

REPUBLICAN MANUAL OF EDUCATION

PART 1 : HISTORICAL

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## A. THE ORIGINS OF REPUBLICANISM

The association of national freedom with a Republican form of Government originated in the 1798 period.

Previous national resistance was disunited and associated with foreign monarchy, apart from a brief period in 1641 under the Confederation of Kilkenny, which had the makings of a National Assembly.

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

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

The reason for failure was the indecision of the national leadership due to its being in the hands of individuals who had too much to lose. Wolfe Tone evaluated in political terms the scale of French aid necessary:- 5,000 ; it would be a hard battle, we would not have the initial support of the men of

of property. 10,000 : it would be a relatively easy victory and we would have the immediate support of the men of property. 20,000 : we would never get rid of the Franch!

There was a time when if a rising had been initiated even without foreign aid: substantial sections of yeomanry - farmers and artisans - would have come over; foreign aid would have been hastened as a result; the British navy would have been immobilised by mutiny. Resolute leadership was lacking.

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

BOOKS TO READ: JEMMY HOPE by Sean Cronin.  
LIFE OF WOLFE TONE by Sean Cronin.  
LABOUR IN IRISH HISTORY by James Connolly  
(published in LABOUR IN IRELAND by Desmond Ryan)

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#### B. THE WAR FOR THE LAND : THE FENIANS : PARNELL

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

Despite the obvious priority, O'Connell in the 1820s and 1830s led the Irish into two agitations which were red herrings as far as the struggle for the Republic was concerned, which gave rise to no stable revolutionary movement, and which when they failed left no positive traces of which the threads might have been picked up later. (Catholic Emancipation and Repeal). The main events of this agitation were mass meetings addressed by the Leader; this did not enable a national organisation to be developed with good local leadership.

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

Lalor's message was not picked up either by the Fenians who were organised as a tight conspiracy in the 1860s aiming to organise a military coup to win independence from Britain. The secret military tradition of the Republican movement goes back to the Fenians and the I.R.B.

The very tightness and secretiveness of the organisation proved to be its undoing, as when the call to arms came in 1867 the nation as a whole did not respond; accepted local leaders were wanting. After that in the 1880s the struggle against the evictions developed into the Land League, which was under the moderate Parliamentary leadership of Parnell. Had a virile Fenian element been combined with this, it would have been an irresistible force. As it was, 'spent' Fenians were the backbone of the Land League.

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

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

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

BOOKS TO READ: MITCHEL: Last Conquest of Ireland Perhaps; LALOR: Collected works; JOHN DEVOY'S Postbag.

### C. LABOUR AND 1916.

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

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

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

The Unionist industrialists of the North, primarily engaged in shipbuilding and the linen trade, wanted to retain free trade with Britain, which was the main market for their products. They were not interested in protecting Irish home industry by tariffs and quotas as the southern businessmen were. This was the economic basis of Ulster Unionism and the reason why the industrial and business classes of the North did not take the same anti-British line in politics as their southern counterparts. Moreover, from

the point of view of the Ulster manufacturers the policy of Union with Britain could be used to divide the working class movement in Belfast, which united, would have been the most potentially powerful social force in Ireland. Catholic and Protestant workers, at one another's throats over sectarian religious issues, could not unite against their common masters. It was no surprise therefore to find that the Unionist employers used the sectarian violence and pogroms of 1919 and the 1920s in Belfast as an opportunity to make slashing cuts in wage rates in the city, which affected all workers, Protestant and Catholic, but which they were too disunited to successfully resist.

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

Redmondites or Griffithites - they both saw themselves threatened by the rising power of Labour. The 1913 lock-out was the attempt of the Irish employers to put Labour in its place, using the help of England's army and police, before Home Rule which they thought was on the point of being granted, became law as they would have to deal with Labour on their own. Both Redmondites and Griffith's Sinn Fein opposed the workers of Dublin as they fought to wrest decent wages and conditions from the employers during 1913. Griffith's paper "Sinn Fein" attacked the Larkin-Connolly Labour Movement very bitterly in 1913.

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

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

Connolly wanted a society in Ireland where the machines and factories and means of producing wealth would be owned and run for the benefit of the people as a whole and for satisfying the needs of the people rather than for the profit of a few. Only in such a society, he held, would workers no longer have to sell their labour to those who wanted to make a profit out of them. But at the same time he saw that the Irish people could not choose such a socialist form of society until they were a free people first, free from foreign domination, and had established an independent Republic. For as long as Ireland was not free Britain would back every reactionary social element in the country against the interests of the majority of the common people. Likewise, all those within Ireland - such as those interests represented by Redmond and Griffith - who feared the demands of the workers and farmers, would lean on Britain for support and would compromise with imperialism rather than support a radical popular independence policy which might damage their economic interests. The policies of compromise with imperialism pursued successively over the years by Redmond, Griffith, De Valera and Lemass subordinating the interests of the mass of the people to the interests of large property, have shown Connolly's estimate to be a true one. It was, after all, the estimate of Tone as well, who saw that the "men of no property" - i.e. those who had to work for a living and did not own large amounts of capital - as the most reliable fighters for the Republic. It corresponded too with the view of Henry Joy McCracken, in 1798, who said that "the rich always betray the poor".

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

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

The lessons of this period are: 1) The cause of Ireland is the cause of Labour, the cause of labour is the cause of Ireland. In other

words, Irish Labour can only obtain full social emancipation in a country that is politically and economically independent of British imperialism.

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

3) The 1916 Proclamation and the Democratic Programme constitute a common political platform on which the Labour movement and the mass of the Irish people - excluding only those who have a stake in the "connection" - can unite.

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

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

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

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

BOOKS TO READ: The works of PEARSE and CONNOLLY referred to.  
R.M. HENRY: The Evolution of Sinn Fein.  
C.D. GREAVES: The Life and Times of James Connolly.

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#### D. 1916 AND AFTER.

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

That was, of course, a typically Chamber of Commerce viewpoint. There were other forces, too, working towards a bolder national policy than Redmond's --- and that faces us immediately with the question of objectives.

We have had it dinned into us, deliberately and persistently, that the objective of the leaders of the Rising was a recognised national identity - "There goes a man who is different from other men. He is Irish." But was it?

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

The 1916 leaders drew much of their inspiration from the original Irish Republicans, the United Irishmen of 1798. In spite of differences of emphasis, at the very least, in some of them, none of them would have denied Tone and Emmet and McCracken as their political fathers. Those United Irishmen had based their independence movement squarely upon the social revolutionary ideas of their day. They stated their objectives frankly and clearly in their original manifesto: "The Rights of Man in Ireland - the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers in this island, the inherent and indefeasible claims of every free nation to rest in this nation." That manifesto was the people's answer to the hitherto unchallenged claim of the landed aristocracy to dominate their lives. It broke through the old traditional differences, racist and religious, that kept people still fighting the battle of the Boyne, and created a new concept of Irish nationhood that has struggled on through the years right down to our own day.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

If the sharpness of that clash is not always realised, still less is it realised how close the I.R.B. leaders of the Irish Volunteers were, in their sympathies, to the Larkin-Connolly movement, and how sharply at variance they were with Griffith. It is commonly known that Pearse grew very close to Connolly in his political thought as their acquaintance developed. It would be difficult, after reading Pearse's last pamphlet, "The Sovereign People," with its enthusiastic approval of James Fintan Lalor's role in 1848, to doubt that he would have stood with Connolly in the inevitable reorganisation of society

if their revolt had been successful. The lack of clarity of thought that is so apparent in much that he wrote has been a joy to his detractors. His glorification of the carnage in Europe in 1915, which O'Casey used so effectively to lampoon the Rising, drew from Connolly the retort, "Blithering idiot". His interpretation of the still passion-charged history of Irish involvement in the British civil wars of the 17th Century may even have caused some embarrassment to Connolly, whose interpretation had been so different, when he came to sign the Proclamation, but still, even though he made it easy for people to call him by that unpleasant term, "Separatist", he did leave on record his conviction that "Separation from England would be valueless unless it put the people - the actual people, and not merely certain rich men - of Ireland in effectual ownership and possession of the soil of Ireland", and nothing that he wrote would allow us to place him with the supporters of the money-grubbing society that he so obviously despised. His sympathy with the working-class struggle did not begin in his association with Connolly. He had announced it publicly at least as early as 1911, when Connolly was still organising Trades Unions in Belfast.

