

ERIN'S HOPE—  
THE END AND THE MEANS

and

THE NEW  
EVANGEL

BY JAMES CONNOLLY

Price : Two Shillings

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# **ERIN'S HOPE**

THE END AND THE MEANS

(First Published 1897)

and

# **THE NEW EVANGEL**

PREACHED TO IRISH TOILERS

(First Published in 1901)

By JAMES CONNOLLY

With Introductions by  
JOSEPH DEASY

DUBLIN AND BELFAST :  
NEW BOOKS PUBLICATIONS

1968



# *Erin's Hope*

## INTRODUCTION

JAMES CONNOLLY was one of the most able exponents of Marxism in the English-speaking world during his life time. His first published pamphlet was "*Erin's Hope*," which appeared in 1897, when he was 29 years old.

"*Erin's Hope*" has been described as, possibly, the most important of Connolly's minor writings. It exhibits that robust, but powerfully, persuasive style of writing that was such a distinctive feature of his later and greater works.

"*Erin's Hope*" is a very uncompromising statement of the socialist case. It begins by invoking the common ownership of land, which, Connolly maintained, characterised the Celtic clan system and which lasted longer than similar systems elsewhere. The system was not ended by the English invaders until the 17th century; there was then established the feudal system.

Connolly maintained that the conflict between the rival systems of land ownership was the pivot around which centred all the struggles and rebellions, of which Irish history had been so prolific.

In the subsequent resistance to foreign subjection, different elements of Irish society fused in a "compact nationality;" however, during the process, a new class arose which accepted the social system of the invader. This was the new middle class, which was to continually compromise and betray the hopes of the Irish people.

This is the most vital part of the pamphlet. Here is the embryo of the theme which the author was to brilliantly develop in his major work, "*Labour in Irish History*." As the propertied classes compromised with their foreign

overlords, the working class, Connolly was the first to proclaim, would emerge as "the incorruptible inheritors of the fight for freedom in Ireland."

This truth is very relevant to the present time when our Irish Government is making our country totally subordinate to the British economy and wants to go further and make us a satellite of the international millionaire monopolies, which dominate the economies of the capitalist world.

Like all of Connolly's writings, this pamphlet is full of the rich red meat of socialism; for him, anaemic versions had little appeal. Praise, however, must not obscure the fact that this work is far from being flawless. Parts of it are out of date, and became so during his own life time, and were proved to be so by his own very activities. For instance, it includes the statement that "no revolutionists can safely invite the co-operation of men or classes whose ideals are not theirs and whom, therefore, they may be compelled to fight at some future critical stage of the journey to freedom."

The context in which this statement was written must be borne in mind. He was endeavouring to wrench the workers away from the baneful influence of the bourgeois parties. Connolly started this important task and to the present time the Irish Labour movement fights to win the support of the majority of the working people for its policies against those of the national bourgeoisie.

In his preparation for the 1916 Insurrection Connolly no longer shared some of the views he had advanced in his first published pamphlet. Even in the pamphlet itself, the following statement shows he was already beginning to think differently. He wrote: "The true revolutionist should ever call into action on our side the entire sum of all the forces and factors of social and political discontent."

Another controversial aspect of this work is the implied conclusion that industrialisation, under capitalism, was not to be welcomed especially for Ireland; it should await the advent of socialism. Again, such assertions must be related to the period. In 1897 the worst horrors of the industrial revolution were green in the memory and were

still far from abolished, while powerful trade unionism had still to be achieved.

Socialists now favour programmes of industrialisation even under capitalism, but their enthusiasm is conditioned by the method of development and the nature of ownership and control. At the same time it must always be emphasised that it will only be when the social ownership of industry, commerce and finance replaces the private enterprise system that the people will be in full control of the nation's interests and destiny.

The passages on peasant proprietorship in agriculture are also controversial. A strong case can be made for collective farming, but in Ireland it is not immediately practical politics. Furthermore, small farms, privately owned, and allied to an efficient system of co-operatives, can be made viable.

The re-publication in the Centenary Year of his birth of the first pamphlet to be written by James Connolly is an important service to the whole Irish working class movement. It is an historical document; as well, it will greatly assist students of Connolly to acquire a fuller appreciation of his development as a Marxist.

The concluding words of the pamphlet are calculated to warm the cockles of every socialist heart, when Connolly describes the Irish Socialist Republic as "... the safest guarantee man ever received, the guarantee backed by all the gratitude, the loyal hearts, the brains and industry of the Irish people."

Speed the day!

May, 1968.

JOSEPH DEASY.

# ERIN'S HOPE

## THE END AND THE MEANS

"BEFORE the time of the conquest, the Irish people knew nothing of absolute property in land. The land belonged to the entire sept; the chief was little more than the managing member of the association. The feudal idea which came in with the conquest was associated with foreign dominion, and has never to this day been recognised by the moral sentiment of the people."

In these few words of Mr. John Stuart Mill the impartial student may find the key for unravelling the whole tangled skein of Irish politics. Latter-day politicians, both on the English and Irish side, have done their utmost to familiarise the public mind with belief that the Irish question arises solely out of the aspirations of the Irish people to have more complete control over the internal administration of the affairs of their country than it is possible for them to exercise while the seat of government is located at Westminster, and that, therefore, some form of local self-government, as, for instance, Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, is all that is needed to settle this question, and lay forever the troubled spirit of Irish discontent. According to this luminous (?) exposition of Irish history, we are to believe that the two nations have for seven hundred years been engaged in unceasing warfare, that the one country (Ireland) has during all that time been compelled to witness the merciless slaughter of her children by famine, pestilence and the sword; that each succeeding generation has witnessed a renewal of the conflict and a renewal of the martyrdom, until the sensitive mind recoils from a perusal of Irish history as from the records of a shambles, and all, forsooth, because Irishmen and Englishmen could not agree upon the form of political administration best suited for Ireland.

If this new reading of Irish history were true the intelligent foreigner might be forgiven for rating at a very low standard the intelligence of the two nations, which during seven hundred years had not evolved a satisfactory solution of such a simple question. At precisely the same low

standard may safely be rated the political acumen of the English and Irish party leaders, who are to-day complacently trotting out the discredited abortion of Home Rule as a sovereign remedy for Ireland's misery.

The Irish question has, in fact, a much deeper source than a mere difference of opinion on forms of government. Its real origin and inner meaning lay in the circumstances that the two opposing nations held fundamentally different ideas upon the vital question of property in land. Recent scientific research by such eminent sociologists as Letourneau, Lewis Morgan, Sir Henry Maine, and others, has amply demonstrated the fact that common ownership of land formed the basis of primitive society in almost every country. But, whereas, in the majority of countries now called civilised, such primitive Communism had almost entirely disappeared before the dawn of history and had at no time acquired a higher status than that conferred by the social sanction of unlettered and uneducated tribes. In Ireland the system formed part of the well defined social organisations of a nation of scholars and students, recognised by Chief and Tanist, Brehon and Bard, as the inspiring principle of their collective life, and the basis of their national system of jurisprudence. Such a striking fact will, of course, be interpreted in many ways, according to the temperament and political and racial sympathies of the reader. The adherent of the present order of society will regard it as proof of the Irish incapacity for assimilating progressive ideas, and will, no doubt, confidently assert that this incapacity is the real source of Ireland's misery, since it has unfitted her sons for the competitive scramble for existence, and so foredoomed them to the lot of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

## STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

The ardent student of sociology, who believes that the progress of the human race through the various economic stages of communism, chattel slavery, feudalism and wage slavery, has been but a preparation for the higher ordered society of the future; that the most industrially advanced countries are but, albeit often unconsciously, developing the social conditions which, since the break-up of universal

tribal communism, have been rendered historically necessary for the inauguration of a new and juster economic order, in which social, political and national antagonism will be unknown, will perhaps regard the Irish adherence to clan ownership at such a comparatively recent date as the 17th Century as evidence of retarded economical development, and therefore a real hindrance to progress. But the sympathetic student of history, who believes in the possibility of a people by political intuition anticipating the lessons afterwards revealed to them in the sad school of experience, will not be indisposed to join with the ardent Irish patriot in his lavish expressions of admiration for the sagacity of his Celtic forefathers, who foreshadowed in the democratic organisation of the Irish clan the more perfect organisation of the free society of the future.

### THE PIVOTAL ISSUE

Whichever be the true interpretation of Irish history, one fact at least stands out clear and undeniable, viz., that the conflict between the rival systems of land ownership was the pivot around which centred all the struggles and rebellions of which that history has been so prolific. The Irish regarded with inveterate hostility their English rulers, at all times set little store upon promises of incorporation within the pale of the constitution, and rose with enthusiasm under their respective chiefs, because they regarded this as the all-important question, because in their eyes English rule and Dublin parliaments were alike identified as the introducers and upholders of the system of feudalism and private ownership of land, as opposed to the Celtic system of clan or common ownership, which they regarded, and, I think, rightly, as the pledge at once of their political and social liberty.

