries of the I.W.W. moved on to fresh fields of discontent.

A fruitful source of I.W.W. activity was the "Free Speech Fight". A few I.W.W. men would be arrested—as happened in Spokane—and the word was passed through the country that a free speech campaign was on. From far and near hundreds of I.W.W. agitators would arrive with the sole aim of being arrested for street speaking. They called this "breaking into gaol." If by any chance they failed to be arrested they would have to move on for they had no way of living during the agitation other than being kept in gaol. Some of the smaller towns were scared of arresting I.W.W. men because of the swarm who were attracted and the expense of keeping hundreds of them if a free speech fight was declared. These were new tactics and Connolly, who was always a militant, noted these novel methods of struggle and the strong appeal to the dispossessed which the I.W.W. made.

A detailed history of the I.W.W. has been issued by Columbia University as a social study. The method adopted in this book was to allow the organisation to tell its own story by means of conference reports, leaflets, strike appeals, journals with such characteristic titles as *Solidarity*, *Direct Action*, etc. Journals were issued in several European languages to appeal to foreign immigrants.

An interesting account is given in this history of an annual conference where the I.W.W. attitude towards politics was discussed. For most of its members politics was a closed book. They never stayed long enough in one place to become voters or to regard themselves as citizens. To such men "direct action" on the industrial—or agricultural—field made the only appeal. The I.W.W. never gained a firm footing in the cities, but the army of

wanderers seeking seasonal jobs, drifting over the country, spread its message far and wide.

De Leon and other political manipulators at the conference decided that their best plan was to drag it out for as many days as possible, so that the hobo delegates, without any reserves, would be driven to leave. When they quit the conference for the roads, the politicians judged that their nominees—who could afford to stay longer—would adjust the constitution to their liking. This plan was well thought out. But it broke on the fanatical militancy of the rank and file. Hundreds of them rode “on the rail-rods.” Some met with accidents, others froze to death—for it was mid-winter—and a few starved. But those who attended and survived were numerous enough to inflict a crushing defeat on De Leon and the others who wanted to control them. The story is told under the heading, “Victory of the Revolutionary Rabble.” De Leon withdrew from the I.W.W. and confined his advice and criticism to the columns of the *Weekly People*.

A strong current of I.W.W. opinion favoured ignoring political action completely. Some stood for ideas of industrial decentralisation. For the most part the organisation was too pre-occupied with its industrial struggles to bother with schemes of a future industrial order though I.W.W. spokesmen and writers urged that when the workers were organised on their plan they should not come out on strike but march into the mills, mines and factories as masters.

All this I.W.W. ferment represented a phase of American Labour activities—not very advanced, for it had points of close comparison with Robert Owen’s “Grand National Consolidated Trade Union” at the beginning of nineteenth century trade union activities in Britain. But in theory at least the I.W.W. plan did recognise that the great trusts which operated modern mechanised plants employing thousands of workers could only be fought effectively by greater solidarity and by dropping all the petty sectionalism that kept workers apart.

Connolly, with his deep grasp of Socialist theory, would never give any endorsement to anti-political ideas. He

believed in labour capturing the machinery of the State. He had urged this in Britain and from Socialist platforms in America. In Ireland he had advocated just the same course. His case for establishing an independent Irish State was precisely that it gave Irish workers a chance to control the national destinies. Connolly realised as well, the importance of the workers organising industrially. He accepted the view that the time for reliance upon small, separate, exclusive trade unions was past. The future belonged to the industrial union corresponding to the large-scale capitalist industry which was developing so rapidly. The One Big Union with its bitter Labour conflicts was not only a product of American capitalism in Connolly's day. Later—in 1913—under the leadership of Larkin and Connolly, the same kind of situation arose in Dublin. And here it was possible for Big Bill Haywood, leader of the American I.W.W., to come and make typical I.W.W. speeches which applied equally in Dublin.

At first sight there seems to be little in common between the great masses of seasonal and migratory workers who moved across the States and poured into the I.W.W. and the Dublin unskilled workers of the tenements who became the backbone of the Irish 'Transport Workers' Union. But there was a similar pitiless pressure on the lives of both these groups, in America and in Ireland. All that the rank and file knew in each case was that they felt the full force of exploitation and injustice. Connolly was fitted to be the spokesman of discontent in America and in Ireland.

During his association with the I.W.W. Connolly was assimilating as much of its theory and activity as might be useful to him in organising the Irish workers at home. He found it easy to assimilate ideas and to apply these not rigidly but with whatever modifications were required when he came to deal with the Irish problems of sweating, slumdom and industrial servitude.

Among those who fight against social injustice are men of varying types with strongly-defined characteristics. Some cling to revolutionary dogmas which they have learnt in their youth and they can only continue to repeat these as

they grow older, irrespective of the conditions they have to face. Connolly's value to Ireland and especially to the Irish workers, is that he had a sufficiently wide experience to realise that while the struggle of Labour is international and demands international solidarity, there are differences in each country which give the struggle a special character suited to the history and tradition of the country, as well as the actual conditions.

Along with his propaganda for industrial unionism in America, Connolly combined an advocacy of political action and—through the Irish Socialist Federation and its organ *The Harp*—he inculcated the ideas of Irish national struggle too, combining these with the social struggle. This was not a novel departure, for *The Irish World*—long established as an organ of Irish intransigence in America—had added to its name and *Industrial Liberator*, following the Fenian tradition of friendly relations with revolutionary social movements abroad.

Connolly's writings expounding Industrial Unionism are scattered in various publications. The best known is his pamphlet *The Axe To The Root* issued by the Irish Transport Union. This comprises several essays including an opening chapter *Political Action of Labour* written, as the official introduction to the 1921 edition tells us, "for the guidance of the American working class." But in the S.L.P. foreword to an earlier pamphlet *Socialism Made Easy* published by the Socialist Labour Party in Glasgow, the claim is made that this particular section was written much earlier for the *Socialist*, the official organ of the Scottish S.L.P. What is substantially Connolly's final judgment on industrial unionism appeared in *Old Wine in New Bottles* published by the *New Age* (London, April 30, 1914). This essay is included in *The Axe to the Root* collection. Connolly also wrote on the subject in *The International Socialist Review* published in Chicago, by Charles H. Kerr. Consequently from 1908—or even earlier—Connolly's thought in relation to industrial unionism is fairly well documented.

In the opening pages of *Old Wine In New Bottles* he writes :—

In the year of grace 1905, a convention of American Labour bodies was held in Chicago for the purpose of promoting a new working-class organisation on more militant and scientific lines. The result of that convention was the establishment of the Industrial Workers of the World—the first Labour organisation to organise itself with the definite ideal of taking over and holding the economic machinery of society. The means proposed to that end—and it is necessary to remember that the form of organisation adopted was primarily intended to accomplish that end, and only in a second degree as a means of industrial warfare under capitalism—was the enrolment of the working class in Unions built upon the lines of the great industries. It was the idea of the promoters of the new organisation that craft interests and technical requirements should be met by the creation of branches, that all such branches should be represented in a common executive, that all, united, should be members of an industrial union, which should embrace all branches and be co-extensive with the industry, that all industrial unions should be linked as members of one great union, and that one membership card should cover the whole working-class organisation. Thus was to be built a working class administration which should be capable of the revolutionary act of taking over society, and whose organisers and officers should in the preliminary stages of organising and fighting, constantly remember, and remembering, teach, that no new order can replace the old until it is capable of performing the work of the old, and performing it more efficiently for human needs.

He proceeds :—

As one of the earliest organisers of that body I desire to emphasise also that as a means of creating in the working class the frame of mind necessary to the upbuilding of the new order within the old, we taught, and I have yet seen no reason to reconsider our attitude upon this matter, that the interests of one were the interests of all, and that no consideration of a contract with a section of the capitalist class absolved any section of us from the duty of taking instant action to protect other sections when said sections were in danger from the capitalist enemy. Our attitude always was that in the swiftness and unexpectedness of our action lay our chief hopes of temporary victory and, since permanent peace was an illusory hope until permanent victory was secured, temporary victories were all that need concern us.

If these quotations are read carefully it will be seen that Connolly is unrepentantly militant. He wants a big industrial army for fighting purposes. But a big army without fighting spirit he regards as a positive danger. He says :

I believe that the development of the fighting spirit is of more importance than the creation of the theoretically perfect organisation; that, indeed, the most theoretically perfect organisation may, because of its very perfection and vastness, be of the greatest possible danger to the revolutionary movement if it tends, or is used, to repress and curb the fighting spirit of comradeship in the rank and file.

Speaking of the wave of Labour militancy that swept Britain in 1911 Connolly expresses his admiration for this spirit. In Ireland, too, there had been industrial discontent, beginning with the turbulent strike movement of 1907 in Belfast, led by Jim Larkin, in which Protestant and Catholic workers joined forces and—perhaps even stranger—dock labourers and police found themselves on the same side, for the Belfast police staged their own strike movement, demanding the reinstatement of Constable Barrett who had been dismissed for refusing to ride with a blackleg carter. Larkin addressed them in the police yard and the uniformed men carried Barrett shoulder-high. The Irish Transport Workers' Union, which was formed on Jan 4, 1909, arose out of all this. Before this union was formed, Irish workers in Cork, Dublin, Derry and other centres were crying out for militant action.

Noting this Labour activity over some years Connolly regarded it as a good and healthy sign. He remarks in *Old Wine In New Bottles* :—

The sympathetic strike sprang into being; every group of workers stood by every allied group of workers; and a great wave of effective solidarity caught the workers in its grasp and beat and terrified the masters. Let me emphasise the point that the greatest weapon against capital was proven in those days to be the sporadic strike. It was its very sporadic nature, its swiftness and unexpectedness, that won. It was ambush, the surprise attack of our industrial army, before which the well-trained battalions of the capitalist crumpled up in panic, against which no precautions were available.

Here Connolly is urging industrial guerilla warfare on the part of Labour. Swiftmess, unexpectedness, surprise—these were also the qualities on which he relied when he began to prepare armed revolt. He sounds too, a curious note of warning against the danger of big Labour organisations being so controlled and drilled that a healthy militant spirit is crushed out. Writing of the position in Britain around 1914, he says:—

In the transport industry all unions are being linked up until the numbers now affiliated have become imposing enough to awe the casual reader and silence the cavilling objector at trade union meetings. But I humbly submit that, side by side with that enlargement and affiliation of organisations, there has proceeded a freezing up of the fraternal spirit of 1911; there is now despite the amalgamation, less solidarity in the ranks of Labour than was exhibited in that year of conflict and victory.

If I could venture an analysis of the reason for this falling-off in solidarity, I would have to point out that the amalgamations and federations are being carried out in the main by officials absolutely destitute of the revolutionary spirit, and that as a consequence the methods of what should be militant organisations having the broad working-class outlook are conceived and enforced in the temper and spirit of the sectionalism those organisations were meant to destroy.

Into the new bottles of industrial organisation is being poured the old, cold wine of Craft Unionism.

The much contemned small unions of the past had at least this to recommend them, *viz.*, that they were susceptible to pressure from the sudden fraternal impulses of their small membership. If their members worked side by side with scabs or received tainted goods from places where scabs were employed, the shame was all their own, and proved frequently too great to be borne. When it did so we had the sympathetic strike and the fraternisation of the working class. But when the workers handling tainted goods, or working vessels loaded by scabs, are members of a nationwide organisation, with branches in all great centres or ports, the sense of the personal responsibility is taken off the shoulders of each member and local officials, and the spirit of solidarity is destroyed.

Summarising his case:—

The amalgamations and federations that are being built up today are, without exception, being used in the old spirit of the worst type of sectionalism; each local union or branch finds in the greater organisation of which it is part, a shield

and excuse for refusing to respond to the call of brothers and sisters in distress, for the handling of tainted goods, for the working of scab boats. A main reason for this shameful distortion is to be found in the campaign against "sporadic strikes" . . . The big strike, the vast massed battalions of Labour against the massed battalions of capital on a field, every inch of which has been explored and mapped out beforehand, is seldom successful, for very obvious reasons. The sudden strike, and the sudden threat to strike suddenly, has won more for Labour than all the great Labour conflicts in history.

The whole passage is an earnest plea to preserve the right of groups of workers to spring to action immediately they feel there is a need. He concludes :—

If we develop on these lines, then the creation of a great Industrial Union . . . or the creation of those much more clumsy federations and amalgamations now being formed, will be of immense revolutionary value to the working class; if, on the contrary, we allow officialism of the old, narrow, sectional kind to infuse their spirit into the new organisations, and to strangle these with rules suited only to a somnolent working class, then the Greater Unionism will but serve to load us with great fetters. It will but be to real Industrial Unionism what the Servile State would be to our ideal Co-operative Commonwealth.

Not only does this reveal Connolly's ardent spirit but it indicates the lines of his industrial thought. He rejects size in favour of militancy where the two conflict. He foresees the danger of a big organisation functioning as a dead hand to repress rank and file struggles in bureaucratic fashion. It says much for Connolly's acute understanding of trade union development that he was able at this early stage of enthusiasm for mass organisation to point out the dangers of inertia and stagnation latent in the new model of the One Big Union. Connolly saw that the problem was to get a large, well-organised industrial movement which would preserve the initiative of enthusiasts that expresses itself best and most directly in small groups.

Though he saw the dangers of mass organisation if it came under reactionary direction, Connolly endorsed

industrial unionism as being the natural line of development in place of a multiplicity of smaller unions. He states his main thesis as follows :—

... the enrolment of the workers in unions patterned closely after the structure of modern industries, and following the organic lines of industrial development, is *par excellence*, the swiftest, safest, and most peaceful form of constructive work the Socialist can engage in. It prepares within the framework of capitalist society the working forms of the Socialist Republic, and thus, while increasing the resisting power of the worker against present encroachments of the capitalist class, it familiarises him with the idea that the union he is helping to build up is destined to supplant that class in the control of the industry in which he is employed.

Connolly's view of political action is stated in a section of *The Axe to the Root* where he writes :—

... the fight for the conquest of the political State is not the battle, it is only the echo of the battle. *The real battle is the battle being fought out every day for the power to control industry*, and the gauge of the progress of that battle is not to be found in the number of voters making a cross beneath the symbol of a political party, but in the number of these workers who enrol themselves in an industrial organisation with the definite purpose of making themselves masters of the industrial equipment of society in general.

... I believe it to be incumbent upon organised Labour to meet the capitalist class upon every field where the latter can operate to our disadvantage. Therefore, I favour direct attacks upon the control of the governmental powers through the ballot box, but I wish to see these attacks supported by the economic organisation.

Like most of the pioneers of the Labour movement, Connolly had a love for the resounding phrase. To him it was never a question of winning an election but always of achieving the conquest of political power. In those early years the Labour movement was so weak and victory seemed so far off, that it needed strong words and grandiloquent utterances for comfort and compensation. Maybe they lit up the imagination of their hearers and helped to get them on the march like an army with a big drum. Now that Labour is strong, its spokesmen can put its case in milder language for the power of the movement

commands attention. Incidentally Connolly revealed his progressive outlook when—long before women secured votes in Britain or in Ireland—he declared that

in our organisation we shall have Woman Suffrage whether governments like it or not.

In Irish history Connolly found many lessons to reinforce his advocacy of industrial unionism. He pointed to the degree of solidarity achieved in the Land League struggle.

During Land League days in Ireland, when a tenant was evicted from a farm, not only his fellow tenants, but practically the whole country, united to help him in his fight. When the evicted farm was rented by another tenant, a land-grabber or "scab", every person in the countryside shunned him as a leper and still better, fought him as a traitor. Nor did they make the mistake of fighting the traitor and yet working for his employer, the landlord. No, they included both in the one common hostility.

At the command of the Land League, every servant and labourer quit the service of the landlord, says Connolly, even though the landlords were prepared to pay them better than the tenant farmer. The labourers unselfishly supported the tenant farmers in their struggle. This relentless and implacable war upon the land-owning class gave a new word "boycott" to the English language, through its enforcement against the Irish landowner, Captain Boycott. The effectiveness of the weapon of solidarity was discovered.

Of the Land League struggle Connolly says :—

It put courage and hope and manhood into a class long reckoned as the most enslaved in Europe. It broke the back of the personal despotism of the Irish landlord, and so crippled his social and economic power that Irish landed estates, from being a favourite form of investment for the financial interests, sank to such a position that even the most reckless moneylender would for a time scarce accept a mortgage upon them.

That it failed of attaining real economic freedom for the Irish people was due not to any defect in its method of fighting, but rather to the fact that economic questions are not susceptible of being settled within the restricted radius of any one small nation, but are acted upon by influences world-wide in their character.

... The Irish tenant, uniting on the economic field, felt his strength, and, carrying the fight into politics, simply



James Connolly: The Forerunner

[Lafayette

swept into oblivion every individual or party that refused to serve his class interests; but the toilers remain divided on the economic field, and hence are divided and impotent upon the political—zealous servants of every interest but their own.

Here Connolly is concerned to show first, what the tenant farmer achieved, second, what he failed to achieve because Ireland can never be an isolated unit and third, what the labourers and wage-earners can learn from this lesson of solidarity. Everything leads back to his main argument. He wants to see industrial unionism organised not only to fight battles over wages, hours and conditions but with the larger aim of transforming society so that poverty, insecurity and industrial servitude will be things of an evil past. Part of this appeal of industrial unionism to Connolly may have been that it built on self-reliance and brought the gospel of "Sinn Fein" to the Labour movement.

During the early years of the century Arthur Griffith was teaching national self-reliance in Ireland and urging that, within the country, a strong organisation should be built up, capable of taking control of Ireland by gradually pushing out all the organs of external rule. This policy of extrusion made for national confidence. The I.W.W. advocated a similar policy for Labour. It called upon the workers to organise so that they might take control of industry. The ideal expression of this teaching was not that the workers should come out on strike but that those who ran the mills, mines and factories should stay in and take possession. Connolly knew Irish history and was familiar with Sinn Fein propaganda so he would be more responsive to these Labour "Sinn Fein" ideas.

Arthur Griffith's proposal in 1905 that a Council of Three Hundred should meet in Dublin and constitute itself the real Irish Parliament which local bodies should recognise was his way of advocating a national "stay in" strike. It emphasised Ireland's right to manage her own affairs even before she had the power to do it. When the actual struggle for independence came, Ireland needed a strong political movement as well as a movement of armed insurrection to carry this Sinn Fein policy to success.

While Connolly was ready to accept the I.W.W. idea of workers in industry taking control, it is clear from his writings that he always recognised the need for a political Labour body to lift the struggle on to a higher social plane. He was a social thinker and knew that social changes are necessarily political in character. For workers in any mill or factory to seize control in isolated fashion would have been as futile as for some local body in Ireland to announce its independence of the British administrative machine. A strong element in the I.W.W. was against all political activities and believed solely in what it called "direct action" but in Connolly's carefully reasoned writings he always stressed the political character of the workers' struggle.

From his knowledge of Irish history, Connolly had a good understanding of the role of physical force movements. He knew that to seize factories demanded either an insurrectionary force or else the use of Parliament to legalise national control of industry.

Throughout his American period we can see Connolly's growing maturity as a Labour thinker and as a practical organiser. In earlier years, his Irish Socialist Republican Party had no power to shape national policy or to affect the course of events though it was a contributory factor to the growth of Republican ideas. When he first came to America his paramount interest was in theory. Gradually he was drawn into a more practical movement. He reached that point—which all students of social thought reach sooner or later—of having to decide how he could best apply his theories to life. When that point is reached, the decision taken determines whether a man is content to repeat textbook phrases or whether he will take a more perilous and practical course of applying living principles to the controversies and events of his time. Connolly took the road to life.

Connolly's experience as a worker gave him a balance and judgment which more detached students often lack. He had a shrew practicality. Only a workman inured to everyday hardships imposed by a hostile social order could learn how to combine relentless adherence to his principles with

sufficient concession to existing conditions to enable him to survive. He had to strike the balance between what he wanted and what was possible. He steered a course between opportunism and futility. This is what every man who influences the life of his generation has to do.

In 1910 a group of his old friends in Dublin who knew his value invited him back to Ireland to engage in a lecture tour. When the call came he was a very different James Connolly from the young dogged theorist who had braved suffering and starvation for years rather than give up a fraction of his beliefs. He had just the same beliefs now but he was less of a rigid theorist and more of a practical organiser. This meant that he was more dangerous. He had gone away from Ireland as a propagandist: he was returning as a leader of men.

8. Return

WHEN CONNOLLY RECEIVED the invitation to return to Ireland to lecture for the Socialist Party of Ireland (*Cumannacht na h-Eireann*) he could hardly have foreseen that this would mean abandoning his American activities altogether. But his wife was not pleased. When they had lived in Edinburgh, years before, she had urged him to go to Dublin. Now she had a different feeling.

"I don't want you to go!" she said earnestly.

"Its only for a few months," he answered. "Things are beginning to stir again over there and I'd like to help. I'd like to see Dublin again," he added wistfully.

"Think of all the misery we had there. How can you want to go back?"

"I love Dublin. I'd rather be poor there than a millionaire here!"

It was his confession of faith and there was no arguing about it.

"I suppose you must go," she answered slowly. "But remember it's easier to go than to come back. When will you start?"

She was right. It was easier to go than to come back.

In *The Harp* Connolly had given the most complete expression of his national and international ideas. He combined Socialist teaching with a passion for Irish national independence and had urged Irish workers to join in the struggles of the world's workers but never to forget the struggle in their own land. With these views in his political maturity—after experiencing life in Ireland, Britain and America—it was not surprising that Connolly felt the urge to return to Ireland. He expressed that feeling in *The Call*

of *Erin* which he wrote before his return. One verse reads :—

Glorious is the land we're leaving
And its pride shall grow with years,
And the land which calls us homeward
Can but share with us her tears.
Yet our heart her call obeying
Heedless of the wealth men crave,
Turneth home to share her sorrow,
Where she weeps beside the wave.

She is calling, she is calling in the wind
And o'er the tide.
We, her children, hear her voices
Call us ever to her side.

This has that nostalgic longing which we find in many songs and writings of Irish exiles. Connolly had the same bitter experiences and had the same response to the traditional impulses. In this as in many other respects, Connolly was typical of his people.

In preparation for his return to Ireland *The Harp* which he had edited in New York since 1908 was transferred to Dublin in January, 1910. It was then issued from the *Irish Nation* office, under the editorship of Jim Larkin. The *Irish Nation* and *The Peasant* were journals established in Dublin by W. P. Ryan and these—together with their editor—played an important part in that re-awakening of social thought which helped to bring Connolly back. Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, Fred Ryan, Walter Carpenter, J. H. Cousins, Thomas Lyng and others were concerned in that movement. This group organised a series of Sunday evening lectures in the Antient Concert Rooms in Dublin. Jim Larkin was engaged in the task of organising the unskilled workers in the young and vigorous Irish Transport Union.

Before his arrival—in the first Irish number of *The Harp*—Connolly outlined his new approach to Irish political and industrial problems. He appealed to all men and women who cared for social righteousness. He did not ask for uniformity of belief about methods. He declared that he had come to believe that the theoretical clarity of a few Socialists was not as important as the aroused consciousness

of the mass of the workers. This was a sign of the direction in which Connolly's mind was now working.

He wanted to gather masses of workers together and with the help of all people of goodwill, to start a movement that would bring practical results. He had stepped out of the economic study class and was facing the problems of Irish life. Emphasising that he had not altered his own views since the days of 1896 and that the Irish struggle was, in his judgment, part of the world-wide struggle of the workers against oppression, he urged that a revolutionary reconstruction of society, carried out by the working class, was the only hope for Ireland and the world. But he was ready to co-operate with all who would help in the political and industrial organisation of Labour, even if their ultimate aim was not so ambitious or far-reaching as his own. He went on to advocate greater solidarity on industrial union lines so that the Irish workers, organised as a class, could dictate terms and become as powerful as the Land League in its day. In the April issue of *The Harp* Connolly praised the readiness of the Irish workers to act together, in spite of their lack of Socialist theory.

Larkin conducted the journal—pending Connolly's arrival—in so belligerent a fashion that the June number was threatened with five different libel actions. This was the situation which Connolly found when he reached Dublin in July, 1910. The June issue was the last to appear. So *The Harp* did not long survive transplantation to Ireland. But it went out fighting.

Apart from its characteristic Connolly combination of Irish national ideas and Socialist teaching, the chief contribution which this journal made was the publication of the concluding chapters of Connolly's greatest work *Labour in Irish History*. Earlier chapters had appeared in *The Workers' Republic* as far back as 1898. This book is, in itself, an outstanding example of Connolly's tenacity. Through all the years he never let go of the task till it was completed.

Towards the end of 1910 this was published in book form for the first time. His wife received the first copy sent from Ireland, inscribed to her by James Connolly on Nov 8, 1910.

The book is Connolly's most lasting theoretical achievement. To lay this foundation stone of the Irish Labour movement Connolly had worked for many years. In it he examines Irish history from the Labour standpoint, treating of the various factors, personalities and incidents as a record of social struggle. More than any other piece of his writing this reveals the strength and originality of Connolly's mind.

When he returned to Ireland he used his voice and energy on the platform. He became a familiar figure in Dublin, Belfast and Cork as a Socialist propagandist. His principal task was that of organiser for the Socialist Party of Ireland. But his energy overflowed into other channels. He joined the newly-formed Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. Larkin, the founder, was at this period in gaol on a framed-up charge so thin that, after widespread protests, he had to be released. With his belief in militant industrial unionism it was inevitable that Connolly should link himself with the turbulent Larkin movement which, starting from Belfast, spread to other Irish towns and soon reached Dublin. But he had yet to make a prominent place for himself in the new Ireland with its fierce industrial and national discontents. The first intimation his family received that Connolly was going to stay in Ireland was when a letter arrived from Dublin (dated Nov 13, 1910) in these terms :—

Dear Lillie,

This is the fatal letter. I want you to come back to Ireland. Now, after you have drawn your breath, let me tell you the particulars. My engagement is for two pounds a week and most of the money is already in hand. Also, I am sure that I have a more promising future in Ireland than in America, not so often and so long away from home as I would be if we stayed in the U.S. You are not coming back to the misery you left. Do not be afraid of that. By next post I will send you second-class tickets to Londonderry—three full tickets, four half tickets . . .

Not only does this letter indicate how slender were the financial resources upon which Connolly thought he could count but it reveals, incidentally, that he was a man who wished to spend his leisure with his wife and children at home and not at all the grim revolutionary of popular fancy. Financially the arrangement appealed to Connolly for it

represented a 100 p.c. rise on his salary in the old I.S.R.P. days. He had a pound a week then, paid irregularly.

A fortnight after receiving his letter the whole family—wife, five girls and a boy—started for Ireland. On the voyage back the ship stewards called them the “millionaire family.” They said they had often taken big families to America but had never brought one back before.

“They’d call you the madman’s family if they knew the truth!” said Connolly when he heard this.

Arriving in Dublin the family were given a warm welcome at a social held in the Antient Concert Rooms where Connolly had so often lectured in the past. He and Nora—his eldest daughter—worked hard for the Socialist Party nominee at the local election. The grimy Dublin tenements horrified her, for she had been too young to remember the terrible housing conditions which they had left. When she protested about the dirt and desolation, Connolly told her that was all the more reason to do her canvassing and help win the election—to change all this. He was always ready to draw the propaganda moral. Owing to Connolly’s efforts branches of the Irish Socialist Party were formed in various centres and he engaged in vigorous controversies with his critics.

In 1911 the Connolly family again migrated, this time to Belfast and, in July of that year, he was appointed Secretary and Ulster District Organiser of the Irish Transport Workers’ Union. Soon after this he acted as negotiator in the bitter industrial dispute at Wexford. Here two local ironworks locked out 550 employees because they dared to join the Irish Transport Union. There were turbulent scenes and police, to the number of 250, were drafted into the district. Baton charges took place in which one of the locked-out men was fatally injured.

P. T. Daly—the union organiser—was arrested on a charge of “inciting to riot.” He had made a protest in the Coroner’s court at the inquest on the dead man. The position seemed to be one of complete deadlock when Connolly arrived. Although the dispute had dragged on for months the employers still refused to recognise the men’s right to join a union. Connolly persuaded them to

recognise an Irish Foundry Workers' Union, affiliated to the Irish Transport Union, with the important proviso that all workers would be re-instated within a month. This was a complete victory for the men for, within two years, the local union became a branch of the Irish Transport Union. However, Connolly allowed the employers to save their faces and even described the result as a "drawn battle." But the men knew they were victorious and demonstrated with bands and blazing tar barrels.

In the Wexford dispute Connolly showed his powers as a negotiator in industrial conflicts. He was a man who inspired confidence in his own side and respect on the other. He was never much interested in appearances, but only in actual gains. At this early stage of Transport Union activities Connolly was a great asset to the union. He furnished them with a literature that applied industrial unionism to Irish conditions. He had a shrewd and practical mind combined with a thorough grasp of industrial organisation and Socialist political theory. While Jim Larkin was the flamboyant, picturesque agitator—a voice of discontent—Connolly bent his forceful mind to the task of creating a new industrial outlook that would express itself in bold and resolute action.

9. Belfast of The Ships

IN JULY, 1911, Connolly took up his duties as the Ulster Organiser of the Irish Transport Union in Belfast. In that same month he was also busy helping the men who had been locked out in a Dublin coal dispute. He spoke at a mass meeting of workers in Beresford Place, Dublin, and his speech, reported in the *Irish Worker* (July 22, 1911) drove home the need for One Big Union for all workers, north and south. He said :—

Now, we, today, in this great strike have all learned the lesson of acting together. Henceforward, when the sailors quit, it will be a sign for the dockers to quit too. And when the dockers quit working it will be a sign for the sailors to walk ashore also. We have seen at Liverpool, recently, how the men on the great liners, having got their increased wages and recognition of their union, walked ashore because the dockers would not get the same rights as they were looking for. If, therefore, it was good for Englishmen and Scotchmen to fight together, why should it not be good for Irishmen also! Were we going to be the scabs of the international battlefield at the present time?

Well, the I.T.W.U. is here now, and we say that the more Irishmen we are, the more it is our duty to act the part of men in this international struggle of the working class, and, by doing so, we are going to bring this fight to a successful issue . . . We are fighting primarily for the right to organise. After that we place our rights in regard to wages and hours and conditions of work. But we place this question of the right of organising first, and also that the union must be recognised. By proceeding on these lines we will build up our organisation and get higher wages and better conditions of employment in the future.

Here Connolly not only emphasises his international outlook but is equally definite in placing the workers' right to organise as being of first importance. This right—so far as Irish workers are concerned—has been subjected to limitations since his day. He proceeded :—

In building up the union we are raising Ireland up. By means of this organisation the people will be given a better

chance of living. They will be given better wages and better housing accommodation, instead of living in slums. In Belfast the workers are not as strong as they are in Dublin, because the old policy of dividing the workers is in progress in Belfast. In some places in the past it was union against union; but today in Belfast it is religion against religion. But we of the working classes are getting slowly and gradually into our heads that so long as the masters make no distinction as to who they will employ, be they Catholic or Protestant, but are quite ready to get a profit out of them, we will refuse to allow religion to divide us in our unions.

I don't care where a man worships, but I do care where he gets his pay on a Saturday night. I don't care where a man worships, but I do care that he has a man's rights allowed to him, and that he is a man standing along with his fellows in the common battle for the uplifting of the human race."

In his emphasis on the need for solidarity between workers of North and South, Connolly struck the same note as Larkin in 1907 during the Belfast strike. Larkin had come to Belfast as the organiser of the National Union of Dock Labourers, with headquarters in Liverpool. The dock labourers of Belfast struck on June 26, 1907. Belfast seamen and firemen demanded an increase in pay. Carters were also involved, first in sympathy with the dockers and then with wage demands of their own. Railway-men refused to handle "tainted" goods. The police in Belfast had their grievances, too and Larkin spoke at their meeting. The climax came when the Belfast papers displayed a photograph of Constable Barrett—who was suspended for refusing to ride with a blackleg driver—being carried shoulder high by the cheering police. They demanded his re-instatement and won. This sort of thing had never happened before and the disaffected police were hurriedly transferred to other areas.

Troops were rushed in to Belfast. The Cameron Highlanders and the Royal Berkshires came in on July 30. Instead of proceeding to the quayside, where the trouble was, these troops began at once to harry the Nationalist quarters. Cavalry and bayonet charges took place on August 11 in the Falls Road. Fighting went on for some hours. Next day this was resumed and the soldiers fired, causing casualties and deaths.

Employers and public authorities in the city relied on the ancient formula of divide and conquer when faced with Labour demands. Their plan—usually successful—was to split Labour on sectarian lines. This concentration of the military in the Catholic area was one move. Another was the decision of the Belfast coal merchants to close their yards on July 11 and to remain closed till July 15, rather than negotiate with union representatives. Of the dockers then on strike, the deep-sea men were Catholics while those handling the cross-Channel trade were Protestants. By shutting the coal yards on the eve of July 12—the great day of Orange manifestation—the merchants reckoned that the workers would use their leisure to fight each other.

What actually happened was something unique in the history of the squalid sectarianism of Belfast. On the "Twal'th"—the day of the faction fights—Catholic and Protestant workers united in a great Labour demonstration. Orange and green banners, Nationalist and Unionist bands joined in the march to the Custom House steps where Larkin made an appeal for Labour unity. His appeal was re-inforced by bills posted on the walls.

"Not as Catholics or as Protestants, as Nationalists or as Unionists but as Belfastmen and workers, stand together and don't be misled by the employers' game of dividing Catholics and Protestants."

Unity was achieved and the struggle continued. At its height the children of the Falls Road area could be seen each night methodically picking out the small stones from the pavements and piling them in large heaps as ammunition ready for use against the military at night. The pessimistic city authorities had these stones cemented down when peace returned.

There was great enthusiasm in the struggle but much expense to the union. The Executive in Liverpool had not reckoned upon Larkin beginning this Labour Crusade in Belfast. A meeting of the Executive decided to make immediate arrangements for a settlement, ignoring Larkin and the men's demands. Strike pay was stopped by the head office. So, after their magnificent fight, the Belfast carters and dockers had to try for a settlement on the old

terms. This abandonment of their own members and of their organiser was one of the cogent reasons for the formation of the Irish Transport Union. From Cork, from Derry, from Wexford and from Dublin, Larkin—the “Strike Organiser”—received appeals from hardpressed workers to come and help them in their fight.

The stamping out of industrial revolt in Belfast only scattered the embers. But in Belfast itself a spirit of disillusionment and demoralisation came out of that 1907 conflict which began with such hopes and sacrifices. Connolly had not been in the 1907 struggle for he was in America then. But now, in 1911, it was his task to kindle again that feeling of solidarity, that belief and hope which Labour had possessed. He had no strong well-established union machinery but just a small, weak union growing out of disaster.

Connolly had an understanding of Belfast for he was a Northerner himself. It is a dour city, grey, with mean streets. And it has played a queer, contradictory role in Irish history. Once it was the cradle of the movement for Irish independence. On the top of Cave Hill—looming over the city—Wolfe Tone, the Father of Irish Republicanism, had taken his oath to the United Irishmen. Connolly was responsive to that Northern tradition of Henry Joy McCracken and James Hope, though he knew that the aims of the Belfast merchants, even in their Nationalist days, had fallen far short of what he wanted. Since that time, Belfast had become the stubborn centre of anti-Nationalist feeling—a cauldron of discordant elements which, every now and then, boiled over.

When Connolly began his work in Belfast the union spirit among the dockers was low. An inhuman system of exploitation had been imposed on the men who unloaded the grain from the deep-sea vessels. A daily average of 100 tons was reckoned a normal load but if the dockers succeeded in unloading 120 tons, each man received a bonus of sixpence. This meant that they did an extra fifth of a day's work for sixpence. A system of tips to windlass men and key workers in general, forced the unfortunate fillers and

carriers to work to the point of exhaustion every day for a basic wage of five shillings.

Checkers and tallymen—those who kept count—were not allowed to reveal how many sacks were being carried till the end of the day. By means of curses, threats, blows and the fear of starvation, the unfortunate dockers would be driven all day. They were made to carry 160 tons, 180 or even 200 tons before the gang quitted work. Some worked in the hold, half-naked, shovelling the grain into tubs, choked with dust and flying wisps of chaff. Others filled the sacks. One unfortunate man would have to carry the weight on his back from the hatch to the ship-rail until the boat was empty. Accidents were frequent. Three days' work in succession was as much as any man could stand. Intimidated by a casual labour system the dockers were easy victims.