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

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

That incitement to military intervention in the rail strike published in Griffith's paper was a bit too much for some members

of Griffith's party. W. T. Cosgrave sent a letter to the next issue of Larkin's paper, "The Irish Worker", dissociating himself from it in general terms. Eamonn Ceannt, afterwards a signatory of the 1916 Proclamation, sent a long, and very angry, letter to "Sinn Fein", and if anyone likes to compare that letter with the newspaper reports of Mr. De Valera's recent tribute to Eamonn Ceannt in Ballymoe, he will, I think, see how enthusiasm for national identity can be used to cover a retreat from national independence.

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

Griffith hit back at Ceannt in his next issue. "Some of the strike orators", he wrote, "have tried to draw a parallel between the fight of the farmers for security of tenure and fair rents and the strike of industrial workers for higher wages. The fight of the Irish people for the land was the fight of a nation for the reconquest of a soil that had been theirs and had been confiscated. The landlord did not make the soil, but the industrialists made the industry."

The same issue carried an editorial: "In Dublin the wives of some of the men that Larkin has led out on strike are begging in the streets. The consequences of Larkinism are workless fathers, mourning mothers, hungry children, and broken-homes. Not the "Capitalists" but the policy of Larkin has raised the price of food until the poorest in Dublin are in a state of semi-famine, the curses of women are being poured on this man's head, Mr. Larkin's career of destruction is coming to a close, but when it has closed it will have established his name in the memory of Dublin as the man who did the maximum of injury to trade-unionism and the industrial revival."

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

It has been attempted, by quoting extracts from Arthur Griffith's paper, "Sinn Fein", and the Larkin-Connolly paper, "The Irish Worker", to indicate the forces that were gathering for the declaration of the Republic in 1916 and for its overthrow in 1922. "Irish freedom", to Griffith, meant freedom for Irish industrialists to manoeuvre to greater advantage within the imperial system. An independent Republic had no place in his plans. We fail to give him the credit for consistency that is his due when we think of him as a man who "weakened" and signed the Articles of Agreement for a Treaty. On the issue of Partition he was tricked by Lloyd George, but, apart from that particular issue, the abandonment of the Republic and the acceptance of a place in the Empire represented very closely his own views on Irish and on world politics. He considered that, by the Act of Union, Ireland had been cheated out of her fair share of the fruits of Empire. He had written of Pitt as "No Imperialist", but "An English Absolutist" who, by destroying Grattan's Parliament, had destroyed the hope of the development of "An Anglo-Hibernian Empire" that would be "master of the world today". A sincerely patriotic man, he saw the development of industrialism within the imperial economy as the basis of all the goods that people mean when they speak of freedom, and he used the same words in his propaganda as other nationalist propagandists use, and so, among those who gathered round him in the Sinn Fein party there were some who were shocked to find that his unquestionable patriotism and his very volubly expressed hatred of all things English did not prevent him from calling upon the British military forces to come to the rescue of the Irish employers when their interests were threatened by the railway strike in Dublin.

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

I hope I have quoted enough of Connolly's and Larkin's own words to show that their aims were unattainable without the building of an Irish economy based upon the needs of the Irish people and

upon their effective ownership of Ireland. I hope I have made it clear that Connolly realised that that could only be done by an independent Irish Republic.

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

In November, 1914, Robert Monteith, then an Irish Volunteer organiser, was ordered out of Ireland by the British government. The Citizen Army and the I.T. & G.W.U. held a meeting of protest. "He is not", Connolly wrote, "of our counsel, he is not of our Union, he is not of our Army, but as he was struck at by our enemy because he held the same high ideal of National Rights as we had, we sprang to offer our all for his aid. That was the true spirit of militant Irish Labour."

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

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

thus, Ireland may yet set the torch to a European conflagration that will not burn out until the last throne and the last capitalist bond and debenture will be shrivelled on the funeral pyre of the last war lord."

The I.R.B. leaders of the Irish Volunteers were, of course, as determined as Connolly was that what seemed to them the opportunity presented by the war should not be allowed to pass without an armed uprising. As Connolly's determination became more certainly known to them they became anxious lest his plans should clash with their plans, and so they sought an understanding with him. It has been said that he was kidnapped and held until that understanding was reached. If that did happen it seems strange that it would have been thought necessary. What is certain is that Connolly was co-opted on to the military council and appointed to command the joint forces, Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army, in the Dublin area.

The story of the actual Rising does not need retelling here, but there is one detail that is not usually stressed and that has especial significance in any examination of the role of the Labour movement in 1916. It concerns the manner of Connolly's death. He had been severely wounded in the fighting in and around the General Post Office, and, after the other leaders had been executed, there was a long delay. It seemed likely that his life might be spared. The newspaper that was virtually the mouthpiece of the Dublin Employers' Federation took fright and called in unmistakable terms for his death, pointing out to the British authorities how unjust it would be to leave that most dangerous man alive. So Connolly was taken from his bed, strapped to a chair, and carried before a firing squad. It was no lone voice that demanded his death. Within a week after the crushing of the Rising the Chamber of Commerce called a special meeting and passed this resolution: "The Council of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce hereby assure His Gracious Majesty of the loyalty of the commercial community to his person and his throne. They also do record their abhorrence of the dreadful scenes of murder, carnage and destruction resulting from the action of a section of the community in the city." Their souls revolted, you will note, from the murder, carnage and destruction in Dublin, while they were sacking their employees to force them, through starvation, to enlist for the fun and games in Flanders.

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

Count Plunkett, who had been elected as a non-party Republican in a by-election in Roscommon, had, at an early stage, organised

"Liberty Clubs". The Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army kept their military formations. Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein Party still remained, and some volunteers, though not a big number, were members of it. The I.R.B. was extending its influence amongst the various groupings.

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

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

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

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

greater part of the pre-truce portion of the war for independence he was Acting President of the Republic.

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

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

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

I have tried to show how consistently hostile Griffith had been to the Larkin-Connolly Labour movement before the Rising. I have tried to show, too, that those I.R.B. leaders who, with Connolly, were responsible for the Proclamation of the Republic, leant towards Connolly's politics and not towards Griffith's. When Connolly was co-opted to the military council and appointed to command the Republican forces in the Dublin area no one had

suggested that "in the interests of national unity" Connolly should stand aside and allow Griffith to lead. No one suggested then that "Labour must wait". But now, at the reorganisation, Griffith, who had been persuaded with difficulty to take his stand with the Republicans, was installed in a position of leadership while Labour was told to wait. Labour waited, and that was the great failure of our generation. I do not think it is too much to say that it was the determining factor in causing the collapse of the independence movement. This can be most easily seen in relation to the situation in the North. Like O'Connell's old slogan, "Repeal of the Union - God Save the Queen!", Griffithism faced the hostility of Belfast Conservatism without offering any attraction to anything that was left of the old Radicalism of the Northern workers. It provided a welcome funk-hold for quite a lot of pseudo-radicalism. The Tories had "played the Orange card", and the only card that might have beaten it was never played, not yet.

As a result of the general election of 1918 the Republic was established by popular vote. It was immediately attacked by the forces of the Crown, and the war that developed in its defence was fought in a political atmosphere dominated, not by Connolly's mind, but by Griffith's mind. Ernie O'Malley has described the attitude of the I.R.A. volunteers as being, generally speaking, vaguely sympathetic towards the cause of Labour, and that was about the size of it. Whatever gestures were made towards Labour by the Government of the Republic were kept well within the bounds of the social system that prevailed. The "Right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland" claimed by the 1916 Proclamation, and itself an echo from the Citizen Army constitution, was not made to mean the right of the people of Ireland to the possession of Ireland. Both in the slums of Dublin and in the countrysides landlords were protected by Republican courts anxious to be "fair to all sides". In certain areas where landless men tried to move in on the ranches and demesne lands the I.R.A. was used to prevent them from doing so.

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

Another similar pamphlet tells how "terrified landowners flocked up to Dublin to beseech protection from the Dail", and goes on to tell

how they got it. A number of men had taken over some ranch land, and had defied the order of the court to vacate it. "One night, about a fortnight after the issue of the judgement, the captain of the local company of the I.R.A. descended upon them with a squad of his men, sons of very poor farmers like themselves, arrested four of them, and brought them off to that very effective Republican prison, an unknown destination."

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

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

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

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

When the Treaty settlement came to be debated in Dail Eireann there were many speeches made against it that were admirable for their courage, and for their devotion to the ideal of Irish independence but there was only one that showed much understanding of the realities behind that settlement. Madame Markievicz, speaking as a disciple of James Connolly, pointed out that English Imperialism was working "by a change of names". "It is the capitalist interests in England and Ireland", she said, "that are pushing this Treaty to block the march of the working people in England and Ireland". That policy, with up-to-date streamlining, has since become familiar to the world under the name of "Neo-colonialism".