The English Government was also astute enough to perceive that the political or national subjection of Ireland was entirely valueless to the conquerors while the politically subjected nation remained in possession of economic freedom. Consequently, we find that the first stipulation made to the Irish tribe upon its submission always provided that the lands of the tribe should be regarded as the private property of the chief; that he should therefore accept them

as a grant from the crown, from which he should in future hold them; that he should drop his Irish title, which proclaimed him the freely elected chief of a free community, and should instead accept an English title, such as duke or earl, and in all things conform to English ideas of civilisation and social order. All these stipulations were in the last degree repugnant to Irish ideas. The chief, as Mill has justly observed, was but the managing member of the tribal association, although in the stress of constant warfare they usually limited their choice to the members of one or two families; yet the right of election was never abdicated by the tribesmen. Whenever the seductions of English gold overmastered the patriotism of an Irish chief, and succeeded in inducing his acceptance of the alien property system and the alien title (as in the case of Art O'Neil and Nial Garbh O'Donnell, the Queen's O'Reilly and the Queen's Maguire), they immediately elected another chief in his stead; and from that moment the unfortunate renegade became an outlaw from his own people, and could only appear in his native territory under an escort of English spears.

## THE SEPTAL SYSTEM

The Irish system was thus on a par with those conceptions of social rights and duties which we find the ruling classes to-day denouncing so fiercely as "Socialistic." It was apparently inspired by the democratic principle that property was intended to serve the people, and not by the principle so universally acted upon at present, viz., that the people have no other function in existing than to be the bondslaves of those who by force or by fraud have managed to possess themselves of property. They did not, indeed, regard all forms of productive property as rightfully belonging to the community; but when we remember that the land alone was at that time of importance, all other forms of property being insignificant by comparison, we see that they were as Socialistic as the industrial development of their time required. The English civilisation against which they had fought was on the other hand, thoroughly individualistic; and, as it triumphed, we are reaping the fruits to-day in the industrial disputes, the

agricultural depressions, the poor-houses, and other such glorious institutions in Church and State as we are permitted the luxury of enjoying in common with our fellow-subjects in this "integral portion of the British Empire." The results of the change on the national life of Erin are well illustrated in the scornful words in which Aubrey De Vere apostrophises the "new race" of exploiters which then arose:

The chiefs of the Gael were the people embodied;  
The chiefs were the blossoms, the people the root.  
Their conquerors, the Normans, high-souled and  
high-blooded,  
Grew Irish at last from the scalp to the foot;  
And ye, ye are hirelings and satraps, not nobles—  
Your slaves they detest you, your masters, they scorn;  
The river lives on, but the sun-painted bubbles  
Pass quickly, to the rapids incessantly borne.

## THE NATIONAL STRUGGLE

The break-up of the Kilkenny Confederation in 1649, and the consequent dispersion of the Irish clans, was the immediate cause of that confusion of thought and apparent lack of directness in aim which down to our day has characterised all modern Irish politics. Deprived of any form of political or social organisation which might serve as an effective basis for its practical realisation, the demand for the common ownership of the land naturally fell into abeyance until such time as the conquest of some form of political freedom should enable the dispossessed Irishry to substitute for the lost tribal association the fuller and broader conception of an Irish nation as the natural repository and guardian of the people's heritage. But when the fusing process of a common subjection had once more welded the heterogenous elements of Irish society into one compact nationality it was found that in the intervening period a new class had arisen in the land—a class which, while professedly ultra-nationalistic in its political aims, had nevertheless so far compounded with the enemy as to accept the alien social system, with its accompanying

manifestations, the legal dispossession and economic dependence of the vast mass of the Irish people, as part of the natural order of society.

## RISING BOURGEOISIE

The Irish middle class, who then by virtue of their social position and education stepped to the front as Irish patriot leaders, owed their unique status in political life to two entirely distinct and apparently antagonistic causes. Their wealth they derived from the manner in which they had contrived to wedge themselves into a place in the commercial life of the "Saxon enemy," assimilating his ideas and adopting his methods, until they often proved the most ruthless of the two races in pushing to its furthest limits their powers of exploitation. Their political influence they derived from their readiness at all times to do lip service to the cause of Irish nationality, which in their phraseology meant simply the transfer of the seat of government from London to Dublin, and the consequent transfer to their own or their relatives' pockets of some portion of the legislative fees and lawyers' pickings then, as at present, expended among the Cockneys. With such men at the helm it is no wonder that the patriot parties of Ireland have always ended their journey upon the rock of disaster. Beginning by accepting a social system abhorrent to the best traditions of a Celtic people, they next abandoned as impossible the realisation of national independence. By the first act they set the seal of their approval upon a system founded upon the robbery of their countrymen, and by the second they bound up the destinies of their country with the fate of an Empire in the humiliation of whose piratical rulers lies the Irish people's only chance of national and social redemption.

As compensation for this gross betrayal the middle class politicians offer—Home Rule. To exactly analyse what Home Rule would confer on Ireland is a somewhat difficult task, since every one interprets the "thing" in his own way and according to his own peculiar bent. Perhaps the safest way, and at any rate the one least open to objection, will be to regard as Home Rule the Bill introduced by Mr. Gladstone. As this scheme represents the utmost that the statesman-like prowess of Mr. Parnell, with a solid phalanx

of eighty-six members behind him, could wrest from the fear or favour of English Liberalism, it is surely safe enough to assume that no other merely political body from Ireland is ever likely to improve upon this concession by any alliance with either of the great factions who watch over the interests of the English propertied class. Home Rule proposed to establish in Ireland a domestic legislature that would be carefully divested of all those powers and attributes which by the common consent of civilised peoples are regarded as properly belonging to the sphere and functions of government; that would have no power in controlling diplomacy, post office, commerce, telegraphs, coinage, customs and excise, weights and measures, copyrights and patents, succession to the Crown, or army, navy, militia or volunteers.

### HOME RULE — ITS MEANING

The only conceivable result of such a state of affairs would have been to create in Ireland a host of place-hunters and Government officials, who, secure in the enjoyment of a good income themselves, would have always acted as a barrier between the people and their oppressors. As a method whereby the English legislature might have been relieved of some of its duties at home, and thus left more free to pursue its policy of plunder and aggression abroad, it ought to have delighted the heart of the Jingo politicians. That they were too dunderheaded to see their opportunity is a mercy for which far-seeing Irish democrats can never be sufficiently thankful.

The second Home Rule Bill was slightly more democratic than the first, therefore the Government made no effort to force it upon the Upper House. The English Liberal Party—the most treacherous political party in Europe—has always had two favourite devices for destroying obnoxious proposals of reform. First: unscrupulous slander and opposition; second: theoretical acceptance of the principle of reform, but indefinite postponement of its practical realisation, continued on one pretext or another, until the hearts of the reformers are broken and their organisations disrupted. The first was defeated by the genius of

Parnell; how well the second method has succeeded let the present political chaos of Ireland testify.

Realising that, taken on its own merits, Home Rule is simply a mockery of Irish national aspirations our middle class leaders have industriously instilled into the public mind the belief that the advent of Home Rule would mean the immediate establishment of manufactures and the opening up of mines, etc., in every part of Ireland. This seems to them the highest possible ideal—an Irish society composed of employers making fortunes and workers grinding out their lives for a weekly wage. But, to say the least, the men who talk in this manner must either be woefully ignorant of the conditions of modern industry, or else, for some private reason of their own, are wilfully deceiving those who believe in them. To establish industry successfully to-day in any country requires at least two things, neither of which Ireland possesses, and one of which she never can possess. The first is the possession of the wherewithal to purchase machinery and raw materials for the equipment of her factories, and the second is customers to purchase the goods when they are manufactured. Now, we find that England, who has had the start in manufacturing over every other nation, who has been extending her commerce and perfecting her machinery for a hundred and fifty years at least, who has created a nation of highly skilled artisans, adept in every form of industrial achievement—England, the wealthiest country in the world, has brought her industries to such a degree of mechanical perfection that her customers cannot keep her going. She can supply goods of every description much quicker than the world is able to purchase and consume them, and as a direct consequence of this vast producing power she is compelled every few years to either wholly or partially stop her machinery and close her factories, to discharge her artisan subjects, and compel them to walk about in enforced idleness and semi-starvation until such time as the goods they have produced are purchased and consumed by other people—their customers.