Connolly was not the man to tolerate such treatment for any human being. His chance came when an Ulster Steamship Line refused to pay Belfast seamen and firemen the same rate of wages they paid in the Bristol Channel. Joining with Bennett, Secretary of the Seamen and Firemen's Union, he called upon the dockers to support the seamen in demanding the same rate of pay as prevailed elsewhere. Six hundred Belfast dockers took action. The seamen gained an advance of 3/- a week. Next he demanded an end of all slave-driving on the docks. He issued a warning that there would be an immediate strike for the dismissal of any offender. Along with this he fixed the daily limit of grain to be unloaded at 100 tons per gang.

A dozen lightning strikes took place before it was understood that the dockers were in earnest. By this time the seamen and firemen were ready to support the dockers in their demands. Connolly taught each section the practical value of solidarity. He was relentless in those activities which built up the union power. Typical of these methods was his withdrawal of men from Dixon's timber yard in Belfast because the firm had locked out its workers in Dublin. As a result the Dublin men were reinstated and given their wages for the day they had lost.

Not only did he take action on matters of wages or conditions but he was always ready to make a stand to stop slander or abuse of the workers. Such a case occurred in Belfast when a docker was accidentally killed, being struck by a bag of cargo that was released too soon. The accident was indirectly due to an attempt to hustle the workers before a meal-time. The merchant's solicitor made a statement suggesting that the docker had been killed because he was a non-unionist. There was no foundation for this slander, the purpose of which was to blacken the union. Connolly instructed the men employed on the ship—*The Nile*—to stop work at once until the statement was withdrawn. One of the officials on the ship asked him to wait until they sent for the merchant. But, in the meantime, a harbour constable arrived and truculently ordered Connolly away.

"All right," he replied. "I will take the men where I can talk to them without interference."

He walked off the docks to the union premises. Six hundred dockers followed leaving the Low Dock deserted. Within ten minutes, merchants, superintendents, managers were at the union office protesting that they were not responsible for any antagonism to the union. The offending solicitor drafted a letter for the press withdrawing any imputation against union members. The harbour master apologised for the constable and said that Connolly was free to carry out his union duties anywhere on the docks or the ships at any time. These direct action methods gained a complete victory. There was never any question of personal bombast or assertion. What he wanted was that the organised workers should be treated properly and that they would acquire self-reliance and self-respect.

The Irish Transport Union organised the deep-sea dockers on the Low Dock. Connolly was able to achieve lasting results for the dockers engaged in this work. The men unloading the ships in cross-Channel trade were not in his union. But they gained substantial benefits through his efforts.

Grain ships were a big proportion of the waning trade of the Low Dock during the recent war. Two grain ships, I

saw there, were docked side by side. They made a striking contrast. The dockers were unloading one by hand—as in Connolly's day—the other was being emptied by the silo method, grain being sucked out through enormous tubes like vacuum cleaners.

I talked to a burly, red-faced docker, with greying hair, who remembered Connolly's struggles to improve working conditions thirty years before.

"There was a time when I saw as much as 250 tons a day come up that hatch and all carried on one man's back," he said, waving his hand towards the hatch through which the grain was then coming up. "It was all sickness and slavery along the docks then. But Connolly put a stop to that!"

Substantially the system he had introduced was still in force, though the normal day's work for unloading by hand was now fixed at 83 tons per gang or roughly 10 tons an hour. For thirty years the men I saw here had enjoyed—and were still enjoying—the benefits of Connolly's leadership and work. It was a great testimonial to the lasting value of work well done.

About seventy men were unloading the grain ship. Eight worked in the hold, serving four groups. When I looked down I saw them working in a golden haze, kneeling in the grain, shovelling it feverishly into the tubs, like dwarfs in an ancient legend, sprawled over fabled treasure. Men drew up the tubs, guiding the ropes with their hard and calloused hands. Canters emptied the tubs into sacks, weighmen pushed the sacks on to the scales. The railer was carrying each in turn on his back from the hatch to the ship's rail. Tally clerks numbered the sacks off as they went. Each man had his place. A line of wagons, along the dockside, filled as the hold emptied. Over the dock and the hatch-way the air was filled with flying fragments of straw and husk, blown by the wind. What it was like in the hold, digging into the grain, I could not imagine. Yet these men had fairly good conditions now. They were not blinded by sweat and exhaustion as before Connolly's day.

The docker I talked to was a strongly-built, muscular man. He had just finished his shift.

"I've been working on the docks for thirty-five years,"

ARMY OF THE IRISH REPUBLIC

(Dublin Command)

Headquarters

Date.. 25th April, 1916

To

Officer in Charge, Reels & D.B.C.

The main purpose at your post is to protect our wireless station. Its secondary purpose is to observe Lower Abbey Street and Lower O'Connell Street. Commanders in the D.B.C. whatever food and utensils you require. Make sure of a plentiful supply of water wherever your men are. Break all glass in the windows of the rooms occupied by you for fighting purpose. Establish a connection between your forces in the D.B.C. and in Reels' building. Be sure that the stairways leading immediately to your rooms are well barricaded. We have a post in the house at the corner Bachelor's Walk, in the Hotel Metropole, in the Imperial Hotel, in General Post Office. The directions from which you are likely to be attacked are from the Custom House, from the far side of the river, Dolier Street or Westmoreland Street. We believe there is a sniper in the Custom House on the far side of the river.

James Connolly
Commandant General

Facsimile of Order issued by James Connolly
in Easter Week, 1916.

he said. "But it's only for the past six months I've had to sign on at the Labour bureau. Those things are killing us," he said, nodding his head in the direction of three cliff-like cement structures. "We call them the Dockers' Memorials!"

I walked over to the ship that was being unloaded by the silo method. Instead of seventy men and a line of wagons, I saw only eight men. Six were playing cards in a corner of the hold while two others, with long shovels, gently stirred the grain round the mouth of immense suckers. My companion leaned across and shouted. I could not hear what he said for there was a continuous vibrating roar, a rattle of hard grains against galvanised metal. Grain was pouring from the hold through the suckers into the silos alongside. The mountain of grain in the hold moved incessantly. Sometimes the surface rippled faintly as millions of tiny grains turned over. Then it fell in sudden cascades. But it was never still.

Not until the grain got low in the hold would the card-players have to work, for suction is most effective when the pressure is greatest. And, as these men are paid on tonnage, they earn more when they are playing cards than when they are stirring the grain with shovels. When two suckers are in use, they can take out 200 tons an hour—the same amount that, with driving and cursing, seventy men did in a day. But it is possible to use four suckers and double the output. By hand the job takes from ten to twelve days of strenuous work: by silo, it can be done easily in three or four. No lines of wagons, no sacks, weighmen or tally clerks are needed. The grain runs straight into the silo. It runs straight out again when required into great motor lorries that are loaded in bulk, through a trap door, by means of a lever.

The silo method means economy of men and materials. No longer are dockers turned into beasts of burden when the silo roars. Connolly was concerned to end an era of brutish toil and the silos are helping too. But what is happening to the surplus dockers? The only alternative to grinding toil is idleness and poverty. A few hours before these two grain ships arrived, I saw a docker with a lean, toilworn face, looking out anxiously to the horizon. That

the docker should be facing disaster after a lifetime of carrying the grain supply of Belfast on his back, because the silo method is quicker and easier, is an ironical fact.

The protective trade union action which Connolly initiated is no remedy. Connolly knew this too. He was conscious of the limitations of ordinary trade union action. He wanted industry to be organised so that every improvement and quickening of production would be an advantage both to the community and the worker. For Connolly, the Socialist, the coming of the silo method of unloading, would have presented no insuperable difficulties. It would have meant that the community had more wealth and leisure to give its working members. These cliff-like silos may now be regarded as Dockers' Memorials but, in the future, they may be taken as standing monuments to the absurdity of an obsolete social system where technical advances are used to make life more insecure, a social order which Connolly did so much to expose and destroy.

Besides its dockers and its seamen, Belfast has its ship-builders. Rising above Queen's Island is a huge oblong framework of interlacing girders known as the gantry. From the side of Belfast Lough this looks like a monstrous Meccano set or a great metal altar raised in honour of the ships. Among this maze of girders are ant-like human creatures moving slowly, while, under their skilled hands, rise the shapes of ships, at first no more than scribbled sketches outlined against the sky. Massive movable cranes run along the rails and gigantic swinging derricks slope arms with military precision. All the time the noise of pneumatic riveting goes on like the rapid explosion of a quick-firing gun. Sometimes a small figure with an acetylene flame bends over a keel. Every day—morning and evening and at noon—shipyard workers stream along the road to and from the Island.

Connolly had little contact with the shipyard workers. His work was to organise the dockers. Yet, in 1911, a good proportion of the shipyard men were Catholics. In that year Connolly drew Catholic and Protestant dockers together in a joint strike movement. But in 1912, alarmed by signs of unity, the employers and the Unionist politicians

—often the same people—helped to foment pogroms against Catholic shipyard workers, who were driven out of the yards of Workman and Clark and of Harland and Wolff. Men, who were attacked, had to run for their lives. Some leaped into the docks and swam ashore while iron rivets, humorously termed “Orange confetti” struck the water all round them.

That unity which Connolly had worked for between Catholic and Protestant workers was shattered and the deep-sea dockers in the Low Dock became more and more isolated. These happenings could only strengthen Connolly's national convictions. He saw English Tory lawyers with huge resources of finance and propaganda, pretending to be “rebels,” after the Carson model, without the slightest personal danger. They worked on passions and prejudices in Belfast to destroy the strength and promise of a united Labour movement. Against all this, Connolly reacted both as a trade union leader and as a believer in an Irish Workers' Republic.

In the narrow, mean streets around the shipyards Connolly could find, every day, signs of deliberately inculcated mass prejudice. The tradition has continued. In some of these streets each house is equipped with a metal flag holder or bracket, jutting out between the upper windows. These are sockets made to take flags for the Orange celebrations. They stand in line like a row of soldiers drilling or like clubs held in invisible hands. It would be a brave man in one of the houses who left his socket empty when flags were flying in all the rest. These things help to explain the expulsion of Catholic workers from the shipyards and also why Protestant fellow-workers who gave their friends warning of approaching trouble, dared not openly defend them.

Blank walls at the ends of these mean streets display elaborate paintings showing figures with ornate robes of silk and ermine. King William on his white horse, surrounded by his followers is a favourite theme. The pictures are sponsored by local street committees who raise funds by house-to-house collections. They engage the artists and have special oratorical opening ceremonies when the pictures are

finished. Speeches are made by Orange councillors and notables. Pictures get stained and weather-beaten. Occasionally it becomes necessary to paint in new faces.

In the Nationalist areas, belligerent feeling contents itself with the whitewash brush or a piece of chalk with which to scrawl bitter phrases on the walls. The effect is always one of dour and dismal desolation. To see the red-painted funnel of a ship rising above the chimney pots of the squat little houses in a grey narrow street, brings a sense of relief and escape. Connolly lived and worked in this atmosphere from 1911 onwards. He read the bombastic speeches of the Orange warriors who loved to rattle their swords. He saw how the minority in the Nationalist areas were harried and terrorised. He knew the Orange reaction was doing its best to destroy his own work for Labour unity in Belfast. But he went on with his work.

10. Belfast of The Mills

NOT ONLY DID CONNOLLY concern himself with the dockers, carters and general labourers in Belfast but he found time, thought and energy to help the mill girls and women who were among the most sweated workers in the city. These mill girls were not members of his union and he had no official concern with them. But he had a human concern which, for Connolly, was a much more important matter.

He wrote about their struggle in the *Irish Worker* (Oct. 28, 1911). The mills were working short time because the Ulster linen manufacturers had agreed to limit production by 15 p.c. Yet each of the manufacturers tried to overreach his competitors and break the spirit of the agreement by speeding-up the machinery and the workers so as to get the same amount of production as when they were working full time. It was an interesting example of commercial morality. Mill owners also took the opportunity while trade was bad to introduce all kinds of petty fines and penalties under a system of new rules. Girls were even liable to fines for laughing, and, indeed, to work in the mills was no laughing matter. They could be fined for talking or for fixing their hair in working time. The penalty for bringing a newspaper, sweets, darning or knitting needles into the mill was instant dismissal.

In his article Connolly said :

The whole atmosphere of the mill was an atmosphere of slavery. The workers were harassed by petty bosses, mulcted in fines for the most trivial offences and robbed and cheated in the most systematic manner. If a spinner whose weekly wages averaged 12/3 lost a day's work, stayed out a day, she was fined 2/7 a sum out of all proportion to her daily earnings. The same was true of the half-timers and the doffers—little children.

These exactions—added to long-standing grievances—drove the mill workers to take strike action. They came to Connolly at the union offices for his advice, his sympathy

and leadership. Nora Connolly, in her book, tells how the older women, crouching over the fire with black shawls pulled tightly about their heads, poured out bitter monologues— :

"Yes," a woman near the fire was saying, her husky voice fierce and bitter, "it's over forty-five years since I started working in the mills. I was just turned eight when I began. When you were eight you were old enough to work. Worked in the steam, making your rags all wet, and sometimes up to your ankles in water. The older you got the more work you got. If you got married you kept on working. Your man didn't get enough for a family. You worked till your baby came, and went back as soon as you could; and then, God forgive you! you counted the years till your child could be a half-timer and started the same hell of a life over again."

Listening to them, Connolly decided to give these women his support. Textile union representatives declined to assist them and advised them not to strike. But over 1,100 women and girls came out of the various mills and appealed to Connolly to lead them. One of his great virtues was that he never forgot which side he was on. And he never took refuge in diplomatic shams. He wrote :—

The girls fought heroically. We held a meeting in St. Mary's Hall and packed it with 3,000 girls and women. They were packed from floor to ceiling, squatting on the floor between the platform and the seats—3,000 cheering, singing, enthusiastic females, and not a hat amongst them.

He did his best to rally support for the strikers. The girls had no union funds behind them but they went out on the streets with collecting boxes and raised £87. But they were only able to draw 2/- a week strike pay. Trade was bad and they were in no position to win the strike by orthodox means. Connolly put in a demand for increased wages for them. He regarded this as a negotiating point which might be given up in return for an improvement in conditions, abolishing the fines and permitting them to laugh and sing at work. Always he attached most importance to conditions and held that workers should never tolerate treatment which destroyed their self-respect.

Not only did he speak for the girls at a big demonstration at the Custom House steps but he pressed his daughter

into the service as a speaker for the first time. Yet, in spite of all their efforts, the power of money was beating the girls. So he called them together and advised them to resume work.

"Go back," he told them. "But when you do go back, defy every oppressive and unreasonable rule. If a girl is checked for singing, let the whole room start singing at once; if you are checked for laughing, let everyone laugh; and if anyone is dismissed, all should put on their shawls and march out. And, when you are returning, don't go in separately but gather outside the gate and march in singing and cheering!"

This was an early example of the "Stay-in Strike" which was to be used increasingly in Europe and America in succeeding years. One exasperated manager who sent a girl home for singing had to send for her again. Work was resumed only when she returned and she was welcomed with a song. So he snatched victory out of defeat and the mill girls made up a special song which they sang in his honour.

These battles of ill-paid workers for more tolerable conditions were very gratifying to Connolly who had a wholesome belief in the value of discontent. In the *Irish Worker* for Christmas, 1912, he expounded this theme:—

Considering the state of slavery in which the Irish workers are today, a state of restlessness, of 'divine discontent' on the part of Labour in Ireland is an absolute essential prerequisite for the realisation of any spiritual uplifting of the nation at large. With a people degraded, and so degraded as to be unconscious of their degradation, no upward march of Ireland is possible; with a people restless under injustice, and resolved, if need be, to peril life itself in order to end such degradation, tho' thrones and empires fall as a result—with such a people all things are possible; to such people all things must bend and flow . . .

"A small nation such as Ireland can only become great by reason of the greatness of soul of its individual citizens. It is therefore a matter of sincere congratulation to every lover of the race that the workers of Ireland are today profoundly discontented and, so far from being apathetic in their slavery, rebellious to the point of rashness. Discontent is the fulcrum upon which the lever of thought has ever moved the world to action. A discontented working class! What glorious promise for the future! Ireland has today within her bosom

two things that must make the blood run with riotous exultation in the veins of every lover of the Irish race—a discontented working class and the nucleus of a rebellious womanhood. I cannot separate these two things in my mind; to me they are parts of the one great whole; different regiments of the one great army of progress . . . Every victory won by Labour for Labour helps to strengthen the bent back and enlarge the cramped soul of the labourer. Every time the labourer, be it man or woman, secures a triumph in the battle for juster conditions, the mind of the labourer receives that impulse towards higher things that comes from the knowledge of power . . . On the whole it remains true that the fruits of the victories of the organised working-class are as capable of being stated in terms of spiritual uplifting as in the material terms of cash.

The discerning reader will note that Connolly was more concerned to liberate the human spirit than to push for material benefits. He was never the leader from outside who wanted to hand down a little more cash and a pat on the shoulder to the people underneath. Neither was he that more repulsive type that squirms its way upward to share in the shoddy standards of those whom it affects to despise. Connolly was the working man who believed in the working class, its possibilities as the foundation of a decent society, in its capacity for freedom and humanity.

In *The Re-Conquest of Ireland*—a continuation of his earlier historical study—the author has much to say concerning Belfast and its problems. It was published in 1915 and its lessons are drawn chiefly from the years just before Connolly was writing and working in Belfast. He quotes Dr. Bailie, City Medical Officer of Health, on the reasons for the large number of premature births: this extract is taken from the Official Report for 1909:—

The premature births were found to be most prevalent among women who worked in mills and factories, engaged in such work as the following—spinning, weaving, machining, tobacco-spinning and laundry work. Many of the women appear to be utterly unable for such work owing to the want of sufficient nourishment and suitable clothing and being through stress of circumstances compelled to work up to the date of confinement, would be accountable for many young and delicate children found by the Health Visitors.

Speaking of consumption Dr. Baillie continues :—

Districts suffering most severely from this disease are Nos. 3, 4 and 12 in which 136, 117 and 112 cases occurred respectively and it is to be noted that in these districts textile industries are largely carried on . . . As in previous years it was found that consumption was most prevalent amongst the poor, owing largely to the unfavourable conditions under which necessity compels them to live—such as dark, ill-ventilated houses and insanitary habits, together with insufficient food and clothing.

Connolly's comment is :—

This is confirmatory of the previous saying of Dr. Koch, of Berlin, that the chief cause of consumption was to be found in the unsanitary houses and workshops of the poor. The Socialist contention that most diseases could be eliminated by the establishment of a juster social order, and that the capitalist system is mainly responsible for sickness and the poverty that follows from sickness, as well as the sickness that follows from poverty, is thus strikingly verified from impartial sources.

Consumption did not end its ravages in Belfast in 1909. Neither is it confined to that Northern city. It reached across the border and the causes are the same in each case. Connolly presents this summary :—

To those who are acquainted, even upon hearsay, with the conditions in the mills of Belfast, it will be no surprise to learn that the poor are the chief sufferers from consumption and especially the poor mill workers. Imagine a spinning room so hot with a moist heat that all girls and women must work in bare feet, with dress open at breast and arms bare, hair tied up tight to prevent it irritating the skin rendered irritable and tender by sweat and heat; imagine the stifling, suffocating atmosphere that in a few months banishes the colour from the cheeks of the rosiest half-timer and reduces all to one common deadly pallor; imagine all the windows closed in such a place, or only opened for a few minutes when the advent of the Lady (Factory) Inspector is announced and closed immediately she retires; imagine all the machinery driven at ever increasing speed in such an inferno, and imagine these poor slaves at meal hours catching up their shawls and rushing out, perhaps amid rain and frost, to snatch up a few badly-cooked mouthfuls of badly nourishing food and be back in their places inside of 45 minutes! Is it any wonder that such people, working amid such conditions, are subject to consumption?

The medical authorities issue long and minute instructions as to how consumption may be avoided, but the instructions are as a rule utterly valueless to the class most subject to the scourge. Of what use is it to teach people about the evil of overcrowding when their wages will not permit them to secure decent house room? Of what avail a paper telling how to cook and prepare food when they have only 45 minutes to come from the mill, cook a meal, eat it, and return to the mill—the mother being one of the bread-winners or wage-earners of the family? Of what avail instilling into the worker the necessity of choosing proper food to counteract the tendency to consumption, and so increase the resisting power of the individual, when the wages are so small that only the poorest, easiest cooked, and generally least nutritious foods can be bought!

We do not deny the benevolent motives of the good ladies and gentlemen at present crusading against consumption in Ireland, but we consider that the agitator who arouses people to revolt against the conditions of toil and life, for the workers is doing more to end the scourge than all the anti-tuberculosis societies ever dreamed of. Consider, for instance, the life of the sweated home-workers of Belfast, and imagine what poor resisting power their bodily frames must offer to the inroads of the White Plague.

Connolly then proceeds to give, in detail, quoting from Dr. Bailie, the rates of pay in various types of clothing work especially those for home workers. The first is typical :—

In the last week in December, for instance, a woman was observed embroidering small dots on cushion covers, there were 308 dots on each cushion, and for sewing these by hand she received the sum of one penny. She said that for a day's work of this kind she would have difficulty in making sixpence. Nor is this an exceptional case . . .

The actual rates quoted have, of course, no relation to present money values. But the presentation of his argument, with a factual basis, shows how careful Connolly was to get accurate data upon which to base his case. He had a methodical mind and a habit of research. One of the silliest parrot-cries used whenever social evils are exposed is to dismiss the exposure as "propaganda." This is often regarded as sufficient to wipe out of the way a whole selection of inconvenient facts. Connolly was a propagandist—he would never let anyone forget it—but he could present facts

in such a reliable way that the stigma of "propaganda" lost all its meaning. Another advantage which Connolly had was his knowledge of actual working conditions. When, for example, he speaks of opening a mill window during the visit of the lady inspector and closing it as soon as she had gone, he had the whole of his working experience behind him, beginning from the time when he stood on the box in the Edinburgh printing works to deceive the inspector about his age. Everyone with ordinary working experience in industry knows that such happenings are too common to excite comment.

Finally he reaches this conclusion :—

In these industrial parts of the North of Ireland the yoke of capitalism lies heavy upon the lives of the people. The squalor and listless wretchedness of some other parts is, indeed, absent, but in its stead there exists grinding toil for old and young—toil to which the child is given up whilst its limbs and brain are still immature and undeveloped, and toil continued until, a broken and enfeebled wreck, the toiler sinks into a too early grave. In this part of Ireland the child is old before it knows what it is to be young . . . In their wisdom our lords and masters often leave full-grown men unemployed, but they can always find a use for the bodies and limbs of our children. A strange comment upon the absurdities of the capitalist system, illustrating its idiotic wastefulness of human possibilities; that the intellect and strength of men should be left to rot for want of work, whilst children are by premature work deprived of the possibilities of developing fully their minds or their bodies.

No one can read these sections of the book—or indeed any of his writings — without realising that James Connolly was animated by that noblest of all feelings, the desire to end human suffering and to ensure that the weakest would not have the heaviest burdens imposed on them by those who make profit out of their necessity and helplessness.

Working in Belfast among dockers and mill girls—for every section of the workers—his efforts were directed to widening their scope and power. In pursuit of this aim, Connolly found he could not exclude politics or the Irish National struggle. In January, 1913, he contested the Dock Ward, Belfast, and polled 900 votes in the Labour interest,

just as earlier he had contested local elections in Edinburgh and Dublin.

More important, politically—in May, 1912—he attended the Irish Trade Union Congress in Clonmel, and moved a resolution calling for a political Labour Party, for the independent representation of Labour on all public boards and that these aims should be included among the objects of Congress, a levy of 1/- a member per annum to be imposed for the purpose. This resolution was carried by 49 to 18 votes and really marks the beginning of a political Labour Party in Ireland. Connolly occupies the same pioneer position as founder of an independent political Labour Movement as Keir Hardie does in Britain.

His job was even more difficult than that of Hardie's, for not only had he to fight the enemies of Labour but he also had to fight the enemies of Ireland. In Belfast during those early years there was a stirring of national feeling partly as a reaction against the bombast of Carson and the Ulster Volunteers. A Young Republican Party was founded in Belfast. It issued a stirring manifesto and sent copies to the Nationalist papers and to the *Irish Worker*. Padraig Pearse, then editor of the Gaelic League organ, welcomed the new group in his journal and hoped their example would be followed all over Ireland.

The Northern Republicans were against partition, not as a matter of argument but because already they had had some experience of minority treatment. They could tell of beatings, of terrorisation, of men driven from work because they were Catholics, of homes smashed, burned and fired into. On Queen's Island there had never been more than 3,000 Catholics in the shipyards and they were always in peril of attack by the 20,000 Orangemen who worked there. Connolly was occupied during all this period with his work for the Labour movement. But he was not too busy to draft statements putting the Republican side against Orange truculence.

Some of his critics—with a strange ignorance both of Irish history and of Connolly's life-long belief in a real independence movement, have sought to explain his part in the 1916 Rising as being due to a sudden war-time

aberration. Nothing could be farther from the truth. He was always an uncompromising advocate of Irish Republicanism. His articles in Alice Milligan's Belfast journal the *Shan Van Vocht*, as far back as 1897, demonstrate this. And his experiences in Belfast from 1911 onward would certainly not cause him to moderate his beliefs or think that Irish freedom could be gained without a real struggle. He knew those forces that sweated the helpless mill girls, that tyrannised over Catholic workers and brandished their shining swords while proclaiming that "Ulster Would fight." Connolly was quite ready to do his best to see that they had to make good their boast.

11. Connolly Looks at History

ALMOST THE FIRST TASK Connolly set himself when he returned to Ireland was to see to the publication of his book *Labour in Irish History*, the result of years of reading, study and thought. It is the key to Irish history from the Labour standpoint and is an examination of the various social groups in relation to the National struggle.

His reputation as a social thinker rests chiefly upon this book and its sequel *The Re-Conquest of Ireland*. H. W. Nevinson—an acute observer—described the essential Connolly when he wrote :—

The first time that I met James Connolly, I felt a difference between him and the other famous Irish patriots whom I had known. I think it must have been early in 1912 the year before he rose to fame in the great strike of the Irish Transport Workers' Union. We were speaking on the same platform in Dublin, and the difference I noticed was a greater breadth and depth of view than I had found in the numerous patriotic speeches I had heard up to that time. Connolly was as good an Irish patriot as could be found, and no one has surpassed him in devoted service to the Irish people. But his patriotism took a form at that time uncommon, and to me all the more attractive, because it was so fresh and practical in its aims. He knew the crimes of English Government, but he was not perpetually mumbling and grumbling over them. He knew the history of Ireland's wrongs, but he was not going to harp upon them for ever. If patriotism meant merely the assertion of nationality, he would have agreed with the nurse who, at her execution, said that patriotism was not enough. Much of Ireland's misery was due to England's imperialism; much was inherited from England's atrocities in the past. But there were causes of misery which affected not Ireland alone, but England as well—affected indeed the whole world. I quickly understood that Connolly was not merely a Nationalist rebel; he was a world-wide revolutionist.

Nevinson's judgment is confirmed when we turn to Connolly's historical study and see how he uses the past to reveal the social factors in the national struggle. Connolly's thesis—outlined in his foreword—is that England was the

exponent of the feudal-capitalist system in Ireland. The Gaelic tradition, he holds, is democratic, finding expression in the ancient Brehon code.

In the re-conversion of Ireland to the Gaelic principle of common ownership by a people of their sources of food and maintenance, the worst obstacle to overcome will be the opposition of the men and women who have imbibed their ideas of Irish character and history from Anglo-Irish literature. That literature, as we have explained, was born in the worst agonies of the slavery of our race; it bears all the birth-marks of such origin upon it, but irony of ironies, these birth-marks of slavery are hailed by our teachers as 'the native characteristics of the Celt.'

One of these slave birth-marks is a belief in the capitalist system of society; the Irishman frees himself from such a mark of slavery when he realises that truth that the capitalist system is the most foreign thing in Ireland.

The Irish propertied classes, he tells us, have become more English than the English, in defence of their privileges and they never tire of talking of the ancient Irish veneration for aristocracy and of the Irish attachment to the principle of private property. Connolly denies all this and points to the time when the Irish people ruled in Ireland. He says:—

Politically, Ireland has been under the control of England for the past 700 years, during the greater part of which time the country has been the scene of constant wars against her rule on the part of the native Irish. Until the year 1649, these wars were complicated by the fact that they were directed against both the political and *social* order recognised by the English invader. It may surprise many readers to learn that up to the date above mentioned the basis of society in Ireland, except within the Pale (a small strip of territory around the capital city, Dublin), rested upon communal or tribal ownership of land. The Irish chief, though recognised in the courts of France, Spain and Rome, as the peer of the reigning princes of Europe, in reality held his position upon the sufferance of his people, and as an administrator of the tribal affairs of his people, while the land or territory of the clan was entirely removed from his private jurisdiction.

In the parts of Ireland where for 400 years after the first conquest (so-called) the English governors could not penetrate except at the head of a powerful army, the social order which prevailed in England—feudalism—was unknown, and as this comprised the greater portion of the country, it gradually came to be understood that the war against the

foreign oppressor was also a war against private property in land. But with the forcible break up of the clan system in 1649, the social aspect of the Irish struggle sank out of sight, its place being usurped by the mere political expressions of the fight for freedom.

After the dispersal of the clans, the aristocracy were of foreign or traitor origin—serving the invader—so the national movement was left in the hands of the middle class, whose spokesmen denied that there could be any connection between the social rights of the Irish workers and the political rights of the Irish nation. They tried to create what they called a “real national movement” which disregarded social discontents and would do nothing economically for the mass of the people. When Michael Davitt introduced the social struggle against landlordism into the national movement he had to meet criticism from these men.

Discussing the movement for the revival of the Gaelic language Connolly urges that this is not enough. It is also necessary, he says, to revive that Gaelic tradition of democracy which belonged to the earlier Irish social order.

The seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were, indeed, the *Via Dolorosa* of the Irish race. In them the Irish Gael sank out of sight, and in his place the middle class politicians, capitalists and ecclesiastics laboured to produce a hybrid Irishman, assimilating a foreign social system, a foreign speech, and a foreign character. In the effort to assimilate the first two, the Irish were unhappily too successful, so successful that today the majority of the Irish do not know that their fathers ever knew another system of ownership, and the Irish Irelanders are painfully grappling with their mother tongue with the hesitating accent of the foreigner. Fortunately the Irish character has proven too difficult to press into respectable foreign moulds, and the recoil of that character from the deadly embrace of capitalist English conventionalism, as it has already led to a revaluation of the speech of the Gael, will in all probability also lead to a re-study and appreciation of the social system under which the Gael reached the highest point of civilisation and culture in Europe.

... Hence we believe that this book attempting to depict the attitude of the dispossessed masses of the Irish people in the great crisis of modern Irish history, may justly be looked upon as part of the literature of the Gaelic revival.

Here Connolly states his approach very clearly. How essentially modern this is may be judged by his comment: "The apostate patriotism of the Irish capitalist class, arising as it does upon the rupture with the Gaelic tradition, will, of course, reject this conception, and saturated with foreignism themselves, they will continue to hurl the epithet of 'foreign ideas' against the militant Irish democracy."

Even in our own time we can note the exploitation of that cry of "foreign ideas," used particularly against the organised Labour movement in Ireland, just as Connolly foretold.

Having made sure of his general premises, he goes on to examine the various movements in Irish history in the light of his social analysis. He says:—

During the last hundred years every generation in Ireland has witnessed an attempted rebellion against English rule. Every such conspiracy or rebellion has drawn the majority of its adherents from the lower orders in town and country, yet under the inspiration of a few middle class doctrinaires the social question has been rigorously excluded from the field of action to be covered by the rebellion if successful; in hopes that by such exclusion it would be possible to conciliate the upper classes and enlist them in the struggle for freedom.

The result has in nearly every case been the same. The workers, though furnishing the greatest proportion of recruits to the ranks of the revolutionists, and consequently of victims to the prison and the scaffold, could not be imbued *en masse* with the revolutionary fire necessary to seriously imperil a dominion rooted for 700 years in the heart of their country. They were all anxious enough for freedom, but realising the enormous odds against them, and being explicitly told by their leaders that they *must not expect any change in their condition of social subjection, even if successful*, they as a body shrank from the contest, and left only the purest minded and most chivalrous of their class to face the odds and glut the vengeance of the tyrant—a warning to those in all countries who neglect the vital truth that successful revolutions are not the product of our brains, but of ripe material conditions.

In spite of patriotic appeals, he continues, the landlord class remained resolutely loyal to England and preyed relentlessly upon their Irish tenants while middle class poets and romanticists were enthusiastic but indefinite in their

patriotic appeals. He asserts that the lower middle class gave many unselfish patriots to the National cause but maintains that they shied off the question of the basis of national and economic subjection. This was a source of real weakness when a more thorough-going movement was needed to serve the interests of the masses who were left leaderless by the drawing back of men who had no conception of—and no sympathy with—a social revolutionary movement. It was never Connolly's way to generalise at large so he goes on to draw concrete lessons from Irish history to clinch his argument.

He does not concede that the people of Ireland had anything to gain by taking sides in the Williamite wars which ended in 1691. The battle in Ireland, he claims, was essentially one between two sets of plunderers—the old and the new :—"The forces which battled beneath the walls of Derry or Limerick were not the forces of England and Ireland, but were the forces of two English political parties fighting for the possession of the powers of government; and the leaders of the Irish Wild Geese on the battlefields of Europe were not shedding their blood because of their fidelity to Ireland, as our historians pretend to believe, but because they had attached themselves to the defeated side in English politics."

This judgment is based upon the manner in which each side divided the land among their friends when they had the power. Connolly does not question the sacrifices made by Irishmen in the struggle. He says : "The undeniable patriotism of the rank and file does not alter the truthfulness of this analysis of the situation. They saw only the new enemy from England, the old English enemy settled in Ireland they were generously, but foolishly, ready to credit with all the virtues and attributes of patriotic Irishmen."

When the Williamite wars were over the modern history of Ireland began. Goaded by famine and poverty the labourers and small farmers demanded consideration. He tells how, after the famine of 1740, the landlords found that high prices could be made by supplying cattle and dairy produce to the British market, so they began to evict tenant farmers, seizing common lands, breaking up small farms

and substituting grazing lands where they could raise cattle and sheep.

This development was not peculiar to Ireland for Britain, too, had her great Enclosure movements, both in Elizabethan days and in the early years of the Industrial Revolution when the people were driven off the land into the factories. British industrialists wanted cheap food from Ireland so that their factory workers would not demand higher wages.

Where a hundred families had lived on their small farms, a dozen shepherds took their place. The Irish peasant farmers did not submit without a struggle. Secret societies were formed which engaged in acts of desperation. They dreamed of terrorising their rulers into abandoning the policy of enforcing grazing in place of tillage farming which gave employment and security.

In the southern area, the Whiteboys—wearing white shirts over their clothes—organised nightly expeditions against the landlords, while, in the North, Oakboys, Steelboys, Hearts of Steel and others, carried on the same social struggle. Connolly tells the story of these land workers—simple, unlettered, honest men, who fought their battle against oppression.

Following the struggle for the land he turns to the period of Grattan's Parliament and of the Irish Volunteers. Belfast organised its Volunteer movement in 1778 to protect the city from possible invasion by the French, as the central government in Britain had no troops available. Soon Ireland had 80,000 citizen soldiers—her first Citizen Army—which was able to demand and enforce the setting up of Grattan's Parliament in Dublin. How Grattan betrayed the Volunteers and denounced them as "an armed rabble" is a black spot in Irish history. As a consequence the Act of Union was forced through and Grattan's Parliament fell. Connolly does not soften his recital of these events:—

... the Irish capitalist class used the Volunteers to force commercial reforms from the English Government and then, headed by Henry Grattan, forsook and denounced the Volunteers when that body sought by reforming the representative system to make it more responsive to the will of the people, and thus to secure in peace what they had won by the threat of violence ... But the only hope of realising

that Ireland lay then in the armed force of the Volunteers, and as the capitalist class did not feel themselves strong enough as a class to hold the ship of state against the aristocracy on the one hand and the people on the other, they felt impelled to choose the only other alternative—viz, to elect to throw in their lot with one or other of the contending parties. They chose to put their trust in the aristocracy, abandoned the populace, and as a result were deserted by the class whom they had trusted, and went down into bankruptcy and slavery with the class they had betrayed.

He tells how the Government seized the artillery of the Liberty Corps—the Workers' Volunteer contingent (just as was attempted before the Paris Commune in 1871); how they arranged with the Merchants' Corps to take over their arms and allowed the Lawyers' Corps to hold a procession before their arms were surrendered. In brief, he says: "The working men fought, the capitalists sold out, and the lawyers bluffed."

The downfall of Grattan's Parliament and the betrayal of the Volunteers—together with the mass of the Irish people—was the prologue to the rise of the United Irishmen and of Wolfe Tone. Connolly does well to include in his history a condemnation of Grattan's Parliament from a pamphlet written by Wolfe Tone and published in 1791. Influenced by the French Revolution the United Irishmen took as their object the achievement of an Irish Republic.