Arthur Griffith's part in the Treaty settlement was logical and consistent. He had always supported the capitalist interests, even to the extent, in 1911, of putting aside temporarily his "Irish Rebel" attitude and calling upon the British forces to break a Larkin-Connolly strike. Now, in the sharper crisis of 1922, he again called upon the British forces, and this time, when the borrowed guns were roaring around the Four Courts, there was no protest from Mr. Cosgrave. There had been that much clarification of ideas on one side of the barricade. On the other side there had been no such clarification. The Larkin-Connolly leadership was gone. The I.R.B., beheaded of its pro-Connolly leadership, and by reason of its conspiratorial methods unpredictable, threw its disciplinary influence behind Griffith and against the Republic. The Labour leaders, without vision and with their sights drastically lowered from Connolly's objective blundered into support for Griffith's State, and a politically leaderless I.R.A. fought a rearguard action in defence of the Republic until it could fight no longer.

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### E. THE TREATY AND THE CIVIL WAR.

With the Treaty, Arthur Griffith and his supporters, having successfully prevented the Labour movement from playing a leading role in Sinn Fein, assisted in this by the spinelessness of the Labour leaders, William O'Brien and Cathal O'Shannon, who had abandoned Connolly's conception of Labour having a major role in the struggle against imperialism, did a deal with the British government. In effect what happened at the Treaty was that Griffith took over John Redmond's policy of Home Rule, except that this time it was for a partitioned country, the representatives of Irish business, particularly that section of it with commercial links with England, and the big ranchers, doing a deal with British imperialism. De Valera sought a compromise with imperialism (Document No. 2) which was not acceptable in 1921. Eleven years later he adopted Griffith's old Sinn Fein programme of protection for Irish industry and, backed by the smaller Irish manufacturers and traders who wanted the Irish home market to themselves together with the farmers who were won over by his promise to retain the land annuities he came to power as leader of Fianna Fail. But neither document No. 2 nor the Fianna Fail 1932 programme was a republican programme.

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

The anti-Treaty I.R.A. saw the Republic was betrayed and tried to maintain it by arms, to return to the position of 1919 and 1920. But their leadership was primarily a military leadership, not a political one. They had little conception of how they would convince the mass of the people of what was happening and organise them to oppose the Free State Government. They did not know how they could identify the cause of the defence of the Republic with the economic and social needs of the people, and linking with the Labour movement. The I.R.A. leader who most clearly saw the need to give a strong social base for the defence of the Republic was Liam Mellows, who expressed his views in a number of letters smuggled out of Mountjoy Jail to his I.R.A. colleagues when he was imprisoned in August 1922 after the fall of the Four Courts.

Mellows saw that without the support of the working class, in particular the trade unions, the Republic was lost. "We should certainly keep Irish Labour for the Republic", he wrote. "It will

probably be the biggest factor on our side. Anything that would prevent Irish Labour from becoming imperialist and respectable will help the Republic...We are back with Tone - and it is just as well - relying on "the men of no property".

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

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

If this had been done or done early enough, by the anti-Treaty I.R.A. leadership, there would almost certainly have been greater support for the Republic than there was. The Free State might have been defeated, or at least the Civil War would not have been lost so easily by the Anti-Treaty side. If the economic power of the trade unions had been thrown on the side of the Republic and against the Free State the outcome of the struggle might have been very different. But it was not to be. The conflict was primarily a military one. Apart from the lonely voice of Mellowes there was nobody to explain what needed to be done to save the Republic - i.e. the need for a political leadership and the social base in the interests of the mass of workers and small farmers. There was nobody on the official Labour side to give a lead after the death of Connolly. The military struggle to defend the Republic inevitably ended in defeat. Mellowes earlier had pointed why: "The reason for many young soldiers going wrong (i.e. I.R.A. volunteers taking the Treaty side) is that they never had a proper grasp of fundamentals. They were absorbed into the movement and fight - not educated into it. Hence no real convictions."

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

2) The need for members of the movement to have a thorough political education so that they will understand the reasons for

for the different attitudes of different sections of the people to the Republican struggle. The need for them to identify themselves by active participation and leadership, as Republicans, in the economic and social struggles of workers and small farmers, so that the latter will be with them in the time of military struggle.

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

BOOKS TO READ: LIAM MELLOWES: Notes from Mountjoy Jail (reprinting)  
EOIN NEESON: THE CIVIL WAR IN IRELAND.  
DOROTHY MACARDLE: The Irish Republic.

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#### F. WHY THE CIVIL WAR WAS LOST : PARTITION

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

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

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

2) While masses of the people were sympathetic to the Republican side, this did not extend into active involvement. The Republicans gave the people a military leadership, not a political one. De Valera, the main political figure on the Republican side, had nothing to contribute in the way of political leadership while the Civil War lasted. There was no political leadership or organisation in existence to explain to the people what had happened and why Griffith and Collins had compromised with Britain. The "betrayal" of the Treaty was generally understood by Republicans in terms of individual moral fault - Griffith or Collins and the others had "sold out" because of some defects in their moral fibre - rather than in terms of the social and economic interests Griffith and Collins represented; that is, business, commerce, shopkeepers, the ranchers and the "gombeen" nationalists in general, whose business was suffering badly as a result of the war with Britain and the depredations of the Black and Tans. These people now thought that they had got a good bargain from Britain and they were unwilling to continue the fight for the sake of the Republic because this would have thrown them into the arms of the small farmers, the workers, the landless men, the "men of no property", who were enthusiastic for the Republic because they saw in it the opportunity for winning social and economic as well as political freedom, but who got nothing from the Treaty settlement.

3) Significant masses of the common people, workers and small farmers in particular, could have been swung on the side of active support for the Republic if Mellowes' programme had been carried out, or had been adopted by the I.R.A. at an earlier stage when this was still feasible, before the Civil War actually broke out. Such a step would have given the cause of the Republic a visible social content which would have attracted the support of the most radical elements in the country, the men who had nothing to lose in a fight to the finish with Britain, unlike the business elements who supported the Treaty. But this was not done. If the Mellowes programme had been adopted the trade unions in particular could have been involved in the defence of the Republic. These were organisations which had the economic power and ability to cripple the Provisional Government. If they had been active on the side of the Republic the refusal of the workers to work could have stopped the trains and transport system and the entire civil administration, making prosecution of an effective war impossible for the Free State. Political strikes in industry and distribution could have held the Government to ransom. But the Trade Unions were not involved as organisations, as Labour had been in 1916 when led by Connolly.

As it was, the Republican ranks in the Civil War were manned by individual workers and small farmers in the main, and the strongest and toughest resistance to the Free State troops was put up in the small farm areas of the south and west, where the poorest and economically hardest hit people in the country lived. Likewise many workers and trade unionists were active in the I.R.A. But individual participation is vastly different from organisational involvement. The organised power of Labour and the trade unions remained unused and the Labour leaders, William O'Brien, Cathal O'Shannon and Tom Johnston attempted to adopt a position of "neutrality" which in effect played into the hands of the Free State. Official Labour sat on the fence. Responsibility for this rested not just with the I.R.A., for failing to give the fight for the Republic a social content which would appeal more to the workers and small farmers as Mellowes had advocated; it rested primarily with the leaders of the Labour movement, the Trade Unions and the Labour Party themselves, who were in general timid, shortsighted men, with little vision, concerned primarily with protecting their union funds, and in no appreciating that the interests of the workers could only be served by a genuinely anti-imperialist Republican Government, based on the support of the men of no property, whereas the Free State was ruled by the same business interests which had tried to suppress the Labour movement during the 1913 strike. Moreover, they did not appreciate that Britain feared nothing more than the emergence in Ireland of a real anti-imperialist Government, based on championing the interests of the workers and small farmers, and not committed by its ties with finance, commerce, industry or ranching to a policy of compromise with imperialism. The 1920s were to hammer home the truth of this to many of the Labour men when the Free State Government revealed clearly the economic and social interests it served by introducing slashing wage cuts, cuts in social security benefits and anti-trade union and small farmer legislation.