### LIMITED MARKETS

Bear this in mind, and remember also, that Germany, France, Italy, Belgium, Austria, Russia every state on the

continent of Europe and America, India, China and Japan, are all entering into the struggle; that each of them is striving hard, not only to provide what it had formerly relied on England to provide, but also to beat England out of the markets of the world. Remember that for all those countries the great difficulty is to find customers, that the old-established firm in the business—viz., the British Empire—finds that her customers cannot keep her mills and factories going. Remember all this, and then tell me how poor Ireland, exhausted and drained of her life-blood at every pore, with a population almost wholly agricultural and unused to mechanical pursuits, is to establish new factories, and where she is to find the customers to keep them going. She cannot create new markets. This world is only limited after all, and the nations of Europe are pushing their way into its remote corners so rapidly that in a few years time, at most, the entire world will have been exhausted as a market for their wares.

### SWEAT-SHOP FACTORIES

Go to the factory towns, to the ship-building centres, to the coal mines, to the Trade Unions, or to the Stock Exchanges of England, the continent of Europe or America, and everywhere you will hear the same cry: "The supply of cotton and linen goods, of ironwork, of coal and of ships of every description, is exceeding the demand; we must work short time, we must reduce the workers' wages, we must close our factories—there is not enough customers to keep our machinery going." In the face of such facts the thoughtful Irish patriot will throw rant aside and freely recognise that it is impossible for Ireland to do what those other countries cannot do, with their greater advantages, viz., to attain prosperity by establishing a manufacturing system in a world-market already glutted with every conceivable kind of commodity. It is well also to remember that even under the most favourable circumstances, even if by some miracle, we were able to cover the green fields of Erin with huge, ugly factories, with chimneys belching forth volumes of poisonous smoke and coating the island with a sooty desolation—even then we would quickly find that under the conditions born of the capitalist system

our one hope of keeping our feet as a manufacturing nation would depend upon our ability to work longer and harder for a lower wage than the other nations of Europe, in order that our middle class may have the opportunity of selling their goods at a lower price than their competitors. This is equivalent to saying that our chance of making Ireland a manufacturing country depends upon us becoming the lowest blacklegs in Europe. Even then the efforts would be doomed to failure, for the advent of the yellow man into the competitive arena, the sudden development of the capitalist system in China and Japan, has rendered forever impossible the uprise of another industrial nation in Europe.

Again, it is said we need not perhaps establish industry or try it, but we can at least establish peasant proprietary, and make every man the owner of his farm, let every man live, if not under his own vine and fig tree, at least upon his own potato patch. In the first place, I consider such an act to be, even if practicable, one of very questionable justice. To make the land of a country the property of a class is to my mind equally iniquitous, whether that class number a few hundreds or a few thousands. The land of a country belongs of right to the people of that country, and not to any particular class, nor even to any single generation of the people. The private ownership of land by the landlord class is an injustice to the whole community, but the creation of a peasant proprietary would only tend to stereotype and consecrate that injustice, since it would leave out of account the entire labouring class as well as the dispossessed millions of former tenants whom landlord rule had driven into the Irish towns or across the sea.

## NATIONALISATION OF LAND

It is, of course, manifestly impossible to reinstate the Irish people on the lands from which they have been driven, but that fact only lends additional point to the demand for the nationalisation of land in the hands of the Irish State. Setting that fact, aside, however, have our advocates of peasant proprietary really considered the economic tendencies of the time, and the development of the mechanical arts in the agricultural world. The world

is progressive, and peasant proprietary, which a hundred years ago might have been a boon, would now be powerless to save from ruin the agriculture of Ireland. The day of small farmers, as of small capitalists, is gone, and wherever they are still found they find it impossible to compete with the improved machinery and mammoth farms of America and Australia. Whereas each Irish farm is burdened with the support of its field workers for the entire 365 days in the year, the capitalist farmer of the States hires his "hands" by the hundred for harvesting operations, and discharges them immediately it is completed, thus reducing to one-fourth the annual wages bill of his workers.

### SCIENCE IN AGRICULTURE

How are our small farmers to compete with a state of matters like this, or like unto that revealed in the report of the American Social Science Association, even as far back as 1878? It tells how science and invention, after devoting so much time to industry, have turned their attention to agriculture, and as a result have effected almost a revolution in that branch of human activity. Ploughs which, driven by horses, plough more than five acres per day, or the extent of many an Irish farm, and steam ploughs which do much more; machines for sowing seeds, with which a boy and horse can do three times the work of a man, and do it much better; reaping machines, with which a man with one or two pairs of horses can do the work of at least sixty men with reaping hooks; reaping machines which not only cut the harvest, but tie it as well, are now so common in England and America as to fail to attract attention, and we hear on good authority of machines which cut, thrash, winnow, and sack it, without the intervention of any other human hands than those of the engineer who tends the machine. In cutting the corn a man or boy, with a horse and machine, can do the work of twenty men cutting an acre an hour.

All this, be it remembered, is only possible to the farmer who holds his thousands of acres. The first cost of any one of those machines would be enough to ruin the average small farmer in Ireland, and the result is that while he is

painfully labouring on his farm his American competitor can bring in his harvest, send it thousands of miles by railroad, load it into ships, send it across the Atlantic, and eventually sell it practically at our doors as cheap as, and cheaper than, our home produce. The competition of New Zealand beef and frozen mutton has already inflicted incalculable harm upon the Irish cattle trade, and within the last few months I have received private information of a contract entered into with the Peninsular and Oriental Steamship Company to transport butter from the huge cattle ranches of Australia to any port in Great Britain and Ireland at a price that spells ruin to the dairy farms of these countries. While, then, in order to avoid even the appearance of injustice, we may rigidly respect those "rights of property" in land our peasant farmers have acquired by purchase, we must recognise that peasant proprietary in itself offers no hope of a free and unanxious life—not even to the peasant proprietor.

## EFFECTS OF CONQUEST

Ere we can forecast the future we must understand the present and bring a just sense of proportion to our review of the history of the past. What, then, are the conditions which govern life in Ireland to-day, and of what are those conditions the outcome? According to the most eminent authorities who have ever dealt with the subject the soil of Ireland is capable of sustaining a population many times larger than she has ever borne upon its surface, yet Ireland is in a state of chronic starvation. Every ship that leaves our ports is laden down with harvest for human consumption, while the people whose strong hands have reaped that harvest pine in wretchedness and want, or fly from the shores of this fertile land as from the arid sands of a desert. The landlord class, infatuated with that madness which always precedes destruction, press for their rents to the uttermost farthing wherever they can wheedle or coerce a too-compliant legislature and executive to support them in their exactions. The capitalist farmer, driven to the wall by the stress of the competition, seeks in vain to maintain his foothold in life by unceasing struggle with the lord of the soil on one hand and a ruth-

less oppression of the labourer on the other; the small farmer, bereft entirely of hope for the future, settles despairingly into a state of social wretchedness for which no savage land can furnish a parallel; the agricultural labourer, with his fellow in the towns, takes his strength, his brains, his physical and intellectual capabilities to the market, and offers them to his wealthier fellow-creatures, to be exploited in return for a starvation wage. On all sides anarchy and oppression reign supreme, until one could scarcely wonder if even the most orthodox amongst us were tempted to echo the saying of the Spanish Don Juan Aguila after the battle of Kinsale: "Surely Christ never died for this people!"

## THE USE OF THE SOIL

These are the conditions under which life is endured in Ireland to-day. From what do such conditions spring? There are two things necessary for the maintenance of life in Ireland, as in every other country. They are land and labour. Possessed of these two essentials, the human race has at its command all the factors requisite for the well-being of the species. From the earth labour extracts alike its foods and the mineral wealth with which it contrives to construct and adorn its habitations and prepare its raiment. Therefore the possession of the soil is everywhere the first requisite of life. Granting this as a proposition too self-evident to need elaborate demonstration, we at once arrive at the conclusion that since the soil is so necessary to our existence the first care of every well-regulated community ought to be to preserve the use of that soil, and the right to freely share in its fruits, to every member of the community, present or prospective, born or unborn.

## PRODUCTION FOR USE

The moment when the land of a country passes from the care of the community as a public trust, and from being the common property of the entire people becomes the private property of individuals, marks the beginning of slavery for that people and of oppression for that country.

With the land held as the property of individuals there are immediately created two antagonistic classes in society—one holding the land and demanding from the other a rent for permission to live upon it, and the other driven by a constant increase of their own numbers to offer larger and larger shares of the produce of their labour as tribute to the first class, who thus become masters of the lives of their fellow-beings. With the land held as the common property of the people an abundant harvest would be eagerly welcomed as an addition to the wealth of the community, guaranteeing against want every one of its members. With the land held as private property the abundant harvest must be sold to satisfy the exactions of the holder of the soil, and as he jingles in his pockets the result of the sale of his tenants' produce the families who reaped it may be perishing of want.