Connolly's judgment of the 1798 Rising is doubly significant in view of his own later revolutionary activities. Had greater decision been displayed by the Commander of the French expedition to Bantry Bay, he is of opinion that the Irish Republic could have been won then. His greatest admiration was given to the people, "wretchedly armed, totally undrilled, and compelled to act without any systematic plan of campaign, because of the sudden arrest and imprisonment of their leaders. Yet they fought and defeated the British troops on a score of battlefields, despite the fact that the latter were thoroughly disciplined, splendidly armed, and directed like a huge machine from one common centre. To suppress the insurrection in the counties of Wicklow and Wexford alone required all the efforts of 30,000 soldiers; had the plans of the United Irishmen for a

concerted uprising all over the island on a given date not failed, the task of coping with the Republican forces would have been too great for the Government to achieve. As it was, the lack of the means of communication prevalent in those days made it possible for the insurrection in any one district to be almost fought and lost before news of its course had penetrated into some other parts of the country."

The need for decision, for clear, bold leadership and co-ordination of activities was here seen as vital to the success of an insurrection. This reads like a departmental report on points for future reference in the event of a rising. Connolly remembered these points later when he took a decisive part in the movement of his day, though in 1916 (as in '98) lack of co-ordination was a terrible handicap. "My business is revolution," he told a lady who expressed amazement that he knew so much about these risings of the past. And he was a man who minded his business.

Ferocious measures were taken after the failure of the '98 Rising to break the spirit of the people. From his knowledge of these happenings Connolly drew the conclusion that it was worse than useless to turn back in the middle of a revolutionary struggle.

12. The Unbroken Tradition

APART FROM the military details of the '98 movement, Connolly emphasises its democratic and international character. That it took inspiration from the French Revolution, with its declarations on the rights of nations and the rights of man, is clear. Wolfe Tone issued his call to that "large and respectable body of men, the men of no property" and the United Irishmen maintained fraternal relations with kindred organisations in England, in Scotland and in France.

An early manifesto issued by Wolfe Tone and his associates in June, 1791, make plain what kind of organisation they intended to form. They wanted " communications with the different towns to be assiduously kept up and every exertion used to accomplish a National Convention of the People of Ireland, who may profit by past errors and by many unexpected circumstances which have happened since this last meeting . . . communications with similar societies abroad—as the Jacobin Club of Paris, the Revolutionary Society in England, the Committee for Reform in Scotland. *Let the nations go abreast.* Let the interchange of sentiments among mankind concerning the Rights of Man be as immediate as possible.

When the aristocracy come forward, the people fall backward; when the people come forward, the aristocracy, fearful of being left behind, insinuate themselves into our ranks and rise into timid leaders or treacherous auxiliaries. They mean to make us their instruments; let us rather make them our instruments. One of the two must happen. The people must serve the party, or the party must emerge in the mightiness of the people, and Hercules will then lean upon his club. On the 14th of July, the day which shall ever commemorate the French Revolution, let this society pour out their first libation to European liberty, eventually the liberty of the world, and with their hands joined in each other, and their eyes raised to Heaven in His presence, who breathed into them an ever-living soul, let them swear to maintain the rights and prerogatives of their nature as men, and the right and prerogative of Ireland as an independent people.

After quoting this, Connolly comments that: "It would be hard to find in modern Socialist literature anything more broadly international in its scope and aims, more definitely of a class character in its methods, or more avowedly democratic in its nature than this manifesto . . ."

In discussing the outlook of the United Irishmen, Connolly emphasises his view that the ancient Irish civilisation disappeared with the defeat of the 1641 Insurrection and the break-up of the Kilkenny Confederation. In that insurrection the Irish clan system made its last stand. The position was confused because the Irish had as allies, noblemen who held lands as private property under the English feudal system. These men feared confiscation by that new generation of marauders from Britain but they also feared confiscation by the Irish clansmen if the insurrection was successful. So they were a source of weakness in the councils of the rebels. The clan system went down in defeat because there was no unity of aim.

The Confederation held sway over the greater part of Ireland. But there were some under its banner who believed in feudalism. Out of this welter of social confusion emerged the new political society based on private property, superseding the clan system based on kinship. This change was not, of course, peculiar to Ireland. Pioneers have traced this line of development in many lands. Connolly was familiar with Morgan's *Ancient Society* and other books which chart this social process in Europe and America. In Ireland, however, the ancient septs or clans, were destroyed from without as well as weakened from within. They cracked under the blows of the invader. The clans ceased to be a force.

A new and wider conception of democracy had to be born in the shape of the National idea. Wolfe Tone and the United Irishmen expressed the democratic National idea—caught partly from the French Revolution—which embodied, too, the democracy of the clan system in a way suited to new and different times. Connolly gives us new perspectives in his study of Irish history.

When he comes to write of Emmet's conspiracy—which follows closely on the '98 Rising—he claims that this was

even more distinctly democratic and international in its sympathies than the preceding movement. He writes :—

The treacherous betrayal of the United Irish chiefs into the hands of the Government had removed from the scene of action practically all the middle class supporters of the revolutionary movement and left the rank and file to their own resources . . . It was accordingly with these humble workers in town and country Emmet had to deal when he essayed to reorganise the scattered forces of freedom for a fresh grapple with the despotic power of the class government then ruling Ireland and England. All students who have investigated the matter are at one in conceding that Emmet's conspiracy was more of a working class character than its predecessors.

As to the part taken by the Dublin workers, Connolly says :—

It is significant that the only serious fight on the night of the ill-fated insurrection took place in the Coombe district of the Liberties of Dublin, a quarter inhabited exclusively by weavers, tanners and shoemakers, the best organised trades in the city, and that a force of Wicklow men brought into Dublin by Michael Dwyer, the insurgent chieftain, were sheltered on the quays among the dock labourers and eventually enabled to return home without any traitor betraying their whereabouts to the numerous Government spies over-running the city.

Emmet appealed to Irish workers but he also looked to the French Republic and to militant revolutionaries in Britain. He and Colonel Despard—who was hanged for high treason in England—were said to be preparing for a simultaneous rising in both countries. Connolly is impatient of the attempts made to deck Emmet out in pretty green ribbons and to submerge the real character of his conspiracy in a mush of sentimentality. Emmet did not only protest against injustice to Ireland, says Connolly, but he was an Irish apostle of a world-wide movement for liberty, equality and fraternity. He believed in the community of free nations. Connolly insists that Robert Emmet was a bigger man with wider aims than his panegyrists often allow.

Next he turns from the study of insurrections to examine the work of a pioneer social thinker—William Thompson

of Clonkeen, Roscarbery, Co. Cork. Thompson was contemporary with Robert Owen and his most important book was published in 1824. Among serious social students, Thompson's work has long been recognised as far in advance of his contemporaries. His writings are known on the Continent and Connolly's considered judgment is given in this passage :—

Fervent Celtic enthusiasts are fond of claiming, and the researches of our days seem to bear out the claim, that Irish Missionaries were the first to re-kindle the lamp of learning in Europe, and dispel the intellectual darkness following the downfall of the Roman Empire; may we not also take pride in the fact that an Irishman also was the first to pierce the worse than Egyptian darkness of capitalist barbarism and point out to the toilers the conditions of their enslavement, and the essential pre-requisites of their emancipation.

During the early part of the nineteenth century there were stirrings of political and economic unrest. Robert Owen, mill owner and English pioneer of Co-operation, visited Dublin and spoke at the Rotunda to fashionable and wealthy audiences who wished to experiment with co-operative ideas. Out of all this—in 1831—came the well-known Co-operative colony of Ralahine in Co. Clare, started by Mr. Arthur Vandeleur, the owner, with the active assistance of Mr. Craig, a Manchester follower of Owen.

Ralahine was a marked success. The people on the estate formed a co-operative society and by hard work gradually rose from a condition of wretchedness to comfort and security. Further progress was being made when Mr. Vandeleur lost his fortune through gambling in Dublin. He was declared bankrupt and his creditors seized the buildings and grounds of the association, refusing to recognise their agreement and treating the members as ordinary labourers on the estate.

Ralahine was a good example of what could be done by enterprise and co-operative effort. It has been an inspiration to other voluntary bodies. But while political, social and financial control remain in the hands of vested interests such communities can be crippled or wiped out. Connolly himself sympathised with the idea of voluntary co-operation

though his chief aim was the political transformation of society. He records the progress of the Ralahine experiment in detail and was ready to join with the co-operative advocate, George Russell (A.E.) on the common ground of enthusiasm for social progress.

When Connolly comes to discuss the gaining of Catholic Emancipation by Daniel O'Connell in 1829 he is indignant at the betrayal of the small farmers who voted for him in spite of their landlords. The system of voting was an open one and they had no fixity of tenure. When Emancipation was won, the voting qualification was changed from a 40/- annual rent to a £10 basis. The smaller tenants lost their votes and the landlords proceeded to evict many of them to extend their own grazing lands.

This was a prelude to the horrors of the famine years—reaching a culmination in 1847. All through that period Connolly notes O'Connell's attitude to the poor, his opposition to trade unionism, his defence of child labour in factories. Connolly does not withhold credit for the eloquence and energy which helped to win Catholic Emancipation but he stamps O'Connell as a social reactionary. One indictment is that O'Connell worked incessantly to separate the Irish movement of discontent from the Chartist movement in Britain, led by that brilliant, if erratic, Irishman, Fergus O'Connor.

The rise of the Young Irelanders, who broke loose from O'Connell, is hailed by Connolly as carrying on that tradition of revolt which had marked every generation. He draws attention to its affiliation with similar movements on the Continent, such as *Young Italy*, which had responded to Mazzini's call for freedom. When we see how, invariably, Connolly emphasises the international sympathies of every worth-while Irish movement we can rate at its true value the mendacity of reactionaries who tried to present him as a kind of Hitlerite "National Socialist."

When Connolly comes to write of the famine years, the tragedy of "Black 47," the hunger, the fever, the evictions, the corpses tossed from the emigrant ships and the landlords clamouring for their rents, we can get a measure of the man, his flaming indignation and vibrant feeling. His

pages glow. John Mitchel, James Fintan Lalor and Thomas Devin Reilly won his admiration because they advocated as the first duty of the people, the refusal to pay rents, the retention of crops to feed their own families and the tearing up of railway lines, if necessary, to prevent food leaving the country. Connolly was ready to criticise the Young Irelanders when he thought fit. But anyone who placed himself with the people at that time of suffering receives his commendation. He selects John Mitchel :—

Eventually the Government seized upon the really dangerous man—the man who had hatred of injustice deeply enough rooted to wish to destroy it at all costs, the man who had faith enough in the masses to trust a revolutionary outbreak to their native impulses, and who possessed the faculty of combining thought with action, John Mitchel. With his arrest, the people looked for immediate revolution, so did the Government, so did Mitchel himself. All were disappointed. John Mitchel was carried off to penal servitude in Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) after scornfully refusing to sign a manifesto presented to him in his cell, by Thomas Francis Meagher and others, counselling the people *not* to attempt to rescue him. The working class of Dublin and most of the towns were clamouring for their leaders to give the word for a rising; in many places in the country the peasantry were acting spontaneously.

When Meagher was afterwards arrested in Waterford the people created a barricade at the bridge to prevent the soldiers taking him. They asked him to give the word for an insurrection. But he ordered them to remove the barricade. The people let him go, crying out as they did so : "You will regret it! You will regret it and it is your own fault!" Meagher was to prove himself a fearless soldier and Connolly recognised this. But Connolly's ardent spirit and his revolutionary social teaching—his heart and his head—made him condemn the cautious tactics of that day. He declared that he would never take the responsibility of holding back anyone who wanted to fight for Ireland and from his attitude to these earlier struggles it is easy to deduce what his own position would be in a similar situation.

The type of leader Connolly could not endure was William Smith O'Brien. When the people were dying of

hunger, Smith O'Brien would not allow them to seize carts of grain passing along the roads. He refused to permit his followers at Mullinahone to fell trees for a barricade until they asked permission of the landlords who owned the trees.

The presentation of this landlord leader is a typical example of the Connolly outlook, showing how courage in the rank and file came to nothing, through weak leadership by men whose social aims and position inclined them to compromise. Even when they were honest—and they often were—they suffered from a kind of stammer in action. They were hesitant in attacking a system with which they were fundamentally in sympathy. Connolly remarks caustically that, remembering Smith O'Brien's exploits, we can understand how he has a monument in Dublin while the writings and name of James Fintan Lalor were boycotted for more than fifty years.

In 1848—the year of European turmoil—Mitchel was using his journal *The United Irishman* to stress the need for unity between the Chartist and his own movement. Chartist leaders, such as Ernest Jones and John Frost, spoke out for Irish freedom. The Smith O'Brien section worked to detach the Irish movement from the general democratic struggle. Mitchel appealed to the precedent of 1798 and the teaching of Wolfe Tone.

With the arrest of Mitchel, *The Irish Felon* came into being as the militant organ of national revolt. It insisted that the English Conquest had two sides—the social or economic and the political. Consequently the Re-Conquest must have these two aspects. As this is the essence of Connolly's own view, it is not surprising that he picks out the writings of James Fintan Lalor and Devin Reilly, both of whom wrote for *The Irish Felon*.

James Fintan Lalor has an eloquent simplicity. His style matches his feeling and his thought. Lofty and forceful, it attains its highest expression in *The Faith of a Felon* published on July 8, 1848. Lalor criticised the Confederation of Kilkenny :—

They wanted an alliance with the landowners. They chose to consider them as Irishmen and imagined they could induce them to hoist the green flag. They wished to preserve an

aristocracy. They desired, not a democratic, but merely a national, revolution. Had the Confederation in the May or June of '47 thrown heart and mind and means into the movement I pointed out they would have made it successful, and settled at once and forever all questions between us and England.

He suggests an immediate course of action. First the tenants are to pay no rent or arrears unless they have a surplus of harvest produce. Second they should resist eviction. Third, *on principle*, to refuse all rents to the present usurping proprietors and, fourth, they should decide what rents should be paid to the community for the use of the land. He wants all this to be part of the European revolutionary struggle and concludes :—

Mankind will yet be masters of the earth. The right of the people to make the laws—this produced the first great modern earthquake . . . The right of the people to own the land—this will produce the next. Train your hands, and your sons' hands, gentlemen of the earth, for you and they will yet have to use them.

This was the kind of talk—and of thought—that Connolly appreciated.

After the Young Ireland movement declined, the next insurrectionary group to spring up was the Fenian Brotherhood established in 1857 by John O'Mahony, Michael Doheny and James Stephens, all exiles in Paris. Connolly speaks of this "Fenian Conspiracy" as an example of the coincidence of militant class feeling and revolutionary nationalism. He insists again and again that the real nationalists—the separatists—have always been men of broad human sympathies and democratic ideas. Stephens and O'Mahony were later connected with revolutionary movements in France, and the man chosen by Stephens to be Commander of the Irish Republican Army was Cluseret, afterwards Commander-in-Chief of the Paris Commune of 1871.

The *Irish People*—organ of the Fenian Brotherhood attained a wide influence outside Ireland as a journal of social discontent as well as for its national stand. In Ireland itself, the city workers most responsive to Fenianism

made the best struggle for improved labour conditions. Connolly draws the conclusion from these movements that the Rising of 1798 was an Irish expression of the democratic tendencies behind the French Revolution, that the 1848 movement belonged to the social upheavals which swept the Continent at that time. Also he declares that the Fenian Brotherhood was part of that wave of discontent which produced the International Working Men's Association with branches throughout Europe, including centres in Dublin and Cork.

Insurrectionary movements waned with the failure of the '67 movement in Ireland and the defeat of the Paris Commune. It was not until the Land League emerged, rallying the small farmers in the fight for their land, that vitality returned to the Irish revolutionary movement. When Davitt founded the Land League at Irishtown, Co. Mayo, in 1879, he was denounced by Irish reactionaries while the British authorities, representing similar interests, tried to crush him and destroy his movement by re-imprisoning him. But he made a vital appeal to the small farmers and also forged links with the rising movement of Labour in Britain. His journal *The Labour World*, published in Liverpool, maintained the international tradition of the Irish militants.

Connolly rarely cares to indulge in prophecy but speaking of the Land League he says :—

... the great social struggle of all the ages will again arise and re-shape itself in Ireland to suit the new conditions. The war which the Land League fought, and then abandoned before it was either lost or won, will be taken up by the Irish toilers on a broader field with sharper weapons, and a more comprehensive knowledge of all the essentials of permanent victory ... the Irish toilers henceforward will base their fight for freedom not upon the winning or losing the right to talk in an Irish Parliament, but upon their progress towards the mastery of those factories, workshops and farms upon which a people's bread and liberties depend.

At the end of his account of the long travail of the Irish people, his record of their struggles, Connolly reaches this conclusion :—

As we have again and again pointed out, the Irish question is a social question, the whole age-long fight of the Irish people against their oppressors resolves itself in the last analysis into a fight for the mastery of the means of life, the sources of production, into Ireland.

Here we have Connolly measuring 'himself and his thought against the Irish historical background. Not idly or merely with the pleasure and interest of the social student, did he unravel all the knots of the earlier struggles. He toiled through the years, gathering his facts, subjecting them to analysis, with the precision of a man who is planning a military campaign. And that was what he was always doing. When we read Connolly's historical work we must remember that his purpose was not only to study history but to do his part in the making of it. Not only are we studying the history of Ireland in his book but we are observing the development of his own mind, how he absorbed and assimilated from the events of the past and came to believe in certain principles and methods.

It was characteristic of his logical and forceful mind that after studying the insurrectionary struggles of the past he began at once to feel out those elements and tendencies which would make for the Re-Conquest of Ireland.

13. Controversy

WHEN CONNOLLY came home from America he had little leisure to continue his historical studies. At once he was plunged into controversy and struggle. Yet his value as a social thinker was that—after he reached maturity—he never theorised aimlessly. He considered the Irish situation, the people and the needs of the time. Though concerned with practical questions of wages and conditions he never lost sight of his ultimate goal. The practical man who has ceased to believe in any comprehensive aim is a familiar figure. Even more pathetic is the theorist who has no influence on the people around him because his ideas are too remote from their lives. Connolly's mind was so tempered by experience that he avoided both pitfalls.

Rarely does a manual worker succeed in escaping—or defying—the stress of existence to the point of equipping himself with knowledge and developing his reasoning powers so as to become a real thinker, not merely a man who echoes other men's thoughts. When he is able to do as Connolly did, his handicaps become advantages. Just as hard work develops the muscles of a blacksmith, so the difficulties Connolly overcame developed the muscles of his mind. His thought was stamped deeply like the impression on a coin.

His experience was of greater value because he was concerned with social matters, with the problem of eliminating those evils of poverty and economic servitude. He knew the forces against which he had to fight and the methods used to maintain their dominance. This knowledge made him an excellent propagandist, a cogent reasoner, sharp in controversy but ready to see his opponent's point of view. He had a great belief in the cumulative force of truth, so that while he was relentless in attacking what he believed was false, he was indulgent to honest thought in an opponent.

In 1910—the year of Connolly's return—Fr. Kane, S.J., gave a series of Lenten lectures in Gardiner Street Church attacking Socialism. These were published in a pamphlet. Connolly replied to the criticisms in detail in his *Labour, Nationality and Religion* published in the same year. This is a good example of his persuasive and critical powers, especially as he wrote as a Catholic and a Socialist. The arguments for and against Socialism are much more familiar now than they were in 1910. But it says something for Connolly's quality as a controversialist that he always quotes the exact text of the indictment before proceeding to answer it.

Socialism was declared to be a denial of the Natural Rights of the individual. Connolly replies that,

if a man had all the patriotism of a Robert Emmet or a George Washington, if he had all the genius of a Goldsmith or a Mangan, if he had all the religion of a St. Simeon Stylites or a St. Francis d'Assisi, if he belongs to the working class, he has no effective Right to Live in this world unless a capitalist can see his way to make a profit out of him. Translated into actual practice these 'natural' rights of which the reverend gentleman discoursed so eloquently, mean for 23,000 families in Dublin the right to live in one room per family—living, sleeping, eating and drinking and dying in the narrow compass of the four walls of one room.

He goes on to say that

as factories, ships, railroads and buildings cannot be divided up in pieces they must be owned in common

and continues,

If land belongs to those who have tilled it, by what means, other than common ownership, shall we re-establish the right of that 75 p.c. of the Irish people who, according to Mulhall, were evicted between 1837 and 1887, or of those agricultural labourers who toil upon the land but own not one foot of it.

It will be noted that Connolly likes to bring these principles down to concrete examples.

When it is charged that Socialism means breaking up the home and destroying family life, Connolly asserts that Socialism, as he understands it, means no such thing. He points out that the least Socialist nation and classes have

the most divorces; America and its capitalist class, for example. Connolly insists that Socialism must be considered purely as an economic system.

Socialists are bound to agree upon one fundamental and upon that only. That fundamental is, in the language of Fr. Kane, 'that all wealth-producing power, and all that pertains to it, belongs to the ownership and control of the State.' Hence, upon all other subjects there is, and will be, the widest possible diversity of opinion.

Connolly goes on to defend August Bebel from the accusation that he wanted children taken away from their parents and brought up without the influence of the home. All that Bebel asserts, says Connolly, is that it is the duty of the State to provide for the education, care, physical and mental development of the child. Fr. Kane himself, had declared that 'the reason of civil society is in the insufficiency of the family alone to attain that fuller perfection of human nature which is the heritage of its birth.' Socialism proposes to implement the remedy.

Apart from these clashes over the significance of various Socialism proposals and principles, the interest of *Labour, Nationality and Religion* today lies in the light it casts upon Connolly's own conception of Socialist theory. When Fr. Kane denounced the Materialist Conception of History, he drew the following comment from Connolly :—

Let us examine briefly the true context of this doctrine. While remembering that there are a good many Socialists who do not hold it, and that a belief in it is *not* an essential to Socialism, it is still accepted as the most reasonable explanation of history by the leading Socialists of this world. It teaches that the ideas of men are derived from their material surroundings, and that the forces which made and make for historical changes and human progress had and have their roots in the development of the tools men have used in their struggle for existence, using the word "tools" in the broadest possible sense, to include all the social forces of wealth production. It teaches that since the break-up of common ownership and the clan community, all human history has turned round the struggle of contending classes in society—one class striving to retain possession, first of the persons of the other class and hold them as chattel-slaves, and then of the tools of the other class and hold them as wage-slaves; that all the politics of the world resolved

themselves in the last analysis, into a struggle for the possession of that portion of the fruits of labour which labour creates but does not enjoy, i.e., Rent, Interest, Profit. Here, let us say that no Socialist claims for Marx the discovery or original formulation of the doctrine of the Materialistic Conception of History—indeed, the brilliant Irish scholastic, Duns Scotus, taught it in the Middle Ages; but that more precise formulation of the guiding forces of history which relate to the influence of economic factors, and which we call Economic Determination, has indeed Marx as its clearest expositor, although the Irish economist, William Thompson, of County Cork, in 1826, had pointed it out before Marx was out of swaddling clothes.

Familiar as he was with the Socialist literature dealing with the Materialist Conception of History and Economic Determinism, Connolly refused to regard these phrases as incantations. He took from Marxian theory as much as he wanted to help him explain social struggles and the course of history. But he was conscious of something much more important—the human spirit—without which Marx himself would never have laboured in obscure poverty and exile for the truth as he saw it. Connolly refused to accept any explanation of the world that ignored this truth.

He was a man of great individuality, combining an acceptance of the Marxian view of economics and of history—as a record of social struggles—with the Catholic outlook which emphasised the value of the human soul. Connolly is not by any means the first man to realise the revolutionary implications of Christianity. If a man is simply a bubble of gas, a product of chemical action, he may be used as a machine handle or as cannon fodder without any question of the degradation of humanity. But once admit his possession of a soul and the case against human degradation becomes infinitely stronger.

Because of his belief in man's dignity and fine potentialities, Connolly claimed that no barriers should be erected to prevent men and women developing as free human beings. His belief in free nations—in a free Ireland—was founded on his belief in free men. He believed in the value of human life and was constantly engaged in trying to raise this to a higher level of thought and of spirit. Connolly used the Materialist Conception as a key to social

and economic processes but he would not accept this as explaining religion for he knew that at the core of man there is mystery and all the theories are only attempts to get a little nearer to the truth. He accepted this historical theory as that which gives the clearest explanation of social development.

In this controversy Connolly accepted Marxian economic teaching and argued the case for the Marxian theory of value which he had learnt in his days of Social Democratic activity in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Fr. Kane—in his final lecture—quoted the English Social Democratic writer, H. M. Hyndman, to show the benefits society derived from the Church in the Middle Ages. Hyndman said :

It is high time that the nonsense that has been foisted on to the public by men interested in suppressing the facts should be exposed. It is not true that the Church of our ancestors was the organised fraud which it suits fanatics to represent it. The monasteries and priests did far more for elementary education than is at all known . . . As to University education, where would Oxford be today but for the munificence of bishops, monks, and nuns? Fourteen of her finest colleges were founded by churchmen or abbots for the benefit of the children of the people. The Reformation converted these colleges into luxurious preserves for the sons of the aristocracy.

Hyndman—says Fr. Kane—

tells us how the Reformation converted the lands of the monasteries into the properties of rack-renting landlords. Abbots and priors were the best landlords in England. While the Church had power, permanent or general poverty was unknown. One-third of all tithes, one-third of all ecclesiastical revenue was first set aside to be given to the poor. The monks were the road-makers, alms-givers, teachers, doctors, nurses of the country. They built, furnished and attended the hospitals, and gave the poor relief out of their own funds. While the monasteries stood, the poor or unemployed were always sure of food and shelter.

He contrasts this with the days of the Reformation :

Under Good Queen Bess, unlicensed beggars over fourteen were flogged and branded on the left ear, unless someone would take them into service for two years. If they begged

again all over 18 were executed unless someone was willing to take them into service for two years; caught a third time death was the penalty, without reprieve.

Commenting on Hyndman's testimony, Connolly says first, that

it shows the Socialists have been uniformly fair in their treatment of the attitude of the Catholic Church of the past towards the poor.

But, he goes on, it is just these murders, barbarities and outrages practised by the aristocracy of the Reformation which constitute the title deeds of the landed estates in England and Ireland—that private property which Fr. Kane wants to defend.

The Reformation, he contends, was the Capitalist idea appearing in the religious field,

as Capitalism teaches that the social salvation of man depends solely upon his own individual effort, so Protestantism, echoing it, taught that the spiritual salvation of man depends solely upon his own individual appeal to God.

Yet it is irrational, he concludes, to condemn the Reformation—the child of Capitalism—while endorsing Capitalism—the parent.

Nothing made Connolly more angry than contemptuous references to the people, so when Fr. Kane says that in a Socialist community the Will of the People would be nothing more than the whim of the tyrant mob, the most blind and ruthless tyrant of all, because blindly led by blind leaders, Connolly springs to the defence:—

What is the political and social record of the mob in history as against the record of other classes? There was a time, stretching for more than a thousand years, when the mob was without power or influence, when the entire power of the Governments of the world was concentrated in the hands of the kings, the nobles and the hierarchy. That was the blackest period in human history. It was the period during which human life was not regarded as being of as much value as the lives of hares and deer; it was the period when freedom of speech was unknown, when trial by jury was suppressed, when men and women were tortured to make them confess crimes before they were found guilty, when persons obnoxious to the ruling powers were arrested and

kept in prison (often for a lifetime) without trial; and it was the period during which a vindictive legal code inflicted the death penalty for more than 150 offences—when a boy was hung for stealing an apple, a farmer for killing a hare on the roadside. It was during this undisturbed reign of the kings, the nobles and the hierarchy that religious persecutions flourished, when Protestants killed Catholics, Catholics slaughtered Protestants and both hunted Jews, when man 'made in God's image' murdered his fellow man for daring to worship God in a way different from that of the majority; it was then that Governments answered their critics by the torture, when racks and thumbscrews pulled apart the limbs of men and women, when political and religious opponents of the State, had their naked feet and legs placed in tin boots of boiling oil, their heads crushed between the jaws of a vice, their bodies stretched across a wheel while their bones were broken by blows of an iron bar, water forced down their throats until their stomachs distended and burst, and when little children toiled in mine and factory for 12, 14 and 16 hours per day.

But at last with the development of manufacturing, came the gathering together of the mob, and the consequent knowledge of its numbers and power, and, with the gathering together, also came the possibility of acquiring education. Then the mob started upon its upward march to power—a power only to be realised in the Socialist Republic. In the course of that upward march the mob has transformed and humanised the world. It has abolished religious persecution and imposed toleration upon the bigot of all creeds; it has established the value of human life softened the horrors of war as a preliminary to abolishing it, compelled trial by jury, abolished the death penalty for all offences save one, and in some countries abolished it for all; and, today, it is fighting to keep the children from the factory and mine, and put them to school. This mob 'the most blind and ruthless tyrant of all' with one sweep of its grimy, toil-worn hand, swept the stock, the thumbscrew, the wheel, the boots of burning oil, the torturer's vice and the stake into the oblivion of history, and they who today would seek to view those arguments of kings, nobles and ecclesiastics, must seek them in the lumber room and the museum.

This defence of the role of the people throughout history is not invalidated by the happenings of the past decade though it would certainly appear that Connolly was too optimistic in his belief that progress would go straight on, away from all these horrors of the past.

While he quoted "Saints and Pontiffs of the Catholic Church" in support of his social views, Connolly admitted that these have received strong ecclesiastical condemnation. The first part of his booklet is taken up with showing that various movements for Irish freedom, right throughout history, had to meet similar condemnation. But these movements have since received the endorsement of the nation. The same, he urged, is true of the movement for economic justice. "Socialism," he concluded, "is neither Protestant nor Catholic, Christian nor Freethinker, Buddhist, Mohammedan, nor Jew; it is only human."

In a controversy which Connolly had with Fr. MacErlean, over *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, in the columns of the *Catholic Times* for November, 1912, he made his position still more clear. Writing in the issue of November 8th, he declares :—

First as an Irish Nationalist and latterly as a Socialist, I have always accepted and understood the doctrine so well expressed by Fr. MacErlean that the Holy See must always acknowledge the *de facto* Government in any country without examining or deciding the question of its rightful title. But the considerations which compel the Holy See, as such, to recognise the *de facto* Government and the *de facto* social order are not binding on individual Catholics, and we, therefore retain to the full all our rights and prerogatives as citizens and workers for social betterment, without abating necessarily one jot of our Catholicity.

As individual Catholics, we claim it as our right, nay, as our duty to refuse allegiance to any power or social system whose authority to rule over us we believe to be grounded upon injustice.

Elaborating this view in the issue of November 22nd, Connolly writes :—

I admit unquestioningly the obligation resting upon the Holy See to recognise the *de facto* Government and the *de facto* social order in any given country or age. But side by side with, part and parcel of, that admission, and not to be divorced from it, I insist upon the right of the individual Catholic to disregard that obligation and to be a reformer of, or rebel and reformist against, the Government which the Holy See is compelled by its international position to recognise.

Without this right, Catholicity would be synonymous with the blankest reaction and opposition to all reform. As an example Ireland is illuminating. For the greater part of seven centuries the *de facto* Government of Ireland has been a foreign Government imposed upon the country by force, and maintained by the same means. The Holy See was compelled by its position to recognise that government, but the holiest and deepest feelings of the Catholics of Ireland were in rebellion against that government, and, in every generation, the scaffold and the prison and the martyrs' grave have been filled in Ireland with devout subjects of the Holy See, but with unrelenting enemies of the *de facto* government of Ireland. The firm distinction in the minds of Irish Catholics between the *duties* of the Holy See and the *rights* of the individual Catholics has been a necessary and saving element in keeping Ireland Catholic and he, by whatever name he calls himself or to whatever order he belongs who would seek to destroy that distinction, or make acquiescence in the political obligations of the Papacy, a cardinal article of Catholic faith, is an enemy of the faith and liberties of our people.

Connolly never took up a truculent attitude merely to make a sensation. He was as conciliatory as possible but when the interests of the workers or of the Irish nation demanded a stand, he had that intrepid quality of spirit which made him ready to declare his views whatever the opposition. When he returned to Ireland in 1910 he was a poor man, a man who had been driven out of Ireland in earlier years by poverty because of the uncompromising character of his social views. He came back ready to face any kind of persecution if need be for the sake of truth. No one can read his side of the controversy without recognising that here is a brave and honest man who will abandon neither his Catholic faith nor his passion for social justice.

His articles in *The Harp*, his controversies with Daniel De Leon and his other activities in America leave no doubt as to the reality of his belief. Yet these principles were never, in his view, any reason for supporting reaction. He had the same firm belief in nationalism—that is, in the right of every country to enjoy freedom. He also believed in international freedom and a united world movement of the workers, as the necessary culmination of the winning of freedom in each land. One thing he could never tolerate

was that patriotism should be an excuse for the Jingoistic waving of national flags to keep workers apart, to prevent intelligent thought and to serve the ends of reaction

His considered views on Nationalism, Socialism and Internationalism were expressed in a great many writings. Some of these were gathered from the *International Socialist Review* and first published by Charles H. Kerr, in Chicago, then reprinted in the pamphlet *Socialism Made Easy* issued by the Socialist Labour Party in Glasgow. In Chapter 3, under the heading, *Socialism and Nationalism*, he presents his ideas in dialogue form:—

Well, you won't get the Irish to help Socialism. Our Irish leaders tell us that all we Irish in this country ought to stand together and use our votes to free Ireland.

Sure, let us free Ireland!

Never mind such base, carnal thoughts as concern work and wages, healthy homes or lives unclouded by poverty.

Let us free Ireland!

The rackrenting landlord—is he not also an Irishman, and wherefore should we hate him? Nay, let us not speak harshly of our brother—yea, even when he raises our rent.

Let us free Ireland!

The profit-grinding capitalist, who robs us of three-fourths of the fruits of our labour, who sucks the very marrow of our bones when we are young, and then throws us out in the street, like a worn-out tool when we are grown prematurely old in his service—is he not an Irishman and mayhap a patriot, and wherefore should we think harshly of him?

Let us free Ireland!

'The land that bred and bore us,' And the landlord who makes us pay for permission to live upon it.

Whoop it up for liberty!

'Let us free Ireland!' says the patriot who won't touch Socialism.

Let us all join together and cr-r-rush the br-r-rutal Saxon. Let us all join together, says he, all classes and creeds.

And, says the town worker, after we have crushed the Saxon and freed Ireland, what will we do?

Oh, then you can go back to your slums, same as before.

Whoop it up for liberty !

And, say the agricultural workers, after we have freed Ireland? What then?

Oh, then you can go scraping around for the landlord's rent or the money-lender's interest, same as before.

Whoop it up for liberty !

After Ireland is free, says the patriot who won't touch Socialism, we will protect all classes, and if you won't pay your rent you will be evicted, same as now, but the evicting party, under command of the sheriff, will wear green uniforms and the Harp without the Crown, and the warrant turning you out on the roadside will be stamped with the arms of the Irish Republic.

Now, isn't that worth fighting for?

And when you can't find employment, and, giving up the struggle of life in despair, enter the Poorhouse, the band of the nearest regiment of the Irish army will escort you to the Poorhouse door to the tune of *St. Patrick's Day*.

Oh, it will be nice to live in those days !

'With the Green Flag floating o'er us' and an ever-increasing army of unemployed workers walking about under the Green Flag, wishing they had something to eat. Same as now !

Whoop it up for liberty !

Now, my friend, I also am Irish, but I'm a bit more logical. The capitalist, I say, is a parasite on industry—as useless in the present stage of our industrial development as any other parasite in the animal or vegetable world is to the life of the animal or vegetable upon which it feeds.

The working class is the victim of this parasite—this human leech ; and it is the duty and interest of the working class to use every means in its power to oust this parasite class from the position which enables it to thus prey upon the vitals of Labour.

Therefore, I say, let us organise as a class to meet our masters and destroy their mastership ; organise to drive them from their hold upon public life through their political power ; organise to wrench from their robber clutch the land and workshops on and in which they enslave us ; organise to

cleanse our social life from the stain of social cannibalism, from the preying of man upon his fellow man.

Organise for a full, free and happy life FOR ALL OR FOR NONE."

This extract is typical example of his Socialist propaganda writing, revealing the I.W.W. influence. He left no doubt in the mind of any student of his writings that he was a believer from the first in Irish national freedom. But at the same time he had nothing but contempt for those who would substitute flag-wagging for thought and action to remedy social evils. He held that to achieve real national freedom the Irish workers in town and country must use their political power to take control of the country.