Connolly, if he had lived, would have involved organised Labour on the side of the Republic. But there were no men with the Connolly outlook in the top leadership of Labour in the early 1920s. And in general this has remained true of the Trade Union and Labour Movement in Ireland ever since. While the membership of the Republican movement during the various phases of its development over the past four decades has consisted primarily of workers in the towns and small farmers and labourers in the countryside, no attempt has been effectively made to involve labour organisationally on the side of the Republic and against the pro-imperialist policies of successive Cumann na nGael, Fianna Fail and Coalition Governments. This has been the main reason, moreover, for the political weakness of Labour in Ireland over the past four decades. The trade unions have been strong in the economic field, and they continue daily to grow stronger - in numbers, membership, funds and power over the economy. But politically the leadership of the working classes in the towns and cities has never been (a) Republican, (b) Anti-imperialist or (c) With a social content which identified the

the fight for the Republic with the economic and social needs of the workers and small farmers. As a result the urban workers - and much of the countryside too - have had little alternative but to support the nearest thing to such a programme, namely the Fianna Fail platform in the 1930s and 1940s. Today, as Fianna Fail is increasingly revealed as a pro-imperialist party, with the integration-with-Britain policies of Lemann and Lynch, the urban workers, who numerically are stronger in Ireland than ever before, are looking for an alternative political leadership. It can safely be predicted that the Labour Party will be able to provide such a leadership only to the extent that it is Republican in outlook and policy, anti-imperialist, willing to tackle the property interests that are linked to and dependent on imperialism, and able to explain to the workers that their economic and social interests can only be served by a genuinely anti-imperialist programme.

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G. CUMANN na nGAEL AND FIANNA FAIL. FROM THE  
TREATY TO 1932.

The Cumann na nGael Government that ruled the Free State from 1922 to 1932 represented the most pro-imperialist elements in the country, whose economic interests called for free trade with Britain and close political and cultural ties with her. These were:

a) Business interests bound up with commerce, trade and merchandise, importing and exporting, who made money out of the necessity for Ireland to import the bulk of the manufactured goods she consumed from Britain.

b) Business interests bound up with banking, finance and insurance, who made their money from the channeling of Irish savings abroad, particularly in the various colonies of the British empire, where they could make a higher rate of interest than if they were invested in Ireland, however productive they might be in other ways at home.

c) The big farmers, "ranchers", who made their money by selling cattle to Britain and who needed free access to the British market for this.

d) Business interests bound up with brewing and distilling, at that time, in the early 1920s, the largest single sector of industry in the 26 Counties who made much of their money on the basis of a large export trade they had developed with Britain and who did not

fear competition from British rivals on the Irish market (e.g. Guinness).

e) Sections of the higher professional groups in the cities and towns, people who were tied by sentiment or economic interest to the old Asaendancy.

An analysis of the social background of the Cumann na nGael T.D.s and Senators, of the people and areas that voted for them in elections and of the speeches and policy declarations that they made, will show that this picture of the particular social groups they drew their strongest support from and in whose interests they governed is broadly a correct one. Today, broadly similar sectors of the community support the Fine Gael Party and provide it with its leadership and policies.

The political and economic measures carried out by the Cosgrave Government in the 1920s were such as to serve the interests of these groups in the population primarily. These interests were frequently opposed to those of the mass of the people in the towns and countryside, however. The workers in the towns in the 1920s wanted higher wages and better working conditions; they were badly hit by the mass unemployment and low wages imposed on the people in the aftermath of the Civil War and as a result of the World Slump, whose effects the Cosgrave Government's policies could do nothing to mitigate. The mass of the small farmers were discontented by the fact that they had got nothing as a result of the War of Independence which they had provided the backbone of the struggle in the countryside. They were insecure in their property; they had to pay millions of pounds a year in the form of land annuities to the Free State Government, which then passed them on to Britain as "compensation" to the landlords who had been bought out of the land which their ancestors had robbed from the people. Many of the small farmers and labourers too asked why the many big estates of the Midlands and Munster could not be divided up and given to the impoverished and landless men of the west and south. As the 1920s passed, the workers, small farmers and rural labourers saw that the Cumann na Gael Government, with its wage cuts, unemployment and repression of republicans and trade unionists, and with its subservience to Britain in every field, was not a government with their interests at heart. Moreover, in 1925 a severe blow was dealt to the prestige of the Cosgrave Government by the Boundary Agreement, when the Twenty Six County Government agreed to accept the Border as it had been drawn under the Government of Ireland Act. Griffith and Collins had purported to regard the Free State as a "stepping stone" to the Republic and that the Boundary Commission agreed on under the Treaty would redraw the boundaries of the Six Counties, exclude Tyrone and Fermanagh etc. from the North, and make the Six Counties no longer viable as a separate state. But

the Boundary Commission Report changed nothing, and in retrospect it seemed as if the Civil War had been fought to force partition on the people.

But due to the Provisional Government's victory in the Civil War, power in the country south of the border was possessed by the Free State. The Free State controlled the army, the police and the civil service; they made the laws and were able to enforce them on those who didn't want to obey in the area under their jurisdiction. In general those laws were passed either in the interests of Britain or of the pro-imperialist elements who held office in the Free State. But during the 1920s more and more of the common people saw that the Free State was using its power against the people rather than for their benefit, in the interests of imperialism rather than of anti-imperialism. More and more began to look for an alternative political leadership to the Free State, an anti-imperialist leadership, which would put the interests of the men of no property and the small men first.

Two organisations existed by 1926 which might provide this alternative leadership and government - Fianna Fail and the I.R.A.

Fianna Fail, under De Valera's leadership, had been formed in 1926 after a split in Sinn Fein. The official Sinn Fein position on the Treaty was that the people had been confused and divided and that they must be won back to their allegiance to the Republic, and could express this allegiance by returning a majority of Sinn Fein candidates in a general election, as had happened in 1918. The remaining T.D.s of the Third Dail who did not accept the Treaty claimed de jure power and Sinn Fein gave allegiance to this body as being the legitimate successor of the government of the Republic proclaimed in 1919. It had, of course, now power to enforce its will or make laws that would be obeyed. This power was possessed by the Free State Government.

De Valera held that the only way to win a majority was to declare a willingness to go into the Dail as a minority and that there was no possibility of winning majority support for the long term programme - the Republic - without winning it first for a short term programme. The interests De Valera and his colleagues represented within Sinn Fein saw that the power possessed by the Free State could be used for their benefit, and so they set about the steps which would enable them to take power in the state into their own hands. De Valera left Sinn Fein and founded the Fianna Fail Party in 1926 and adopted a programme which they pledged themselves to implement if elected to a majority in the Free State Dail so that they could form a Government.

What interests did De Valera and his Fianna Fail colleagues represent?

*They represented, so far as the leadership and policy-making sections of Fianna Fail went, an important section of the business and manufacturing sector of the country, whose economic interests were opposed to those of the commercial, banking and ranchers sector that supported Cosgrave. Fianna Fail represented the small manufacturers and distributors who, twenty years before, had supported Arthur Griffith's old Sinn Fein, with its policy of protecting the home market against foreign competition in the interests of Irish manufacturers. They did not want free trade with Britain - which the bankers, merchants and ranchers who supported Cosgrave wanted. They wanted a protected Home market which they could exploit; they wanted their own home manufactures to replace the imported goods from Britain which the Cosgrave Government did nothing to discourage. They were anti-imperialist to the extent that they wanted to oust British goods from as much of the economy as possible and replace them with goods manufactured in Ireland; they wanted a protected Irish industry with tariffs, quotas, duties and licenses, and the restriction of the free field British industry had had in Ireland since the Union. They represented "property", but a significantly different section of it than did Cumann na nGael. Indeed the interests of these two sections of "property" were considerably antagonistic to one another. The replacement of imports by home manufacturers would injure the merchants and importers who supported the Free State. It might provoke retaliation from Britain which would injure the cattle trade that the ranchers depended on. It might lead to control of the investment of Irish capital in the empire, to use it instead to build up home industry, and this would injure the banks and the remnants of the ascendancy. Hence the hostility of Cosgrave and Co. to Fianna Fail reflected the conflict of interest between one section of business and another.*

At the same time the ideas of industrialisation and economic development put forward by Fianna Fail in the interests of Irish industrialists would benefit the workers in the towns, give more jobs, reduce unemployment and enlarge the home market for the farmers. Hence they were likely to get the support of Labour in the urban areas, which in fact Fianna Fail did get. But it is important that the Fianna Fail programme was not a Labour programme and not put forward in the interests of Labour. It emanated from the small business elements who wanted the home market for themselves, who were anti-imperialist to the extent that they feared and were injured by the competition of British imports, but who wanted to make the maximum profit they could out of Irish workers and small farmers themselves. The leadership of Fianna Fail was soon in the hands of "property"; license seekers and protection-seeking businessmen flocked to join Fianna Fail, were the major source of its funds,

and dominated its councils. But this leadership of businessmen and aspiring businessmen was likely to compromise with imperialism when the struggle got such that they could only carry it on only by appealing to the radical sentiments of the "men of no property" for support. For to do that would be to threaten and endanger its own property interests.