As one crime begets another, so one economic blunder invariably brings in its train a series of blunders, each one more fruitful of disaster than the first. When the production of food for public use was abandoned in favour of production of agricultural produce for private sale and private profit, it was almost inevitable that the production of almost every other necessary of life should be subjected to the same conditions. Thus we find that food, clothes, houses and furniture are not produced in order that people may be fed, clad, sheltered or made comfortable, but rather in order that the class who have obtained possession of the land, machinery, workshops and stores necessary for the production of these essentials should be thereby enabled to make a comfortable living at the expense of their fellow creatures. If the landlord and employing class think they can make a rent or profit by allowing the people to feed, clothe, or house themselves, then the latter are allowed to do so under the direction of the former—when, where, and how the masters please. If, on the contrary, they imagine it will pay them better to refuse that right (as they do in every eviction, strike, or lock-out), then they do refuse that permission, and their countrymen go forth starving, their children die of want before their eyes, and their wives and mothers pine in wretchedness and misery in what their forefathers were wont to call the "Isle of the Blest."

## LABOUR POWER

By the operation of certain historic causes the workers have been deprived of everything by which they can maintain life and are thus compelled to seek their livelihood by the sale of their capacity for work, their labour power. The worker thus finds that the most essential condition which he must perform in order that he may possess his life is to sell part of that life into the service and for the profit of another. Whether he sells it by the hour, the day, the week, or the month is immaterial—sell it he must or else starve.

Now, the worker is a human being, with all the powers and capabilities of a human being within him, just as is a landlord, a capitalist, or any other ornament of society. But when he approaches the capitalist in order to complete that bargain, which means the sale of his life piecemeal in order that he may enjoy it as a whole, he finds that he must carefully divest himself of all claims to be considered as a human being, and offer himself upon the market subject to the same law as govern the purchase or sale of any inanimate, soulless commodity, such as a pair of boots, a straw hat or a frock coat. That is to say, the price he will receive for this piecemeal sale of himself will depend upon how many more are compelled by hunger to make the same horrible bargain.

## NO DIFFERENCE

In like manner with the farmer seeking to rent a farm in the open market. Each competitor seeks to outbid the other, until the rent is fixed usually out of all proportion to the price which will in the future be obtained for the produce of the farm bidden for. The agriculturist finds that in years of universal plenty, when throughout the world the earth brings forth its fruits in teeming profusion, the excess of supply over effective demand operates to lower the price of his farm produce, until it scarcely repays his labour in garnering it, and in times of scarcity, when a good price might be obtained, he has little to sell, his customers have not the wherewithal to buy, and the landlord or the money lender are as relentless as ever in their exactions.

As a remedy for such an array of evils Home Rule stands revealed as a glaring absurdity. The Home Rule parties either ignore the question altogether or else devote their attention to vain attempts to patch up the system with schemes of reform which each day tends to discredit more and more. The tenant who seeks in the Land Court for a judicial valuation of his holding finds that in face of the steady fall in agricultural prices (assisted by preferential railway rates in favour of foreign produce) the "fair" rent of one year becomes the rack-rent of another, and the tenant who avails himself of the purchase clauses of the Land Act finds that he has only escaped from the personal tyranny of a landlord to have his veins sucked by the impersonal power of the money lender.

## A SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

Confronted with such facts, the earnest Irish worker turns in dismay and joins his voice to that of the uncompromising Nationalist in seeking from the advocate of an Irish Socialist Republic the clue of the labyrinthine puzzle of modern economic conditions. The problem is a grave and difficult one, alike from the general ignorance of its controlling conditions and because of the multiplicity of vested interests which must be attacked and overthrown at every forward step towards its solution. The solution herein set forth is therefore not guaranteed to be absolutely perfect in all its details, but only to furnish a rough draft of a scheme of reform by means of which the ground may be prepared for that revolutionary change in the structure of society which can alone establish an approximation to an ideally just social system.

The agriculture of Ireland can no longer compete with the scientifically equipped farmers of America, therefore the only hope that now remains is to abandon competition altogether as a rule of life, to organise agriculture as a public service under the control of boards of management elected by the agricultural population (no longer composed of farmers and labourers, but of free citizens with equal responsibility and equal honour), and responsible to them and the nation at large, and with all the mechanical and scientific aids to agriculture the entire resources of

the nation can place at their disposal. Let the produce of Irish soil go first to feed the Irish people, and after a sufficient store has been retained to insure of that being accomplished, let the surplus be exchanged with other countries in return for those manufactured goods Ireland needs but does not herself produce.

Thus we will abolish at one stroke the dread of foreign competition and render perfectly needless any attempt to create an industrial hell in Ireland under the specious pretext of "developing our resources."

Apply to manufacture the same social principle, let the co-operative organisation of the workers replace the war of classes under capitalism and transform the capitalist himself from an irresponsible hunter after profit into a public servant fulfilling a public function and under public control. Recognise the right of all to an equal opportunity to develop to their fullest capacity all the powers and capabilities inherent in them by guaranteeing to all our countrymen and women, the weak as well as the strong, the simple as well as the cunning, the honest equally with the unscrupulous, the fullest, freest, and most abundant human life intelligently organised society can confer upon any of its members.

### COMPLETE SEPARATION

"But," you will say, "this means a Socialist Republic; this is subversive of all the institutions upon which the British Empire is founded—this cannot be realised without national independence." Well, I trust no one will accuse me of a desire to fan into flame the dying embers of national hatred when I state as my deliberate and conscientious conviction that the Irish democracy ought to strive consistently after the separation of their country from the yoke that links her destinies with those of the British Crown. The interests of Labour all the world over are identical, it is true, but it is also true that each country had better work out its own salvation on the lines most congenial to its own people.

The national and racial characteristics of the English and Irish people are different, their political history and traditions are antagonistic, the economic development of the one is not on a par with the other, and, finally, although

they have been in the closest contact for seven hundred years, yet the Celtic Irishman is to-day as much of an insoluble problem to even the most friendly English as on the day when the two countries were first joined in unholy wedlock.

### WHO ARE THE PEOPLE ?

But on whom devolves the task of achieving that downfall of the ruling classes in Ireland? On the Irish people. But who are the Irish people? Is it the dividend-hunting capitalist with the phrascology of patriotism on his lips and the spoil wrung from sweated Irish toilers in his pockets; is it the scheming lawyer—most immoral of all classes; is it the slum landlord who denounces rackrenting in the country and practices it in the towns; is it any one of these sections who to-day dominate Irish politics? Or is it not rather the Irish working class—the only secure foundation on which a free nation can be reared—the Irish working class which has borne the brunt of every political struggle, and gained by none, and which is to-day the only class in Ireland which has no interest to serve in perpetuating either the political or social forms of oppression—the British connection or the capitalist system? The Irish working class must emancipate itself, and in emancipating itself it must, perforce, free its country. The act of social emancipation requires the conversion of the land and instruments of production from private property into the public or common property of the entire nation. This necessitates a social system of the most absolute democracy, and in establishing that necessary social system the working class must grapple with every form of government which could interfere with the most unfettered control by the people of Ireland of all the resources of their country.

On the working class of Ireland, therefore, devolves the task of conquering political representation for their class as the preliminary step towards the conquest of political power. This task can only be safely entered upon by men and women who recognise that the first action of a revolutionary army must harmonise in principle with those likely to be its last, and that, therefore, no revolutionists can safely invite the co-operation of men or classes, whose