Connolly was a nationalist and an internationalist, a man who was concerned with human dignity and the human spirit as well as with material comfort. Because of his many-sidedness—his possession of all those qualities that go to make up a complete human being—those who have single-track minds charge him with inconsistency. They fail to understand how he could believe in spiritual and material betterment, how he could reconcile nationalism and internationalism, the Labour struggle with the battle for Irish freedom.

In his controversial writings he never lost sight of the urgency of any of these causes and it is not his fault if he is too big to be pressed into any narrow mould. He was a man who loved freedom and hated oppression. He wanted all men to be free citizens in a free world. And in his controversies no less than in his actions, he showed that he had those qualities and the ideas upon which this freedom could be based.

14. Upheaval

A VIGOROUS Young Republican Party—with Labour sympathies—was growing up in Belfast, stimulated by Orange opposition to the demand for Irish self-government. Connolly was ready to give these young people his counsel and support, helping them to draw up manifestoes and appeals. His historical knowledge was invaluable, as when he told them that a thanksgiving service was held in Rome after the victory of King Billy at the Boyne. This they recorded in a leaflet stuck up in Belfast at the time of the Orange celebration.

In Connolly's mind the Labour and the National struggle could never be separated. While his trade union activities were chiefly concerned with wages and working conditions he was by no means limited to this. In Belfast local politics he stressed the need for the feeding of necessitous school-children. His agitation helped to get the Act extended to Ireland. He had championed the cause of hungry children since those early days in Dublin when he helped Maud Gonne to launch her campaign. Behind all his efforts was a fine conception of human freedom.

Wherever the battle of human freedom was being fought—in the industrial or the political Labour struggle, in the National cause or in the women's movement, Connolly gave practical support. This was the situation at the beginning of 1913, a fateful year in the annals of the Irish Labour movement. It was a time of growth and turbulence. Not long after the Irish Transport Union had been formed there was a bitter Labour struggle in Cork. The employers raised a fund to defeat the workers who were using the weapon of the sympathetic strike. The Cork employers won. It was their victory which encouraged the federated employers in Dublin to issue their famous ultimatum in 1913 to the members of the Irish Transport Union there. They could not understand how the union continued to grow throughout the country after the defeat

in Cork. The union thrived on defeat for it was based on the recognition that the workers were being oppressed and the need for a strong organisation to fight against this.

In the years just prior to the first World War there was Labour unrest not only in Ireland but in all the big industrial centres in Britain. There were baton charges in Liverpool and Mr. Winston Churchill—as Home Secretary—sent troops to guard railway centres even—as in Salford—against the wish of the local authorities. The unrest was most marked in Dublin because of the terrible conditions under which the people worked and lived. The Irish Transport Union and its leader, Jim Larkin, were at the centre of the turbulence. Dispute followed dispute and the growing idea of sympathetic action widened the scope of the conflicts. Connolly had taught the idea of the sympathetic strike and had done his best to rouse discontent. But most of his time was spent in Belfast.

Larkin rapidly acquired notoriety as the “Strike Organiser” for he was at work in the depths of Dublin. At first he was a dim figure, a lurid shape in the underworld, erupting at meetings of more respectable folk, where his aggressive personality secured a mixed response. But the people of the depths listened to Larkin. This underworld of Dublin was a pitiful thing, a thing of rags and pain. The unskilled labourers of the city huddled in the tenements with their families were a submerged class, the waves of life had closed down over their heads and they were plunged into despair. Connolly knew their plight for he had starved with them in the tenements many years before. But his talk of a new social order in those early years had not reached many.

With Larkin it was different. He did not trouble to theorise. A massive figure of a man, over six feet, with powerful lungs, great qualities of indignation and passion, Larkin stirred his hearers into self-confidence and hope. Such trade unionism as existed before he came was exclusive and had nothing to do with the labourers who drifted into the city, because they were too poor to pay their fares to America or even to Britain. These labourers and their families were a product of the famine years and the ruin

and despair which these left in their train. They were starved out of their country cabins and flung into the slums of the city, to be an easy prey for the sweater.

This mass began to move. The great value of Larkin was his unreasonableness. All the men of reason could explain blandly and smoothly how it was impossible to do anything with or for the people of the tenements. He disregarded them. He was the crater through which the rumblings of discontent secured flaming expression. There was something dangerously expressive and virile about this man. His massive shoulders, the fierce snap of his jaws as he spat out abuse at their enemies brought a thrill to the men and women who till then had been accustomed to regard themselves as the burden bearers, broken in to heavy brutalising toil. They not only resisted injustice but they made demands. They pressed forward. Strikes were frequent. And not ordinary strikes. Dock workers and carters took sympathetic action, helping other workers to win their battles. Transport workers refused to handle 'tainted' goods.

Connolly had explained the theory and had justified the sympathetic strike on the basis that an injury to one was an injury to all. Larkin applied this. Connolly widened the idea of the sympathetic strike when he took action in Belfast in support of Dublin workers. Larkin—the man of fire—was reinforced by Connolly—the man of ice. Connolly's task in Belfast was not easy for he had to build up the union after the turmoil and storm of the Larkin period, when the organisation that Larkin had represented there, repudiated him and deserted the workers because of his militant activities. And Larkin was not an easy man to work with. He had a dictatorial habit of mind.

From the end of January to the middle of August, 1913, there were about thirty strikes in Dublin and matters reached a climax. William Martin Murphy—leader of the Employers' Federation—informed the dispatch workers of the *Irish Independent* that they must choose between Larkin's union and his service. He issued a similar ultimatum to the tramwaymen. But on a sunny morning in August—during Horse Show Week, greatest social event of Dublin—the conductors and drivers of the trams, left their

vehicles, fixed the Red Hand badge of their union on their coats, told the passengers there was a strike on, and walked away.

Murphy and his Federated Employers were furious. It was said that they had received a promise from the authorities of all the force necessary to deal with the rebellious workers. Almost at once the threat of a mass lock-out was uttered. The employers had decided to exterminate the Irish 'Transport Workers' Union and they began making preparations.

When this struggle began Larkin sent for Connolly to help marshal the union forces in Dublin. Great meetings were held amid mounting excitement. Larkin spoke at Beresford Place to the huge crowd gathered outside Liberty Hall, the union headquarters. He talked to them and he sang to them, he defied Murphy and the employers, he jeered at the police. He made this great throng of submerged workers feel that they were a power in the city. At the same time, Carson was organising his Ulster Volunteers in the North and Larkin announced that if it was right for Carson to arm his followers, it was equally right for the workers of Dublin to arm in self-defence. He promised that if force were used against Labour, Labour would return blow for blow and that for every one on their side to fall, two would fall on the other.

After this meeting Larkin and four of his colleagues were arrested. He was charged with "conspiring with others for the criminal purpose of disturbing the public peace and raising discontent and hatred between the working classes of Dublin and the police and soldiers of the Crown and for the purpose of exciting hatred and contempt of the Government and of inciting to murder." In Larkin's speech may be found the germ of the Citizen Army idea—the idea of a Labour force to protect strikers from police attacks.

A mass meeting of the workers had been announced for Sunday, August 31, in O'Connell Street and the Government had issued a "Proclamation" forbidding this gathering. On the Friday night before this meeting Larkin spoke at Beresford Place and set fire to the proclamation, telling the immense crowd that, if alive, he would speak on Sunday as

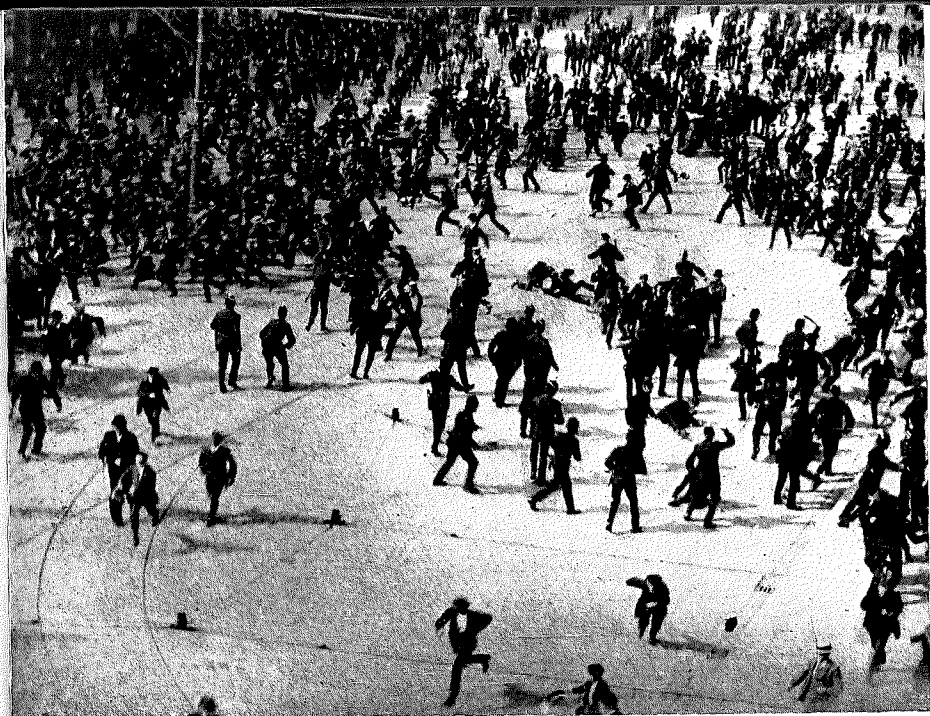
announced. Connolly spoke at this meeting, too, and talked about the need for the workers to arm themselves. A Dublin paper reported his speech under the heading: "Larkin's Lieutenant Calls For Battalions." In this speech Connolly suggested organisation on military lines for the strikers. The idea of a Citizen Army was in the air.

On Saturday morning—after the meeting—Connolly was arrested and taken straight into court. He was charged with inciting to riot and disorderly conduct. He defended himself in court in his very definite fashion. He told the court that the people were being deprived of their rights and that if they were not allowed to use peaceable means of settling their difficulties they would be driven to use revolutionary methods. So far as the proclaimed meeting was concerned he denied that they had told the people to come. All they had said was that they would be there. When it came to a choice of what was legal and what was right, they would choose what was right. Getting tired of continuing the argument, he said that the Crown had no right in Ireland, and never would have any right in Ireland. He refused to recognise the Crown. He refused to recognise the King's Proclamation when it was used against the Irish people. This was a Republican speech that went far beyond the matter of the proclamation. As a result Connolly was sentenced to three months imprisonment and taken away to Mountjoy Prison.

If the authorities imagined that they had Connolly safely stowed away for three months they were greatly mistaken. He immediately went on hunger strike for release, setting an example that was followed by many Irish prisoners in succeeding years. He forced his way out in a little over a week for, in those early days, the prison doctors were much more nervous about hunger striking than they were later.

When he was released—weak from hunger—he went back home to Belfast. His daughter, Nora, tells how thousands of people gathered about the station waiting for his arrival. Squeezing with difficulty through the crowd she asked a man what they were all doing there.

"We're waiting for General Connolly!" he replied loudly.



*Police attack public at proclaimed
Sunday meeting in O'Connell Street
where Larkin spoke.*

Connolly arrived and was taken in a car through the city. It was a triumphal procession. At the Custom House steps the crowd stopped the car and demanded a speech. He was not strong enough to speak for long. When the union offices were reached another speech was demanded. But a union official told them they would have to wait until Connolly was strong again. This reception in Belfast was spontaneous—quite unexpected—but it showed how Connolly's reputation had grown. It showed, too, that uncanny knack which masses of people have in sensing qualities of loyalty and leadership.

In the last week of September, 1913, Connolly wrote an article for *Forward*, the Scottish Labour weekly, describing how, on August 31, he walked round and round the prison ring in Mountjoy with about forty other prisoners, six paces apart. They were not allowed to talk but they conversed in whispers:—

The first question I asked was generally: 'Say, what are you in for?' the rest of the conversation ran thus:

'For throwing stones at the police.'

'Well, I hope you threw them and hit!'

'No, by God, that's the worst of it, I was pulled coming out of my own house.'

'Pulled' is the Dublin word for arrested. It was somewhat mortifying to me to know that I was the only person apparently in gaol who had really committed the crime for which I was arrested. It gave me a sort of feeling that I was lowering the moral tone of the prison by coming amongst such a crowd of blameless citizens.

'But the concluding part of our colloquy was a little more encouraging. It usually finished this way:

'Are you in the Transport Union?'

'Of course I am.'

'Good, well if they filled all the prisons in Ireland they couldn't beat us, my boy.'

'No, thank God they can't; we'll fight all the better when we get out.'

And there you have the true spirit. Baton charges, prison cells, untimely death, and acute starvation—all were faced without a murmur and, in face of them all, the brave Dublin workers never lost faith in their ultimate triumph . . .

While Connolly was in prison, preparations went ahead for the banned meeting in O'Connell Street for August 31—

the very day when Connolly was walking round the prison ring. Larkin was staying at Surrey House, the residence of Countess Markievicz, so as to be out of the way of the police. On the Saturday night before this meeting the first Labour fatalities of the strike occurred. Two men, James Nolan and James Byrne, were killed by the police. Nolan had his skull smashed and Robert Monteith—afterwards prominent in the Irish Volunteers—testified to seeing him beaten to death by drunken policemen.

Tremendous forces of police were mobilised in O'Connell Street on Sunday morning to ensure that the proclaimed meeting was not held. But Larkin—wearing Count Markievicz's best frock coat and a false beard, arrived in a car, disguised as a feeble old invalid. Bent almost double—to conceal his height—he was attended by his "niece," Miss Nellie Gifford. They proceeded to the Imperial Hotel, owned by William Martin Murphy, and Larkin went through to the balcony, straightened his back, tore off his beard and began to speak. A roar went up from the immense crowd thronging the street. But this changed to cries of pain and terror when the army of police flung themselves on the crowd and began to baton savagely all around them.

Casualties—men, women and children—were estimated at about 500. O'Connell Street was littered with hats and caps after the fray and hospitals were crowded. Larkin was immediately arrested and hustled away. The facts about "Bloody Sunday," as it was called, are so well known and authenticated that it would not be necessary to recall them except for the influence of this occurrence in gaining more widespread support for the workers' side and helping to sharpen the idea of a workers' defence force to resist similar attacks.

The Federated Employers issued their ultimatum to the Dublin workers on September 3rd, a few days after the O'Connell Street battering. It was a document to be signed by the employees of 404 firms in the following terms :

I hereby undertake to carry out all instructions given to me by or on behalf of my employers and, further, I agree to immediately resign my membership of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union (if a member), and I further undertake that I will not join or in any way support this Union.

Besides imposing this pledge the employers entered into an agreement with each other not to employ any member of this union.

The response to this demand was instantaneous. Men and women workers stood firm. The lock-out began, involving about 100,000 men, women and children—roughly a third of the inhabitants of the city. Thirty-seven other unions backed Larkin and the struggle became a test of endurance between the unskilled workers without any financial reserves and the employers, on the question of the right of the workers to belong to a union of their own choice.

15. The Great Lock-Out

DUBLIN WAS THROWN into turmoil when the lock-out was declared. Larkin came up for trial on October 27 and received a sentence of seven months. But the outcry in Britain as well as in Dublin secured his release on November 13. Connolly took command of the strike situation during the leader's imprisonment. And when Larkin was released he went across to Britain to initiate his "Fiery Cross" campaign of demanding strike support for Dublin.

A wave of industrial militancy, of strikes and unrest was affecting all the English cities. The *Daily Herald*, then a tiny unofficial Left organ, had taken up the cause of Dublin, helped by the biting cartoons of Will Dyson and the informed enthusiasm of W. P. Ryan. Larkin visited many English cities, calling for sympathetic strike action as well as contributions of food and money. He secured the support of all the Left elements, for whom the Dublin dispute was a spear to prod on their own more cautious leaders. The Larkin rallies often resolved themselves into open attacks on these leaders as well as demonstrations of support for Dublin.

Connolly also crossed over to London and spoke on November 1, in the Albert Hall. He was no stranger to British audiences but here he faced the largest he had yet addressed, winning support by his combination of cool yet passionate sincerity. G. W. Russell (A.E.) poet and co-operative philosopher, spoke at this meeting. Explaining the situation in Dublin he began:—"We no longer know people by the old signs and the old shams. People are to us either human or sub-human. They are either on the side of those who are fighting for human conditions in labour or they are with those who are trying to degrade it and thrust it into the abyss . . ."

The greatest contribution which G. W. Russell made to the struggle was his Open Letter *To the Masters of Dublin*

published in the *Irish Times* (Oct. 7th, 1913) which became the most widely quoted document of the strike. This read :—

Sirs—I address this warning to you, the aristocracy of industry in this city, because, like all aristocracies, you tend to grow blind in long authority, and to be unaware that you and your class and its every action are being considered and judged day by day by those who have power to shake or overturn the whole Social Order, and whose restlessness in poverty today, is making our industrial civilisation stir like a quaking bog. You do not seem to realise that your assumption that you are answerable to yourselves alone for your actions in the industries you control is one that becomes less and less tolerable in a world so crowded with necessitous life. Some of you have helped Irish farmers to upset a landed aristocracy in this island, an aristocracy richer and more powerful in its sphere than you are in yours, with its roots deep in history. They too, as a class, though not all of them, were scornful or neglectful of the workers in the industry by which they profited; and to many who knew them in their pride of place and thought them all powerful, they are already becoming a memory, the good disappearing together with the bad. If they had done their duty by those from whose labour came their wealth they might have continued unquestioned in power and prestige for centuries to come. The relation of landlord and tenant is not an ideal one, but any relations in a social order will endure if there is infused into them some of that spirit of human sympathy which qualifies life for immortality. Despotisms endure while they are benevolent, and aristocracies while *noblesse oblige* is not a phrase to be referred to with a cynical smile. Even an oligarchy might be permanent if the spirit of human kindness, which harmonises all things otherwise incompatible is present.

You do not seem to read history so as to learn its lessons. That you are an uncultivated class was obvious from recent utterances of some of you upon art. That you are incompetent men in the sphere in which you arrogate imperial powers is certain, because, for many years, long before the present uprising of labour, your enterprises have been dwindling in the regard of investors, and this while you have carried them on in the cheapest labour market in these islands, with a labour reserve always hungry and ready to accept any pittance. You are bad citizens for we rarely, if ever, hear of the wealthy among you endowing your city with the munificent gifts which it is the pride of merchant princes in other cities to offer, an Irishman not of your city who offered to supply the wants left by your lack of generosity was met with derision and abuse. Those who have economic power have civic power also, yet you have not used the power that was yours to right what was

wrong in the evil administration of this city. You have allowed the poor to be herded together so that one thinks of certain places in Dublin as of a pestilence. There are twenty thousand rooms, in each of which live entire families, and sometimes more, where no functions of the body can be concealed, and delicacy and modesty are creatures that are stifled ere they are born. The obvious duty of you in regard to these things you might have left undone and it be imputed to ignorance or forgetfulness; but your collective and conscious action as a class in the present labour dispute has revealed you to the world in so malign an aspect that the mirror must be held up to you, so that you may see yourself as every humane person sees you.

The conception of yourselves as altogether virtuous and wronged is, I assure you, not at all the one which onlookers hold of you. No doubt, you have rights on your side. No doubt, some of you suffered without just cause. But nothing which has been done to you cries aloud to Heaven for condemnation as your own actions. Let me show you how it seems to those who have followed critically the dispute, trying to weigh in a balance the rights and wrongs. You were within the rights society allows you when you locked out your men and insisted on the fixing of some principle to adjust your future relations with labour, when the policy of labour made it impossible for some of you to carry on your enterprises. Labour desired the fixing of some principle as much as you did. But, having once decided on such a step, knowing how many thousands of men, women and children, nearly one-third of the population of this city, would be affected, you should not have let one day to have passed without unremitting endeavours to find a solution of the problem.

What did you do? The representatives of labour unions in Great Britain met you, and you made of them a preposterous, an impossible demand, and because they would not accede to it you closed the conference: you refused to meet them further; you assumed that no other guarantees than those you asked were possible, and you determined deliberately in cold anger, to starve out one third of the population of this city, to break the manhood of the men by the sight of the suffering of their wives and the hunger of their children. We read in the Dark Ages of the rack and thumb screw. But these iniquities were hidden and concealed from the knowledge of men in dungeons and torture chambers. Even in the Dark Ages humanity could not endure the sight of such suffering and it learnt of such misuses of power by slow degrees, through rumour, and when it was certain, it razed its Bastilles to their foundations. It remained for the twentieth century and the capital city of Ireland to see an oligarchy of four hundred masters

deciding openly upon starving one hundred thousand people, and refusing to consider any solution except that fixed by their pride. You, masters, asked men to do that which masters of labour in any other city in these islands had not dared to do. You insolently demanded of those men who were members of a trade union that they should resign from that union; and from those who were not members you insisted on a vow that they would never join it.

Your insolence and ignorance of the rights conceded to workers universally in the modern world were incredible, and as great as your inhumanity. If you had between you collectively a portion of human soul as large as a threepenny bit, you would have sat night and day with the representatives of labour, trying this or that solution of the trouble, mindful of the women and children, who at least were innocent of wrong against you. But no! You reminded labour you could always have your three square meals a day while it went hungry. You went into conference again with representatives of the State, because dull as you are, you know public opinion would not stand your holding out. You chose as your spokesman the bitterest tongue that ever wagged in this island, and then, when an award was made by men who had an experience in industrial matters a thousand times transcending yours, who have settled disputes in industries so great that the sum of your petty enterprises would not equal them, you withdrew again, and will not agree to accept their solution, and fall back again upon your devilish policy of starvation. Cry aloud to Heaven for new souls! The souls you have got cast upon the screen of publicity appear like the horrid and writhing creatures enlarged from the insect world and revealed to us by the cinematograph.

You may succeed in your policy and ensure your own damnation by your victory. The men whose manhood you have broken will loathe you and will always be brooding and scheming to strike a fresh blow. The children will be taught to curse you. The infant being moulded in the womb will have breathed into its starved body the vitality of hate. It is not they—it is you who are blind Samsons pulling down the pillars of the social order. You are sounding the death knell of autocracy in industry. There was autocracy in political life, and it was superseded by democracy. So surely will democratic power wrest from you the control of industry. The fate of you, the aristocracy of industry, will be as the fate of the aristocracy of land if you do not show that you have some humanity still among you. Humanity abhors, above all things a vacuum in itself, and your class will be cut off from humanity as the surgeon cuts the cancer and alien growth from the body. Be warned ere it is too late.—Yours, etc., A. E.

As the 1913 struggle dragged on, Labour found more and more allies. A.E. declared that "his whole being went up in a blaze of indignation." W. B. Yeats wrote scornfully of the men who used starvation as a weapon to break the self-respect of the workers. Padraic Colum, James Stephens, Susan Mitchell—hardly a literary man or woman of front rank held aloof.

Republican leaders who within a few years would be side by side with Connolly in the National struggle came out definitely for Labour. Tom Clarke, the old Fenian, denounced the police bludgeonings in O'Connell St. with fierce passion. Padraic Pearse wrote of the rotten tenement buildings which every now and then collapsed, of the hunger of the people, and the brutality of the police. Thomas MacDonagh and Joseph Plunkett threw open the columns of their *Irish Review* for Connolly to state the Labour case. Long before 1916, Eamonn Ceannt—another signatory of the 1916 Proclamation—had identified himself with Labour when he wrote to *Sinn Féin* replying to Arthur Griffith's criticisms. All these and many more were drawn to the workers' side.

After the police attack in O'Connell St. on August 31st, an organisation was formed calling itself the Industrial Peace Committee. Consisting of many prominent and influential citizens this committee met frequently in the Mansion house and endeavoured to find some way of ending the bitter industrial conflict. But while the workers declared their readiness to confer with the employers, these refused to negotiate. Consequently the Committee found itself obliged to abandon its attitude of neutrality and to condemn the employers. This Committee is of historical interest because it was at one of its meetings held in the Mansion House that the proposal to form a Citizen Army of the strikers was first brought forward.

Mr. E. A. Aston—who acted as Chairman at one of the Mansion House meetings of this Committee—has told how Captain Jack White, D.S.O., proposed a motion to this effect. The Committee, says Mr. Aston, was unanimously in favour of the idea. But they had been given the Mansion House on condition that they would maintain an attitude of

neutrality in the dispute. Consequently Mr. Aston felt he had to rule the motion out of order. As a way out of the impasse it was agreed that the Committee should immediately adjourn to other premises. The difficulty was to find a place. Finally the Rev. R. M. Gwynn led a midnight procession of the members down Dawson St., through the Fellows' Garden, to his rooms in Trinity College, where the meeting was resumed. Here everyone was in favour of the proposition to create a Citizen Army from among the strikers. Professor Houston took contributions for the Citizen Army treasury and afterwards these were used to buy staves and boots for the force.

This Industrial Peace Committee (afterwards re-named the Civic League) was composed of University professors, writers and "intellectuals" of various types. The proposal to form a Citizen Army at this time had no military significance. It was brought forward on the plea that it would keep the strikers out of trouble, that it would teach them habits of discipline and self-respect. Had it not been for a technicality the Citizen Army project would have been decided in the Mansion House. As matters turned out it had its birth in Trinity College.

Captain White states in his book *Misfit* that "the first appeal I made for an Irish Volunteer Movement which got Press publicity was at a meeting of the Trinity College Gaelic Society." A meeting was also held in the Antient Concert Rooms at which both Captain White and Connolly spoke. The Provost of Trinity placed this meeting out of bounds for the students and threatened those who attended with expulsion. In consequence some eighty students, who normally would never have attended a political meeting, marched down to the meeting place in a body. It was one of the few occasions when a mass of Dublin students have taken any conspicuous part in any progressive movement. A Press report (of a hostile character) says that "Captain White spoke rather vaguely about Mr. Larkin's Volunteer movement and Mr. Connolly described what the Transport Union had done for the Dublin working classes."

Roger Casement sent a telegram to the Antient Concert Rooms meeting which read : "I understand you begin movement to drill and discipline Dublin workers. That is a good and healthy movement. I wish to support it and I hope it may begin a widespread national movement to organise drilled and disciplined Irish Volunteers to assert Irish manhood and uphold the national cause in all that is right." At this time there was no Volunteer movement in Ireland, other than that of Carson's in the North. The Irish Volunteers had their inaugural meeting at the Rotunda in Dublin on November 25, about a month after the formation of the Citizen Army.

Captain White states in his book that the same night as the Trinity College meeting, "Connolly gave it out publicly in Beresford Place that I had undertaken to organise a Citizen Army among the members of the Transport Workers' union." In the absence of Larkin, who was campaigning in England, Connolly welcomed the idea of the Army. His mind was filled with the tradition of armed revolt so this project of a strikers' army made a strong appeal. Casement's letter indicates how closely and naturally the formation of a workers' force was allied to the cause of National independence.

Larkin introduced Captain White and the Citizen Army project to a big meeting of strikers at Beresford Place, as Sean O'Casey has recorded. So the Citizen Army came into being. Captain White had the enthusiasm, the military experience and the habit of command which made it possible for him to drill and train an undisciplined mass of men. This Labour force was the first Volunteer organisation to accept the challenge of Carson's Volunteers. But it is also true that, at the beginning, the function of the Citizen Army as a strikers' defence unit overshadowed every other consideration. Some years afterwards Connolly himself wrote explaining the origin of the Citizen Army (*Workers' Republic*, May 29, 1915) : "Three men had been killed and one young Irish girl murdered by a scab, and nothing was done to bring the assassins to justice. So since Justice did not exist for us, since the law instead of protecting the rights of the workers was an open enemy and, since the

armed forces of the Crown were unreservedly at the disposal of the enemies of Labour, it was resolved to create our own Army to secure our own rights, to protect our members and to be a guarantee of our own free progress."

The members of the Industrial Peace Committee may have intended by their suggestion of a Citizen Army, as the Rev. R. M. Gwynn has written : "merely drill on military lines to keep unemployed men fit and self-respecting." But when they put staves into the hands of the strikers it could hardly have been expected that they would not use them in self-defence. At any rate the strikers suffered from no illusions or delusions on this point. Neither did their leaders. Attacks on pickets, police assaults on tenement homes, battles with Labour processions, all these happenings were a commonplace of the 1913 struggle. Soldiers were brought out to reinforce the police and fierce riots occurred.

In the *Report of the Commission of Enquiry* set up to investigate the 1916 Rising—three years later—Dublin employers and police officials revealed the depth of their hatred for the organised Dublin workers. Mr. W. V. Harrel, ex-Commissioner of Dublin Metropolitan Police talked about "the Larkinite conspiracy in Dublin from 1908 to 1913" and blamed the Government for not handling it in a stronger fashion. There is a certain grim humour in employers who joined together to lock out their workers and starve them into submission, referring to their victims as a "conspiracy." But it was quite usual. Sir Maurice Dockrell, a well-respected city employer, said at the Enquiry, that he employed armed guards—ex-policemen—to serve him during the strike. These men carried firearms and rode on carts and wagons. He followed up this admission by saying that the police were not active enough and that the Government handled the strike "too feebly." This is a fair indication of the attitude of the Dublin employers. The Commission Report states : "In the winter of 1913, while industrial strikes were in progress in Dublin, an armed force of working men, officially called the Citizen Army, was first created. As this force was partly armed, and the Dublin Metropolitan Police are an unarmed force, the employers

were, in some cases, compelled to arm their carters to resist intimidation by the strikers."

Actually and truthfully what the Commission called the "industrial strikes" in Dublin was the lock-out imposed by the employers. And this picture of the Citizen Army as an intimidatory force is seen in its true perspective when it is realised that the Army in its 1913 days was armed with hurleys and broom handles while, on their own showing, employers were allowed to supply their hirelings with guns. Captain White worked hard drilling the Citizen Army men at Croydon Park, which belonged to the union. Nora Connolly has described one such occasion :

... Here were its members, marching now to the right, now to the left at the command of Captain White. He was tireless in drilling them and the men responded as tirelessly. Right and left they marched, round the field at the double, into columns and out of them. Once he stopped beside Connolly and he was in a rage. Some command he had given was misinterpreted. His hands were clenched and he was fairly gnashing his teeth.

'Easy now, Captain,' warned Connolly. 'Easy now. Remember they're volunteers.'

'And aren't they great!' said Captain White, forgetting his rage in his admiration of the men.

Another order and the men marched past and, at a given place, received broom handles to practise rifle drill

This indicates the kind of weapons they possessed. One contingent of the Citizen Army—from the Aungier Street branch—bought fifty hurley sticks to protect their band instruments which the police threatened to smash up if they came out on the streets. It was facts of this kind which governed the rise and development of the Citizen Army in 1913. Those who want the details about this Labour force, with which Connolly will always be associated, will find it in my *History of the Irish Citizen Army* written at the request of the Citizen Army Council.

16. Fiery Cross

WHILE ALL THIS was happening in Dublin, a Special Trade Union Congress was called in Britain—on December 9, 1913—to deal with the demands that were being made for a General Strike in support of the Dublin workers or for a 'blockade' of Dublin to bring the dispute to an end. From early in September the lock-out had dragged on and it seemed no nearer an end. The British workers had given much help. Food-ships had been equipped by the Co-operative movement and there was general sympathy. But the real purpose of this Congress—as soon appeared—was to enable the British trade union officials to defeat Larkin. His opponents were smarting under the lash of his tongue. He was condemned for disruptive activities and the proposal for a strike in support of Dublin was decisively defeated. One after another, the British Labour officials rose and attacked Larkin. He was allowed twenty minutes to reply.

Larkin gave a marvellous exhibition of the kind of infighting at which he excelled. "Mr. Chairman and human beings," he began. Then he proceeded to castigate them individually as far as his time permitted. Running over his critics, he dragged out every dubious point in their records. "You said we were human beings," shouted one, wriggling under the castigation. "Yes," said Larkin with scorn, "but you don't give much evidence of it!"

As a pyrotechnic display this speech was remarkable. But it did not help Dublin. In any case, the minds of these delegates were made up and their votes decided. Connolly was present with Larkin and he attempted to recall them to Dublin realities.

"This conference was called to help Dublin," he said. "I think we should stick to that. Remember the workers of Dublin have been locked out for months. They are hungry and desperate."

"You should have thought of that before!" jeered a hostile delegate.

"If you think we are ready to withdraw a single word of criticism of your inaction," said Connolly impressively, "you are wrong. We will raise this at the proper time and place. We want you to concentrate on helping Dublin now."

In temperament Connolly had little in common with Larkin. To him the cause was always greater than the individual and he would not waste precious time in personal conflict. But at this conference he loyally supported his leader while emphasising that the Dublin workers—under enemy fire—should be considered first. He joined Larkin in calling for action because he was himself the chief advocate and theorist of the sympathetic strike. He had written that the Church, in the practice of Excommunication, applied the principle of sympathetic action with a thoroughness and ruthlessness that the Labour movement could not hope to equal. And the use of the boycott against the enemies of the people in Ireland always won his approbation.

After the conference, Larkin and Connolly put their case before a big meeting in London. Connolly was not such a flamboyant platform personality as Larkin. This thick-set, middle-aged figure looked more like a prosaic business man. But he spoke with searching simple sincerity, telling the story of the Dublin struggle, how the half-starved Dublin labourers were standing for the rights of manhood and refusing to sign the document pledging them to leave their union. He looked at his audience with honest eyes—eyes that pierced through lies and bombast and compelled the truth. Here was a man of quiet implacability, a quality that discounted mere platform eloquence. Always the personality of a man reaches out. In Connolly's case it was revealed in those level eyes, which looked always as if they were gazing down the barrel of a gun.

Connolly thought of his own people all the time. He did not try to score any smart points. He did not raise his voice unduly. Yet he made everyone realise that if he could save his people from suffering and assure them victory he would not hesitate to adopt any course of action. Connolly—and Larkin too—helped to light a fire of Labour enthusiasm in Britain. They brought a sense of religious conviction—

of idealism into the Labour struggle. All over the country young men and women responded.

Connolly spoke at the Albert Hall along with Bernard Shaw, Cunningham Grahame and G. W. Russell, who paid a further tribute to the manhood of the Dublin workers. He said :—

Nearly all the manhood is found among those obscure myriads, who are paid from five to twenty-five shillings a week. The men who will sacrifice anything for a principle get rarer and rarer above that limit of wealth. I am a literary man, a lover of ideas, but I have found few people in my life who would sacrifice anything for a principle. Yet in Dublin when the masters issued that humiliating document, asking men—on penalty of dismissal—to swear never to join a trades union, thousands of men who had no connection with the Irish Transport Union—many of them personally hostile to that organisation—refused to obey. They would not sign away their freedom, their right to choose their own heroes and their own ideas. Most of these men had no strike funds to fall back on. They had wives and children depending on them. Quietly and grimly they took through hunger their path to the Heavenly City. They stand silently about the streets. God alone knows what is passing in the hearts of these men. Nobody in the Press in Dublin has said a word about it. Nobody has praised them. No one has put a crown about their brows. Yet these men are the true heroes in Ireland today, they are the descendants of Oscar, of Cuchulain, the heroes of our ancient stories. For all their tattered garments I recognise in these obscure men a majesty of spirit. It is in these workers in the towns and in the men in the cabins in the country that the hope of Ireland lies. The poor have always helped each other, and it is they who listen eagerly to the preachers of a social order based on brotherhood and co-operation.

There is a humanistic ring about these words which fit them to express the mind of Connolly as well as that of A.E., poet and philosopher. Both had a deep faith in the humanity of ordinary people and an angry contempt for those who betray and mislead them. Yet these great meetings in London had little influence on the strike situation in Dublin. Friends in Britain were ready to take children from the strike area but such a fierce outcry rose in Dublin that few children were sent. Some thought their faith would be endangered. Others said frankly that if they

were given conditions of comfort and ease they would come back to their tenement homes full of discontent.

The Citizen Army mustered and drilled. With their hurleys and staves they protected their meetings and their band instruments. They taught the police that they could not attack pickets or strike processions with impunity. All the time the struggle dragged on—through summer and winter—for months and months.

Men stood outside Liberty Hall all day, every day, waiting for some change, some glimmer of hope. They and their families starved in the tenements, pawning all they had to pawn. Shopkeepers—dependent on working class customers—went bankrupt. Among these was Michael Mallin, later Chief of Staff of the Citizen Army under Connolly. Mallin had to put up the shutters after becoming very unpopular with the police for his outspoken support of the strikers. A soup kitchen was organised in Liberty Hall with the active assistance of Countess Markievicz, Hanna Sheehy Skeffington and others. But week by week Connolly saw the suffering of the tenements increase while courage still held off the shadows of despair.