The interests of the workers and small farmers, who had no reason to compromise with imperialism, for they had nothing to lose, was mainly represented by the late 1920s by the I.R.A., which had many thousands of members among the city workers and the small men of the countryside. But the I.R.A. was primarily a military force, the armed defenders of the Republic, ready to take up arms to re-establish the Republic when a suitable opportunity offered itself. During the '20s and '30s, although several attempts were made by the I.R.A. to give leadership on the political and economic front as well as the military, they were relatively unsuccessful; and Fianna Fail, led by a middle class leadership inevitably prone to compromise, captured the political leadership of the mass of the people in the countryside and were anti-imperialist, and who returned Fianna Fail as the major party in the Dail in the 1932 election.

The main attempt to give a social content to the cause of the Republic in the late 1920s and early 1930s was made by the I.R.A. on the land annuities question. These were the heavy payments which the farmers made direct to Britain through the Free State Government. The I.R.A. was intimately involved in the countryside agitation against payment of these land annuities by the farmers and in favour of their retention in Ireland. When the Free State bailiffs and police came to collect the land annuities in the countryside, local republicans and I.R.A. units were frequently involved in physical resistance. But while supporting local economic agitations, the I.R.A. and republicans stopped short of direct involvement in political agitation. It was Fianna Fail that reaped the political benefit of the land agitation that had been initiated by the republicans. It was they who made the refusal to pay the land annuities to Britain a major plank in their platform in 1932 and Fianna Fail got the mass support of the people of the countryside in the 1932 election on the basis of their pledge to retain the land annuities in Ireland if they were returned to form a government.

Attempts were made also in the 1920s and early 1930s to closely identify the I.R.A. and the republican cause with that of the workers and trade unionists in the cities. Republicans were very active individually or as units in labour struggles, unemployed demonstrations and trade union organisation. An important development in this period was the growth of strong anti-Unionist sentiment among sections of the Orange working class of Belfast, under the impact of the unemployment and the anti-Labour policies of the Northern Government. Large contingents of Belfast workers took part in the

Bodenstown commemorations during the early 1930s; they were attracted by the social radicalism of the republican movement of those years, which brought the cause of the Republic down "from the clouds" and made it something that mattered in the fields and factories. At this time also there was considerable discussion on organising active republicans in the towns on an industrial basis rather than an area one, to make them more effective in identifying themselves with the problems and interests of the workers and trade unions; but no definite steps had been taken by the time Fianna Fail came to power in 1932 and the political situation changed.

The political problem was the overriding one for the republicans of this period. It was clear to all far-sighted republicans that Fianna Fail and the Fianna Fail leadership did not consist of the kind of people who would carry the anti-imperialist struggle to a conclusion, in either the political economic or military spheres. It was clear that while Fianna Fail was anti-imperialist on certain issues, its anti-imperialism would extend no further than what would serve the economic interests of the manufacturing middle class that dominated it, who would choose to compromise with imperialism when it came to the push rather than put forward the radical social and economic policies which along would swing the support and enthusiasm of the mass of the people, farmers and workers, in favour of a resolute anti-imperialist struggle. The prospect with Fianna Fail in office was of another compromise with Britain and abandonment of the struggle for a united independent Republic, except that this time the betrayal would be by the political leadership of the Irish manufacturers, De Valera and Lemass, rather than of the bankers, merchants and ranchers, Griffith and Cosgrave. But Fianna Fail were the only people on the scene who offered the people a practical possibility of ousting the oppressive Cosgrave Government; and in default of any viable alternative political movement the people were bound to support Fianna Fail.

Many attempts were also made during this period to find some solution to the problem of "politics" for republicans. This question was closely bound up with the question of the attitude of republicans to the Dail and the 26 County Government, and the army, police force and administration which this government possessed. Many republicans held that they should have no truck with the Twenty Six County Government and should not take seats in the Twenty Six County Dail as a minority. Others held that this meant that the Fianna Fail "compromisers" would be allowed to form a government and that they would be facilitated in doing a deal with imperialism because there would be nobody among their members or in their ranks who would keep them under pressure to oppose imperialism to the limit or to expose them. The former held that "politics" as such were inherently corrupt and that Fianna Fail compromise with imperialism would be due basically

to the fact that they had entered the Dail as a minority. The latter held that Fianna Fail would be prone to compromise with imperialism not because they had entered politics, as such, but because of the business and property interests Fianna Fail represented and served, and that a genuine republican party, based on and led by the "men of no property", with a disciplined structure and linked closely to the social struggles of the people, would be immune from such compromise and could enter the Dail and give effective political leadership to the people without being corrupted; they held that even if such a group were in a minority compared with Fianna Fail, its presence would put pressure on Fianna Fail to maintain a radical anti-imperialist line, and it would be available to provide an alternative anti-imperialist leadership for the people if Fianna Fail did give way before imperialist pressure.

When -it came to the general election of 1932 the former side held that the republicans and the I.R.A. should stand aside and give passive support to Fianna Fail in the general election, which in fact was what was done. The latter proposed that the republicans should put up candidates who were closely associated with the land annuity struggle and the labour movement, who would not have the interests of the manufacturers and business elements at heart as Fianna Fail had, and who would take their seats in the Dail, putting pressure on the Fianna Fail Government to carry out a radical anti-imperialist policy and being ready in the wings to replace Fianna Fail as an alternative republican leadership if and when Fianna Fail started to compromise.

This debate between individuals and groups over policy dominated the republican movement for several years in various forms at this time. It was still going on in 1932 when Fianna Fail got the votes of enough people to make it the main party in the Dail and De Valera assumed office.

The main features of this period are:

- 1) The attempt by republicans and the I.R.A. to associate themselves with the social and economic issues before the people by being active in the land annuity campaign and labour struggles. They had grasped the reasons for the failure of 1921 and the lesson of Mellows.
- 2) The emergence of Fianna Fail as a party of the industrial middle class, anti-imperialist to a degree, but prone to compromise because of its ties with business, using republican rhetoric and demagoguery to gain support and championing popular policies to a certain degree.
- 3) The failure of the republicans to give an effective political leadership to the people which would be an alternative to Fianna Fail

and at the same time to put continual pressure on it to oppose imperialism, or else face exposure and replacement. This would have meant tackling the problem of forming a disciplined, incorruptible political movement that would be prepared to work as a minority within the Dail, until it gained enough support to make it a majority.

BOOK TO READ: There Will Be Another Day by PEADAR O'DONNELL.

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H. FIANNA FAIL IN OFFICE - the development of 'Gombeen' nationalism; the 1930s and 1940s.

Fianna Fail came to power in 1932 on a broadly anti-imperialist programme which had won the support of many of the workers and small farmers of the country. The main points of this programme were:

- 1) To protect Irish home manufacturers and the home market and develop Irish manufactures in substitute for imported goods from Britain. For this purpose the Control of Manufacturers Act was passed, making it unlawful for non-Irish nationals to hold more than 40% of the shares in newly formed companies and requiring that a majority of the members of boards of directors of companies should be Irish nationals.
- 2) To establish state industries in the power and manufacturing and transport sectors where private enterprise was unable or unwilling to do the job.
- 3) To retain the land annuities which the farmers paid to Briatin through the Free State Government.
- 4) To abolish the Oath of Allegiance to the Crown which members of the Free State Dail had to take, to abolish the Governor-Generalship and the other trappings of Dominion status accepted by Cumann na nGael under the Treaty.

The bulk of this programme was in fact carried out during the 1930s, and in successive elections the majority of the people in the Twenty Six Counties gave Fianna Fail an overall majority of votes cast. The first major step in carrying it out, however, the retention of the land annuities, resulted in vigorous British counter action. When the Dublin Government announced that it was under no moral obligation to pay the Land Annuities and that it was going to retain them in future, the British Government retaliated by imposing penal duties on Irish exports to Britain, duties which hit the cattle trade and agriculture particularly hard, adding fuel thereby to the hatred which the ranchers felt for Fianna Fail and giving an impetus to the growth of the Blueshirt movement, which based its support primarily on the large farmers. It is highly unlikely that the loss of the relatively small sum involved in the Land Annuities was the main cause of the British Government's action. More likely was the aim of bringing the Fianna Fail Government to its knees as quickly as possible and teaching it the lesson that Britain could not be flouted with impunity.