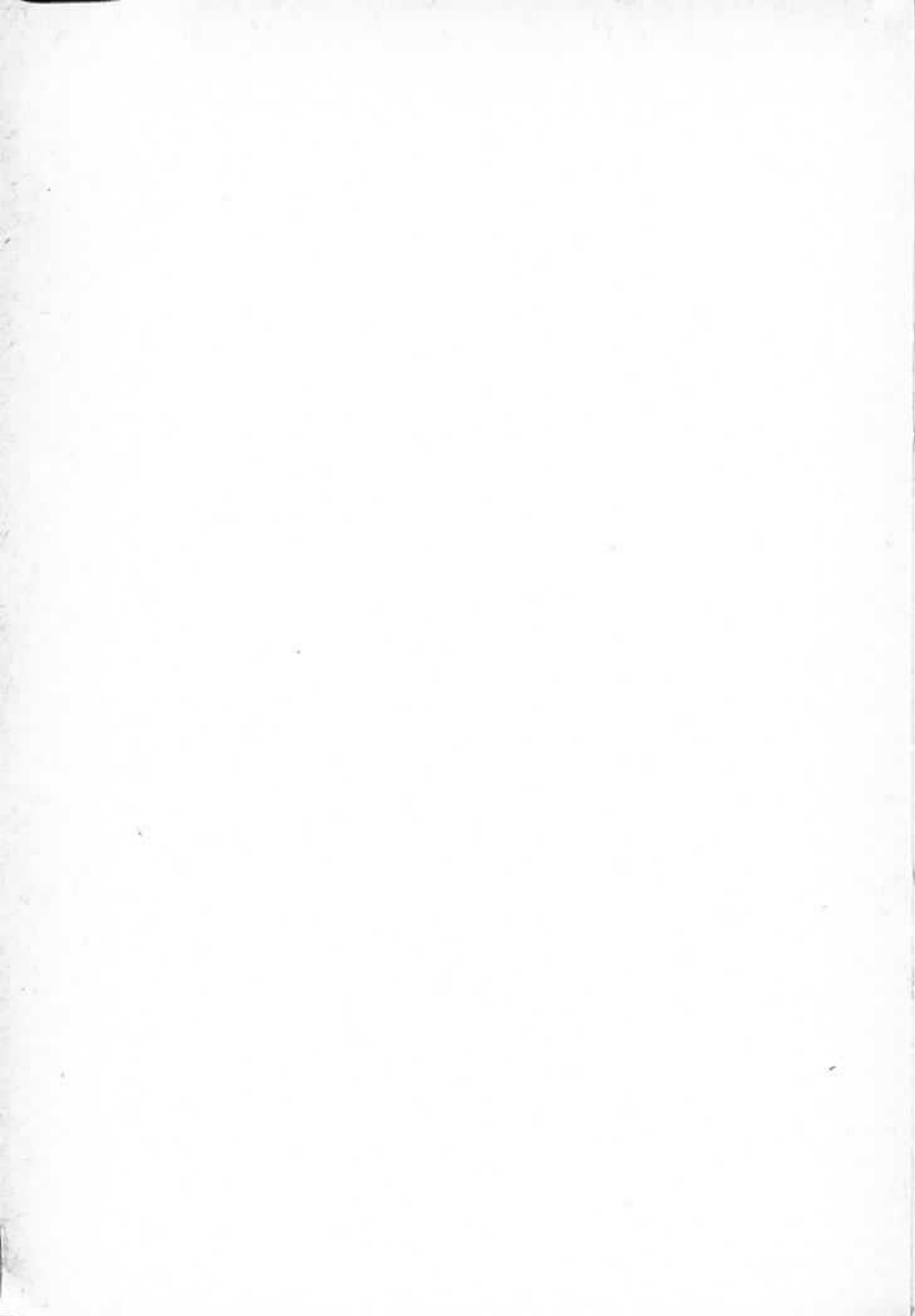
ideals are not theirs, and whom, therefore, they may be compelled to fight at some future critical stage of the journey to freedom. To this category belongs every section of the propertied class, and every individual of those classes who believes in the righteousness of his class position. The freedom of the working class must be the work of the working class. And let it be remembered that timidity in the slave induces audacity in the tyrant, but the virility and outspokenness of the revolutionists ever frightens the oppressor himself to hide his loathsomeness under the garb of reform. And thus remembering, fight for your class at every point.

### SHORTER WORKING WEEK

Our people are flying to the uttermost ends of the earth; seek to retain them at home by reducing the hours of labour wherever you have the power and by supporting every demand for legislative restriction. Your Irish railways employ thousands of men, whose working hours average twelve per day. Were they restricted to a forty-eight-hour week of labour, employment would be provided for thousands of Irishmen who at present are driven exiles from their native land. Let your representatives demand an eight-hour bill for railways. Our Irish municipalities and other public bodies controlled by popular vote employ also many thousands of men. What are their hours of labour? On the average ten, and their wages just above starvation point. Insist upon Irish corporations establishing the eight-hour day in all their works. They at least do not need to fear foreign competition. If you have no vote in the corporation you can at least help to hound off the political platform elsewhere every so-called patriot who refuses to perform this act of justice. Every Irish corporation which declines to institute an eight-hours' working day at a decent wage for its employees has virtually entered into a conspiracy with the British Government to expatriate the Irish people, rather than pay an additional halfpenny in the pound on the rates. In all our cities the children of the labouring class are dying off before their time for lack of wholesome nourishing food. As our municipalities and public trusts provide water for the people free of direct payment and charge the cost upon the rates,

let them also provide at our schools free breakfasts, dinners and teas to the children in attendance there, and pay for it from the same source. No matter what may be the moral character of the parent, let us at least save the helpless children of our race from physical and mental degeneracy, and save our teachers from the impossible task of forcing education upon a child whose brain is enfeebled by the starvation of its body. As the next step in organisation, let the corporations and public bodies everywhere throughout the country establish depots for the supply of bread and all the necessities of life to the people, at cost price and without the intervention of the middleman.

When, in addition to the foregoing reforms, we have demanded the abolition of our hateful poor-house system, and the imposition of a heavy and steeply graduated income tax on all incomes over £400 a year, in order to provide comfortable pensions for the aged, the infirm, and widows and orphans, we will have aroused a new spirit in the people; we will have based our revolutionary movement upon a correct appreciation of the needs of the hour, as well as upon the vital principles of economic justice and uncompromising nationality; we will, as the true revolutionist should ever do, have called into action on our side the entire sum of all the forces and factors of social and political discontent. By the use of the revolutionary ballot we will have made the very air of Ireland as laden with "treason," as fully charged with the spirit of revolt, as it is to-day with the cant of compromise and the mortal sin of flunkeyism; and thus we will have laid a substantial groundwork for more effective action in the future, while to those whom we must remove in our onward march the pledge of our faith in the Social Revolution will convey the assurance that if we crush their profit-making enterprises to-day, yet when the sun dawns upon our freedom, if they have served their fellow creatures loyally in the hour of strife, they and their children and their children's children will be guaranteed against want and privation for all time by the safest guarantee man ever received, the guarantee backed by all the gratitude, the loyal hearts, the brains and industry of the Irish people, under the Irish Socialist Republic.



# *The New Evangel*

## INTRODUCTION

"THE NEW EVANGEL" is a collection of essays published in 1901; a glance at the titles will show how topical are the subjects.

Any of the essays could be usefully made the subject of a discussion at a class or seminar on economic history or politics; they would certainly succeed in generating controversy. Whatever the various re-actions might be there can be no denying the vitality of the articles and their relevance to contemporary issues. Socialists should find them invaluable for crystallising and developing their own ideas on the questions involved.

As applications of Marxism to Irish problems at the time they were written, they have certain limitations and lack the maturity of Connolly's later works. Some formulations are confusing and misleading, while others over-simplify. Many of the weaknesses can be explained in terms of the period in which they were written, while others are more basic.

For instance, an excellent article on "The Economic Basis of Politics" is marred by confusing comments on what the author refers to as the "materialist basis of history." In this context he uses the phrase "the seat of progress and source of revolution is not in the brain but in the stomach." This phrase is, perhaps, useful in explaining the immediate circumstances of a particular revolt, but it is confusing when applied to the processes of history.

When Connolly came to write "Labour in Irish History" he was much more precise and mature. He then made his position quite clear by quoting Karl Marx on the question as follows:

"That in every historical epoch the prevailing method of economic production and exchange and the social organisation necessarily following from it forms the basis upon which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch."

The article, "State Monopoly versus Socialism," is a very able exposition of a subject vital to socialist thinking. The difference between Socialism and State Capitalism is a very crucial issue, especially when the question of industrial democracy is receiving more attention.

Two sentences from the article could be the focus of a valuable discussion:

"Socialism properly implies above all things the co-operative control by the workers of the machinery of production; without this co-operative control, the public ownership by the State is not Socialism, it is only State Capitalism."

Further on, he writes: "... the ownership by the State of all the land and materials of labour combined with the co-operative control by the workers of such land and materials would be Socialism."

These views can now be assessed with the help of experience from countries which have Socialist economies and where industrial democracy is in the process of actual realisation.

Students of Connolly will always be interested in his approach to the question of Socialism and religion. The articles in this selection could be the basis of many a controversy. Many will be pleased to meet in its original context the famous phrase included in the concluding paragraph of "Labour, Nationality and Religion":

"For us we have said elsewhere, Socialism is neither Protestant nor Catholic, Christian nor Freethinker, Buddhist, Mahometan nor Jew; it is only HUMAN."

The circulation of this pamphlet, along with "Erin's Hope", will, without doubt, constructively contribute to the Socialist fermentation presently taking place in Ireland.