Devotees of sweetness and light have condemned Connolly's bitterness, his irreconcilability. They do not make allowance for all the misery and injustice which he had to cope with in this 1913 period. Connolly was a man with a feeling heart, an emotional nature, even though he put an iron restraint on himself. What he felt during these months he has recorded in writings that appeared during the struggle. Successive attempts were made to bring about a settlement. Representatives of the British Trade Union Congress and leaders of the Church intervened to try to restore peace. But all these attempts failed because the employers determined not to have any settlement except that of abject surrender.

Two sittings of a conference were held in the Shelbourne Hotel at which a delegation of the British T.U.C. was present together with representatives of the employers. The conference adjourned to give each side an opportunity for reflection. Then the employers informed the T.U.C. delegates that no good purpose would be served by their



*Larkin arrested after speaking from
the balcony of the Imperial Hotel.
Disguised and wearing Count
Markievicz's frock coat.*

meeting again. Connolly wrote of the employers: "They were able to over-ride the law and to fill the prisons with old and young, men and women, boys and girls who attempted to exercise the picketing rights guaranteed to them by English law."

Dublin's Lord Mayor asked the employers to meet Labour in conference. They refused. Professor Tom Kettle made a similar request on behalf of the Industrial Peace Committee. A Commission arrived from England, headed by Sir George Askwith, to enquire into the situation. The employers briefed Tim Healy to use his bitter tongue on their behalf. But Larkin proved that he had just as bitter a tongue and a better case. The Commissioners—who had no Labour bias—held that the document presented by the employers "imposes on the signatories conditions which are contrary to individual liberty, and which no workman or body of workmen could reasonably be expected to accept." The employers rejected their suggestion of a Conciliation Court.

In November, 1913, Connolly took over the editorship of the *Irish Worker* while Larkin was campaigning in Britain. Connolly was always appreciative of what the British workers did to help Dublin and he spoke of the working people in Ireland and Britain as showing the highest point of moral grandeur yet reached by Labour. Food ships, despatched by the British Co-operative movement, came to the rescue. But Connolly never believed that Labour could win by measuring its financial resources against capital. For that reason he wanted sympathetic strike action. Writing in the *Irish Worker* (December 6, 1913) he said:—

"England has never helped Dublin. English workers have helped and Dublin workers will help them." This is a significant declaration for it shows that Connolly was not one of those foolish people animated by racial prejudices. He was opposed to the British Imperialist Government which he called "England." But he was an Internationalist standing for Labour solidarity overriding all frontiers. His best-known song *The Watchword of Labour*, published in

the issue of December 6, expressed the same idea, with its chorus :

Then send it aloft on the breeze, boys,
The Watchword, the grandest we've known,
That Labour must rise from its knees, boys,
And claim the broad earth for its own.

Still the dispute dragged on. Connolly penned his leader on *Arms And The Man* for his issue of December 13. Here he began to explore the possibilities of the Citizen Army which had been formed in October. He talked of the helplessness of the workers in the face of aggression and continued :

Then something took shape and form on the day on which we announced that the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union proposed to organise and drill a Citizen Army of its own . . . Following this came the uprise of Volunteer forces throughout Nationalist Ireland, and the stalwart young men who have ever cherished high dreams for Erin, commenced to learn the rudiments of drill. At first looked upon as a mere piece of Liberty Hall heroics, it acquired a different aspect when it was discovered that regiments had actually been organised, and drilling under the command of an experienced officer and competent non-commissioned officers was in progress nightly. A parade through the city, impressing the onlookers by its discipline and self-control, effectively dispelled all illusions as to the deadly earnestness of the men and their chiefs.

As Christmas approached there were widespread hopes of a settlement. A third of the city population were now suffering severely from lack of food, clothes, of the simple necessities of life. The lock-out had continued since early in September and men of goodwill felt that the employers would relent at Christmas time. Archbishop Walsh of Dublin made a plea for a conference. But at this conference the employers reiterated their demand that the workers must abandon their union. Under the heading *A Fiery Cross or Christmas Bells* Connolly wrote a leader for his issue of December 20. He said :—

Publicists of all kinds, philanthropists, literary men, lovers of their kind, poets, brilliant writers, artists, have all been conquered by the valiant heroism of the Dublin workers, have all been drawn within the ranks of the friends of the fighters

of Labour—all have succumbed to the magic charm of the unobtrusive men and women whose constancy amid sufferings has made this fight possible . . .

Poets, artists, authors, humanitarians and Archbishops may plead and beg for the ringing of the bells of Christmas for ever. The final word still rests with those who control the money bags.

He spoke of the men and women of the tenements as "the real heroes of this struggle" though he had a generous word for their allies. Yet in these articles he was urging that while Labour had right on its side it would not triumph till it had might, a power stronger than that at present wielded by its enemies. All the bitterness and suffering of the strike situation in these months when Labour held on so grimly made a sharp impact on Connolly's sensitive spirit. A.E. had written of these obdurate and ignorant employers, as blind Samsons pulling down the pillars of their own social order.

The strike ended indecisively after eight months or more. The workers began to drift back but the ban on the union was not imposed. Though crippled, the union still continued to exist. Many union members were victimised though Connolly fought harder against victimisation than on any other issue. The worst paid members suffered most for they were more amenable to the whip of starvation. While conceding that most of the employers did not act badly, Connolly gave details in the *Irish Worker* of the treatment meted out to women and girls. One shop manager, he asserted, paraded union applicants for work before the "scabs." He examined their clothes, hats, skirts and blouses, pinched their arms and made running comments on their physical condition. In an article headed *Bring On Your Libel Actions* Connolly challenged them to deny the truth of what he wrote and gave specimens of one particular manager's talk.

"So you had to come back when you got hungry, did you?"

"You have bad teeth; that is with eating the rotten English food from the food ships."

"Did you get that coat from Larkin?"

"It's a wonder that the Englishmen did not give you a better pair of boots."

This heavy wit was received with guffaws from the "loyal" workers.

The girls were paraded half-clothed before the works' doctor, only to be rejected when the 'examination' was over, a rejection determined beforehand and designed only to humiliate them. Connolly returned to this subject and warned the employers that he intended to expose any such bullying and disgusting treatment. This exposure was useful as a deterrent and as a record of events. It throws light upon Connolly's own character, showing that instinctive tendency to range himself on the side of the weakest and to come forward as their champion. It is not so much the way men bear themselves in victory as in defeat which is the truest index to their worth.

Larkin, speaking as President of the Irish T.U.C. in Dublin in the summer of 1914, claimed that in spite of everything the masters had not prevailed. The union had not been smashed. Connolly summed up the situation when he wrote on November 28, 1914, commenting on a version of the lock-out which had been brought out at the employers' expense :—

From the effects of this drawn battle both sides are still bearing heavy scars. How deep these scars are none will ever reveal . . . When that story is written by a Man or Woman with honesty in their hearts, and with a sympathetic insight into the travail of the poor, it will be a record of which Ireland may well be proud. It will tell of how the old women and young girls, long crushed and enslaved, dared to risk all, even life itself, in the struggle to make life more tolerable, more free of the grinding tyranny of the soulless Dublin employers. It will tell of how, like an inspiration, there came to these Irish women and girls the thought that no free nation could be reared which tolerated the enslavement of its daughters to the worst forms of wage-slavery, and how in the glow of that inspiration they arose from their seats in the workshop or factory, and went out to suffer and struggle along with their men. It will tell of how the general labourers, the men upon whose crushed lives are built the fair fabric of civilisation, from whose squalid tenements the sweet-smelling flowers of capitalist culture derive their aroma, by whose horny hands and mangled bodies are brought the ease and

safety of a class that hates and despises them, by whose ignorance their masters purchase their knowledge—it will tell how these labourers dared to straighten their bent backs, and looking in the faces of their rulers and employers, dared to express the will to be free.

And it will tell how that spectacle of the slave of the underworld, looking his masters in the face without terror, and fearlessly proclaiming the kinship and unity of all with each and each with all, how that spectacle caught the imagination of all unselfish souls so that the skilled artisan took his place also in the place of conflict and danger, and the men and women of genius, the artistic and the literati, hastened to honour and serve those humble workers whom all had hitherto despised and scorned.

Connolly's feeling and admiration for struggling labour comes clearly through these words. His own efforts in 1913 and 1914, during the great lock-out, convinced the workers of his reliability and won him increasing respect among all honest men. The writers, poets and thinkers, who came out on his side at that time were men and women of deep integrity. This helped to make them fine writers and it also determined the stand they took in that time of crisis.

1913 was no ordinary industrial struggle. It was the coming-of-age of the industrial Labour movement in Ireland. Every movement that is worth anything—that stands for anything real—sooner or later has its baptism of fire. Each man, too, has to pass the test in greater or less degree. The conflict in 1913 was all the more bitter because the authorities and the police regarded the "Larkinite conspiracy" as they termed it, as a seditious movement. And Connolly insisted from the beginning that the Citizen Army stood for an Irish Workers' Republic as well as functioning as a strikers' defence force.

This great dispute ended as the world stage was being set for the first European war, launched on August 4, 1914. Connolly had withstood the hammer blows of reaction in Dublin during the lock-out. Now when the dispute was ended, the Citizen Army dwindled. Men were afraid to be seen in a force which might lead to their being marked out for dismissal. And those who joined as part of their strike activity saw no purpose in remaining now that the strike was over. But Connolly's conception of the Citizen Army

was no limited one. Familiar as he was with the history of Irish insurrection he knew the part played by armed forces in the past. He was familiar, too, with the militant workers' movement everywhere, with its aspirations for social revolt.

When the first Great War came there was a surge of rebellious feeling in Ireland. The country was smarting under the conviction that because of Carson's volunteer bluster and sabre rattling in the North it was being cheated of the Home Rule measure promised and passed. It was also feared that Ireland's youth might be conscripted under a pretence of ensuring freedom for small nations, when that freedom was being denied at home. National feeling grew more defiant. Connolly, who regarded the European War as a betrayal of his life-long belief in the International solidarity of Labour, found his point of contact and unity with all those who opposed the war and the war-makers.

The Citizen Army counted for little in the aftermath of the strike. But the idea of the force was there and the most resolute, dogged and reliable men, hardened by the industrial struggle, remained as a solid core. Empty union halls and a feeling of weakness were left in the wake of the industrial conflict. This increased the bitter resolve of the few.

Connolly had returned to his union post in Belfast when the struggle ended. On the outbreak of the European War he issued a call for revolt not only in Ireland but everywhere where workers were capable of taking self-reliant action and not of merely obeying the commands of their enemies. He had a vision of insurgent barricades with, perhaps, Ireland setting up the first. He wanted to see Labour acting as the Citizen Army had acted, as an organised body of volunteers fighting for their own cause. These ideas of Connolly acquired more force because, when Larkin decided to leave for America, he was called back to take control of Liberty Hall.

The nucleus of the Citizen Army — composed of embittered anti-Imperialistic workers — was ready as a weapon to his hand. He grasped that weapon and proceeded to use it in the anti-conscription, anti-war campaign which — in its positive character — soon became identified with militant Nationalism and, more definitely still, with the

aim which Connolly always had in view, the achievement of the Irish Workers' Republic. But—especially after 1913—he was no Utopian. As a serious student of revolution he knew that the first need of the time was to gather all the forces of revolt together as allies against the established order.

So, though he advocated an Irish Workers' Republic, he began to work with those militant Nationalists whose social aims were not so radical as his own. Connolly had no doubt that another forward move would be made as soon as the workers and small farmers realised the necessity.

17. Shaping the Re-Conquest

ON JULY 26, 1914, an event known in history as the Howth gun-running took place. Irish Volunteers succeeded in landing 900 rifles and 26,000 rounds of ammunition from the *Asgard*, a yacht navigated by Erskine Childers. At Clontarf—half-way to Dublin—police and soldiers intercepted the Volunteers. But while the leaders parleyed, the guns were spirited away across the fields. As they marched back, the soldiers came into conflict with the people along Bachelor's Walk. They fired, killing three and wounding many more.

That week a Fianna gathering was being held in Dublin and two of Connolly's daughters, Nora and Ina, were up from Belfast. They stayed at a cottage in the Dublin mountains, belonging to Madame Markievicz. When the rifles were landed, some were brought out to this cottage. Next day it was thought best to take them to a safer place so the two girls spent the day going round in a car sitting on the rifles to camouflage the journeys. When Connolly heard of the successful landing he was delighted and rang up Nora telling her to be sure to bring some of the "new walking sticks" to Belfast. The girls were given two as a reward for their services and brought them home safely.

From this incident it is clear that, even before the first World War, Connolly's mind was turning towards guns. He was considering the role of the Citizen Army, too, for in the *Irish Worker* (May 30, 1914) he wrote: "We believe there are no real Nationalists in Ireland outside of the Irish Labour Movement. All others merely reject one part or another of the British Conquest—the Labour Movement alone rejects it in its entirety and sets itself to the re-conquest of Ireland as its aim."

In Dublin efforts were made after the strike to put the Citizen Army on a more permanent footing. A meeting was arranged for March 22, 1914, at Liberty Hall. Connolly was present at a preliminary meeting. So were Countess

Markievicz and Captain White. At the subsequent meeting Larkin spoke and announced that the Army would have a distinctive uniform. A Constitution was adopted in the following terms :—

1. That the first and last principle of the Irish Citizen Army is the avowal that the ownership of Ireland, moral and material, is vested of right in the people of Ireland.

2. That the Irish Citizen Army shall stand for the absolute unity of Irish nationhood, and shall support the rights and liberties of the democracies of all nations.

3. That one of its objects shall be to sink all differences of birth, property and creed under the common name of the Irish people.

4. That the Citizen Army shall be open to all who accept the principle of equal rights and opportunities for the Irish people.

A further clause was added on the motion of Countess Markievicz which read :—

5. Before being enrolled, every applicant must, if eligible, be a member of his trade union, such union to be recognised by the Irish Trade Union Congress

In clause 2, particularly, the Connolly emphasis—on national and international democratic aims—is given, though his name does not appear among the officers elected at this meeting. Sean O'Casey was appointed Secretary. At first the Citizen Army struck a note of fierce rivalry with the Irish Volunteers. Larkin and O'Casey were especially keen on proclaiming that it was a separate Labour force.

The *Irish Worker*—early in April, 1914—reporting a demonstration said that “a large number of the Citizen Army were in attendance headed by a standard-bearer carrying a beautiful new poplin flag, displaying the design of the Starry Plough, the work of Mr. Megahy.” This flag had a blue background, with glittering golden stars. The Army had its own uniform of a darker green than those worn by the Irish Volunteers and big slouch hats which Transport Union members used to fasten up on one side with the Red Hand badge of the union. The Dublin Trades Council officially approved the Citizen Army on April 6, 1914.

This re-birth of the Citizen Army, after the strike, indicated active interest but it had no special significance until the outbreak of the European War. Connolly's unrelenting opposition to the war, expressed from the very first, placed him in the forefront. The first shot had hardly been fired when he wrote his insurrectionary article *Our Duty in the Present Crisis* for the *Irish Worker* (August 8, 1914).

Connolly's first reaction to the European War of 1914 was that of an Internationalist calling upon workers everywhere to unite against their rulers who had flung them into war.

After speaking of the international struggle Connolly turns to Ireland. "Britain guarantees the independence of Belgium," he says, "but who will guarantee the independence of Ireland? Will the Volunteers?" He remarks, too, that it may mean "armed battling in the streets to keep in this country the food for our people."

So—at the outbreak of war—Connolly wants (1) an international widespread revolt of workers to stop the slaughter; (2) a determined stand for the independence of Ireland; and (3) the conservation of food for the people. The war stirred him to an expression of those fundamental aims. In the very next issue (August 15) he is calling for a united front of the Citizen Army and the Irish Volunteers on a basis of action. His words are clear :—

Imperious necessities of the hour call loudly for, demand the formation of a committee of all the earnest elements, outside as well as inside the Volunteers, to consider means to take and hold Ireland for the people of Ireland.

We of the Transport Union, we of the Citizen Army, are ready for such co-operation. We can bring to it the aid of drilled and trained men, we can bring to it the heartiest efforts of men and women who in thousands have shown that they know how to face prison and death, and we can bring to it the services of thinkers and organisers who know that different occasions require different policies, that you cannot legalise revolutionary actions and that audacity alone can command success in a national crisis like this . . .

Like every serious revolutionary, Connolly's thought became sharper and more practical at a time of crisis. He

planned how he could strengthen the forces of revolt by detaching from the other side all those who were discontented with the existing order. All his political life Connolly had been wrestling with the problem of how far the working class movement should join with others whose attitude in the social struggle was not the same. As far back as 1897 Connolly discussed this very question in a series of articles *The End and the Means* published in Alice Milligan's journal *The Shan Van Vocht* and in Keir Hardie's *Labour Leader*. The problem was purely theoretical in those early days but it is of interest to see that even then—as a young man—Connolly's mind was busy with these practical questions of social and national revolt.

In a section entitled *Ireland's Future* he advances the claim that the working class is "the only class in Ireland which has no interest to serve in perpetuating either the political or social forms of oppression—the British Connection or the capitalist system" and he proceeds :

On the working class of Ireland, therefore, devolves the task of conquering political representation for their class as the preliminary step towards the conquest of political power. This task can only be safely entered upon by men and women who recognise that the first actions of a revolutionary army must harmonise in principle with those likely to be its last, and that, therefore, no revolutionists can safely invite the co-operation of men or classes, whose ideals are not theirs, and whom, therefore, they may be compelled to fight at some future critical stage of the journey to freedom.

This early essay—on the face of it—appears to justify an attitude of isolation not in harmony with Connolly's later activities. It is the voice of that Connolly who said *Unity is good but honesty is better*. Yet in that same essay Connolly goes on to state the need for asserting Labour's economic and social demands because then, he says

we will have based our revolutionary movement upon a correct appreciation of the needs of the hour, as well as upon the vital principles of economic justice and uncompromising nationality; we will, as the true revolutionist should ever do, have called into action on our side the entire sum of all the forces and factors of social and political discontent

It is one of the amazing facts of Connolly's life that he could write with such mature thought and consideration in 1897 on the practical details of mobilising the forces for social and national revolt—a task which he was now undertaking in 1914. These matters that he discussed so carefully, in theory, had become questions of everyday adjustment and we are able to turn to his 1897 writings for guidance on his later activities. Connolly is one of those men carved out of a solid piece; he gets a little more rubbed or polished as the years go on. That is all.

Turning again to 1914 we see that Connolly is prepared to accept the aid and co-operation of any section going his way. But he will not compromise on any matter he regards as vital. He was bitterly hostile to John Redmond who endeavoured to capture the Volunteer movement by forcing his nominees on to the Volunteer Council. Writing in the *Irish Worker* (August 15) he warned his readers that an attempt would be made to bring in anti-Irish landlords and aristocratic officers to subvert the Volunteers. In the September 5 issue he wrote: "Would it not be better for all capable of bearing arms to resolve to fight and if need be to die for freedom here at home rather than be slaughtered for the benefit of kings and capitalists abroad . . ." Connolly was not the man to use such words lightly and this was a sign that he had decided on armed revolt.

His articles in the *Irish Worker* must not be regarded as unrelated expressions of opinion. They reach back in coherent thought to the *Shan Van Vocht*. Connolly was advancing a carefully thought-out policy. When he spoke in commemoration of Labour's martyrs of 1913—Nolan, Byrne and Alice Brady—at a meeting held at the Parnell statue he struck the militant note. In the *Irish Worker* (September 5) his speech is reported:

If you are itching for a rifle, itching to fight, have a country of your own; better to fight for our country than for a robber Empire. If you ever shoulder a rifle let it be for Ireland. Conscription or no conscription, they shall never get me or mine. You have been told you are not strong, that you have no rifles; start first and get your rifles after. Our curse is our

belief in our weakness. We are not weak, we are strong.
Make up your mind to strike before your opportunity goes.

This last sentence represents Connolly's wartime policy. It is an idea that he kept hammering at until he brought the armed rebels out into the Dublin streets. Some critics have written as if Connolly's advocacy of an armed rising was a strange and sudden aberration. But no examination of these pages of the *Irish Worker* or a comparison of these with his still earlier writings in the days of the Irish Socialist Republican Party lends the smallest support to this idea.

The biggest open challenge to Imperialism in the streets of Dublin took place the night of a recruiting meeting addressed by Asquith, Redmond, Dillon and other speakers in the Mansion House on September 25. Connolly wanted to seize the building the night before to prevent it being held. This was to be a joint operation carried out by Citizen Army men and Irish Volunteers. But the project was abandoned when it was discovered that soldiers were in occupation of the Mansion House. On the night of the meeting, Larkin, Connolly, Madame Markievicz and other speakers addressed a great gathering at Stephen's Green, voicing Ireland's opposition to the war-mongers. Citizen Army men armed with rifles and bayonets guarded this meeting, standing side by side with R.I.C. men gripping their carbines. The rifles and bayonets of both sides glinted under the street lamps and the situation was tense—especially as the Citizen Army had no ammunition.

Connolly warned the R.I.C. that any shooting of Irishmen at that meeting would be reported all over the world and would lead to trouble with Irish regiments at the front. Larkin made a flamboyant oration. After this meeting, demonstrations were held all over the city as the brake containing the speakers was escorted by Citizen Army men and a huge crowd to the various points. Sean Connolly—afterwards killed in the Rising—sang rebel songs, enthusiastic speeches were made and the city was roused. It was a Connolly tactic to mobilise popular feeling, to bring armed men into the streets and to familiarise people with the idea of revolt.

A crisis occurred over the split in the Irish Volunteers when Redmond delivered a recruiting speech to the Volunteers at Woodenbridge on September 20. A group of Volunteer officers belonging to the original anti-Redmond Provisional Committee, seized the Volunteer headquarters in Dublin on September 24, repudiated the Redmond section and denied their right to speak for the Volunteers. After the split the Redmondites called themselves the National Volunteers and it was soon revealed that they had by far the greatest numerical strength in the country. Dublin was the stronghold of the Irish Volunteers under Eoin MacNeill and Padraig Pearse. Connolly's part in all this was to back the Republican body. In his journal for October 3, he wrote :—

We bespeak for the Provisional Committee the support of all ready to face whatever the fight may entail in the determination that we shall show the world that though Redmond may sell Ireland, he cannot deliver the goods.

In the following issue of the *Irish Worker* (October 10, 1914) Connolly put forward a programme designed to unite all the elements, moderate and advanced, that were ready to serve the cause of National independence. He said :—

The Provisional Committee must attack aggressively, resolutely, openly, or they and their followers will be wiped out of existence. Aggressive action will convert the waverers better than a thousand speeches or a hundred printed proclamations. Again, let me repeat it, let us never forget it. This fight against Redmondism and Devlinism is a fight to save the soul of Ireland.

I would respectfully suggest that there are certain things which the Volunteers might at once initiate a campaign for, with the certainty of winning the adhesion of everyone worth their salt in Ireland.

Pledge the Irish National Volunteers to remain in armed service to Ireland and to resist attempts of any other nation to deprive Ireland of their services

Pledge the services of their armed forces in Ireland to enforce the repeal of all clauses in the Home Rule Bill denying to Ireland powers of self-government now enjoyed by South Africa, Australia and Canada.

Agitation for a definite object is the best recruiting campaign that the Volunteers could carry out; their pledge to fight for that object will be the guarantee of their success in their fight for the soul of Ireland. Volunteers, Forward! Forward! Forward!

This programme is valuable as indicating the way Connolly's practical mind worked. He based it on the Volunteer movement as a nation-wide organisation capable of rousing the country. He had no desire to strike any extremist note for he wanted to get the whole movement on the march or on the flow. To do this he emphasised the need for "aggressive action." The Connolly technique was to bring a plain issue forward around which popular support could be mobilised. This was an expression of his democratic faith.

There were many who wanted to make the revolutionary movement a matter of conspiratorial head-shakings and self-important inner circles. But Connolly had a different view. He believed that a movement which aimed at the bursting of bonds had to base itself on popular aspirations and grievances, that would ensure popular support. He made it clear that the Citizen Army under his guidance would not remain aloof but would co-operate in any forward movement, just as long as it was really going forward. This was in line with the attitude of the serious social revolutionaries in Europe in 1848 and Connolly showed his grasp of reality and knowledge of history when he took this stand.

The Irish Volunteers held a Convention in the Abbey Theatre on October 25, 1914. They faced a tense situation for they had excluded Redmond's followers from the organisation. Under Connolly's orders, a contingent of Citizen Army men helped to guard the Abbey Theatre and Connolly wrote in the *Irish Worker* (October 31) congratulating them on the success they had achieved. The Citizen Army was strongly represented at the Volunteer demonstration held on October 25 at St. Stephen's Green. In view of the fact that the Citizen Army had been formed first and that the Irish Volunteer organisation from its inception had been strongly criticised by Labour spokesmen, this friendly co-operation was a new policy. It proved that Connolly was no sectarian and that he would not let anything stand in the way of an effective gathering of forces.

As if to mark the change in policy by a formal change of leadership there was a farewell message from Larkin in the *Irish Worker* (October 24, 1914). This read:—"To my comrades of the Irish Citizen Army: in my absence Jim Connolly will take command . . ." Larkin was setting out for America where he engaged in stormy agitation and was imprisoned in Sing Sing for some years. Connolly remained in Dublin.



*Citizen Army Parade at Liberty Hall.
Connolly is standing on the steps.*

18. Open Conspiracy

WHEN CONNOLLY took his place as Commandant of the Citizen Army he at once made his influence felt. Michael Mallin became Chief of Staff and organised a section of the Army in the Emmet Hall, which belonged to the union. He was a man of military experience, gained in the British Army and he had a long connection with Republican activities. In earlier years he had been secretary of the Silk Weavers' Union in Dublin. Mallin had the same enthusiasm as Connolly for the Citizen Army and used to take his men on route marches through the city and surrounding country. He was indefatigable, too, in getting arms. In selecting Mallin as his Chief of Staff Connolly showed his judgment.

Captain Robert Monteith of the Irish Volunteers—a resolute man, very friendly to the Citizen Army—was suddenly dismissed from his employment at the Ordnance Department. He was served with a notice requiring him to live outside Dublin and other "Proclaimed Areas." Monteith went to see Connolly at Liberty Hall to get his advice. Connolly was busy with the *Irish Worker*, which had just gone to press. The country edition had been printed and the Dublin issue was on the way. When Connolly read the deportation order he at once phoned the printer to stop the press. The foreman printer told him that this was impossible now. Connolly cut in on his objections and explanations, repeating curtly, "Stop the press!"

The Citizen Army leader sat down and scribbled out the news of Monteith's deportation notice. Monteith was uneasy at the idea of holding up the paper. "It may cost a lot of money," he told Connolly. "I don't want to be responsible for that."

"Captain Monteith," said Connolly, "in these circumstances £30 or £40 is a small matter."

Monteith then announced that he was going to the Volunteer headquarters to find out whether he should obey the order.

"If I had the handling of the matter," said Connolly, "I would put you in position in Dublin, turn out every Volunteer in the country and say to the Government 'Now, come and take him!' Tell Hobson this and say that, if necessary, I'll turn out the Citizen Army. That would stop all these deportation orders!"

The Volunteers decided not to take the deportation order as a challenge but to use Monteith as an organiser in the country. Connolly had a poster drawn up announcing a public meeting for Sunday, November 15, to be held by the Citizen Army to protest against this deportation. The meeting was held in drenching rain but the Citizen Army turned out with their rifles. Challenging the authorities to treat any member of the Citizen Army as they had treated Monteith, Connolly told his audience that sooner or later they would have to get rid of the British Government or it would get rid of them. He moved a resolution pledging them to make Ireland a free and independent Republic.

Across the front of Liberty Hall appeared a huge scroll *We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser But Ireland*. This building was now an army centre and an arms centre. Besides drilling and marching, the Citizen Army concentrated on securing arms. Howth rifles, Boer Mausers, Italian thumblocks, Martini carbines, British service rifles, shot-guns and revolvers—all were pressed into service. Connolly marched his men through the city streets with arms in their hands, an open manifestation of revolt which distressed some of the Volunteer leaders. He said that the Army were true internationalists when they succeeded in adjusting French bayonets to fit German rifles to fight for Irish independence. The basement at Liberty Hall was turned into a munition works, where men and women worked in shifts—as indicated on a blackboard—making bombs in their spare time. Two men—detailed for the task by Connolly—spent months trying to construct a light machine gun in Liberty Hall. Connolly also introduced the idea of night manoeuvres round enemy strongholds in the city. On the board at Liberty Hall he chalked *Attack on Dublin Castle, Assault on the Magazine Fort*. Groups marched out with rifles to engage in mock attacks. Gradually he

accustomed his men to the idea of attacking these places which afterwards were centres of real attack.

For all his military strategy, Connolly never had an exaggerated view of the place of armaments in the Irish struggle. He was far more concerned with awaking a spirit of freedom, of self-reliance and of readiness for action. Evidence was given at the Commission of Enquiry, subsequent to the Rising, by Colonel Edgeworth Johnstone, Chief Commissioner of the D.M.P. concerning Citizen Army route marches. He reported that Connolly and Mallin often headed these marches and that Countess Markievicz frequently took part. Women and boys went out along with the men.

In the autumn of 1914 the Government decided to suppress the rebel journals. *Sinn Féin*, *Irish Freedom* and the *Irish Worker* were all suppressed. The last legal issue of the *Irish Worker* appeared on December 5 with a blank space where the leading article should have been. The printer had been warned by the official Censor, so he declined to print it. A surprise issue of the *Irish Worker* came out under Connolly's editorship on December 19, with the caption *Printed When The Censor Wasn't Looking*. This contained the missing leading article *Courts-Martial And Revolution*. In this article Connolly issued his deliberate challenge :—

A resurrection! Aye, out of the grave of the first Irishman murdered for protesting against Ireland's participation in this thrice-accursed war there will arise anew the Spirit of Irish Revolution.

Yes, my lord and gentlemen, our cards are on the table! If you leave us at liberty we will kill your recruiting, save our poor boys from your slaughterhouse and blast your hopes of Empire. If you strike at, imprison or kill us, out of our prisons or graves we will still evoke a spirit that will thwart you and, mayhap, raise a force that will destroy you. We defy you! Do your worst!

After the suppression of the *Irish Worker* Connolly attempted to fill its place with the *Worker* published by the Socialist Labour Press, his friends of earlier years. But it was difficult to run a paper that was printed abroad when the situation was changing so rapidly. And the police were

able to seize his supplies as they came off the boat. He decided to bring a printing press into the basement of Liberty Hall and defy the censorship. So, on May 29, 1915, the first issue of *The Workers' Republic* made its appearance. He did not escape criticism for bringing a printing machine into the union premises. Opponents prophesied that the union would suffer through his illegal activities.

"But it is such a small machine," Connolly explained blandly, in reply to his critics, holding out his arms to show them how big it was. "And it will be the union property, to print whatever you like. Think of the money you can save by printing your own reports and circulars!" When his most persistent critic admitted that a policeman had warned him of the consequences of bringing the machine into the hall, Connolly was easily able to rally the meeting to his side. Nobody wanted to be with the police.

Soon Connolly was printing *The Spark* and *Honesty*—rebel sheets—in addition to the *Workers' Republic*. In the first number of the new paper he announced his intention of enlarging the *Citizen Army Notes*—an earlier feature—and of giving details of revolutionary struggles in the past, studying these from the standpoint of military technique. He wanted to demonstrate from actual practice how far methods of street fighting, of barricades and the seizing of buildings could counter the efforts of professional troops.

An article on the Moscow insurrection of 1905 was followed by one dealing with Paris revolts from 1830 to 1848, Lexington, the Tyrol insurgents, Mexico, Irish guerrilla fighting and other armed struggles. Readers were advised to ignore the political character of these revolts and to study them solely from the standpoint of military strategy. They were told to cut them out, to keep them for reference, to look at them from the "standpoint of their value to those who desire to see perfected a Citizen Army able to perform whatever duty may be thrust upon it." Under the heading *Street Fighting* Connolly gave, on July 24, 1915, a resume of lessons in recent articles, making the general deduction, from the experience of insurrections of the past, that "defence is of overwhelming importance in

such warfare as a popular force like the Citizen Army might be called upon to participate in."

This was an open conspiracy, a military manual giving the technique of armed revolt. For Connolly to proceed with such teaching, in spite of the war-time suppressions all round him, gives a measure of the amazing, if quiet, audacity of the man. He supplemented this with lectures to the Citizen Army on military tactics. Open propaganda for revolt went along with the route marches in which the men carried rifles through the streets. The authorities considered suppressing Liberty Hall and its leader but they came to the conclusion that effective action would take a thousand men, that it would result in much bloodshed which would be difficult to justify before the country. So they left Connolly alone.

Many disputes occurred on the Dublin docks during October, 1915, for the shipping companies broke their agreement with the dockers over rates of pay. Connolly took the opportunity given by these disputes to drill and train squads of strikers. There was a long-drawn-out conflict with the City of Dublin Steam Packet Co. which invoked the Munitions Act—containing heavy penalties—against the strikers. The police became more aggressive, treating the pickets along the quays as they had been treated in 1913. When this was reported to Connolly, he ordered out a squad of Citizen Army men to the number of eight or ten, to march down the quays fully equipped with rifles and bayonets, to act as an armed picket at the shipping office. Halting outside the office they formed up in double line and with shining bayonets performed their picket duties like sentries. When the tramp of their feet was heard down the quay, the shipping clerks looked out of the windows of the office and fled at their approach. The police ceased to interfere and the dispute was quickly settled. This action by Connolly roused enthusiasm not only in Dublin but as far away as Glasgow where John Maclean, the Socialist leader, recommended the Dublin method of peaceful picketing to Glasgow workers.

Under Connolly's inspiration and direction the Citizen Army made ready for the Rising. The basement of Liberty

Hall became one big munition works. Then—on March 24, 1916—a surprise mobilisation of the Citizen Army occurred under actual service conditions. A small party of police entered the newspaper shop adjoining Liberty Hall on that day and began to search among the papers. A passage led to Liberty Hall, through a door at the back, and Connolly, who was in the hall, was sent for. Appearing in the doorway he asked if the police had a search warrant. The sergeant replied that they had not. Connolly turned towards the policeman behind the counter who was lifting a bundle of papers and, covering him with a revolver, said, "Drop those papers or I'll drop you!" The policeman dropped the papers.

He told the police that as they had no search warrant they were acting illegally and warned them that the first one to touch the papers would be shot. They backed out of the shop, leaving him holding the gun.

Countess Markievicz then arrived and informed Connolly that the printing office of *The Gael*—a Nationalist weekly—had been raided and the printing machinery removed. All the shops, she said, were being searched for copies of the current issue. When Connolly heard of the raid on the printing plant he thought that the same action might be attempted at Liberty Hall. So with the help of Madame Markievicz and Nora Connolly he made out 250 mobilisation forms for Citizen Army men to come immediately, fully armed, to defend their headquarters. It had been agreed that, if mobilisation was urgent, Connolly himself would sign the forms.

The next problem was to get the forms out of Liberty Hall and into the hands of the men. Police—plain clothes and uniformed—were swarming round the building. A reliable messenger was found in James O'Shea who—dismissed from the foundry where he had been a key man for munitions supply—was now working close to the hall, repairing armed trawlers. Every day he called at Liberty Hall during his dinner hour. Connolly saw him standing there, black with the dust and grime of his work, and called him into the room.

"Do you think you can deliver the mobilisation orders?" asked Connolly.

"I will try," answered O'Shea.

"Make the best try you ever did," said Connolly. "You must get through!"

The papers were slipped down the back of O'Shea's neck and he started out, eyed by the detectives who paid little heed to this grimy worker. He went very slowly till he turned the corner. Then he ran and delivered the forms to Tom Kane, Mobilisation Officer. He had to strip to get at the forms for they had slipped down further as he ran. O'Shea then took a batch of the papers to Mallin at Emmet Hall.

Mallin's first question was whether Connolly was safe.

"If he is not," said O'Shea, "there will be some dead men at Liberty Hall waiting to be buried, judging by what I saw there."

While the mobilisation was going on, the police returned to Liberty Hall with a warrant authorising them to search all newspaper shops to seize copies of *The Gael*. Connolly demanded that Inspector Bannon should read the warrant. Standing in the doorway leading from the shop to the hall, with a revolver in his hand, Connolly informed the police that their warrant to search ended at the threshold of that door.

"You will not enter Liberty Hall," he announced.

"We have no desire to enter Liberty Hall," answered the Inspector.

"I don't doubt it!" said Connolly grimly.

The police did not find any copies of the offending journal and soon departed. Citizen Army men began to stream in from all points of the city. *The Workers' Republic* (April 1, 1916) describes the scene as follows:—

In the machine shops of the railways, in factories, in the dockyard, along the docks, in the holds of coal boats, in stables, on carts, lorries and yokes of every description, in buildings in process of erection, the call reached the men and, on the instant, tools were dropped, work abandoned,

coats hastily snatched up and within five minutes of receiving the summons, the men were on their way, despite the threats, promises or supplication of foremen, bosses, superintendents or owners.