The Economic War hit the cattle ranchers badly. Likewise the policy of protection of industry and the Fianna Fail policy of granting manufacturing licenses to its supporters to produce goods in Ireland which had previously been imported from Britain, hit the merchants, commercial and banking interests that had supported Cosgrave and Cumanna na nGael. The ranchers and the merchants coalesced to form the Blueshirts, a Fascist organisation, modelled on Mussolini's Blackshirts and the other Fascist movements on the continent, with the aim of overthrowing the Fianna Fail Government by violence if necessary, establishing a dictatorship and returning to the outright pro-imperialist policies of the Cosgrave era.

At that time, in the early 1930s, De Valera and Fianna Fail could not rely with very much confidence on the Irish Army and the Gardai, as these bodies had been formed by the Cumann na nGael Party and recruited from the pro-Treaty side in the Civil War. Fianna Fail in its first years in office had in fact to turn to the I.R.A. and the Republicans for military support in countering the Blueshirt threat. De Valera gave the I.R.A. a free hand to deal with the Blueshirts, and the strength of the I.R.A. was undoubtedly the main factor responsible for containing the Blueshirt mobs and preventing the overthrow of the Government by the Cosgrave-O'Duffy-Dillon supporters of that time.

In the meantime, the Fianna Fail Government was building up its own support in the army and police force, establishing a political police loyal to De Valera, trying to win over to the Fianna Fail side as many republicans as possible by means of an efficient system of patronage and pensions for veterans of the War of Independence and

consolidating its hold on the civil service. For it was clear that when the Blueshirts had been dealt with, the continued existence of such a powerful organised military force as the I.R.A., not under the control of the Government would constitute a threat to the Government's monopoly of power in the State - a threat from the left, as the Blueshirts had been a threat from the right. The existence of such a force as the I.R.A. meant that the Government could fear being pushed out of the way if it compromised with imperialism, which it was increasingly inclined to do under the pressure of the Economic War.

At this juncture (1934) maximum unity was needed to put pressure on Fianna Fail and keep a united republican front against the Government. Instead a split occurred in the I.R.A., which was to have a disastrous impact on the cause of republicanism for several decades and from which that cause is only recovering today. One section of the I.R.A., led by Frank Ryan, urged that the I.R.A. and Republicans generally should involve themselves more in the economic and social struggles of the small farmers and workers, should forge organisational links with the Trade Unions and Labour Party under the aegis of a Republican Congress, and should expose Fianna Fail's compromising policies in this way. The other, led by Moss Twomey and Sean McBride, urged that De Valera and Fianna Fail should be called on to declare the Republic, to amalgamate the I.R.A. with the Free State Army, and to march North to enforce the writ of the Republic by force in the Six Counties. As it was highly unlikely that De Valera would be willing to do this, the I.R.A. should then take on the task of expelling the British military forces itself.

This development played right into the hands of the Government and confused the forces of Republicanism which should have remained united at all costs in the work of exposing Fianna Fail and offering an alternative anti-imperialist policy to the Government's on all fronts - social, economic, political and, if necessary, military. Again, as had happened in 1921, different sections of Republicans latched on to different aspects of the national question and counterposed the economic struggle to the political, the political to the military, instead of realising that unity was the first essential, so that a united movement could take up with its full strength the economic, political or military sides of the struggle whenever one or other came to the fore with changing circumstances. The main lesson of past republican failures was that the economic, political and military struggles against imperialism and its different aspects could not be divorced, that the vital need was for an organisation which could take an overall view, be able to analyse the changing character of imperialism as it changed its strategy from one of military domination to one of political pressure to one of economic

penetration, in response to changing demands and circumstances, and be able to concentrate united energies on whichever aspect of the struggle was most appropriate at a given time.

With the anti-Fianna Fail forces divided, De Valera seized his opportunity, declared the I.R.A. an illegal organisation, and slammed down on its members with a battery of repressive laws (which had been originally used by the Cosgrave Government) and police measures. Those members of the I.R.A. who formed the Republican Congress failed to obtain mass support; the people were dismayed and bewildered by the split which had given rise to it. The I.R.A. called upon De Valera to declare the Republic and attempt to enforce its laws in the North. De Valera replied that such an attempt would lead to another civil war between Irishmen, this time between Orange and Green. The I.R.A. went underground on being declared illegal and prepared to resume the war with Britain on its own when the opportunity offered, which seemed to come with the outbreak of the World War between Germany and Britain in 1939.

De Valera was now freed from an effective rival to Fianna Fail internally on the political and economic front and was in a position to compromise with imperialism without evoking mass discontent from the people, as the latter had no effective alternative political leadership to Fianna Fail.

Fianna Fail by the middle 1930s felt it had gone as far as it dared go in conflict with Britain. The manufacturers were satisfied - they had got a protected home market and several state companies were set up to develop industry which was not sufficiently profitable or demanded too large amounts of capital to attract private enterprise. The republican sentiment of many people was catered for by the abolition of the Oath of Allegiance and the trappings of dependence left over from the Treaty. In 1937 De Valera brought in a new Constitution which asserted the de jure claim of the Dublin Government to sovereignty over the whole country, but which recognised the de facto position that that sovereignty could not be exercised in practice north of the Border. In an attempt to broaden the basis of his power De Valera sought an agreement with the Church (in the days of the Cosgrave Government Fianna Fail had been widely regarded by conservative church leaders as the party of Communism and anarchy) and incorporated clauses in his Constitution which recognised the "special position" of the Catholic Church as the faith of the majority of the people, and forbade divorce and contraception, even though the position of the Protestant Churches on these matters is different from that of the Catholic Church. These clauses were inserted in the Constitution on the behest of certain members

of the Hierarchy (though not of all) and they effectively discriminated against the views of the Protestant minority in the Twenty Six Counties, as well, of course, as constituting a major barrier to unity with the Northern Protestants. The latter regarded these concessions by Fianna Fail to clerical opinion in the south as proof of the dominant role which they contended the Catholic Church would be bound to have in a united Ireland, when the Protestant position would have to give way to the Catholic on such issues.

Fianna Fail's political and economic compromise was shown on two major issues - (1) its failure to establish an independent currency and a Central Bank which would have effective power to control the volume of credit in the economy in accordance with the Government's economic policy and (2) its failure to control the export of Irish savings and capital from the country and to demand that the banks, insurance companies and owners of private capital should invest this in home industry and agriculture rather than in British and overseas projects.

Both of these measures would have entailed radical interference with the "rights" of large owners of capital in the national interest; they would have entailed restriction on the "right" of private investors to invest their capital where it would make them the maximum profit, even though it might be of little use to the national economy and the community as a whole. It would have angered even further the British Government, which was - and is - in a position to control Irish credit policy from the Bank of England and thus influence profoundly the internal economic policies of Irish Governments, and whose economy benefits substantially by the investment in Britain of several hundred million pounds of Irish savings and foreign-earnings.

These measures would have necessitated a far more radical interference with property interests and conflict with Britain than the property interests in charge of the Fianna Fail Government and policy were willing to contemplate. To have attempted them would have thrown the Government too much into the arms of the radical and republican elements in the population.

And so, having obtained for Irish manufacturers the right to exploit the Irish market, Fianna Fail decided it had gone as far as it could go; it sought a deal with Britain. It did not realise that there is no stopping short of complete independence; that there can be no resting at a half-way position of half-independence; that from there one can only progress or regress. For Fianna Fail the two-decade-long road of regress back into the United Kingdom had begun.

The deal Fianna Fail did with Britain was the Anglo-Irish Agreement of 1938. In the political sphere this Agreement returned the naval bases of Berehaven, Haulbowline and Lough Swilly to Ireland (Britain had retained them under the Treaty). This did not call for much sacrifice on Britain's part. It ensured her of Ireland's neutrality in the coming conflict with Germany. If Britain had retained the bases Ireland would certainly have been involved in the conflict, and quite possibly on the German side. To have Ireland fight on Britain's side would be too much to hope for as long as Partition existed; so the next best thing for Britain was a neutral Ireland; and this she obtained in this way. In the economic sphere the Agreement marked the end of the Economic War. Britain recognised the right of the Irish manufacturers to protect their home market - British goods had already been ousted from considerable sections of this market in any case; but Ireland guaranteed that British imports to Ireland would be given preference over those of other countries. Britain in turn lifted the penal duties on Irish cattle and allowed many Irish goods to be imported to Britain without duty. At that time Britain wanted to do her utmost to ensure a good supply of Irish agricultural goods anyway, with the war impending; and she did not fear very much the competition of Irish manufactured exports on the British home market, as Irish manufacturers tended to confine themselves in the main to the Irish market and did not in general seek to develop significant outlets in Britain nor abroad, nor had they the capital to do so as long as they permitted unrestricted export of Irish savings and capital.