May, 1968.

JOSEPH DEASY.

# THE NEW EVANGEL

PREACHED TO IRISH TOILERS

*"There is a New Evangel  
At this moment preached in France  
And the priests of its great doctrines  
Despise the tyrant's glance;  
Oh, that Holy Gospel echoes  
From distant sea to sea!  
It teaches Men are Brothers,  
It teaches all are Free!"*

JOSEPH BRENNAN, "*Irish Tribune*," 1848.

## STATE MONOPOLY VERSUS SOCIALISM

One of the most significant signs of our times is the readiness with which our struggling middle class turns to schemes of State or Municipal ownership and control, for relief from the economic pressure under which it is struggling. Thus we find in England demands for the nationalisation of the telephone system, for the extension of municipal enterprise in the use of electricity, for the extension of the parcel system in the Post Office, for the nationalisation of railways and canals. In Ireland we have our middle class reformers demanding state help for agriculture, state purchase of lands, arterial draining, state construction of docks, piers and harbours, state aid for the fishing industry, state control of the relations between agricultural tenant and landlord, and also nationalisation of railways and canals. There is a certain section of Socialists, chiefly in England, who never tire of hailing all such demands for state activity as a sign of the growth of the Socialist spirit among the middle class, and therefore worthy of all the support the working-class democracy can give. In some degree such a view seems justifiable. The fact that large sections of the capitalist class join in demanding the intervention of the State in industry is a sure sign that they, at least, have lost the overweening belief in the all-sufficiency of private enterprise which characterised their class a generation ago; and that they

have been forced to recognise the fact that there are a multitude of things in which the "brain," "self-reliance," and "personal responsibility" of the capitalist are entirely unnecessary. To argue that, since in such enterprises the private property-holder is dispensed with, therefore he can be dispensed with in all other forms of industrial activity, is logical enough and we really fail to see in what manner the advocates of capitalist society can continue to clamour for such state ownership as that alluded to—ownership in which the private capitalist is seen to be superfluous, and yet continue to argue that in all other forms of industry the private capitalist is indispensable. For it must be remembered that every function of a useful character performed by the State or Municipality to-day was at one time performed by private individuals for profit, and in conformity with the then generally accepted belief that it could not be satisfactorily performed except by private individuals.

But all this notwithstanding, we would, without undue desire to carp or cavil, point out that to call such demands "Socialistic" is in the highest degree misleading. Socialism properly implies above all things the co-operative control by the workers of the machinery of production; without this co-operative control the public ownership by the State is not Socialism—it is only State capitalism. The demands of the middle-class reformers, from the Railway Reform League down, are simply plans to facilitate the business transactions of the capitalist class. State Telephones—to cheapen messages in the interest of the middle class who are the principal users of the telephone system; State Railways—to cheapen carriage of goods in the interest of the middle-class trader; State-construction of piers, docks, etc.—in the interest of the middle-class merchant; in fact every scheme now advanced in which the help of the State is invoked is a scheme to lighten the burden of the capitalist—trader, manufacturer, or farmer. Were they all in working order to-morrow the change would not necessarily benefit the working class; we would still have in our state industries, as in the Post Office to-day, the same unfair classification of salaries, and the same despotic rule of an irresponsible head. Those who worked most and hardest would still get the least remuneration, and the rank and file

would still be deprived of all voice in the ordering of their industry, just the same as in all private enterprises.

Therefore, we repeat, state ownership and control is not necessarily Socialism—if it were, then the Army, the Navy, the Police, the Judges, the Gaolers, the Informers, and the Hangmen, would all be Socialist functionaries, as they are all State officials—but the ownership by the State of all the land and materials for labour, combined with the co-operative control by the workers of such land and materials, would be Socialism.

Schemes of state and municipal ownership, if unaccompanied by this co-operative principle, are but schemes for the perfectioning of the mechanism of capitalist government—schemes to make the capitalist regime respectable and efficient for the purposes of the capitalist; in the second place they represent the class-conscious instinct of the business man who feels that capitalist should not prey upon capitalist, while all may unite to prey upon the workers. The chief immediate sufferers from private ownership of railways, canals, and telephones are the middle class shop-keeping element, and their resentment at the tariffs imposed is but the capitalist political expression of the old adage that “dog should not eat dog.”

It will thus be seen that an immense gulf separates the “nationalising” proposals of the middle class from the “socialising” demands of the revolutionary working class. The first proposes to endow a Class State—repository of the political power of the Capitalist Class—with certain powers and functions to be administered in the common interest of the possessing class; the second proposes to subvert the Class State and replace it with the Socialist State, representing organised society—the Socialist Republic. To the cry of the middle class reformers, “make this or that the property of the government,” we reply, “yes, in proportion as the workers are ready to make the government their property.”

## SOCIALISM AND RELIGION

### The Known and the Unknowable

Perhaps upon no point are the doctrines of Socialism so much misunderstood, and so much misrepresented, as in

their relation to Religion. When driven into a corner upon every other point at issue; when from the point of view of economics, of politics, or of morality, he is worsted in argument, this question of Religion invariably forms the final entrenchment of the enemy of Socialism—especially in Ireland.

"But it is opposed to Religion," constitutes the last words, the ultimate shift, of the supporters of capitalism, driven from every other line of defence but stubbornly refusing to yield. "Socialism is Atheism, and all Socialists are Atheists," or "Your Socialism is but a fine name to cover your Atheism in its attack upon the Church;" all these phrases are so commonly heard in the course of every dispute upon the merits or demerits of the Socialist doctrine that we require no apology for introducing them here in order to point their illogical character. So far from it being true that Socialism and Atheism are synonymous terms, it is a curious and instructive fact that almost all the prominent propagandists of Freethought in our generation have been, and are, most determined enemies of Socialism. The late Charles Bradlaugh, in his time the most aggressive Freethinker in England, was to the last resolute and uncompromising in his hatred of Socialism; G. W. Foote, the present editor of the "Freethinker," the national organ of English Secularism, is a bitter enemy of Socialism, and the late Colonel Bob Ingersoll, the chief apostle of Freethought doctrine in the United States, was well known as an apologist of capitalism.

On the continent of Europe many other quite similar cases might be recorded, but those already quoted will suffice, as being those most easily verified by our readers. It is a suggestive and amusing fact that in the motley ranks of the defenders of Capitalism the professional propagandists of Freethought are comrades-in-arms of His Holiness the Pope; the ill-reasoned and inconclusive Encyclicals lately issued against Socialism make of the hierarchy of the Catholic Church belated camp followers in the armies marching under the banners raised by the agnostic exponents of the individualist philosophy. Obviously, even the meanest intelligence can see that there need be no identity of thought between the Freethinker as such, and the Socialist as a Socialist. From what then does the popu-

lar misconception arise? In the first instance from the interested attempt of the propertied classes to create such a prejudice against Socialism as might deter the working class giving ear to its doctrines—an attempt too often successful; and in the second instance, from a misconception of the attitude of the Socialist party towards the theological dogma in general. The Socialist Party of Ireland prohibits the discussion of theological or anti-theological questions at its meetings, public or private. This is in conformity with the practice of the chief Socialist parties of the world, which have frequently, in Germany for example, declared Religion to be a private matter, and outside the scope of Socialist action. Modern Socialism, in fact, as it exists in the minds of its leading exponents, and as it is held and worked for by an increasing number of enthusiastic adherents throughout the civilised world, has an essentially material, matter-of-fact foundation. We do not mean that its supporters are necessarily materialists in the vulgar, and merely anti-theological, sense of the term, but that they do not base their Socialism upon any interpretation of the language or meaning of Scripture, nor upon the real or supposed intentions of a beneficent Deity. They as a party neither affirm or deny those things, but leave it to the individual conscience of each member to determine what beliefs on such questions they shall hold. As a political party they wisely prefer to take their stand upon the actual phenomena of social life as they can be observed in operation amongst us to-day, or as they can be traced in the recorded facts of history. If any special interpretation of the meanings of Scripture tends to influence human thought in the direction of Socialism, or is found to be on a plane with the postulates of Socialist doctrine, then the scientific Socialist considers that the said interpretation is stronger because of its identity with the teachings of Socialism, but he does not necessarily believe that Socialism is stronger, or its position more impregnable, because of its theological ally. He realises that the facts upon which his Socialist faith are based are strong enough in themselves to withstand every shock, and attacks from every quarter, and therefore while he is at all times willing to accept help from every extraneous source, he will only accept it on one condition, viz., that he is not to be required

in return to identify his cause with any other whose discomfiture might also involve Socialism in discredit. This is the main reason why Socialists fight shy of theological dogmas and religions generally: because we feel that Socialism is based upon a series of facts requiring only unassisted human reason to grasp and master all their details, whereas Religion of every kind is admittedly based upon "faith" in the occurrence in past ages of a series of phenomena inexplicable by any process of mere human reasoning. Obviously, therefore, to identify Socialism with Religion would be to abandon at once that universal, non-sectarian character which to-day we find indispensable to working-class unity, as it would mean that our members would be required to conform to one religious creed, as well as to one specific economic faith—a course of action we have no intention of entering upon as it would inevitably entangle us in the disputes of the warring sects of the world, and thus lead to the disintegration of the Socialist Party.