Men from Inchicore works reported to Emmet Hall, got their equipment and left for Liberty Hall, led by Mallin with a loaded revolver. O'Shea, who came along with Mallin, was struck by the amazement of the onlookers when all these groups of men in their working clothes, carrying rifles and bandoliers, converged on Liberty Hall. At O'Connell Bridge the policeman on point duty left his post and stared at them, like everyone else. Some had their shirt necks open and were covered with grime, others were in smocks or overalls marked by grease, coal dust, cement or sand. Some had whips hanging to their belts. One of the few well-dressed men was Sean Connolly, an office worker from the City Hall. They gathered at Liberty Hall. Others continued to pour in, all with rifles and bandoliers. Each had a story of difficulties overcome. One man, O'Keeffe, a carter, had received his mobilisation notice just as he was starting out with a load. He saw Connolly's name on it, put the chain on the wheel and went for his rifle. Several men arrived dripping wet. They received a rousing cheer. They had been working in a yard overlooking the canal when the call came. The doors were locked so they climbed over the wall and swam across.

The mobilisation was a great success and was a tribute to Connolly's influence as well as to his intensive training. Within an hour of the call, 150 armed men had arrived. Connolly addressed them in the big room and told them that the police had attempted to raid the hall. "From now on," he told them, "it will be necessary to have an armed guard on the premises day and night." Four points were selected for special guard—inside the front door, the top of the stairs, the machine room containing the press, and the roof. Each available man was to do four hours guard. From that night a guard was kept. Mallin or Captain Poole made regular visiting rounds.

All the time the Citizen Army was being trained and prepared, Connolly did not neglect the wider field of public

opinion. The country was alive to the danger of conscription. In October, 1915, the Dublin Trades Council had called upon the organised workers to join either the Citizen Army or the Volunteers to resist conscription. Professor Eoin MacNeill asked the Dublin Trades Council to co-operate with the Irish Volunteers. Leaders of the Volunteers met to discuss plans for joint action. Connolly demanded that the Volunteers should give a pledge to back the workers' resistance to conscription by military force if necessary. MacNeill strongly opposed giving such a pledge and no definite line of action was decided. Connolly criticised the hesitancy of the Volunteer leaders. During this period he interviewed every member of the Citizen Army and asked each one whether he was prepared to fight with the Citizen Army even if they had to fight alone.

Connolly's attempts to spur on the Volunteers and his incessant demands for action were resented by Volunteer leaders who said that he would put the British authorities on their guard. Because of this Connolly was kidnapped by their orders on January 19, 1916. He did not return to his work in Liberty Hall after lunch on that date. Subsequently it was learned that he was held in a house in the Lucan area while members of the Volunteer Military Council—Pearse, MacDonagh and Plunkett—discussed their plans with him, convinced him that they were in earnest and informed him that Easter Sunday had been fixed provisionally as the date for the Rising.

His friends at Surrey House did not see him again till he returned on Saturday night, January 22. Connolly never revealed the details of the discussion he had with the Volunteer leaders. But a basis of firm understanding was reached. From that date he took his place as a member of the Military Council and the Citizen Army moved still closer to the Volunteers. Connolly, it has been said, captured his captors.

When he disappeared there was consternation among Citizen Army leaders. It had been agreed that if anything happened to Connolly this would be the signal for an immediate Rising. Madame Markievicz urged that the fight should begin at once. But Mallin, who suspected the truth,

went to the Military Council of the Volunteers to demand Connolly's release and said that if this demand was not granted the Citizen Army would begin the insurrection by attacking Dublin Castle. An account of 'this kidnapping'—told from the Volunteer side—is given in P. S. O'Hegarty's *Victory of Sinn 'Fein*. The brief leader which Connolly wrote for the *Workers' Republic* (January 29) obviously had its origin in the discussions he had with the Volunteer leaders. This read :—

Our notes this week will be short. The issue is clear and we have done our part to clear it . . . we have planted the seed in the hope and belief that ere many of us are much older it will ripen and blossom into action.

For the moment and hour of that ripening, that fruitful and blessed Day of Days we are ready.

Will it find you ready?

After this incident the Citizen Army Council decided that Connolly should be given an armed guard. Liberty Hall was already under guard, night and day. Connolly was in an exultant mood as the time for the Rising drew near. He sensed that events were giving momentum to the revolutionary urge. His leading article on March 25, 1916, was a clarion call. It was headed *We Will Rise Again*. In it he spoke of the efforts made since the war began to drag Ireland behind the Imperialist machine and how those efforts had failed. He was pleased with the progress made.

This 17th of March will be for ever memorable . . . The magnificent parades of Volunteers under arms, the overflowing meetings, the joyous abandon of the Irish gatherings of all descriptions and, above all, the exultant rebel note everywhere manifest, all, all were signs that the cause of freedom is again in the ascendant in Ireland . . . The Cause is not lost, this 17th day of March has assured us that despite all the treason of the traitors, Ireland still remains as sure in heart as ever, and, though Empires fall and tyrannies perish, WE WILL RISE AGAIN.

Alive as he was to the value of symbols in this struggle Connolly prepared for the ceremonial hoisting of the green flag over Liberty Hall. At the present time—when the tri-colour is a familiar sign of national independence—the significance and emotional effect of the hoisting of the flag

is not at once apparent. In the Ireland of those days when Independence was still an aspiration, this open proclamation of national loyalty stirred deep feeling.

How it was regarded appears from the announcement in the *Workers' Republic* (April 8, 1916) under the heading *The Irish Flag* which read:—

The Council of the Irish Citizen Army has resolved, after grave and earnest deliberation, to hoist the green flag of Ireland over Liberty Hall, as over a fortress held for Ireland by the arms of Irishmen. This is a momentous decision in the most serious crisis Ireland has witnessed in our day and generation.

To hoist the flag in this way was regarded as proclaiming open rebellion. The Executive Committee of the Irish Transport Union was deeply perturbed at Connolly's announcement. A majority of the members decided on Wednesday, that a meeting should be summoned for the following Sunday to consider Connolly's action. Thomas Foran, the Union President, moved that an Executive meeting should be called on the next night to enable Connolly to attend and explain. By seven votes to five this resolution was defeated. Foran made another earnest appeal and succeeded in getting them to reverse their decision and to hear Connolly, though the majority were hostile.

When the Committee met on the following night, Connolly attended and explained his stand. He said he did not think it necessary to get permission from the Committee to unfurl the Irish flag over the Union premises. He did not think there would be any objection raised and if the day ever came that the Union did object, he would sever his connection with it. He refused to appeal to the members against the Committee on this matter and said that if they did not agree to the hoisting of the flag he would resign his position and issue a statement cancelling the ceremony. He made it clear that he, personally, had taken up a course of action from which he would not recede.

After his statement the majority of the Committee were still opposed, so he asked permission to speak to John Farrell—one of his strongest opponents—in private. They went into an adjoining room and here Connolly took Farrell

into his confidence, explaining that an insurrection was to take place and that the hoisting of the flag was part of the plan. Connolly appealed to him as an Irishman not to stand in the way. He said that the Citizen Army was marching out of the hall in a fortnight and probably they would never return. Farrell returned to the Committee room and announced that he had withdrawn his opposition. The Committee then agreed to allow the ceremony to proceed. Connolly's handling of these men was a big personal triumph. Even if they could not understand his motives or accept his uncompromising attitude, he silenced their opposition by force of personality.

The rank and file did understand. When the day of the ceremony came (Sunday, April 16) all the approaches to Beresford Place were blocked by tens of thousands of spectators packed tightly together. In front of Liberty Hall, the Citizen Army cleared a space and formed a square where the actual participants in the ceremony gathered. A Colour Guard of sixteen men, the Fintan Lalor Pipe Band, the Women's Section, the Boy Scouts under Captain W. Carpenter, the Colour Bearer—Miss Mollie O'Reilly of the Citizen Army—occupied the square, the men forming up on three sides. Connolly was in charge with other officers, Michael Mallin, Constance Markievicz and C. Poole.

All was done with military ceremony. The Colour Bearer advanced, received the Colours from the Commandant—James Connolly—and escorted by the Guard passed into the hall, up the stairway on to the roof. All eyes turned to the slight figure on the parapet, holding the flag as she advanced. She fastened this to the staff and, with a pull of the lanyard, the green flag, with the golden harp upon it, went fluttering to the top, billowing above the heads of the crowd.

Connolly gave the sharp order to present arms and the buglers sounded the general salute. The ceremony had a tremendous moving quality. As the flag billowed out there was an intense silence. Strangers looked at each other with tears in their eyes. Many stood crying unashamedly. Then there was a frenzy of cheering. People who had never met before shook hands excitedly. It was as if a cold tomb had opened and a loved figure—waited for with hopeless longing

—had suddenly appeared among them. The ghost of Irish nationality had taken on flesh. The spirit of Revolution was abroad again. In the hearts of the massed humanity jammed tight in all the streets surrounding Liberty Hall was a strange exultant stirring.

In this, Connolly felt as the people felt. That was his strength. He was satisfied. That night he gave a lecture to the Citizen Army men in the hall on methods of house-fighting, of breaking through walls, fighting from house to house and roof to roof. He said he was going to fight the way he wanted, not the way the enemy wanted. "The odds are a thousand to one against us," he concluded. "If we win, we'll be great heroes; but if we lose, we will be the greatest scoundrels the country ever produced. In the event of victory hold on to your rifles, as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached. We are out for economic as well as political liberty. Hold on to your rifles!"

Already the Citizen Army men had realised the persuasive value of their rifles. When it was decided to guard Liberty Hall day and night there was some grumbling about the presence of the Citizen Army there. Connolly was asked to take them out of the hall. He declared that so long as he was there the Citizen Army would remain. Then the critics decided to bring forward a resolution at a general meeting removing Connolly from his position as Acting General Secretary of the union. The Army heard about this and on the night of the meeting they filed in with full equipment and took up their positions with rifles and bayonets against the wall. Nobody said a word to them and they said nothing. But the resolution deposing Connolly was not moved. The Army understood the value of holding on to their rifles.

In his talk to the Citizen Army we see Connolly in thought and action on the eve of the Easter Rising. The more one looks at him the more solid he appears. All his study and experience and endurance had gone to fit him for the role he was now to fill.

19. Documentary

NOTHING SHOWS THE tenacious and logical mind of James Connolly more than the fact that while he was carrying out the detail work of planning the re-conquest, he could, at the same time, compile his case—based on history and theory—in the second section of his work *The Re-Conquest of Ireland*, which followed *Labour in Irish History*. The two together were afterwards published under the title *Labour in Ireland*.

Connolly was anxious that his historical work should have the widest possible circulation and, in that connection, a letter which he wrote to A.E. possesses considerable interest. I am indebted for this to Seumas O'Sullivan, Editor of *The Dublin Magazine*. The letter was written on February 4, 1914, from the I.T. and G.W. headquarters at Liberty Hall, Dublin, and reads as follows:—

Mr. George Russell.

Dear Sir,—I have been negotiating with my publisher, Roberts of Maunsell and Co., for the issue of a 1/- edition of my book *Labour in Irish History*, published in the first instance at 2/6. He tells me that if I can give him a cash order in advance for a quantity at special rates he will bring the cheap edition out immediately. The amount named at the rate quoted would cost £37-0-0 for which I would receive books to value. I cannot raise the money, but believe there is a great demand for the cheap edition, and am therefore asking a few friends if they will join with me in the venture, and advance me a few pounds for this purpose. I guarantee to repay any sum advanced within one year. Could you or would you be inclined to help? The money must be paid next week. My only excuse for troubling you is that this is not a personal, but a propagandist venture,

Yours

James Connolly.

From this letter two points emerge—Connolly's anxiety to reach working class readers and the slender nature of his own financial resources. Although his book had been published, and he had spent his life writing, lecturing,

organising, he yet found it impossible to advance £37 towards this cheap edition. In the letter there is no suggestion of any profit for himself even when the books are sold. He was concerned with circulation only because he wanted to spread his ideas and share his knowledge. His letter reveals that honesty and disinterestedness which marks his whole career.

The second part of his historical contribution *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* was first published at Liberty Hall in 1915 as a sixpenny booklet with a red cover on which there is a design of a figure rising from the tomb, half-dazed by the light of day, approaching the hilt of a sword which is fixed firmly in the ground. His foreword to the booklet begins :

The underlying tone of this work is that the Labour Movement of Ireland must set itself the Re-Conquest of Ireland as its final aim, that that re-conquest involves taking possession of the entire country, all its powers of wealth and production and all its natural resources, and organising these on a co-operative basis for the good of all.

He proceeds to demonstrate how Protestants and Catholics, North and South, have been exploited and how the re-conquest would mean the ending of that exploitation. His historical chapters have that fullness of knowledge and clarity of thought which one expects from Connolly at the height of his powers. When he comes to write about *Dublin in the Twentieth Century* and *Labour in Dublin* he leaves the history of long ago and turns to history in the making, to which he, himself, had already added a few foot-notes by way of strikes and agitation. The pages of this contemporary history, as he shows, are shameful enough.

In his chapter on *Belfast and Its Problems* Connolly is as analytical as when he writes about Dublin. He finds much of his factual material in the Reports of the City Medical Officer. He makes the same deadly use of these documents as Marx did of Reports by Factory Inspectors in Britain, revealing the wretched conditions of factory workers. Here is the same exactness, the same attention to detail, the same objectivity which makes the indictment unanswerable.

Facts and figures of consumption among mill workers, of the number of premature births among women working in mills and factories are given. While his remedy for these evils is to have the industries owned by the community, he puts forward a series of demands calculated to mitigate the sufferings of these victims. These are : 1. The abolition of the early morning start. 2. The abolition of all task or piecework or "rushing" systems. 3. Reduction of working day to the limit of eight hours or less, forbidding physical and mental exhaustion. 4. Compensation for accidents to equal full pay of injured workers. 5. Pensions to all widows of workers killed at work, to be a charge on the firm employing the worker.

These sweated workers and victims of consumption in Belfast are, he says, descendants of the men who "fought for civil and religious liberty at Derry, Aughrim and the Boyne." If the poor, sweated descendants of Protestant rebels against a king had, today, one-hundredth part of the spirit of their ancestors, he declares, the re-conquest of Ireland by the working class would be a much easier task. Common sufferings—north and south—should "provide a common basis of action—an amalgam to fuse us all together, and that as we suffer together, we should fight together that we may be free together." This is Connolly's teaching on the question of unity between north and south.

While Connolly was busy with Labour and National revolt he found time to speak on behalf of the women's movement which was making its militant demand for the rights of citizenship. He presents the case for woman suffrage in his book, a case universally conceded though it was fiercely contested in his day by reactionaries who have to be dragged along as humanity marches forward.

Characteristically—in this chapter—Connolly begins by drawing attention to the wretched conditions of labour under which women and girls lived in Dublin. Turning to the Labour movement, Connolly asserts :

In Ireland the woman's cause is felt by all Labour men and women as their cause; the Labour cause has no more earnest and whole-hearted supporters than the militant women. Rebellion even in thought produces a mental



*Citizen Army Guard on the
roof of Liberty Hall.*

atmosphere of its own; the mental atmosphere the women's rebellion produced, opened their eyes and trained their minds to an understanding of the effects upon their sex of a social system in which the weakest must inevitably go to the wall . . .

His indignation is in proportion to the weakness and helplessness of the victims of injustice. He writes :—

The worker is the slave of capitalist society, the female worker is the slave of that slave. In Ireland that female worker has hitherto exhibited in her martyrdom an almost damnable patience. She has toiled on the farms from her earliest childhood, attaining usually to the age of ripe womanhood without ever being vouchsafed the right to claim as her own a single penny of the money earned by her labour, and knowing that all her toil and privation would not earn her that right to the farm which would go without question to the most worthless member of the family if that member chanced to be the eldest son.

The daughters of the Irish peasantry have been the cheapest slaves in existence—slaves to their own family who were in turn slaves to all the social parasites of a landlord and gombeen-ridden community . . . The Irish peasant, in too many cases, treated his daughters in much the same way as he regarded a plough or a spade—as tools with which to work the farm.

Connolly speaks of the hardships and dangers endured by Irish girls forced to emigrate to save themselves from starvation. A contributory factor to this position is, he points out, the idea that the eldest son takes the farm, so that the girls least fitted to struggle have been packed off across the ocean with, as a parting blessing, the injunction to be sure and send some money home.

He sums up :

Those who prate glibly about the 'sacredness of the home and the sanctity of the family circle' would do well to consider what home in Ireland today is sacred from the influence of the greedy, mercenary spirit born of the system of capitalist property; what family circle is unbroken by the emigration of its most gentle and loving ones. . . . Just as the present system in Ireland has made cheap slaves or untrained emigrants of the flower of our peasant women, so it has darkened the lives and starved the intellects of the female operatives in mills, shops and factories . . . Of what

use to such sufferers can be the re-establishment of any form of Irish State if it does not embody the emancipation of womanhood.

When Connolly wrote about the emancipation of woman it is clear that he did not mean only the right to vote. He meant something far more fundamental, nothing less than that men and women should unite to bring about a just social order. In this, Connolly is in line with Labour thinkers in other lands. Yet—though he had a far larger aim—he still felt the need for supporting the immediate demand of the women's political movement, for he was both honest and practical. While asserting that the victory of Labour can alone give woman full social emancipation, he pledged his aid to the militant women in their fight :

None so fitted to break the chains as they who wear them, none so well equipped to decide what is a fetter. In its march towards freedom the working class of Ireland must cheer on the efforts of those women who, feeling on their souls and bodies the fetters of the ages, have arisen to strike them off . . .

In his chapter *Schools and Scholars* Connolly examines the educational system as it applied to Dublin, Belfast and the country. This chapter is partly historical and partly a record of the wretched school accommodation provided for children in his day. He had memories of his own attendance as a barefoot child at a rural school. His recital of the difficulties, the dangers to health through bad school buildings; the way in which children were deprived of education because it was more profitable to make them toil in fields or mills, contains once more his emphasis on personality. Always he put life before profit. His comment on the educational system enables us to check up on what has been done—and left undone—to remedy the evils.

. . . we have in our cities squalid, unhealthy, wretched abominations, where teaching is a torture to the teacher and learning a punishment to the taught. Where the democracy functioning through a representative public body would supply a competent staff of well-paid teachers and splendidly-equipped, heated and lighted buildings, the present system of despotically controlled education gives us a staff of

wretchedly paid teachers with no rights, but with duties continually increasing. These unfortunates are condemned to carry out the most important function of modern society in buildings totally unsuited for the purpose, badly ventilated and drained, and in most instances totally unheated save at the expense of the unfortunate head of the teaching staff.

When Connolly came to write of *Labour and Co-operation in Ireland* he had a broader canvas. He recalled the success of the Ralahine experiment in Co. Clare until it was killed by landlordism. But his main interest did not lie in isolated colonies. The work carried on by the Irish Agricultural Organisation Society and its leaders, Sir Horace Plunkett, Fr. Finlay S.J., and especially by his friend, George Russell had his warm approval. The *Irish Homestead* under A.E.'s guidance, declared war on "gombeenism" and sought to give the small farmer lessons in the value of co-operation. "Every petty exploiter denounced the movement," said Connolly. But just as the farmers banded together in the Land League, so they were willing to use co-operation against landlords and village bloodsuckers. A.E. had used the *Irish Homestead* to support the Dublin workers in 1913, meeting with criticism from his colleagues of the I.A.O.S. over this, for they declared their neutrality.

Other lands—notably the Scandinavian countries—Connolly recorded, had led the way with Government aid in marketing butter, cheese, eggs and other produce on a big scale. Connolly took pride in the fact that at the time he was writing :

Over 100,000 Irish farmers are now organised in Co-operative societies. We have co-operative creameries, co-operative marketing, co-operative banks, and projects for co-operative fishing are already well on their way.

Both Connolly and Russell were united in the view that the small farmers of Ireland had much to gain "by creating a market among a sympathetic and prosperous Irish working class . . . A millionaire having only one stomach can only consume what one stomach requires, he cannot consume more of the staple products of our Irish farms than a well-paid tradesman would require and demand . . . every upward move of Labour in Ireland which adds to the income of the

working class, and transforms its members from semi-starved slaves into well-paid toilers creates thousands or tens of thousands of new customers."

Here they both saw lines of future alliance between workers in the towns and small farmers in the country who want a home market which they may supply on co-operative lines. Connolly suggested the establishment of co-operative stores in the cities by organised labour to help the co-operative farmers and he visualised trade unions putting their funds into co-operative enterprises in the country so as to make life in the rural districts easier and to ensure food for themselves. This "farmer-worker" movement has been popularised widely since Connolly's time. But A.E., and himself, pioneered the idea in Ireland.

Connolly was never content merely to theorise about future developments. All these things, said he, wait on the time when workers in the towns and small farmers in the country join together to secure political power. In his last chapter *Re-Conquest—A Summing Up* he listed those regenerating, progressive forces which he wanted to see linked together to achieve national and social freedom. Towards a virile and honest Labour movement it was Connolly's belief that all other movements rooted in a real desire for social progress must bend and flow. He ended with his confession of faith as a Labour thinker:—

Labour in Ireland tends to become more and more self-reliant and in its self-reliance it discovers its strength. Out of such strong self-reliance it develops a magnetism which will draw to it more and more support from all the adherents of all the causes which in their entirety make for a regenerated Ireland.

The Gaelic Leaguer realises that capitalism did more in one century to destroy the tongue of the Gael than the sword of the Saxon did in six; the apostle of self-reliance amongst Irishmen and women finds no more earnest exponents of self-reliance than those who expound it as the creed of Labour; the earnest advocates of co-operation find the workers stating their ideals as a co-operative commonwealth; the earnest teacher of Christian morality sees that in that co-operative commonwealth alone will true morality be possible and the fervent patriot learns that his hopes of an

Ireland re-born to National life is better stated and can be better and more completely realised in the Labour movement for the Re-Conquest of Ireland.

No doubt there are many gaps in this presentation. The National movement has not gone straight along the lines which Connolly's optimistic outline suggests. But he makes no rash prophecies of speedy national regeneration. The Labour movement did not retain its leading position in the National forces which for a time Connolly secured by virtue of his resolute character and his clear thinking.

A small country, suffering from arrested development, whose economic life has been dammed up and thwarted for centuries, almost inevitably expresses itself in the outworn capitalist form of private enterprise which Connolly condemned as no longer capable of ensuring the nation's well-being. Energetic small men spring forward to be little captains of industry, reaching for the glittering prizes of the competitive world. But if we care to look behind the old labels and forms adopted by the New Ireland we see an increasing intervention by the State in matters of transport, power, industry and commerce. Mumbling the old shibboleths, the experts have—by their acts—to pay tribute to Connolly's grasp of economic facts. When the primary motive is just a scramble for profits by economic troglodites, the people suffer both as producers and consumers. Squabbles over fixed prices and unedifying bickerings among profiteers, all bear witness to Connolly's economic wisdom. He charted the line of economic progress which must be followed to avoid national shipwreck.

Connolly's primary value to Ireland was not so much that of an economic leader as of a planner and man of action in the national struggle. He saw what had to be done at the time and was the man of his epoch. His task was to draw all those forces together that were needed to upset the balance of the old regime. In doing this he proved that he was a true revolutionary and no mere sectarian. If we consider his *Re-Conquest of Ireland* as a documentary covering the Ireland of his day and the immediate needs of the struggle, his masterly grasp of essentials is clear.

Thirty years after his death his work can stand as a social and political analysis as well as a manual of national struggle. And not least is the consideration that Connolly was penning this analysis of the Irish situation at the very time when he was engaging in the practical task of building the insurrectionary force to challenge the alien Government which seemed to be firmly established in the country. Theory and practice went together for—as he maintained—“the only true prophets are they who carve out the future which they announce.”

20. Divided Councils

AS THE EASTER RISING approached, Connolly's task became one of still greater responsibility. Inside the Irish Volunteers there was a division between the Irish Republican Brotherhood section—under the leadership of Pearse—and the more moderate element behind Professor Eoin MacNeill. The first group was definitely heading for a Rising but, in accordance with I.R.B. tactical considerations, MacNeill had been put at the head of the Volunteers as the nominal leader while key positions were supposed to be held by I.R.B. men. MacNeill was not informed of the decision to fight until a few days before the date fixed for the Rising and, by this time, the I.R.B. section had made it clear that Pearse's orders in a crisis took precedence over his. MacNeill adopted a vacillating attitude towards these plans for a Rising, depending apparently upon what advice or pressure he received from his friends. Finally MacNeill informed Pearse, on the Thursday before the insurrection that, short of informing the British, he would do all he could to stop the Rising. But the I.R.B. section felt they could rely on his silence if not on his co-operation.

Connolly, as the leader of the Citizen Army, did not come directly into these preliminary conflicts. There was no division of opinion in the Citizen Army. They had planned for a Rising and they intended to fight. Connolly had left none of his men in the slightest doubt about this. To him they were armed citizens, not parts of a military machine merely obeying orders. His faith in democracy made everything much simpler and clearer, so far as the Citizen Army was concerned, when the time for action came. But, besides being the leader of the Citizen Army—with its single purpose—he was also a member of the Military Council directing the Rising and he was appointed Commandant-General of all the Republican Forces in the Dublin area. His selection as the chief military officer on

the Republican side demonstrates the confidence that all felt in him but this increased his responsibility enormously.

The first open setback to the revolutionary plans was the failure of Casement's effort to deliver arms by means of the German ship *The Aud*. Casement arrived in Ireland from Germany by submarine at the same time as the arms ship. Owing to various mishaps *The Aud* was not met by the Volunteers when she arrived off Tralee. And when Casement landed from the submarine he was arrested. Captain Monteith, who had landed with Casement, was able to send a message to Connolly, the gist of which was that if the Rising was contingent on German aid, it was unwise to go on. Connolly, who had never relied on German Imperial help—he detested all the Imperialists—was unmoved by this message. He held that Ireland must win her own freedom.

Rumours of Casement's arrest floated round Dublin though this was not reported in the press. It may have been this—relayed through his friends—which finally determined MacNeill to countermand the Volunteer mobilisation notices for Easter Sunday, the date fixed for the Rising. Early on Saturday, MacNeill is said to have been persuaded that if the Rising were impeded the authorities would at once order widespread arrests. For that reason the leaders thought they could rely upon his silence. But he had a second thought later in the day. He cycled down to the offices of the *Sunday Independent* in Dublin after midnight and handed in a notice countermanding the "manoeuvres." This notice prominently displayed, reached every part of Ireland on the Sunday morning. It read:—

Owing to the very critical position, all orders given to the Irish Volunteers for tomorrow, Easter Sunday, are hereby rescinded and no parades, marches or other movements of Irish Volunteers will take place. Each individual Volunteer will obey this order strictly in every particular.

This action—entirely unexpected—killed the preparations for a Rising in the country for there was no opportunity for the Military Council to get any further word to the districts. How disastrous this was is clear from the description given by Nora Connolly of the confusion in the

Volunteer camp at Dungannon. Here some hundreds of young men with full military equipment, and girls with first aid outfits waited for the fight to begin. Suddenly, to their bewilderment, word arrived for them to demobilise. Nora Connolly determined to go to Dublin at once to see what was wrong. Six of the girls went with her. As they departed by train, they saw another Belfast contingent of Volunteers trooping from the station in high spirits, knowing nothing about the demobilisation order.

At five o'clock on Easter Sunday morning, Nora and her companions reached Liberty Hall. She demanded to be taken to her father.

"Is it very important," said the Citizen Army guard. "The Commandant did not get to bed till after three."

"I must see him at once," said Nora.

She went along to his room, knocked and entered. Connolly was sleeping on a low camp bed.

"What is wrong?" she asked, going over and kneeling by his side. "Are you not going to fight?"

"Not going to fight!" said Connolly, rousing himself and instantly alert. "If we don't fight now, all we have left to hope for is that an earthquake will come and swallow us up!"

In Connolly's careful studies of the armed risings in the past, his greatest condemnation had been reserved for those leaders who talked bombastically, who roused the people and then failed them, who preached revolt and left the rank and file to suffer repression without striking a blow. It was such conduct, he thought, that took the heart out of the nation. He was determined that he would not be numbered with such men. Had he not written that he would never take the responsibility of holding back a man who wanted to fight for Ireland.

This word from the North was the first inkling he had that MacNeill finally had decided to oppose the preparations for the Rising. His daughter told him what had happened—the eager contingents arriving and then the message which destroyed everything.

"This is very different from what we have been led to expect," he said sternly. "Are you sure that what you have told me is true?"

"Do not take my word alone," she answered. "Call in the other girls and ask them."

He did so and they confirmed her story.

He sent for the officer on duty.

"Get me six men who know the city," he said sharply. "Now," he continued, turning to the girls, "I want each of you to go round with these men to the addresses I give and tell your story as you told it to me. Then ask them to come here!"

Nora Connolly was taken to a house near Parnell Square where she met Sean MacDermott. He was pale and tired looking. He listened to her story in silence and said he would come at once.

One by one they came in—the members of the Military Council. Sean MacDermott, Tom Clarke, Joseph Plunkett—his neck swathed in bandages—Michael Mallin, Padraig Pearse, Thomas MacDonagh. A Council Meeting was held.

This last Military Council meeting held in Liberty Hall was guarded by men of the Citizen Army, posted at the doorway and on the stairs. Connolly exerted himself to save the Rising. He knew and the others knew that, with the arrest of Casement and the discovery of the arms ship, orders for their arrest would be issued. If they were to strike at all it must be before Dublin Castle could deliver its blow. Tom Clarke wanted the Rising for Sunday evening as planned but it was agreed by the others that MacNeill's action and its effect on the country demanded a change. Agreement was reached that Easter Monday at noon should be the time fixed for the Rising. Word might then be got to the country.

After the meeting Nora saw her father again. He was in high spirits now, singing softly to himself. She saw him in uniform for the first time, an erect, broad-shouldered, soldierly figure, with twinkling grey eyes. She buckled on his sword.

"You should be doing that for some young fellow!" he chuckled.

"Is everything all right now?" she asked.

"Yes, it's all right—all right now!" he answered, with deep-toned satisfaction.

The *Sunday Independent* arrived with MacNeill's notice cancelling the Volunteer parades. Connolly asked Pearse if he could explain this and Pearse replied that he knew nothing of it.

Nora reminded her father that he had written her saying that MacNeill was a danger, that the need for a neutral figurehead was gone, that he should be replaced.

"Yes," replied Connolly, "but I couldn't——"

He broke off. Connolly had never believed in these wheels within wheels, revolving in different directions. He had the simpler, more democratic outlook of the Citizen Army.

Although he exerted himself to save the situation—and succeeded—Connolly could not prevent confusion in the country. MacNeill's action had destroyed the possibility of concerted revolt in all areas. The Republican Proclamation was printed on Sunday in the basement of Liberty Hall. It was finished on Sunday night. This document has the ringing quality which marked the American Declaration of Independence and the French affirmation of the Rights of Man. It is a statement of national liberties for which men were prepared to die. Connolly and Pearse each had a hand in the drafting.

Early on Easter Monday morning, Nora Connolly and her friends from the North came to the hall. The 1916 Proclamation was unrolled and they were asked to memorise it as well as they could. It was considered too dangerous a document for them to carry. Pearse spoke solemnly to them. MacDonagh relieved the tension. "So you are off to the North," he cried. "Here you are, a fine strapping bunch of girls. We starting a revolution and you thinking how quickly you can get away from the city!"

"At twelve o'clock," Connolly told his daughter, "the fight begins!"

Other messengers were sent to different parts of the country to try to repair the damage which MacNeill had done. This point requires stressing because it has been

said that 1916 was intended to be merely a "token Rising," a blood sacrifice. If this were so, the leaders would hardly have exerted themselves to send out messengers at this late hour to rally the Volunteers in the country districts. Connolly, Pearse and the others knew that when MacNeill smashed their plan for a concerted Rising, he made their situation desperate. But they did not despair of remedying it and the fact that they tried, showed that they hoped for success though they were ready to face military defeat, believing—as Connolly always maintained—that not to fight after such preparations and pledges, would be much worse than defeat.

Police and military evidence given at the Commission of Enquiry into the Rising indicates that Connolly was quite right in his judgment that the Rising had to be pushed on swiftly while there was time. Lord Wimborne was pressing for a raid on Liberty Hall on Easter Monday morning, just before the Rising took place. But the authorities were hampered by the fact that many officers had holiday leave. Plans for attacking Liberty Hall and arresting all the leaders had been under discussion for some time. One proposal mentioned was that 100 police and 100 soldiers should rush Liberty Hall. But this was rejected. Another suggestion was that 1,000 soldiers should surround the building and take all the leaders together. These plans were actually being discussed in Dublin Castle when the Citizen Army contingent made its attack, seizing the guard room at the Castle entrance on Easter Monday.

After Casement's arrest, the arrival of the arms ship and MacNeill's countermand order, the authorities must have realised quickly that the plans for an insurrection were serious and, if nothing had been done over Easter, a mood of dejection would have spread among the Volunteers. It would have been easy enough then to have taken the leaders and added 1916 to those other "might-have-been" insurrections which Connolly always held up to derision. Because Connolly saw this danger and acted quickly, he prevented the 1916 movement fizzling out like a damp squib.

Tom Clarke pressed for action and all the leaders agreed to the Monday plan. But, without Connolly's initiative and

the undivided support of the Citizen Army, the Volunteer leaders might have postponed action out of weariness and disgust at the mobilisation muddle. If this had been done immediate arrests would have followed. Connolly effectually prevented this and his greatest contribution to the struggle of Easter Week was to ensure that the Rising took place. This served as an essential preliminary to the successful struggle for National Independence which came later. 1916 lit the fuse.

Connolly had sent out a special Mobilisation Order to the Citizen Army in these terms, *All ranks will parade at Liberty Hall with full equipment on Sunday at 3.30 p.m. (Signed) James Connolly, Commandant.* On Sunday afternoon Citizen Army men and women came trooping into the hall. Their mobilisation order stood. In one room, work went forward to finish up the last of the bombs. Many had spent their holiday making bombs or remoulding "sparrow hail" into buckshot. Some of the women had worked all night trying to get a cartridge belt perfectly adjusted to the machine gun which had been made in Liberty Hall. But they could not get it to work smoothly. So it was never used.

Outside Liberty Hall a growing crowd watched the men coming in or fixed their eyes on the square-built structure as if waiting for it to move. All knew that this was the centre of the revolt. Partly to divert the crowd and partly to give the men something to do, a route march was arranged through the city. They started out at about 4 p.m. All were keyed up and ready for action. But they returned to the hall for tea. That night an improvised concert was held in the hall.

Every Sunday evening there was a concert. But as it was expected that the fight would be on, no programme had been arranged for this evening. Michael Mallin played his flute and rebel songs were sung. Since Connolly had taken over at Liberty Hall the concerts had had a more definite propaganda note of revolt. Soon after he had assumed control he appeared in the hall one Sunday night and listened while a popular comic song was being sung. When it was over he informed those present that Liberty Hall

stood for definite Labour and National ideas. "Any of you who don't like this can go!" he said. The Liberty Hall concerts were part of that intense life of the rebel movement, songs and recitations were coloured with these ideas. Connolly had written a propagandist play *Under Which Flag*—striking a note of National struggle. Long before the night of the final concert, the atmosphere of the Liberty Hall functions was revolutionary and Republican.

At 11 p.m. on Sunday night "lights out" was sounded and the men made their beds in the dark. No one was allowed to leave the hall without permission. Next morning there was a roll call. Mallin read out the names of the men selected for the attack on Dublin Castle. Others were selected for the different garrisons—Stephen's Green, Harcourt St. Station and the G.P.O., which they were to occupy with a larger force of Irish Volunteers.

Around ten o'clock James O'Shea—a Citizen Army man—was on guard by the passage leading to No. 7—Connolly's room—with instructions that no one was to pass and that he was to fire if the stairs were rushed. Mallin came down from No. 7 and spoke to O'Shea. At about 11.30 the "Fall In" call was sounded by Bugler W. Oman and the men gathered at their various stations. Captain R. MacCormack led the first section off at about 11.35 a.m. to seize Harcourt St. railway station and other points of vantage. As he started out, Connolly hurried after him. "Get along as soon as you can, Mac," he urged. "I expect fighting will have begun in other areas before you arrive!"