The political and economic sides of the Agreement, therefore, represented a compromise by the representatives of the Irish manufacturing middle class with British imperialism. The essential character of the relationship between the two countries - Ireland's weakness and dependence, as against Britain's strength and dominance, was likely henceforth to get gradually stronger and more powerful, while the forces working for political and economic independence within Ireland were likely to get weaker unless they could realign and reunite themselves.

In 1939, on the outbreak of War, the I.R.A. estimated that another opportunity had come, as had happened in the First War, to take advantage of England's difficulties for the benefit of Ireland. The "bombing campaign" was organised in England, a campaign in which numbers of brave men gave their lives for their country. If England had been defeated in the War it would have been highly likely that an opportunity would have existed for winning the reunification of the country and ending Partition. But this did not occur. The Fianna Fail Government was told by the

British Government that it could not presume to maintain its position as a neutral between Britain and Germany if it gave the I.R.A. a free hand. De Valera declared a state of emergency; the Offences Against the State Act was passed. Hundreds of republicans were interned without trial for the duration of the war. Many were tried before the Special Criminal Court and there were several judicial murders of republicans. Fianna Fail made every effort to smash the republican movement and, although it did not succeed, Fianna Fail emerged from the War in strong control of the country, having inflicted grievous blows on the organisation and personnel of the republican movement, which was still groping to find an effective policy whereby imperialism could be countered and the Fianna Fail Government's policies could be effectively exposed before the people and their allegiance won for some alternative course.

In the period 1946-48 an attempt was made by some disillusioned members of Fianna Fail and some former republicans to provide a more radical political alternative to Fianna Fail. The Clann na Poblachta Party, led by Sean McBride was founded and got a considerable measure of support in some bye-elections and had several T.D.s elected to the Dail in the 1948 General Election. The main political planks of this new Party was to invite the Nationalist M.P.s from the Six Counties to take part in the proceedings of the Dublin Parliament. It used much "republican" rhetoric, but its leadership was firmly in the hands of middle class elements whose main unifying link was a common desire to get Fianna Fail out of office. The new party was a mushroom growth, with no firm basis of popular support built up as a result of consistent championing of the needs of the workers and small farmers, and thus with no mass pressure from below to prevent the leadership selling out when they came within sight of the spoils of office.

It was with alacrity therefore that McBride and others led the new "republican" party into a coalition Government with the most reactionary party in the country, Fine Gael, on the defeat of Fianna Fail in the General election of 1948. McBride and other Clann na Poblachta leaders took office in the Coalition Government, where it was quite impossible for them to implement even such programme as they had, and the new party gradually fizzled out. Its fate was an object lesson of what would happen to those who sought to move from "the gun" into "politics" without the requisite political understanding, a disciplined organisation and incorruptible leadership that was not "middle class", and a basis of mass support won as a result of championing the economic and social needs of the people.

The leaders of the Labour Party also joined the Coalition Government and thus sacrificed the interests of the people they were

supposed to represent for the sake of gratifying a barren hostility to Fianna Fail and to obtain political office for themselves. For in reality the period of the two Coalition Governments, 1948-51 and 1953-57, saw the country ruled in the interests of Fine Gael, which was the largest party and which therefore dominated the Coalition; the general pattern of legislation was conservative in the extreme e.g. the abortive "Mother and Child Scheme". To appease the "republican" rhetoric of Clann na Poblachta Fine Gael "proclaimed the Republic" in 1949 and withdrew from the Commonwealth. This was a "republic" of Twenty Six counties, and meant only a change of name from De Valera's Free State. It was essentially a demagogic gesture and added not one jot or tittle to the territorial area or the power of the Twenty Six County State. Britain, however, retaliated even to this by passing another Government of Ireland Act (1949) which stated that the Six Counties could not cease to be part of the United Kingdom without the consent of the Six County Parliament. Even if the majority of the people there should vote to leave, they would not be allowed to as long as Unionists had a majority in Stormont.

*The lessons of this period are:*

1) The progressive character of the Fianna Fail programme of 1932, emphasising economic development and inevitably leading to a conflict with Britain. The inevitability of compromise on the part of the middle class manufacturing interests that provided the leadership of Fianna Fail under pressure from Britain unless an alternative republican leadership that had no such ties was available to take over the struggle instead.

2) The trend towards Fascism and dictatorship among the most pro-imperialist propertied interests - commerce, banking and the ranchers - when they were being hurt in their pockets by the policies of economic independence of Fianna Fail.

3) The failure of republicans to maintain unity when it was most needed in the early 1930s to keep up maximum pressure on Fianna Fail and expose and prevent the trend to compromise among the propertied elements. The division of republicans into different sections, each taking up a different aspect of the anti-imperialist struggle, without any common strategy or leadership. The greater ease with which Britain and Fianna Fail as a result could deal with republicans and effectively exclude them from having a major influence on events.

4) The failure and unwillingness of Fianna Fail to tackle the problems of establishing an independent currency and credit system and to control the investment abroad of Irish capital, as this would have entailed a more radical interference with property interests than

Fianna Fail was willing to undertake without mass pressure from below; and this could not emerge when the republicans were divided and weakened.

5) The reasons for the failure of the Clann na Poblachta attempt to provide a political alternative to Fianna Fail. Barren hostility to Fianna Fail and a "gimmicky" programme was no substitute for a genuine anti-imperialist policy that would be more convincing to the people than Fianna Fail's. There was no mass popular basis, no links with the best elements of the people in defence of their social and economic interests, no effective discipline or pressure from below to keep the leadership responsive to the needs of the rank and file, and this leadership was in any case drawn in the main from shopkeeper and gombeen elements who were inherently prone to abandon the people they represented once they got the offer of a government job.

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I. NEO-COLONIALISM - the 1950s and the 1960s.

When Fianna Fail in the 1930s failed to prohibit the free export of Irish capital abroad independent Irish manufacturing capitalism was doomed. For this meant that the bulk of the annual surpluses (of output over input) in the economy was invested abroad through the banks, insurance companies and private holders of large capital. Because of this Twenty Six County industry could not expand its internal market; it was starved of capital and native Irish industry merely replaced imports. Few industries had sufficient capital to become big and strong enough to enter export markets on any great scale. Home industry as a result was frequently feather-bedded and of low efficiency, offering second rate goods to the consumer, including the farmers, who in this way helped to subsidise numbers of the protected industries and enabled their owners to make a profit.

In 1938, under the Anglo-Irish Trade Agreement, Britain had allowed the protection of Irish industry, knowing that these industries would be unable to expand and become internationally competitive on the basis of the Irish home market alone because of the failure to check the export of Irish capital. By 1959 the attempt to develop home industry while allowing the free investment of the economic surplus abroad had worked itself out. It was clear that Twenty Six County industry could no longer expand on the basis of the home market alone, and indeed it could not provide employment for the huge number of unemployed in the country in 1956 and 1957 and for the numbers of people leaving the land. One alternative would have been to restrict capital exports; but if Fianna Fail had not dared to do that in its radical days in the 1930s, they were certainly not going to do it. . . twenty years later, when the manufacturing interest is had originally represented had established all sorts of ties and links with commercial, banking and large farm capital which had been its opponent in the days of the Blueshirts. The other alternative was to throw open the doors to imperialism and invite foreign interests in to develop the country in whatever ways they might consider profitable. This was in fact the step taken, disguised for the people under the title of a "Programme for Economic Expansion".

The Control of Manufacturers Act, requiring a majority of shares in new companies to be in Irish hands, was repealed. Foreign capital was offered tax concessions, grants and the prospect of good supplies of relatively cheap labour to induce it to set up in Ireland. In the period 1958-66 this led to the establishment of some 200 new enterprises in the Twenty Six Counties and a considerable expansion of industrial employment. Some of this foreign capital led to new production; more of it took the form of take-over bids for Irish industries and distributive units, house property and land. Large sections of independent Irish business were reduced to the position of subsidiaries of British and foreign capital. Increasingly the independent Irish manufacturers and entrepreneurs of the 1930s became the local managers of British and foreign firms in the 1960s. By 1966 one fifth of the managers and executives of Irish firms were non-Irish nationals, and this astonishing proportion reflects a much greater measure of capital ownership and control. The independent Irish manufacturing class whose economic interests Fianna Fail had represented and championed in the 1930s and 1940s is gradually being penetrated, taken over and replaced by foreign capital in all the major sectors of industry. This process has already been almost completed in the Six Counties, where the area has remained part of the United Kingdom from the beginning and where there was never a government with protectionist ideas or the power to implement them even if it had them. The Twenty Six County Government had that power, won in 1921, but had been too weak and too bound up with property to push the policy to its logical conclusion. Increasingly, therefore, Twenty Six County capitalism will come to have much the same relation to British imperialism as Six County capitalism - one of utter dependence. The decisions as to what will be produced and where, will lie mainly in British hands, and the character of the Irish economy and the extent of employment will be decided in London rather than in Dublin as was the case in the 19th century. The state sector of Irish industry, which is the main section not in foreign hands or under major foreign influence, could still be used by a government that wished to develop new processes and enterprises; but this would lead to competition with home or imported goods and lead to strong political pressures on the Government, which, as one primarily serving private enterprise, it would not be likely to resist. The likelihood indeed is that the Dublin Government will cease to develop further state enterprises in production and will sell off the private (including foreign) buyers the profitable sections of the state enterprises that already exist; so that foreign capital can purchase a hold on Irish state enterprise as well. This is the logic of the present position at any rate. In the meantime between £400 and £500 million of Irish capital is invested in Britain and abroad by Irish banks, insurance companies and private investors.