Socialism, as a party, bases itself upon its knowledge of facts, of economic truths, and leaves the building up of religious ideals or faiths to the outside public, or to its individual members if they so will. It is neither Free-thinker nor Christian, Turk nor Jew, Buddhist nor Idolator, Mahommedan nor Parsee—it is only HUMAN.

## THE ECONOMIC BASIS OF POLITICS

The Stomach, not the Brain.

NOTHING more strikingly illustrates the crude and unscientific theories of the ordinary middle class politician than the desperate attempts at present being made to build up a great political party in Ireland on the lines of the late Home Rule movement. Apparently all sections of the Home Rule party are possessed with the belief that great political movements can be constructed at will, and that an effective, aggressive political force may have its origin, not deep down in the daily life of the people, but in the brains of some half dozen gentlemen in parliament. Viewed from this standpoint the toiling multitudes are mere automata,

and the really effective national force is to be found in the men whom the Home Rule press and orators point out to the multitude as "leaders." The truth that the political movements of a country spring from the pulsations of its economic life; that all political parties are the instruments of a class, and are great and powerful only in the proportion in which the development of the struggle for existence forces their particular class interest upon the majority of the nation as a dominant factor in their daily life—all this seems to a quite unheard of philosophy amongst capitalist politicians.

Yet a slight survey of the history of the world in general, or of Ireland in particular, could not fail to bring the truth of this eminently Socialist doctrine home to the mind of the thoughtful student of events. The great political organizations which have successfully revolutionised the systems of governments under which they lived, have had their origin, not in the brains of mighty leaders, but in the daily and hourly needs of the multitude, and have acquired force and power only in so far as those needs became sharp and pressing enough to goad that sluggish multitude to action. When at such a crisis there arose a man lucky enough, or astute enough, to make himself the mouthpiece of the discontented multitude; to coin its inarticulate groanings into political phraseology, and give its hunger-inspired desire for change in intelligent formulation, then such a man became a "great leader," and the organisation following the course he advocated the leading political force. To the minds of the superficial middle class thinkers—always ready to believe that the world turned around their heroes and successful persons as upon its axis—the leaders had created the movement which they led; to the mind of the scientific Socialist the leaders and the movements were both the product of the quickening of intellect caused by social conditions adversely affecting the life of the people at large.

Examine the great revolutionary movements of history and you find that in all cases they sprang from unsatisfactory social conditions, and had their origin in a desire for material well being. In other words, the seat of progress and source of revolution is not in the brain, but in the stomach. The fact that this truth has hitherto been

obscured, or even denied; that the pioneers of progress uniformly clothed their political demands in the most idealistic language and the most flowery phraseology; or that they constantly appealed for the support of "all unselfish and generous souls," rather than to commonplace interests, only proves that we are all too prone to hide even from ourselves the real nature of our impelling desires, and, even when most stubbornly following our grossest instincts, to throw around our actions all the glamour of "spiritual cravings," or "patriotic hopes."

The power and unconquerable optimism of the socialist party is due to their recognition of this materialist basis of history, this economic basis of politics. Knowing that their ultimate ideal and immediate demands are in a line with the progress of the human race towards prosperity, and that every scheme for better social conditions at all likely to effect its purpose must be of the nature of a step in their direction, Socialists cannot lose courage, because even in the midst of temporary defeat they know that the needs of the workers, who are in the majority, will eventually impel them into line with the Social-Revolutionary forces. From this fact our Irish politicians—and revolutionists—may gain, not comfort, perhaps, but wisdom. The history of the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Irish Volunteers, the risings of 1798, 1848, and the Irish Land League, all bear out our argument upon the economic basis of great political movements.

The American Revolution was a revolt against the action of England in throttling the infant industries of America, and came to a head with a tax upon tea—all "base" material reasons; the French Revolution was the revolt of an oppressed and famished people against outworn, mediæval landlordism (feudalism) and the vexatious taxes upon industry imposed by a corrupt Court; the Irish Volunteer movement was, in its anti-English aspect, a revolt of the Irish manufacturing class against the restrictions put upon their trade by England,—"**FREE TRADE**, or else" was the motto they hung upon their cannon, and when that one point was gained all the "patriotic enthusiasm" of the leaders vanished; Grattan termed the Volunteers, upon whose backs he had climbed to political eminence, "an

armed rabble," and the whole movement collapsed as suddenly as it had arisen—the economic basis being gone the patriotism was no longer evident. 1798 was an abortive Irish edition of the French Revolution—despite the lying twaddle of the present day about the society of United Irishmen being a "Union of ALL CLASSES," there is not in history any record of a movement, except the Paris Commune, in which the classes and the masses were so sharply divided; 1848 found its inspiration in the promptings of famine—and its failure in the total incapacity of the doctrinaire Young Irelanders to understand the difference between revolutionary action and "heroic" posings; the Land League found its inspiration in a partial failure of the crops, and in the newly developed competition of America—and the collapse of the Land League came with reduced rents and partial prosperity.

In every case the social condition of the mass of the people was the determining factor in political activity. Where the mass of the people find existing conditions intolerable, and imagine they see a way out, there will be a great political movement; where the social conditions are not so abnormally acute no amount of political oratory, nor yet co-operation of leaders, can produce a movement.

The great Labour uprising at the Irish Local Government elections of 1898 sprang up spontaneously without a leader, and despite the political parties; when the men who supported it have realised the futility of trying to effect any great improvement in their condition by the action of local bodies, they will seek for a political party which can express their class interests upon national basis—and seeking it find the Socialist Party, ready and equipped for the task. By our action to-day we are preparing the ground for more aggressive revolutionary action when the working class of Ireland at last recognise in our principles the embodiment of their hopes; firmly grounded upon our knowledge of the economic basis of all political action, we confidently await the day when the ever-increasing pressure of capitalist society shall bring the workers into our ranks—and the destinies of the nation into our hands.

## FATHER FINLAY, S.J., AND SOCIALISM

### An Exposition of Social Evolution

“Those who seek a comprehensive remedy for the sufferings of the working classes look beyond trades unionism. They perceive that they must modify more profoundly the relations between Labour and Capital; to bridge across the chasm dividing them, and so abolish that rivalry of interest out of which has grown so much inhumanity to man. One class of reformers propose to effect this change by the absolute abolition of private capital—by taking capital, or the material instruments of wealth production, out of the hands of the individuals and classes, and making it the property of the community, vesting it in the State. This scheme—the dream of the Socialist—impossible to work out in practice, hopelessly breaking down wherever it has been tried, violates the fundamental conception of all property. What a free man creates by his labour, that is his property; if it is his property he can do with it what he wills — consume it by present use or reserve it for further production. To forbid him the right to reserve it or use it as capital would be to deny him the right to possess property. From this point of view—as well as from others—Socialism is seen to have much in common with slavery.”

The above quotation, from the paper on “Co-operation” read by Father Finlay, S.J., before the fourth annual general meeting of the Maynooth Union, calls for more than a passing notice, is deserving of more intelligent criticism than our capitalist contemporaries have been able to bring to bear upon it. For this reason we propose to place before our readers a brief statement of our position, in so far at least as it is affected by the assertions contained in the paper quoted from above.

We readily allow that no man in Ireland within the clerical body, and few men in Ireland outside the ranks of the adherents of scientific Socialism, can bring to bear upon questions of political economy, and the effect which theories of political economy have had upon the industrial life of the people, such a wealth of knowledge as the reverend gentlemen whose paper we are now discussing.

The feeble and ineffective efforts of the Home Rule pressmen to criticise the co-operative movement to which Father Finlay devotes so much of his energy and ability is in itself proof enough that, however efficient our journalistic guides may be as caterers to the palate of a reading public ready to forgive every inconsistency of statement, or colouring of fact, if only it is seasoned with a dash of "patriotism" or "true religion," as helps to the intelligent discussion of an economic question they are worse than useless. The economic theories held by the non-Socialist parties of Ireland to-day and voiced by the publicists on press and platform are in fact the theories which prevailed in England more than 50 years ago—during the agitation for the repeal of the Corn Laws, and for Free Trade in general. Such ideas are now regarded throughout the remainder of the world as outworn and obsolete; it is only in Ireland they survive, and in Ireland only among men who having failed to keep step with the intellectual march of the world would fain convince themselves that the intellectual incapacity which shuts them off from sympathy with the thought of the age is the distinguishing birthmark of a true Celt. That the criticism of such persons should be of little effect in adding to our knowledge any important truth on an economic subject is, of course, to be expected, and we do not propose to waste our own or our readers' time in discussing them, but the arguments of Father Finlay naturally carrying more weight, deserve, we repeat, a much more serious study.