Other detachments moved off. A contingent of about 150 men, headed by Connolly, Pearse, Clarke, MacDermott and Plunkett—all signatories to the Proclamation—mustered outside Liberty Hall and marched away to occupy the G.P.O. One woman accompanied them, Connolly's secretary, Winifred Carney. All his life Connolly had striven to create a situation in which there was an open struggle between Irish democracy and Imperial domination. Now, in spite of all hesitations and treacheries, he was successful. The fight had begun.

21. Last Days

THOSE WHO HAVE STUDIED the Easter Rising and those who took part in it agree that Connolly was an inspiration to all with whom he came in contact during that week. It seemed as if in this fight his personality found complete expression. Before vacating Liberty Hall—in accordance with the promise made to his trade union colleagues—he told his Citizen Army men that with the Rising there was no more Citizen Army and no more Irish Volunteers but only the Army of the Irish Republic. He was Commandant-General of this force in the Dublin area. His Citizen Army men recall his words before they left Liberty Hall.

"The Citizen Army will have the post of honour. Your detachment will attack.

"Others will be taking up defensive positions.

"Open fire on the stroke of the Angelus bell."

In the sunlit morning the main body of rebels marched up through Abbey St. to occupy the G.P.O. which it had been decided to make the general headquarters. Captain R. McCormack of the Citizen Army says that Connolly had urged the occupation of the Bank of Ireland—the old Irish Parliament building—for this purpose, as it was more central and had a greater symbolic value. But Pearse objected as he did not wish to have this building under fire. Connolly gave the order to attack when they were opposite the G.P.O. This operation was well-timed. The post office staff and the general public were hustled out and an armed guard placed at the door.

Windows were barricaded, the tricolour hoisted, and Pearse, standing on the steps, read the Proclamation, declaring the Republic established. There were two tricolour flags and, high above all, a green flag with the words *Irish Republic* in flaming orange. Connolly clasped Pearse's hand warmly and cried: "Thank God, Pearse, we lived to see this day!" Winifred Carney was soon busy in the main hall typing despatches for other garrisons, a

Webley revolver lying beside her on the post office counter. Connolly took her out into O'Connell St. to show her the flags waving above the building. "Isn't it grand!" he said.

O'Connell St. was quiet after the occupation. It was swept clean of soldiers and police. But it was the calm that preceded the storm, that storm of flame and shell-fire which burst over the G.P.O. for the next five days. The Easter Insurrection has a growing literature, for its significance has become more evident with the years. For those who wish to study the event there are many books, including my own *Green Banners*, and *The History of the Citizen Army*. Here it is Connolly's part that matters.

On Tuesday, April 25, the *Irish War News* was issued by the rebels. It was a four page sheet and its purpose was to hearten the fighters and their supporters. Connolly breathed the spirit of exultant struggle into this as into everything else. Hard fighting went on around the various garrisons, particularly the City Hall, Stephen's Green and Mount St. Bridge. Liberty Hall—though empty—was under bombardment from a gun boat on the Liffey. The attention paid to this building was a lefthanded tribute to Connolly and his force. Liberty Hall was attacked because it was regarded as the centre of the revolt. The G.P.O. was soon under fire and the ring of flame drew closer. Incendiary shells were added to the constant cannonade which grew fiercer on Wednesday and lasted all through Wednesday night. On Thursday—towards the end of the week—O'Connell St. was blazing. Flames leaped up from the great buildings all round. Iron girders were melted and twisted, plate glass windows ran into solid lumps. At night the garrison, blackened and wearied, stood on guard, waiting for the expected attack or they sang defiantly in the lurid glow. Surrounded by fire, the men of the G.P.O. held out. Occasionally they took the offensive in a sortie. Connolly was always in the front line. He supervised the building of a barricade in Princes St. in expectation of an attack. Here he received his first wound—a flesh wound in the arm. Returning to the G.P.O. he had it dressed, asking the Red Cross man to say nothing about it to anyone.



Scroll unfurled at Liberty Hall on Anniversary of Connolly's execution.

Earlier in the week Connolly had sent over the Starry Plough banner of the Citizen Army to the small garrison holding the Imperial Hotel in O'Connell St. This was the building owned by Martin Murphy which figured in the bloody Sunday attack by the police when Larkin spoke from the balcony. "Martin Murphy triumphed in this building in 1913 when the people were batoned," said Connolly. "But now Labour triumphs over Martin Murphy and his like! Put up the flag!" To Connolly it was a triumph to be able to fight for what one believed.

About two hours after he received his first wound, Connolly was carried back to the G.P.O. suffering from two wounds in the leg. His ankle was shattered and an operation was performed by Dr. O'Mahony of the R.A.M.C., a prisoner in the G.P.O. Desmond Ryan, who was present, states that the doctor told him Connolly's most serious wound was caused by a dum-dum bullet striking his instep. Gangrene set in almost immediately.

At night the flames shot up into the surrounding blackness and the defenders of the G.P.O. found it a grand and terrible spectacle, like a torch raised in honour of Ireland's freedom. They sang their songs in chorus and remained on guard. On Friday morning the upper part of the G.P.O. was on fire and evacuation was considered by the leaders. Connolly had his bed wheeled into the main hall. In an order, signed by Connolly, dated April 28—found on the body of The O'Rahilly, who was shot dead while fighting in Henry Place—he is still encouraging his men. This reads:—

To Soldiers,

This is the fifth day of the establishment of the Irish Republic and the flag of our country still floats from the most important buildings in Dublin and is gallantly protected by the officers and Irish soldiers in arms . . .

Let me remind you what you have done. For the first time in 700 years the flag of a free Ireland floats triumphantly in Dublin City . . .

As you know I was wounded twice yesterday and am unable to move about, but have got my bed moved into the firing line, and, with the assistance of your officers, will be just as useful to you as ever . . .

Pearse, too, set an example of unflinching bravery. But by temperament he was more solitary than Connolly. Winifred Carney spoke of Pearse's melancholy look. During Easter Week, Pearse may have withdrawn more and more into his dream of martyrdom for Ireland. Yet he penned his generous tribute to the fighters :—

I desire now, lest I may not have an opportunity later, to pay homage to the gallantry of the soldiers of Irish freedom who have, during the past four days, been writing with fire and steel the most glorious chapter in the later history of Ireland. Justice can never be done to their heroism, to their discipline, to their gay and unconquerable spirit in the midst of peril and death.

... They have redeemed Dublin from many shames and have made her name splendid among the names of cities.

If I were to mention the names of individuals, my list would be a long one.

I will name only that of Commandant General James Connolly, Commanding the Dublin Division. He lies wounded, but is still the guiding brain of our resistance . . .

On Friday morning the Cumann na mBan girls were evacuated from the building and arrangements were made for the garrison to fight their way out to the surrounding streets under enemy fire. The G.P.O. was burning. It was imperative to leave. Connolly had to be carried on a stretcher and Pearse was the last man to go.

With some casualties they reached Moore Street, a busy market thoroughfare adjoining the G.P.O. Using picks and shovels they broke through several shops until—at No. 16—they were held up by a pile of debris, the result of intensive gun fire. Here Connolly's stretcher was put down and the new headquarters of the Irish Republic were established. Winnie Carney, who remained with Connolly, has told how they all suffered from exhaustion, from hunger, from sleeplessness. She sees a young volunteer on guard, falling asleep on his feet, slipping down and waking with a jerk. She would like to have relieved him but she was so exhausted she could not. Connolly lies there with a shattered ankle and the leaders consult round his bed.

At about 1.30 p.m. on Friday they decided to surrender. Tom Clarke alone held out for a fight to the death.

Elizabeth O'Farrell was sent with a flag of truce held high above her head. Her friend, Julia Grenan, was disconsolate, thinking she had gone to her death. Connolly, from his stretcher, comforted her. At 3.30 p.m.—accepting the enemy terms of unconditional surrender—Pearse walked out and Connolly was carried behind on a stretcher.

Pearse drew up and signed the final order to all the garrison commanders which read:—

In order to prevent the further slaughter of Dublin citizens, and in the hope of saving the lives of our followers now surrounded and hopelessly outnumbered, the members of the Provisional Government present at headquarters have now agreed to an unconditional surrender, and the Commandants of the various districts in the City and Country will order their commands to lay down arms.

P. H. Pearse.

29th April, 1916,
3.45 p.m.

Underneath this Connolly wrote:—

I agree to these conditions for the men only under my own command in the Moore Street District and for the men in the Stephen's Green Command.

James Connolly.

April 29, '16.

In this last pronouncement, it will be noted, Connolly does not agree to any surrender except for the two specific garrisons mentioned. He leaves the others to judge for themselves what they will do. If 1916 had been regarded by him merely as a token Rising or a blood sacrifice he certainly would not—at this last minute when he was seriously wounded—have left it open for others elsewhere in city or country to carry on the fight.

Connolly was separated from his companions and lodged in Dublin Castle. They never saw him again. During Easter Week his wife was staying in a cottage belonging to Madame Markievicz. This was in the Dublin mountains near the city. Nora had been trying to get back to Dublin after the failure of her mission to the North. The issues were too confused for the Volunteers to rally there. She had to walk most of the way back for rail transport was disorganised. When she arrived, weary and footsore, she

saw O'Connell Street in ruins and heard the news of the surrender. A *Daily Sketch* poster in the city showed a picture of her father with the lettering *James Connolly, the Dead Rebel Leader*. But she found out that he was not dead, though a prisoner in the Castle. She pushed on till she reached the cottage where she discovered that her mother had read the news of Connolly's death. To know that he was still alive gave them both a little hope.

Connolly's wife was allowed to visit him in the Castle and on the following day, Nora insisted on going too, though her mother and other friends warned her that she risked arrest. Dublin Castle bristled with bayonets. Soldiers guarded the landings and filled the alcoves. Others, with fixed bayonets, stood at the door of his room though he could not walk. They were terrified lest there should be an attempt at rescue.

Father Aloysius—a brown-robed Franciscan—who distinguished himself by his efforts for the wounded in Easter Week and who visited all the garrisons with the terms of surrender, went to see Connolly at the Castle. He visited Connolly, he said, in his capacity as a priest and Connolly said it was in that capacity he required him. At first the officer in command refused to allow the armed guard in Connolly's room to be removed during the friar's visit. Father Aloysius insisted on this guard leaving. The officer replied that it was against military orders and that the soldiers were there for the priest's protection in case Connolly should attempt to escape.

"I do not doubt your motives," said the officer. "But you may not be able to prevent it if he tries to escape!"

"It is no part of my duty to try to prevent him from escaping," answered Father Aloysius. "But I cannot carry out my religious duties so long as these men are in the room!"

After much argument the guard was removed just outside the door. Connolly had made such an impression that even when he was lying helpless with a shattered ankle in Dublin Castle they were afraid to let him out of their sight.

Fr. Aloysius had attended Pearse before his execution though he was not allowed to accompany the Irish leader on

the morning that he went before the firing party. He had never met Connolly before he went at the request of the wounded man. He spoke of Connolly's splendid powers of concentration for, though badly wounded and weak, Connolly still had full control of his splendid faculties. Captain Stanley, at the Castle, expressed his admiration for Connolly as did Surgeon Tobin, who attended him.

When Mrs. Connolly and Nora saw Connolly he seemed weak and feverish. He told them how he had been court-martialled, propped up in bed. The strain was very great for a sick man. Before they left, he slipped into Nora's hand the statement he had made to the court-martial. This read :—

To the Field General Court Martial, held at Dublin Castle, on May 9th, 1916.

(Evidence mainly went to establish the fact that the accused, James Connolly, was in command at the General Post Office, and was also Commandant-General of the Dublin Division. Two of the witnesses, however, strove to bring in alleged instances of wantonly risking the lives of prisoners. The Court held that these charges were *irrelevant* and could not be placed against the prisoner.)

I do not want to make any defence except against charges of wanton cruelty to prisoners. These trifling allegations that have been made, if they record facts that really happened, deal only with the almost unavoidable incidents of a hurried uprising against a long-established authority, and nowhere show evidence of set purpose to wantonly injure unarmed persons.

We went out to break the connection between this country and the British Empire, and to establish an Irish Republic. We believed that the call we then issued to the people of Ireland was a nobler call, in a holier cause, than any call issued to them during this war, having any connection with the war. We succeeded in proving that Irishmen are ready to die endeavouring to win for Ireland those national rights which the British Government has been asking them to die to win for Belgium. As long as that remains the case, the cause of Irish freedom is safe.

Believing that the British Government has no right in Ireland, never had any right in Ireland, and never can have any right in Ireland, the presence in any one generation of Irishmen, of even a respectable minority, ready to die to affirm that truth, makes the Government for ever a usurpation and a crime against human progress.

I personally thank God that I have lived to see the day when thousands of Irish men and boys, and hundreds of Irish women and girls, were ready to affirm that truth, and to attest it with their lives if need be.

JAMES CONNOLLY, Commandant-General,
Dublin Division,
Army of the Irish Republic.

The last visit that his wife and daughter paid to Connolly was at twelve o'clock on Thursday night when an ambulance was sent and an officer said that James Connolly was very weak and wished to see them.

"I suppose you know what this means?" he said to his wife when she came in.

"No it can't be that!" she protested, kneeling by his bed and breaking into sobs.

He put out his hand to comfort her.

"Don't cry," he said. "Hasn't it been a full life? And isn't this a good end?"

He turned to his daughter.

"I heard that poor Skeffington was killed!"

They had tried to keep this news from him for Skeffington was a close friend.

"Yes," she answered. "They're all gone! All the best men in Ireland are gone!"

She gave him the names of the executed leaders.

He was silent. This was a shock. He had thought he would be the first to go, not the last.

"Everyone said they wouldn't shoot you while you were wounded," she continued. "We've been living on that hope!"

"I never thought that," he answered. "I remembered Sheepers in South Africa!"

"Today's papers said it was promised in the House of Commons last night that there would be no more shootings."

"England's promises," said Connolly, shortly.

"You've only five minutes more," said the officer.

They had to take their leave.

During those last days Connolly was thinking of his friends and his family, never of himself.

His face lit up when they told him how his son, Roddy, had been released from Richmond Barracks with other boys, because he was under sixteen. His identity was not known.

"So Roddy was in prison," he said. "How long?"

"Eight days," Nora told him.

"He was in the fight, and has been imprisoned for his country, and he is not sixteen. He has had a great start in life, hasn't he?"

Nora gave him an account of her fruitless efforts in the North and her efforts to get back to Dublin. He told her he was proud of her.

He remembered about a boy who helped to carry his stretcher from the post office, under heavy fire, in the final dash, and how the boy had leaned over, sheltering him with his body. He had a word for them all. He laughed and talked with Surgeon Tobin, the military doctor, and with the officer in the room. His daughter was glad to see the kindly twinkle she knew so well, come back into his eyes.

"The Socialists will never understand why I am here," he told Nora. "They all forget that I am an Irishman."

Some in Britain and elsewhere made obtuse, even stupid, comments on his stand. But others did understand. Connolly was not executed as early as other leaders possibly because of his wounds. A reaction against the shootings had set in. At first opinion in Ireland had been confused but when, day after day, executions took place of men whose only crime was that they believed passionately in Irish independence, a feeling of shocked resentment grew. Fr. Aloysius approached John Dillon with the idea of doing something to stop the executions. John Dillon raised the question on the adjournment at Westminster on May 11. He withdrew his motion on the understanding that there would be no more executions pending a future debate.

On Thursday—the day before the execution—Fr. Aloysius came to see Connolly but found him flushed and weak, having had a bad night after the strain of the court-martial. Deciding not to trouble Connolly then, he said he would come back in the morning. But he had an uneasy feeling and thought he had better see Captain Stanley before he left Dublin Castle. Captain Stanley could not be

found and the priest had reached the gates of the Castle when his uneasiness returned. He went back. He spoke of his fears to Captain Stanley but the captain assured him that he could safely leave Connolly till the morning, reminding him of Asquith's promise to suspend executions. Fr. Aloysius went back to Church Street but at 9 p.m. that night Captain Stanley called and brought a message that he would be wanted at about 2 a.m. He knew this meant Connolly's execution.

Many people believed that Connolly's life would be spared when he was left alive so long. They thought a badly wounded man would not be shot. He never thought so. Besides the Imperialist factions, the elements who opposed Labour in 1913 had never forgiven Connolly and publicly clamoured for his death.

Before dawn on May 12, Connolly was brought down to the Castle Yard and placed on a stretcher in the ambulance. Fr. Aloysius went with him to the prison yard at Kilmainham. Here he was propped in a chair and shot.

"Was there any sign of reluctance or hesitation when the soldiers were ordered to shoot a wounded man?" I asked the friar.

"None," he answered. "They were soldiers and had to obey orders."

Just before he died, Connolly was asked if he would say a prayer for the men about to shoot him.

He answered, enigmatically, "I will say a prayer for all brave men who do their duty!"

Connolly's death helped to produce that final revulsion of feeling which in a few years made the national movement in Ireland irresistible. He wrote truly when he penned those prophetic words not long before his death, "We will Rise Again" and the nation made good his promise.

One of the earliest expressions of the changed feeling in Ireland was contained in the letter from Dr. O'Dwyer, Bishop of Limerick, which was published in the press. It was addressed to Sir John Maxwell who was governing the country under martial law. "You took care," he said, "that no plea for mercy should interpose on behalf of the poor young fellows who surrendered to you in Dublin. The

first intimation we got of their fate was the announcement that they had been shot in cold blood."

W. B. Yeats sensed the change their death had made and wrote it down in verse :—

But who can talk of give and take
What should be and what not,
While those dead men are loitering there
To stir the boiling pot.

A.E. in his poem *Salutation* wrote of the dead leaders, including this verse to his friend James Connolly :—

The hope lives on age after age
Earth with its beauty might be won
For labour as a heritage.
For this has Ireland lost a son.
This hope unto a flame to fan
Men have put life by with a smile.
Here's to you, Connolly, my man,
Who cast the last torch on the pile.

Maeve Cavanagh—a close friend of Connolly who herself took part in the Rising—wrote these lines soon after the event :—

The blackbird, gallant herald, calls
"Way, for the great insurgent, Spring."
Mimosa's beaded blossom falls
And scents her path of wayfaring;
And when the furze spreads prickly leaves,
Sweet amber fires she lights again,
Dreams immemorial she weaves
Within the restless hearts of men.

22. Connolly and Modern Ireland

WHEN CONNOLLY and his fellow signatories to the 1916 Proclamation were executed they could not know what their movement was to accomplish within a few years. Yet their sacrifice and struggle lit the fire which swept the country. So it is important to know what they stood for. The Proclamation takes its stand upon the rights of the people, on democracy :—

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible . . .

The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally . . .

It calls for a "National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women." This, it should be noted, was before Britain introduced woman suffrage. Connolly naturally would take the lead in any affirmation of democracy either political—as with woman suffrage—or of a more directly social and economic character. He informed Mrs. Sheehy-Skeffington—the Irish feminist leader—that only one of the leaders questioned the suffrage proposal. All the signatories had shown their sympathy with Irish Labour in the 1913 struggle—Pearse was particularly outspoken—so Connolly would not have to contend with them over any expression of democracy. The Proclamation expressed what they all wanted, for idealists who join in such a struggle do not serve vested interests.

One effect of the repressive measures after the Rising was to produce a widespread movement of revolt. The Citizen Army—which had merged with the Volunteers in 1916—resumed its independence, though it co-operated closely with the Volunteers who now became known as the Irish

Republican Army. At the 1916 Irish Trade Union Congress held in Sligo, the Irish Labour movement adopted the cautious attitude of declining to endorse Connolly's 1916 stand, as to the wisdom or folly of which they would not pronounce. This is not surprising as Connolly had considerable and stubborn opposition to meet among trade union leaders during his lifetime. Connolly's own idea of Labour's attitude was expressed in *The Workers' Republic* (April 8, 1916) just after the hoisting of the flag at Liberty Hall, which ceremony was objected to by the Transport Union Executive. He wrote :—

Where better could that flag fly than over the unconquered citadel of the Irish Working Class, Liberty Hall. . . . The cause of Labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour. They cannot be dis severed. Ireland seeks freedom. Labour seeks that an Ireland free should be the sole mistress of her own destiny, supreme owner of all material things within and upon her soil . . .

At the 1916 Congress, Irish Labour was divided on the issue of the Rising and to have taken a stronger line would have exposed the movement to the danger of repression or suppression. Yet it is undeniable that failure to take a stronger line prevented the Labour movement from occupying a higher place in the growing independence movement. Connolly had urged Labour to take the lead as the most advanced and resolute section.

Irish Labour did take a great part in the Anti-Conscription movement of 1918, when an All-Ireland Labour Convention was held on April 20, 1918, in the Mansion House, Dublin. A protest General Strike of one day was decided on and every man and woman was urged to sign the pledge of resistance against conscription. The Labour declaration embodied the Connolly outlook in its emphasis on Labour interests everywhere. It ran :

Believing that our success in resisting the imposition of Conscription will be a signal to the workers of all countries now at war to rise against their oppressors and bring the war to an end, we pledge ourselves in the name of the oppressed of every land, in every age, to use all means that may be deemed effective to defeat this conspiracy to enslave our nation.

Huge processions of organised workers, men and women, marched to the City Hall to take the anti-conscription pledge and the General Strike on April 23 completely shut down the economic life of the country. On April 24, the

Irish T.U.C. and Labour Party issued a *Manifesto to the Organised Workers of England, Scotland and Wales*, declaring that :

Irish Labour is resolutely against Conscription for any war whether imposed by a British or an Irish or any other authority.

Connolly had taken the lead in the anti-conscription movement in the early days of the war. Reported in the *Irish Worker* (September 5, 1914), Connolly said "Conscription or no conscription, they shall never get me or mine." He took a definite national and international line on this issue. In 1918 Connolly's message was reaching out to ever wider sections of Irish Labour.

Another lead Connolly gave was concerned with the conservation of essential food supplies at home. He had said that it might come to armed battling in the streets of Dublin. His mind was seared by the memory of grain being exported in the famine years while the people starved by the roadside. To make sure that adequate supplies of food at reasonable prices were available to the Irish people the Labour movement—immediately after the first World War—had to take vigorous action to enforce an embargo on the export of bacon, of butter, of potatoes and of cattle. Cattle were turned back from the docks in Dublin and driven through the streets.

The National Executive of the Irish T.U.C. issued *An Open letter to Bacon Curers, Dealers and Feeders* following the announcement that the British Government intended to remove price control on bacon and butter from March 31, 1920. Supplies were withheld from the market just before de-control, with the result that prices soared. Bacon was over 4/- a lb and butter reached 4/6. The Irish Food Control Committee was purely advisory. London retained effective control. This was the situation—in the

absence of National Government—when the Labour movement warned the bacon merchants :—

... You have assumed the responsibility of providing bacon for the Irish people. You chose this duty voluntarily, and the people hitherto have accepted you at your own valuation; they have acquiesced without questioning your ability or organising capacity.

To provide food of this particular kind is your duty to your country, that is the service your country demands of you in your capacity of merchants or traders. You have ignorantly and selfishly thought that your only consideration need be to buy cheap and sell dear. Despite your political professions, of whatever brand, you have conformed to the social philosophy of nineteenth century Manchester, 'Every man for himself and the devil take the hindmost.'

... We do not recognise the right of the owners of bacon factories to withhold their premises and machinery from use at their own discretion against the common interest. These material structures have been built and adopted by the workers for a social purpose—i.e., to provide bacon for the people. If those who hold these things in trust refuse to fulfil their trust, the people must relieve them of their trust.

We have available the workers and their experience, the killing staff, the curing staff, the clerical staff. We have the means of distribution within Ireland at our disposal, we have the co-operative market of Great Britain for our surplus.

We shall enter at once into negotiation with the organised workers of England, Scotland and Wales through their Wholesale Co-operative Societies. They will be glad to provide the necessary finance to enable us to pay for the pigs, knowing that after our home needs are satisfied, they will have a plentiful supply for distribution to their working class membership at a price which has not been inflated by the interposition of the profiteers.

A protest may be raised that it will be illegal to enter into possession of a factory without the proprietor's sanction, that such an act would be prevented by the armed forces of the British Crown. We answer: Perhaps; perhaps not! We shall take the risk.

This challenge to the bacon curers deserves to be quoted because it shows that Irish Labour accepted the Connolly criterion of judging production from the standpoint of its value to the community instead of its value to the vested interests. The bacon-curing firms had threatened that they would close down their factories rather than submit to

Labour interference when they were profiting from the chaotic prices. Irish Labour maintained that the owners of industries had a duty to the community which allowed them the use of these resources. They were partners in a social contract with the community under which they were morally bound to supply food and essential goods. If they failed to do this, the Irish workers had the right to take over. At Knocklong, in Limerick, creamery workers had a strike the following year. They remained at work in the creamery and the local farmers continued to supply milk which they turned into butter. In spite of their quarrel with the management they maintained the service and put out a streamer reading *We Make Butter Not Profits*.

All these activities around 1920 and 1921—when transport workers in the north and south actively interfered in the matter of maintaining local supplies and keeping down prices—represented the application of Connolly principles. Not only were these activities of great practical value at the moment but they expressed a social philosophy which Connolly taught—that the needs of the community were paramount over all private interests. At this time—around the 1920's—when the National movement was resurgent and aggressive, Connolly's ideas received their sharpest and clearest expression. Labour was rising to the front of the national movement again and getting nearer to the position which Connolly desired it to take.

In 1919, the Republican Dail adopted a *Democratic Programme* which indicated the strength of the Connolly influence. This programme was largely the work of Thomas Johnson, a prominent Labour Party official, who was invited to submit a draft. The *Democratic Programme* reads:—

We declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all the men and women of the nation, but to all the material possessions of the nation; the nation's soil and all its resources; all the wealth and wealth-producing processes within the nation; and we affirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare of the nation. . . . In return for willing services we . . . declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the nation's labour.

It shall be the first duty of the Government to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to ensure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing or shelter, that all shall be provided with ample means and facilities requisite for the education and training of free citizens of a free nation.

This *Democratic Programme*, adopted by the nation's representatives in the first Dail, was a fuller statement of the ideas and aims embodied in the 1916 Proclamation. Connolly, as the chief theorist, historian and man of action in the Labour movement, passed on his distinctive outlook to his colleagues which they advanced inside the National movement. The National movement was particularly responsive to Labour's social views during the period of struggle. With the coming of the Truce and the Civil War period, Labour's influence greatly diminished.

The Citizen Army joined in the fight against the Treaty and for the Republic because it held that this settlement with the British Government meant that vested interests on both sides were coming to an agreement at the expense of the Irish people. From the time of the Treaty all talk of radical social change was discouraged. It would, however, be wrong to assume that the Treaty struggle was fought out on any fundamental social issue. Many of the anti-Treatyites were purely conservative or traditional in their approach. They objected to the Treaty because it was something new. If it had been presented in more traditional terms they would have found little wrong with it. The union between those who wanted drastic social change and the conservative Republicans was an uneasy one. Each pulled a different way and no progress was possible. Liam Mellows was an outstanding I.R.A. leader who, in the Treaty debate in the Dail, advanced Connolly's ideas of opposition to Imperialist exploitation as a reason for rejecting the Treaty. But nowhere did these ideas get full or definite expression.

When the Griffith-Cosgrave regime was established, those in power wanted to develop the country on orthodox capitalist lines. The country was suffering badly from arrested development. Britain's Industrial Revolution in the early nineteenth century had left Ireland substantially

untouched. It was a cattle ranch for England, a farm yard supplying dairy produce to British industrial towns. This national economy provided little employment, so emigration was the fate of thousands who could not find work at home. The more vigorous among the middle class either went into the British or Colonial Civil Service or else joined the overcrowded professions. So it is that even today, in the ranks of the Colonial civil servants or among the British Army officers, one finds many Irish names and some of the owners have distinguished themselves for their services against movements for self-government in various British possessions.

The vitality of the middle class demanded new outlets at home. That was one of the forces making for national discontent. When self-government was achieved the men of initiative began to push out towards greater economic development in Ireland. All the avenues that had been dammed up were now under increased pressure. The Cosgrave regime could not proceed quickly because the established forces, the cattle ranchers and traders, the commercial men who had based themselves upon the *status quo* were hostile to change. They had put their wealth and prestige on the side of the Treaty Government against the Republicans because they did not want any alteration in the balance of internal power. So, although an Industrial Revolution was overdue in Ireland, the Cosgrave regime was slowed up by these backers.

One thing the Government did was to re-organise the entire creamery industry. This had to be done for, during the years of struggle before the Treaty, many creameries had been burnt out or wrecked as reprisals for attacks on British soldiers. The whole industry was in a state of hopeless chaos and confusion. No proper scheme of production or marketing could be worked out during the time of disorder. The Irish Agricultural Organisation Society had prepared a scheme under which the creameries belonging to private firms (about 180 or roughly a third of the entire number) would be bought out and their activities transferred to the 400 co-operative creameries in the country.



*Ruins in Dublin after the 1916
Rising.*

Part of this plan was to restrict the number of creameries in each area by means of a licensing scheme. The Government advanced credits to buy out the redundant creameries through the Dairy Disposal Co. which it set up as vendor. Each milk supplier was a shareholder in the society which took his milk. The co-operative creameries—affiliated to a central body—made themselves responsible for the £150,000 credits used to buy out their rivals. They agreed to pay this money back to the Government from their profits. In return they secured the monopoly of the creamery industry. At once it became practicable to organise the creameries on more efficient lines, eliminating competition and making arrangements for bulk transit and marketing.

This economic measure was not based on any theoretical belief in the value of co-operation. It was the only way of handling the problem effectively. Since the days of nineteenth-century, cut-throat competition, other ideas and methods had become necessary. A.E. regarded this creamery policy as a great victory for the co-operative idea and declared that it was as if one of the principal industries in Britain—for example, shipbuilding—was being run on co-operative lines. Connolly had always stood for co-operation against competition and desired to extend the principle to cover the whole community. Although in this development the benefits were restricted to the farmer members, the creameries plan showed that the new Irish State was not impervious to Connolly's ideas.

By far the biggest piece of pioneer work in economic reconstruction was the Shannon Power Scheme, launched in 1929. This made possible the development of industries all over the country by the production of abundant electric power. Industries were largely dependent upon the import of British coal. The Shannon Era signalled a withdrawal of interest and energy from purely political problems and a growing keenness in economic progress. An efficient, vigorous middle class was rising to the helm. The Labour movement did not show any great degree of initiative in pushing forward a distinctive economic policy, perhaps because the industries were small and scattered and most of the Irish workers belonged to the rural areas. Connolly's

denunciations of capitalism as an English importation alien to the Irish people, his arguments for co-operation or collectivism in industry, were ignored and neglected.

Yet the Shannon scheme itself—all the constructional work needed to make that great power house—costing many millions, was made a State charge, its administration and control centred in the Electricity Supply Board—a State body. Here the Connolly idea of using national wealth to exploit national resources for the benefit of the citizens, has received homage. As in the case of the creamery industry, necessity rather than economic conviction has determined this course. Ireland has few wealthy magnates who can afford to lock up their money in a gigantic undertaking like the Shannon power scheme, which demanded years of constructive effort before it could hope to pay dividends. So the people, through the Government, had to foot the bill and the E.S.B. retains control.

The Shannon power scheme stands as an economic object lesson showing the value of Connolly's ideas. When an extension of the benefits of this scheme to the rural areas was decided on, the State again had to step in, for private interests have done little for the comfort of those rural areas on which they rely for a backing. Industrialists in all the towns have based themselves on this large-scale State enterprise which they condemn in theory. Ministers proclaim their belief in private enterprise and private industries. While Britain, and Europe generally, have swung towards collectivist ideas of ownership and working, Ireland—starting late in the race—has begun, in theory at least, to build up her industry on that nineteenth century individualism which produced fortunes for a few and misery for the many.

It would seem that Connolly's conception of a new Ireland where the people controlled their own economic destinies, either through State industries or co-operative effort, has not made much headway, although the *Democratic Programme* of 1919 called for the development of industries through co-operative enterprise. Yet even though Ministers and industrialists vie with each other in

saluting private enterprise, there is in practice, an ever-increasing measure of State activity. The main features of this trend are obvious. The production of beet sugar began with a heavy State subsidy to the Carlow factory. In 1945 this industry produced 95,000 tons of sugar and supplied all the home demand. In the beginning a Continental sugar combine contributed the necessary technical knowledge. Now the Government through its representatives on the board, directs the policy of this important national industry.

One of the most recent invasions of private industry was when the Government assumed financial responsibility for the railway system. The G.S. Railway had been practically bankrupt for many years. It could not afford necessary repairs and reconstruction. The system became more and more obsolete. The Government established a new company, *Coras Iompair Éireann*, appointed a Chairman, financed a reconstruction scheme and worked out a transport policy in the public interest. It left to private enterprise the less worthy task of scrambling for shares in the new company which the State set up. The State might have gone all the way with Connolly in taking over the railways. Instead it merely advanced the money, which is to be repaid. But it retains effective control over policy. Not only does the State control the railways but a centralised transport system—road and rail—has been established with the Government in control. Although the Irish Labour movement is not strong and the industrial revival has thrown up vigorous defenders of private enterprise in the person of the small factory owners yet the Connolly view of economic development is being increasingly justified. The need for efficiency is compelling the Government to take enterprises out of private hands. Such an unwilling tribute to Connolly is one of the greatest possible testimonials to the economic truth of his teaching.

Connolly taught that the competitive system no longer served the best interests of humanity, that the profit motive in capitalist industry prevented the utmost use being made of available resources. When the second World War came, the Éire Government endorsed this view by setting up various non-profit-making companies as the only way of

securing essential supplies. In the emergency, profit-making concerns proved to be a rotten stick. The companies of non-profit-making character formed by the Government comprised :—Grain Importers (Eire) Ltd.; Animal Feeding Stuffs (Eire) Ltd.; Timber Importers (Eire) Ltd.; South of Ireland Timber Importers Ltd.; West of Ireland Timber Importers Ltd.; Oats (Ireland) Ltd.; and Oils and Fats (Eire) Ltd. These concerns were appointed as sole importers, for the emergency period, of the commodities specified. They dealt in goods essential to the life of the nation.

Under an Emergency Powers Order made in March, 1942, the Minister for Finance was authorised to guarantee the payment of principal and interest to the extent of £5,750,000 in connection with other State companies. These include Irish Shipping Ltd. (£2,000,000); Tea Importers (Eire) Ltd. (£2,000,000); Fuel Importers (Eire) Ltd. (£1,250,000); Pigs and Bacon Commissioners (a body appointed for the purchase of pigs for the conversion into bacon), (£500,000).

When the emergency came, it was Connolly's ideas and methods, not those of orthodox capitalist industry which had to be relied on. It may be urged that these are not normal developments but are of a purely emergency character. Even if this is so, a system which cannot stand up to an emergency is faulty. The emergency revealed those faults to which Connolly had directed attention. It is undeniable, too, that external trade will have to be done in bulk through marketing boards and central bodies for an indefinite period, especially as Eire must fit in with countries who are adopting a collectivist economy.

Before the war-time emergency, the Irish State, by means of loans, of licences, of export bounties and the granting of trading and productive monopolies, exercised a great measure of control over the development of industry. The public purse was used to foster private industry, either directly or by means of tariffs and high prices. Citizens had to bear losses and risks though profits went into private hands. Concessions were granted to firms which established subsidiary interests in Ireland though their main

interests remained outside and their activities would have been described by Connolly as a form of economic Imperialism quite as dangerous as political domination.

Where the choice has had to be made between the State financing and directing industrial developments or allowing these to become the property of outside financial interests, the balance of argument is in favour of direct participation in industry. The Government has planned big post-war developments in power and fuel production. When this is realised it seems doubly foolish for opponents of the Connolly outlook to insist on the importance of that private enterprise which is so obviously out-of-date. But there is always a time-lag between industrial practice and those principles of a past era in which industrialists believe. This has prevented Connolly from getting the credit he deserves for seeing the direction in which industry should and would go. His economic wisdom and foresight will be recognised in time.

If theory and practice in industry could be brought into closer harmony, results would give more satisfaction. During the war period the efforts of the State to fix maximum prices and to allocate supplies on an equitable basis, have been hampered by the demand for profit as against social service. Connolly's ideas of industrial control by the people have not been accepted by the energetic middle class who are shaping Irish civilisation. Yet these ideas are being applied, as a matter of necessity, in the modern world. Behind Arthur Griffith with his orthodox nineteenth-century views of industrial development, we may discern James Connolly standing for a modern industrial order that will frankly accept social needs in place of private profit as its motive force.

Since National independence was gained, Irish Labour has striven to improve its position and status. These efforts have been mainly of an opportunist character. No widespread literature explaining Connolly's creative ideas as applied to industry, has penetrated the Irish working class to an extent that would help to shape the modern Irish Labour movement. The movement is weak in research and study, departments in which Connolly himself was strong.