These trends reflect a neo-colonial situation in the Twenty Six Counties of Ireland. Unlike the North, the South is not a direct

colony of imperialism, occupied and garrisoned by British troops. The main decisions as to economic policy - and therefore, inevitably, political policy - are made by the British firms which increasingly dominate the economy and whose interests are served by the British Government in the political sphere. Indeed from the point of view of imperialism this method of control has many advantages the direct method had not got. Britain can let Ireland have all the trappings of political sovereignty, a Parliament, a flag, an Irish emblem on our postage stamps; but if the real decisions are made in London the reality of control lies there, and there is no awkward anti-imperialist movement to deal with as there was in the 19th century. The banker and take-over-bidder are much less palpable enemies to deal with than an occupying soldiery - and much cheaper. Moreover, if the Twenty Six Counties were part of the United Kingdom again politically, Britain would have the awkward task of trying to placate a large contingent of M. P.s from Ireland in the Westminster Parliament as she had to do in the Union period. As it is, the neo-colony has no representation at Westminster, which makes it much easier for Britain to effectively take the main decisions for the country without having to suffer any adverse consequences.

Indeed this neo-colonialist position has such obvious advantages to the imperial power that there have been signs in recent years that Britain might not be averse to allowing the political reunification of Ireland and the ending of Partition, as long as both parts of the reunited country were economically dependent and there was free movement of labour, capital and goods between the two countries as there was in the Union period. Several British political leaders have put forward such ideas in recent years. Such a development would also save Britain quite substantial sums which she spends in the Six Counties every year and which give a dwindling political return as the Dublin Government moves to oust the Stormont administration as the main favourite of the imperial power.

The success of neo-colonialism in the Twenty Six Counties following the abandonment by Fianna Fail and the leadership of Twenty Six County capitalism of the attempt to establish themselves independent of imperialism, is in turn the main reason for the present division in Ulster Unionism. Unionism, led by Captain O'Neill, has been given its instructions by its British masters to make itself more respectable, to brush discrimination, gerrymandering and bigotry under the table, while Britain economically "integrates" the Twenty Six Counties with the United Kingdom. In this situation the old warcries and sectarianism of the Orangemen no longer are as useful to Britain as they were in the past; they would impede the development of good relations and integration with the south. And so the British Government urges the political leaders of North and South to meet and join together. The old fashioned Orangemen have been replaced by the leaders of Fianna Fail

as the favoured servants of imperialism. The Orangemen are in fact being sold down the river by the British Government, which always regards Ireland as a whole and which wishes to have the whole island in a state of political and economic dependence. Many of the Orangemen do not appreciate that they are politically expendable by imperialism, and the Paisley movement is an attempt to assert the old certitudes of the Unionist faith - anti-catholicism and anti-republicanism - in a situation where they are increasingly less and less useful to the neo-colonial policies of Britain in Ireland.

At present there is free movement of labour and capital between the Twenty Six Counties and Britain. Following the signing of the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement in January 1966 and its coming into force over a 10 year period, there will be free movement of goods also; and the economic position of the Union period will have been restored in all its essentials.

The Free Trade Agreement represents the final capitulation of Irish capitalism before imperialist pressure. In October 1964 the British Government unilaterally broke the terms of the 1938 Trade Agreement with Ireland by imposing a levy on Irish exports to Britain. The Dublin Government's reaction to this was not to take measures which would reduce Ireland's dependence on Britain, but to open negotiations for a full economic union. Over a 10 year period the existing tariffs and quotas that still protect the Irish home market against outside competition will be gradually done away with and by 1975 British industry will have a free run of the Irish market as it had during the 19th century and indeed as it had in the main until Fianna Fail began its industrialisation programme in 1932. In return for this Ireland got a few minor concessions for our exports which are not likely to amount in value to more than £5 million a year at most.

The wheel has come full circle. The representatives of what is left of Irish manufacturing capital (Fianna Fail) and of Irish commerce, banking and the big farmers (Fine Gael) were in favour of the Free Trade Agreement with Britain and our full acceptance of the country's position as a neo-colony. Labour alone opposed it in the Dail, and the republican movement opposed it in the country. The leadership of the national independence struggle which the "men of property" seized in 1919 and 1920, which passed to another group of propertied men in 1932, has passed now to Labour and Republicans.

During the 1950s and early 1960s the Republican movement continually kept before the people the cause of the Republic and the lesson that the main force responsible for the political and social ills of Ireland was British imperialism, which had divided the country, kept part of it in the United Kingdom and maintained continual political and economic pressure on the other part to ensure the co-operation of its rulers. No other movement kept these basic facts before the people, nor attempted to give leadership on the basis of a strong anti-imperialist programme.

In the middle 1950s the I.R.A. and republican movement launched an attack on the British occupying troops in the north and maintained this attack for several years. The military forces available, however, were insufficient to attain their object, despite the courage and self-sacrifice of countless brave men. The Six County campaign too was crippled by having to operate to a considerable extent from a base which was insecure and hostile, as the Twenty Six County Government and police harried republicans in the rear continually and mass arrests and internments of republicans made leadership and organisation extremely difficult. For a period too, in 1956, there was widespread political support for the Sinn Fein Party as the political arm of the republican movement, and very large numbers of votes were cast in favour of republicans at the polls and a number of republicans were elected to the Dail, although on an abstentionist ticket so that they did not take their seats. These successful candidates were defeated in subsequent elections, however, and in 1962 the I.R.A. called off the campaign in the North and commenced a regroupment of republican forces and a reassessment of the present position of the anti-imperialist struggle in Ireland.

This regroupment and reassessment is still continuing. It entails an analysis of the changing strategy and policies of imperialism in Ireland, particularly in so far as it has assumed a neo-colonialist character and has changed its forms of control and domination of Irish destinies. It entails an analysis of the past history of the Irish republican movement in its various phases, with a view to understanding the mistakes and failures which were made in former years and avoiding them in the present and the future. It entails above all a ruthless realism in assessing the existing situation, avoiding the sentimentality and wishful thinking which has so often led republicans astray in the past, shunning any attempts to repeat the battles of the past in a changed environment, and working out the policies and organisational means whereby the movement can attain its object of a united Republic, politically and economically in charge of its own destinies, with an educated, prosperous and contented people, in which the exploitation of man by man has been abolished.

*The lessons are:*

- 1) The abandonment by Fianna Fail in 1958 of the attempt to maintain an independent Irish manufacturing class independent of British imperialism. The economic penetration of the Twenty Six County economy by British business. The different aspects of neo-colonialism culminating with the Anglo-Irish Free Trade Agreement and the prospect by 1975 of completely free movement of goods, capital and labour between Ireland and Britain. The increasing unimportance in this situation of a political border within the country, as both parts are economically "integrated" with Britain. Britain's changing demands on Ulster Unionism as neo-colonialism establishes itself more and more firmly in the Twenty Six Counties.

2) Labour and Republicans as the only forces in the country opposing this process and seeking to give an alternative lead to the people on an anti-imperialist programme of national independence - but the appropriate organisational forms have not been worked out.

3) The failure of the attempt made by the I.F.A. and the republican movement in the 1950s to dislodge Britain from the North by means of physical force. The reasons for this being the lack of sufficient military strength and the absence of a government in the south which would support the attempt, or at any rate maintain neutrality. The active hostility of the southern government put the I.R.A. under a crippling disadvantage. The relative success of Sinn Fein at the polls for a period, during the latter 1950s, and the election of a group of abstentionist T.D.s, followed by the failure to maintain this support.

4) The working out during the early and middle 1960s of new policies and organisational methods which would enable the movement to learn from the failures of the past and carry the struggle for independence to a successful conclusion in the circumstances of today.

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