To begin with we would like to remind the reverend lecturer that he did not place before his hearers such a clear and definite idea of the true Socialist position as he himself possesses. In a lecture delivered in Dublin before the Statistical Society, some few years ago he, in dealing with the teachings of Karl Marx—the ablest exponent of Socialism the world has seen, and the founder of that school of thought which embraces all the militant Socialist parties of the world—Father Finlay laid before his hearers an exposition of the evolutionary nature of the Socialist doctrine, its historical derivation and materialistic basis, which is not at all compatible with the crudely false conception of Socialism to be found in the foregoing quotation. Modern Socialism, he showed, is not the product of the

brains of any man nor of any number of men; it is the legitimate child of a long, drawn-out historical evolution, and its consummation will only be finally possible when that evolutionary process has attained to a suitable degree of development. As capitalist society—the system of wage-labour and “free contract” between master and man—was only developed according as the system of feudalism—or serf labour under a hereditary, landowning nobility—broke down owing to the demand for new methods of industry produced by the opening up of new markets through the discovery of America, and the perfection of means of transit and communication, in like manner will Socialism also come when the development of capitalism in its turn renders the burden of a capitalist class unbearable—and the capitalist system unworkable. Socialists point out that the capitalist system depends upon the maintenance of equilibrium between the producing and consuming powers of the world; that business cannot go on unless the goods produced can find customers; that owing to the rapid development of machinery this equilibrium cannot be maintained; that the productive powers of the world are continually increasing whilst the virgin markets of the world are as continually diminishing; that every new scientific process applied to industry, every new perfecting of machinery, increases the productivity of labour, but as the area of the world remains unaltered the hope of finding new markets for the products of labour grows ever less and less; that a time must come when all the world will be exhausted as a market for the wares of commerce, and yet invention and industrial perfecting remain as active as ever; that capitalism—able to produce more in a few months than would supply its customers for years — will have no work for the workers, who, constituting the vast majority as they do, will have to choose between certain starvation and revolt for Socialism. That the same economic development which will create the necessity for revolt will also provide the conditions required to make that revolt successful, in so far as it will have forced out of business the multitude of small capitalists, and replaced them by huge companies, stores, and trusts—a unification of industry, requiring only the transference of the right of ownership from the individual

to the democratic community to bridge the chasm between capitalism and Socialism. That the private property which the worker should possess in the fruits of his toil is continually confiscated to-day by the capitalist process of industry, and that Socialism by making ALL citizens—society—joint heirs and owners of the tools of production, will restore to the workers that private property of which capitalism deprives them.

Here then is a statement of the aims and principles of modern Socialism. The intelligent reader will observe that this is not a mere piece of speculative philosophy, nor yet the product of disordered brains acted upon by hunger-weakened stomachs. On the contrary it is primarily a scientific analysis of the past and present structure of society—a comprehensive **SUMMING UP OF THE FACTS OF HISTORY.**

In face of this fact, which we would most respectfully remind Father Finlay he has himself most lucidly explained ere now, what becomes of his statement at Maynooth that Socialism "had hopelessly broken down wherever it had been tried." The statement was crudely false, mischievous, and misleading, and Father Finlay would not risk his reputation by repeating it before any audience of scientists in the world. That he thought it quite safe to make such an utterance at Maynooth is an interesting indication of the low estimate in which he held the intellectual grasp of his hearers on the thought of their generation. Socialism has not "broken down wherever it has been tried," because, being the fruit of an historical evolution yet to be completed, **IT HAS NEVER BEEN TRIED.**

If Father Finlay can tell when and where such an industrial order as would be recognised by the Socialist parties of the world as Socialism, has been tried and failed, then we will publicly recant our errors. Wanting such information we, and with us an ever-increasing band of the wage-slaves of capitalism, will continue to prepare for that revolt which shall establish the Socialist Republic.

## **SOCIALISM AND POLITICAL REFORMERS**

Among the many developments of Socialist activity at which the man in the street is apt to be astonished, perhaps

none are more difficult to comprehend at first sight than the implacable hostility shown by the Socialist parties of the world towards the political parties hitherto identified with the agitation for political reform. The uninitiated find it hard to understand why there should be such marked hostility between parties, both of whom place on their programme planks of political reform seemingly almost identical in character; why the Socialist party, which represents the most revolutionary ideas of our day, should seek the downfall of political reform parties with a zest and eagerness which the most bigoted Conservative could never hope to excel. It is observed that wherever the Socialist party is strong, as in Germany, France, or Belgium, it is the Liberal party—the party of mere political reformers—which has been the first to suffer in loss of prestige and membership in exact proportion as Socialism has advanced.

Strange, though the circumstance may seem to the unreflective mind, it is but what might have been expected to result from the appearance upon the political field of a force which like the Socialist party had at once a programme of political reform embracing all and more than the old reform parties had striven for, and a programme embodying demands for economic changes which receive no support from middle-class reformers, though a crying necessity of the times. The development of acute economic problems, side by side with the extension of the franchise—economic problems are, in fact, most acute in the politically freest countries—has borne in upon the minds of the working-class voters the conviction that, except as a means to an end, political freedom is a valueless acquisition for their class. They therefore demand the right to use that political power in the direction of their own class interests, but on making such demand are surprised to see their quondam middle-class leaders the first to denounce them and call upon the State to oppose them. When this point has been reached, as in the countries above named and to a lesser degree in England and America, the thoughtful observer of politics cannot but see that middle-class parties of reform have outlived their usefulness; that whatever political change is still required to establish the democracy in power can be sought for as well under the banner of

the new political force of Socialism as under the old banner of Liberalism, and that this new power by basing its agitation upon the material wants of the producing class gathers to its aid a potential power, in the passion and self-interest of the majority of the nation, which the mere doctrinaires—Liberal, Radical, or Republican—could never hope to rally. Therefore political reform parties decay as the Socialist parties thrive; the latter carry the political demands of the former on their banner side by side with the economic demands of their class, and thus deprived of their sole reason for existence the capitalist reform parties lose their attraction for the multitude—now pressing eagerly onward to the inspiration of a new and better hope.

On the other hand Conservatism is, as a party, secure of an existence as long as the present system lasts. It may be set down as an axiom that there will always be a Conservative party as long as there is tyranny and privilege to conserve. Hence we find the old reform parties shedding their members at both ends—the wealthier section falling over into the ranks of Conservatism, in order to strengthen the only party able to defend their monopolies, and the working class section joining hands with the Socialists as the only party embracing the cause alike of political and industrial liberty. The Socialists are naturally desirous of hastening this process, in order that the political battlefield may be left clear and open for the final struggle between the only two parties possessed of a logical reason for existence—the Conservative party defending the strongholds of monarchy, aristocracy and capitalism; and the Socialist party storming those strongholds in the interest of human freedom. This consummation cannot be realised as long as there exists a political party which, like the Liberals of England and the Continent, and the Home Rule parties of Ireland, attempts to blend the principles of progress and reaction—now blatantly declaring for political freedom, now vigorously defending economic slavery. Therefore the Socialists uniformly seek the discomfiture of Liberalism, regarding it as a buffer between the contending forces of tyranny and freedom; and hence the clear-sighted workmen of the Continent have already reduced that once formidable party to a mere cypher in

politics, and will ere long completely wipe it out of existence.

The fact is not without its lesson to us here in Ireland. We too have so-called parties of reform—Home Rule in all its phases is now but a cloak for the designs of the middle class desirous of making terms with the Imperial Government it pretends to dislike. It is but capitalist Liberalism, speaking with an Irish accent. As such it is the enemy of every effort at working-class emancipation, and if the workers of Ireland as are alive to the interests of their class as are their brethren on the Continent, they will help build up that Socialist Party which is destined to march over the grave of Home Rule Liberalism to the final assault and destruction of the strongholds of oppression.

"IRELAND as distinct from her people, is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for Ireland,' and can yet pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland—aye, brought by Irishmen upon Irishmen and women, without burning to end it, is in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart, no matter how he loves that combination of chemical elements he is pleased to call 'Ireland.'"

JAMES CONNOLLY.



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