Connolly's work has been neglected by Labour while the middle class has felt the stimulus of an undeveloped country, releasing their energies. The past twenty-five years has been the era of the Irish middle class. They have moved forward, leaving their mark everywhere in the country, with the growth of new industries and manufactures. Necessity compels them to prepare the way for Connolly's triumph.

So far as the building up of smaller industries in the country is concerned, it was inevitable that this should be done by individual effort. Ireland had been undeveloped for so long that when the opportunity came, energy flowed into the channels of industry like rain into the dry earth. Economic development had to be on these lines, if only as a transition to a greater social control of industry. Today it is the Irish industrialists who are shaping the new industries with the State in the background, assuming control of those economic activities too big for private hands. Irish Labour has not yet shown sufficient maturity of thought to apply Connolly principles to industry. Perhaps this is partly due to the fact that Irish industry itself is not very mature. It is still in the early stages and the workers will learn by experience, as Connolly himself did from the developed industrialism of Britain and America.

Irish conditions of insularity in rural areas have not made for collectivist activity. But those who imagine they can rely on the Irish countryman to resist all social progress will not find that the history of the land struggles supports this view. In Northern Ireland and in the industrial centres of Britain the benefits derived from the municipal ownership of transport and gas are mere commonplaces; in Eire, this idea has hardly penetrated. On the industrial front the Connolly ideas have not yet become operative though conditions are ripe for these. When the Dublin buses were taken over in the National transport system it was one sign of change.

If we turn to the problems of rural Ireland it is interesting and instructive to read what Connolly wrote on these matters in 1897 when he contributed his articles to Alice Milligan's *Shan Van Vocht*—published in pamphlet

form under the title *Erin's Hope: The End and the Means*. One might expect his youthful views to be doctrinaire and to have little relation to the actual problems that confront us today. But it is Connolly's amazing practicality which is the leading characteristic. In the section "Ireland's Future," speaking of the farmer seeking to rent a farm in the open market he says:—

Each competitor seeks to outbid the other, until the rent fixed is usually out of all proportion to the price which will in the future be obtained for the produce of the farm bidden for. The agriculturist finds that in the years of universal plenty, when throughout the world the earth brings forth its fruit in teeming profusion, the excess of supply over effective demand operates to lower the price of his farm produce until it scarcely repays his labour in garnering it, and in times of scarcity, when a good price might be obtained, he has little to sell, his customers have not the wherewithal to buy, and the landlord or money-lender are as relentless as ever in their exactions.

Many farmers, out of their experience, can endorse the truth of Connolly's words. He proceeds:—

The agriculture of Ireland can no longer compete with the scientifically equipped farmers of America, therefore, the only hope that now remains is to abandon competition altogether as a rule of life, to organise agriculture as a public service under the control of boards of management elected by the agricultural population (no longer composed of farmers and labourers, but of free citizens with equal responsibility and equal honour), and responsible to them and the nation at large, and with all the mechanical and scientific aids to agriculture the entire resources of the nation can place at their disposal. Let the produce of Irish soil go first to feed the Irish people, and after a sufficient store has been retained to insure of that being accomplished, let the surplus be exchanged with other countries in return for those manufactured goods Ireland needs but does not herself produce.

Thus we will abolish at one stroke the dread of foreign competition and render perfectly needless any attempt to create an industrial hell in Ireland under the specious pretext of 'developing our resources.'

Apply to manufacture the same social principle. Let the co-operative organisation of the workers replace the war of the classes under capitalism and transform the capitalist himself from an irresponsible hunter after profit into a public servant, fulfilling a public function and under public control.

Like Davitt, Connolly would vest possession of the land in the nation. He says :—

The land of a country belongs of right to the people of that country, and not to any particular class, not even to any single generation of the people. The private ownership of land by the landlord class is an injustice to the whole community, but the creation of a peasant proprietary would only tend to stereotype and consecrate that injustice since it would leave out of account the entire labouring class as well as the dispossessed millions of former tenants whom landlord rule had driven into the Irish towns or across the seas.

... Setting that fact aside, however, have our advocates of peasant proprietary really considered the economic tendencies of the time, and the development of the mechanical arts in the agricultural world? The world is progressive, and peasant proprietary, which a hundred years ago might have been a boon, would now be powerless to save from ruin the agriculture of Ireland. The day of small farmers, as of small capitalists is gone, and wherever they are still found, they find it impossible to compete with the mammoth farms of America and Australia ...

How are our small farmers to compete with a state of matters like this, or like unto that revealed in the report of the American Social Science Association, even as far back as 1878? It tells how science and invention, after devoting so much time to industry, have turned their attention to agriculture, and as a result have effected almost a revolution in that branch of human activity. Ploughs which, driven by horses, plough more than five acres per day, or the extent of many an Irish farm, and steam ploughs which do much more; machines for sowing seeds, with which a boy and a horse can do three times the work of a man, and do it much better; reaping machines, with which a man with one or two pairs of horses, can do the work of at least sixty men with reaping hooks; reaping machines which not only cut the harvest, but tie it as well are now so common in England and America as to fail to attract attention, and we hear on good authority of machines which cut, thresh, winnow and sack it, without the intervention of any other human hands than those of the engineer who tends the machine. In cutting the corn a man or a boy, with a horse and machine, can do the work of twenty men, cutting an acre an hour.

All this, be it remembered, is only possible to the farmer who holds his thousands of acres. The first cost of any one of these machines would be enough to ruin the average small farmer in Ireland, and the result is that while he is painfully labouring on his farm, his American competitor can bring in his harvest, sent it thousands of miles by railroad, load it into ships, send it across the Atlantic, and eventually sell it practically at our doors as cheap as, and cheaper than, our home produce.

Remember that all this was written in 1897, yet Connolly could see the trend of the mechanical developments in farming and understand the problems which are facing the small farmer today. These developments have been intensified since Connolly's death but he stated the present-day problem in a practical way. Agricultural experts in modern times have suggested an extension of co-operative farming or a system of collective farming to deal with these difficulties which Connolly foresaw. He did not put forward his suggestions in a dogmatic way but "only to furnish a rough draft of a scheme of reform." His purpose was to give the small farmer that security and comfort which present conditions so often deny.

How far the land policy followed since his death has achieved his aims may be judged by the statement of Mr. Moylan, Minister for Lands, in the Dail on April 11, 1946. The Minister stated that he thought it was a mistake to give land to landless men. There were enough people on the land. He disliked the idea of putting more people on it. He drew attention to the land speculation that was going on. There were cases he knew where individuals had bought a dozen or fifteen farms. The Minister deprecated this position.

No more room for landless men and, at the same time, a few individuals owning many farms! Unless the Connolly policy of vesting the land in the State is followed it is difficult to know how to prevent wealthy farmers swallowing up the land which the small farmer is unable to cultivate on competitive lines.

Connolly was always a keen supporter of the woman's movement for equality of rights both in citizenship and in industry. He helped women workers in Belfast to get better conditions. The Labour movement for him was a progressive, enlightened, democratic force standing for sex equality. Feminists have criticised the Irish industrial code—which in many ways represents a big advance for labour—on the ground that it provides for the exclusion of women workers from certain branches of industry by Ministerial Order.

When an Irish trade union confined to men, sought to deprive the Irish Women Workers' Union of the legal right to negotiate for a section of their members who had been engaged in the bookbinding trade for many years, this trend of activity—in the ranks of organised Labour—revealed that Connolly's belief in the solidarity of a united Labour movement, standing for the interests of all and particularly of the weaker sections, without distinction of sex, has yet to win acceptance. Connolly fiercely maintained the right of all workers to organise freely and to carry on negotiations as they determined, without any Government licence or approval. Recent trade union legislation represents a step back from the Connolly view of the workers' right to independent organisation. But the decision of the Supreme Court re-affirming the right of workers to organise freely and declaring the legal invasion of that right to be unconstitutional is an important victory for Irish labour. So some of the lost ground has been regained.

Indicating the housing conditions both in Dublin and in Belfast, Connolly pointed to the appalling death rate among children, to the lack of well-equipped schools, to the need for school-feeding where the children were hungry. Dublin housing conditions in Connolly's day were dreadful. Since then there has been much building, both in the capital and in the country generally, to make up for the neglect of centuries. Even so the Report on *Slum Clearance in Dublin* (1937) revealed that 90,000 people were still living in one-room tenements and, of these, 40,000 were in dwellings which had been condemned. During the war period the housing situation has deteriorated everywhere owing to lack of building materials. Only if the problem had been tackled earlier on a nation-wide scale with the same thoroughness and energy as was applied to the Shannon electricity scheme could it have been adequately dealt with. To do this a Government must accept Connolly's idea of social responsibility before profit-making.

The wretched condition of the elementary schools in Connolly's day was exposed in his writings. Many new schools have since been built but, in spite of official efforts, the position remains bad. Inspectors have condemned nearly

one in every ten schools. A medical inspector has described half the total school buildings in Eire as "obsolete, verminous or defective." In 1945, over 11,000 children in Dublin were excused attendance at school on grounds of insufficient clothing and boots. A hard struggle was waged by friends of hungry children to secure the provision of school meals—a cause dear to James Connolly's heart and mind. After almost incredible opposition from well-to-do obstructionists, less than half the Dublin schools availed themselves of the special Corporation grant and gave the children cold milk and cheese sandwiches, a few gave them hot meals. A good many citizens who were able to store up food reserves talked complacently about how fortunate Ireland was during the war period. But many poor families, including young children were ill-clad, shivering and hungry. A large increase in rickets and tuberculosis followed. As food was available in Eire there was no excuse for this.

The "Stand-still" Wage Order pressed hardest upon the poorly paid, including the farm labourers who were not allowed to emigrate to Britain and had to work for £2 or £2 2s. 6d. a week—varying in different areas—at casual, seasonal employment. Although industrial development has been pushed forward wherever possible, workers have been constantly told that the scale of social benefits and the standard of living suitable for Britain cannot be afforded in Eire. Yet they were also told that national dignity demanded that establishment costs for the Presidential office should be maintained at the British level of the old Governor-General days. Writing, in 1897, of the national aspirations of the "middle class leaders," Connolly said "This seems to them the highest possible ideal—an Irish society composed of employers making fortunes and workers grinding out their lives for a weekly wage." There are evidences that this ideal remains.

Undoubtedly the code of industrial legislation covering factory, shop and clerical workers represents a tremendous advance on the position before National independence was won. This is a comprehensive measure covering working hours, conditions, compulsory holidays with pay, and other

matters. In the post-war period, various sections of Irish workers have supplemented this by winning, through direct action, a longer holiday than the week guaranteed by law. This move for greater leisure is a sign of vitality in the Labour ranks.

Looking over the whole field of development since Connolly's day we can see that the biggest thrust has been made in the direction of economic advance. Social advance has not kept pace with this. It may be that the conditions of famine and wretchedness were so common in earlier years that the social conscience is not sufficiently aroused at the spectacle of want and deprivation today. The recent history of Europe shows how easy it is for the human spirit to accommodate itself to conditions of suffering and squalor.

Connolly put the social conditions of the people first on his programme to be dealt with when national freedom had been won. The *Democratic Programme* of 1919 bears the marks of Connolly inspiration. Besides declaring that "it shall be the first duty of the Government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food or clothing or shelter" the document goes on to say: "It shall be the duty of the Republic to adopt all measures necessary for the re-creation and invigoration of our industries and to ensure their being developed on the most beneficial and progressive co-operative industrial lines."

Not only did Connolly want Ireland to accept such a programme—it was formally adopted by the Dail—but he desired to see it carried out under the inspiration and leadership of Labour. He brought that spirit and outlook into the National movement, giving it fresh vitality just as Michael Davitt did with the Land League in earlier years. Like Davitt he worked with more moderate leaders. The movement could not go forward without the support of the sections that each of these men represented. Alien rule was overthrown and the Irish middle class seized their opportunity. Connolly receives honour as a National leader but his teaching has sunk beneath the surface. His ideas remain and when the Irish workers are ready for another advance Connolly will rise again.

23. Connolly and The World

THE STORY OF JAMES CONNOLLY is the story of a man of the people whose struggles and difficulties are rooted in a sense of unshakable loyalty to his fellows. His career must be studied in relation to his background, that background of trial and vicissitude which was the common lot of the mass of the people in the latter half of the nineteenth century. That he belonged to the Irish people only served to intensify his problem of poverty and insecurity which was general among the propertyless people in all the countries.

Connolly very quickly arrived at the conviction that the "Irish Question" was essentially a social question—the same social question which faced workers in other countries. Yet he never wavered in his belief that an Ireland in which Irish men and women would control their national destinies was the pre-requisite of any real social change. He studied Irish history and read the works of those social thinkers who challenged the need for the continued existence of poverty and industrial servitude. National and social emancipation became for him two different facets of the one movement for human liberty. He saw the Irish working class as the chief driving force in this movement.

Because he had seen and felt all the deplorable consequences which flow from national servitude, he had no patience with those shallow cosmopolitans who told him that National freedom did not matter. When people outside Ireland talked in this way he knew that it was because they had not sufficient imagination or comprehension to grasp the nature of difficulties which they were not called upon to face.

Since Connolly's day the problem of how to harmonise national sovereignty with the common good has become more pressing. The world has grown smaller and the power for harm possessed by each nation has grown bigger. Given his background of belief in international working class fraternity—the unity of interest of the mass of the

people everywhere—this problem would not present any insoluble difficulty to him. Co-operation between honest States—which rejected Imperialist or capitalist exploitation—should be as possible as co-operation between honest men. He believed that the salvation of the world, politically, economically and socially, depended upon Labour taking control. After that, problems of adjustment still have to be met. But they cannot be met by depriving any nation of freedom. There is always a danger of free men running amok. The remedy is not to shut men up in gaol. Neither is it a reasonable precaution to deprive nations of their freedom. The remedy, Connolly thought, was to adjust matters so that free men and free nations could find their best interests and their highest aspirations served by co-operation. Connolly would find it amusing to hear the Imperialist wolves arguing that the Nationalist tendencies of the small lambs are a danger to the fold. He had sufficient commonsense to know that small nations can never threaten world peace and that they are too weak to be belligerent. Big predatory powers use small nations as a fuse is used for a bomb. Connolly penetrated all the smoke screens and would not agree that Ireland should remain a subject nation under any pretext.

When the first World War—of 1914-18—came, Connolly was a mature thinker with years of study and propagandist activity behind him. In the *Irish Worker* and, later, in the *Workers' Republic* he stated his attitude to events in Ireland and the world. He wrote regularly for the Scottish journal *Forward* and his writings of the period show that he moved easily in the stormy current of world affairs. He hailed Dr. Karl Liebknecht's anti-war stand in Germany with enthusiasm and registered his agreement. An erroneous report of Liebknecht's death early in the war filled him with grief. He wrote appreciatively of the French Socialist leader, Jean Jaures, and his speeches against the war at its outbreak. Connolly was familiar with the earlier anti-militarism of Gustave Hervé and with the record of August Bebel. He admired Keir Hardie's efforts in Britain. His own swift pronouncement on the war in the *Irish Worker* (August 8, 1914), was phrased as an international

appeal to workers to revolt against the war and to Irish workers to take their part in such a movement. In *Forward* (August 22, 1914), he returns to the attack :—

The war of a subject nation for independence, for the right to live out its own life in its own way, may and can be justified as holy and righteous; the war of a subject class to free itself from the debasing conditions of economic and political slavery should at all times choose its own weapons . . . but the war of nation against nation in the interest of royal freebooters and cosmopolitan thieves is a thing accursed.

This statement of his fundamental belief, forms part of his urge to action and his tribute to Karl Liebknecht. He says :—

No; we cannot draw upon the future for a draft to pay our present duties. There is no moratorium to postpone the payment of the debt the Socialists owe to the cause; it can only be paid now. Paid it may be in martyrdom, but a few hundred such martyrdoms would be a small price to pay to avert the slaughter of hundreds of thousands. If our German comrade, Liebknecht, has paid the price, perhaps the others may yet nerve themselves for that sacrifice. On what conception of national honour can we blame them? Before what fetish of national dignity can we prostrate ourselves in abasement to atone for their act? . . . All hail, then, to our continental Comrade, who, in a world of imperial and financial brigands and cowardly trimmers and compromisers, showed mankind that men still know how to die for the holiest of all causes—the sanctity of the human soul, the practical brotherhood of the human race.

Although Connolly applauded Liebknecht for attacking the German militarists it did not prevent him from being charged with complicity in a plot with those same militarists when he stood out for Irish freedom. Many other quotations could be given from Connolly's writings of the period to show his international approach. In 1914 he saw no ideological cleavage between the big Imperialist powers. So he counselled resistance to the war effort not only in Ireland—but everywhere else. His bitter opposition to the 1914-18 war was not rooted in any pacifist idea. His anti-militarism was founded upon his belief in the international working class movement. The distinction between Connolly's anti-militarism—a vigorous opposition to

workers being dragooned into fighting the battles of their enemies—and of philosophic pacifism, is very clear.

Connolly's attitude towards militarism was in line with the International Socialist Movement of his day, especially that of the Left section to which he belonged. In a *Forward* article (August 15, 1914) he writes under the heading of *A Continental Revolution* :—

Anti-militarist societies and anti-militarist campaigns of Socialist societies and parties, and anti-militarist resolutions of Socialist and International Trade Union Conferences have become part of the order of the day and are no longer phenomena to be wondered at. The whole working class movement stands committed to war upon war—stands so committed at the very height of its strength and influence . . .

I am not writing in captious criticism of my Continental comrades. We know too little about what is happening on the Continent, and events have moved too quickly for any of us to be in a position to criticise at all. But believing as I do that any action would be justified which would put a stop to this colossal crime now being perpetrated, I feel compelled to express the hope that ere long we may read of the paralysing of the internal transport system on the Continent, even should the act of paralysing necessitate the erection of Socialist barricades and acts of rioting by Socialist soldiers and sailors, as happened in Russia in 1905 . . .

His remedy for the war was a workers' insurrection throughout Europe. Social Democrats in various European countries had been agitating from the beginning of the nineteenth century for the substitution of a Citizen Army in place of a standing army of professional soldiers or conscripts housed in barracks apart from civilian workers. August Bebel had urged this in his thesis *Not a Standing Army But a Citizen Army* referred to in Karl Liebknecht's *Militarism and Anti-Militarism* written in 1907. This book is a comprehensive statement of the nature of militarism and how it is used against the workers. Under this Social Democratic scheme for a Citizen Army, the soldiers would continue to live at home and so would share in the outlook of their own people. This would make it harder for reactionaries to use them in times of strikes and discontent to shoot down their fellows.

Between the Citizen Army project of the Social Democrats and the Irish Citizen Army led by Connolly are marked differences. The first was intended as a more democratic State alternative to conscription and ruthless militarisation. The Irish Citizen Army began as a volunteer workers' force in the 1913 Dublin strike, closely linked with the trade union movement, right up to the time when it participated in the 1916 National revolt. Undoubtedly the Irish Citizen Army emphasised the solidarity of these workers in uniform with the general body of workers. Many lived in the Dublin tenements. They put on the dark green uniform of their force after they had discarded their working clothes for the day.

To build up a workers' Citizen Army was strictly in accord with Socialist thought. In Ireland as in Britain there had been much confusion between working class anti-militarism and the pacifist idea. On the Continent where for generations the fight was against conscription, this confusion did not exist. Abstract pacifism has never made much appeal to workers who have to struggle so hard everyday that they naturally think of life in terms of struggle rather than non-resistance. Pacifists usually belong to those sections of the community sheltered from the harshest struggle. Connolly—who was always an anti-militarist and denounced conscription—had no sympathy with abstract pacifism or Tolstoyan ideas. Militarism—in his view—meant simply the maintenance of a professional army which could be used against the workers at home or abroad. The essence of militarism is the use of blind, unreasoning instruments. Such a force can be used to bludgeon any demand for national freedom in the interests of a ruling Imperialism.

Much of the opposition to the war of 1914-18 was upon Socialist grounds and was not based on pacifism. Sacrifices were made and imprisonment endured in the course of that opposition. But the pacifists—such as Bertrand Russell—were generally regarded as the spokesmen of the movement because they were "genuine pacifists." Since those days many of the prominent pacifists have recanted and supported the use of arms. The Socialist anti-militarists,

who would not renounce the use of force under any circumstances, have proved that their attitude was one of greater consistency and logic. It is these working men who have confounded the professors. Connolly expressed the outlook of those Socialist anti-militarists who opposed the 1914-18 war in Britain and elsewhere. During that whole period he acted as a leader of the international working class movement.

In 1900, Connolly attended the Paris International Socialist Congress as representative of the Irish Socialist Republican Party. This gathering passed a comprehensive anti-militarist resolution declaring its opposition to the capitalist colonial policy of expansion and condemning the oppression of small nations. Congress re-affirmed its adherence to earlier anti-militarist declarations of 1889, 1891 and 1894. It urged workers' representatives to vote against all credits for military, naval and colonial expenditure and called for "the education and organisation of young people with the object of fighting militarism." Such decisions have an historical interest now. They show the traditional attitude of the Socialist movement against militarism.

All his life Connolly was a spokesman of Socialist anti-militarism. This side of his work is little known in Ireland where his death gave him an abiding place in history as one of the founders of that New Ireland which rose out of the wrack of war. During the war years Connolly seized the opportunity of giving a sharper turn to the age-long Irish Struggle. Writing in the *Workers' Republic* (January 22, 1916) he said :—

We believe that in times of peace we should work along the lines of peace to strengthen the nation, and we believe that whatever strengthens and elevates the working class strengthens the nation.

But we also believe that in times of war we should act as in war. We despise, entirely loathe and despise, all the mouthings and mouters about war who infest Ireland in times of peace, just as we despise and loathe all the cantings about caution and restraint to which the same people treat us in times of war.

Mark well, then, our programme. While the war lasts and Ireland is still a subject nation, we shall continue to urge her to fight for her freedom.

We shall continue, in season and out of season to teach that the 'far-flung battle line' of England is weakest at the point nearest its heart . . . that the time for Ireland's battle is *NOW*, the place for Ireland's battle is *HERE*.

We will be no party to leading out Irish patriots to meet the might of an England at peace. The moment peace is in the air we shall strictly confine ourselves and lend all our influence to the work of peaceful reconstruction.

Connolly was no irresponsible. He weighed the situation closely. The choice, as he saw it, was between Irishmen being swept into the net of conscription and forced to fight in a war that was not their own, or else to choose to strike for national freedom. With such an alternative, as an anti-militarist and a Nationalist, he took a consistent course. In 1914, all the stagnation, stability and security of reaction held over from the nineteenth century came to an abrupt end. Connolly did not cease to be a social thinker when the situation made him a leader in the armed struggle of the nation. His place at the apex of that struggle obscured his life's work for many of his countrymen, who saw this as something apart and not in its true perspective. Some time had to elapse before it was seen that his action in 1916 was the logical result of everything that had gone before.

After his death and before the significance of the Easter Rising was grasped many people—mainly outside Ireland—confessed themselves bewildered by Connolly's participation. He died at the beginning of a revolutionary epoch before it was realised that there were sharper methods of gaining power than voting, appealing or protesting. The Russian Revolution of 1917 and the toppling of many crowns in Europe helped to make Connolly's stand intelligible to those for whom revolutionary action was incomprehensible in 1916. Robert Lynd, in his introduction to a new edition of *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* (October, 1916) reports a conversation which he had in Dublin with Professor T. M. Kettle about Connolly's part in the insurrection. Kettle quoted some eloquent lines from Francis Adams' poem *Anarchists* expressing a blind exasperation which leads to revolt. "That," commented Robert Lynd, "seems to me to be the true interpretation of the last passion of James Connolly."

Connolly was no anarchist and his own closely reasoned analysis of the world situation in considering when the blow should be struck, disproves the contention that he gave way to passion or despair. Those whose minds had become set in more pacific times found Connolly's stand completely unintelligible. Their thought could not catch up with events. Later it was seen that Connolly was not merely a romantic survival from the 1848 barricades in Europe or even a throwback to earlier Irish revolutionary struggles. He knew about these movements of the past and learnt from them. But he was the forerunner of a new epoch in which both small nations and struggling masses all over Europe have had to battle for liberation. Europe today is the justification of Connolly's heroic insistence on struggle. All who love National liberty and the rights of democracy have had to follow the Connolly path. His was the movement of Resistance on which others have been modelled.

Outside Ireland—especially in earlier years—Connolly's significance was missed. Some writers, in estimating his work, ignored his stand for Ireland. Others dismissed him as a Socialist who, unaccountably, lost his way at the end. Daniel De Leon injected his venom into the "Answers to Correspondents" section of the *Weekly People*. "Yes," he said, "the Connolly who fought in Dublin was the same Anarchist-Syndicalist who caused so much trouble when he was in the States." This sterile theorist who lived on a diet of words could never forgive Connolly for helping to shape events.

The British Labour publicist, Thomas Johnston, Editor of *Forward*, wrote in his issue (May 6, 1916), concerning Connolly's part in the Rising as follows:—

He may, of course, have changed his views. He may have shut his eyes to the lessons of the history he so ably expounded six years ago; the quiet-mannered, soft musical-voiced man who a year ago was lecturing in Hutchinsonstown for the L.R.C. may suddenly have run amok for a bloody revolution which, apart from its predestination to failure, could not possibly secure, nor lead to the securing, of the Socialist ownership and control which he spent the best part of his life in advocating. He may. But the psychology of it all is a mystery to me.

Johnston would certainly have been amazed after his talk of "predestination to failure" if he could have known that within a few years Ireland would have achieved that self-government which, for generations, had been the national aim. Connolly sensed the value of the Rising and proved far more practical than the British Labour statesman whose own achievements in bringing Socialism nearer in Britain have not been conspicuous since Connolly's death. And he ought to have known that Connolly had always urged National freedom as a pre-requisite condition for the Irish workers to control their own destinies.

Not only in Britain did Socialists confess their inability to understand Connolly. That able Polish Socialist and well-informed writer—Karl Radek—wrote an article condemning the Easter Rising as a "putsch" foredoomed to failure. Pundits, wiseacres, owlsh theorists—all displayed their ignorance by pitying Connolly condescendingly.

It was left to the greatest of all the revolutionary leaders—Lenin—who, like Connolly, was not only a man of words, to express another view. Lenin—who was soon to lead the 1917 Russian Revolution—came forward at once with a Socialist vindication of the Easter Rising and of Connolly's part in it. Replying to Radek's belittling of the Rising as a "putsch" Lenin called it an "heroic Rising." Developing his argument he says (Selected Works. Vol. 5, p. 303):—

To imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie, *with all its prejudices*, without the movement of non-class-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses . . . to imagine that, means *repudiating social revolution*. Only those who imagine that in one place an army will line up and say, 'We are for Socialism,' and in another place another army will say 'We are for Imperialism' and that this will be the social revolution—only those who hold such a ridiculously pedantic opinion could vilify the Irish Rebellion by calling it a 'putsch.'

He continued :—

. . . Capitalism is not so harmoniously built that the various springs of rebellion can immediately merge, on their own accord, without reverses and defeats. On the other hand, the very fact that revolts break out at different times, in different

places, and are of different kinds, guarantees wide scope and depth to the general movement; only in *premature*, partial, sporadic, and therefore unsuccessful, revolutionary movements will the masses gain experience, acquire knowledge, gather strength, get to know their real leaders, the Socialist proletarians, and in this way prepare for the general onslaught, in the same way as separate strikes, demonstrations, local and national, mutinies in the army, outbreaks among the peasantry, etc., prepared the way for the general onslaught in 1905.

It was unfortunate for those British comrades who wanted to accuse Connolly of forgetting Socialism that Lenin, who gave all his life and thought to its advancement, should endorse Connolly and condemn their attitude. Here is a man who was a student of history and a practical revolutionary—as Connolly was. He was able to look back to 1905 in the history of Russia and see the value of an apparently premature Rising as part of the general struggle. Connolly, too, had looked back on Irish history, the abortive and premature revolts, the apparently wasted opportunities of the past. He saw that each had contributed something to the modern movement. Learning from these he echoed the cry of revolt caught from Fintan Lalor who, he says, “like all the really dangerous revolutionists of Ireland, advocated his principles as part of the creed of the democracy of the world, and not merely as applicable only to the incidents of the struggle of Ireland against England.”

What Connolly says about Lalor applies to himself even more definitely. That a great revolutionary theorist and man of action like Lenin should write, out of his knowledge, justifying Connolly from the Socialist standpoint, should make Socialists in Britain realise the value of Connolly's life and work. If they drop all Imperialist prejudice they will understand that his action in 1916 was not something detached from his previous activities but a necessary consequence, whether considered from a Labour or a National viewpoint.

Connolly's stand for Nationalism has raised some prejudice against him in these latter days, when Nationalism is alleged to be a disturber of world peace. But Connolly knew that the real disturber of world peace is that economic Imperialism which masquerades under many labels and

uses many counters. The rise of the nation state—at the time of the French Revolution—was bound up historically with the idea of democratic rule, the rule of the citizens. Free nations, it was urged, have rights that should not be impinged, just as free men have equal rights. Connolly did not claim rights for any one country—as the Chauvinists do—but for all. His principles are a guarantee of world democracy and world peace. In *What Is A Free Nation?* (*Workers' Republic*, February 12, 1916) he writes:—

As the separate individual is to the family, so the separate nation is to humanity. The perfect family is that which best draws out the inner powers of the individual; the most perfect world is that in which the most separate existence of nations is held most sacred.

This view is, of course, modified by the idea that all the nations should exist to serve the larger interest. Connolly, while allowing that the nation should enter into international obligations limiting its own powers, does not concede that the small nation is a danger to world peace. It is not the small nation any more than the small man who wants to pick a quarrel. The little nations are all for international safeguards. They supported the League of Nations until the intrigues of the big Powers smashed it and made it a sham. The big Imperialist powers cause wars and suffering because they will not allow rights to the smaller nations.

This democratic Nationalism is the very antithesis of Nazism which built, not upon common citizenship and equal rights of all peoples but upon a degenerate idea of blood and race and soil, giving to one race the right to crush and rule others. This was a perversion of the democratic nationalism which Connolly advocated just as it was a parody of Socialism.

Always he maintained, as a first principle, that workers of the world should unite. To build on such a basis is an additional safeguard of world peace. Connolly saw every nation with its own culture, customs, literature, language and associations, enriching the common stock. He believed that only in this way could there arise a genuine internationalism. Between this and the machine-made

cosmopolitanism that results from Imperialist rule there is a wide gulf.

His deepest conviction was that the salvation of the world depends upon Labour taking control of it. He did not compromise with this belief. Everything he did was an attempt to bring it closer to realisation. For this he was ready to endure suffering. Behind his Labour and National principles was experience as well as study. Toil was something that he had felt in his muscles, in exhaustion and fatigue. He knew hunger in the pit of his stomach, not only as the flourish of an election manifesto. And he related his own hunger to the hunger of the famine years, the suffering of his own people. The worth and clear-cut determination of Connolly was due largely to this experience, incommunicable in its full meaning to those who have never had to work hard for their bread or suffer privation for themselves and their families.

As a pioneer of Labour thought, he was too busy trying to build up his movement from its lowly beginnings to busy himself with rising in the social register. And he had no inclination that way. He had a bitterness that cut like a sword into everything mean and contemptible. His greatest contempt was reserved for those who exploited the weak—the women and children. He was a clear-eyed man who refused to burke any necessary struggle. Flintlike in principle, he combined shrewdness with simplicity. He was not a sectarian, for he sought to draw the sections together on a basis of reality. He would never fight merely over phrases, definitions or formulas. But he was always ready to make a stand for what he knew to be true. The Labour movement internationally, and the movements for national independence in war-torn Europe, need to recapture the intrepid spirit of Connolly. They are faced with tremendous tasks and they have to tread the Connolly path as they seek to win national freedom and working-class fraternity in this post-war predatory world.

Connolly took from Socialist theory as much as he wanted to help him understand social struggles and the course of history. But he was always conscious of something more important than economic analysis. He was aware of the

grandeur of the human spirit. He refused to accept any explanation of world affairs that treated men and women as undifferentiated masses, whose individual hopes and strivings were of no account. His belief in free nations—in a free Ireland—was founded in his belief in free men, in the free human spirit. He fought everywhere and in every field against the degradation of life. He believed in the value of life and was constantly endeavouring to raise this to a higher level of comfort, of culture, of opportunity and spirit. During his lifetime he was regarded as a visionary. But the world is swinging round to his economic and social views. In Britain and on the Continent, collectivism is striding forward. Little nations—overrun during the war—are responsive to the urge for national freedom. In Ireland—late in the field of economic development—the State is playing an ever more important role, taking a more dominant part in economic life. Side by side with the State invasion of industry and transport, economists are urging developments of agricultural co-operation. Connolly always insisted that Ireland must go forward with the rest of the world.

In a world where the aeroplane has annihilated distance, to talk of isolation is merely folly. Economic necessity has led to a greater measure of State interference and control in Irish industry. So far there has been a narrowly practical concentration upon economic progress—so long held back—to the exclusion of social aims. Energy, after the winning of National independence, flowed into economic rather than political or social channels. This was inevitable in a State whose object has been to catch up, economically, in a striving world. But after industry has been established we begin to ask: What is industry for? Connolly gave the answer for Ireland and the world. The Irish Labour movement is again becoming part of the world's progressive forces, linking up with the democratic struggle and so expressing the Connolly spirit.

Now in Europe, where so many people have been torn from their old moorings, the struggle for national and social freedom is intensified. Connolly is a powerful and sincere voice calling attention to human, national and

social needs. Not to submerge the nations or to destroy individual liberty but, in association, to achieve practical democracy, that is the road which Connolly points out to the people of Europe. It is the road which he followed in Ireland—this sturdy, thick-set, honest man with the level eyes—who was the forerunner of the struggle now being waged in the world.

Bibliography and Notes

James Connolly's writings are scattered through many propaganda journals in Ireland, in Britain and in America, between 1896 and 1916. In 1896 he edited and published James Fintan Lalor's *Rights of Ireland and Faith of a Felon*. In 1897 he issued his 98 *Readings* (16 pp.) in five fortnightly parts. These historical pamphlets gave selections from *United Irishmen* official documents and the writings of the National leaders of the period in prose and verse.

Erin's Hope: The End And The Means (1897) was made up of several articles written for Alice Milligan's *Shin Van Vocht* and Keir Hardie's *The Labour Leader*. Afterwards it was reprinted in America in *The Harp Library* and in Dublin—in the twenties—under the title *The Irish Revolution*.

Connolly founded *The Workers' Republic* in 1898. First issue appeared on August 13. After eleven issues of the first series, the paper was suspended for lack of funds. He started it again in May, 1899, as a half-penny weekly and, by May, 1903, 85 issues had appeared in all. It was the organ of the Irish Socialist Republican Party.

Other publications were: *The New Evangel* (1901) *Socialism Made Easy* (Socialist Labour Press, Glasgow, 1909). This was afterwards published with the omission of the first section and the addition of *Old Wine in New Bottles* from the *London New Age* (April 30, 1914) under the title of *The Axe to the Root* (Irish Transport Union). Part of this pamphlet had originally appeared in *The Socialist* (Glasgow). Other material was taken from *The International Socialist Review* (C. H. Kerr, Chicago).

Songs of Freedom (1907) was followed by *Labour, Nationality and Religion* (1910), *Labour in Irish History* (1910) and *The Re-Conquest of Ireland* (1915). The two latter were afterwards published in one volume under the title *Labour in Ireland*.

The Harp—monthly organ of the Irish Socialist Federation—was founded and edited by Connolly in New York in 1908. Transferred to Dublin in January, 1910. Five issues appeared in Dublin, the last being in June. Connolly edited *The Irish Worker* from November, 1913, till this was suppressed in the autumn of 1914. One further number appeared "published when the Censor wasn't looking." Subsequently he edited *The Worker*—printed by the Socialist Labour Press in Glasgow and sent to Dublin. On May 29, 1915, he published the first issue of *The Workers' Republic*—a weekly journal, printed on the Union press in the basement of Liberty Hall. He edited this till the eve of the 1916 Rising.

Contributed to the *Weekly People* and other American journals, to *Forward* (Glasgow), *The Socialist* (Glasgow), *Fianna* (Dublin), *The Irish Review*, *The Irish Nation*, *L'Irlande Libre* (Paris), etc. He

wrote manifestoes and leaflets on topical issues—The Coronation, the Queen's Jubilee, etc., and took part in vigorous newspaper controversies. His three-act play *Under Which Flag* was produced in Liberty Hall in March, 1916.

Desmond Ryan's *James Connolly* (1924) and W. P. Ryan's *The Irish Labour Movement* are of great value to students of the period. A more intimate personal study is Nora Connolly O'Brien's *Portrait of a Rebel Father*.