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**THE
HISTORICAL
BASIS
OF.....**

An outline map of Ireland is centered on the page. Inside the map, there is a five-pointed star. Within the star is a silhouette of a raised fist, a common symbol for socialism or communism. The text of the title is overlaid on the map.

**SOCIALISM
IN
IRELAND**

BY

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note

THE HISTORICAL BASIS OF SOCIALISM IN IRELAND was originally published by the SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND. The exact date of publication remains uncertain, but more than likely it was issued in 1910 or 1911.

IT was the S.P.I. which opened correspondence with James Connolly on the question of his return to Ireland from America; and when he did return in 1910, he took up the position of National Organiser in that body.

IN its publications the S.P.I. gave the following general position it held: --

THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND HOLDS: --

THAT society, as at present constituted, consists of two classes, the capitalist class, who own all the instruments of production; and the working class who possess nothing but their labour power or capability to work, mentally or physically.

THAT the worker, in order to subsist, must sell his labour power to the capitalist, and as the capitalist to exist as a capitalist must make a profit out of the labour power sold to him, and the lower the wage paid to the worker the greater the profit, consequently THE INTERESTS OF THE TWO CLASSES ARE DIAMETRICALLY OPPOSED.

THAT the remedy for the existing state of society is to be found in the establishment of a SOCIALIST REPUBLIC in which the worker shall be guaranteed the full product of his toil and the advantage of every improvement in the mode of life.

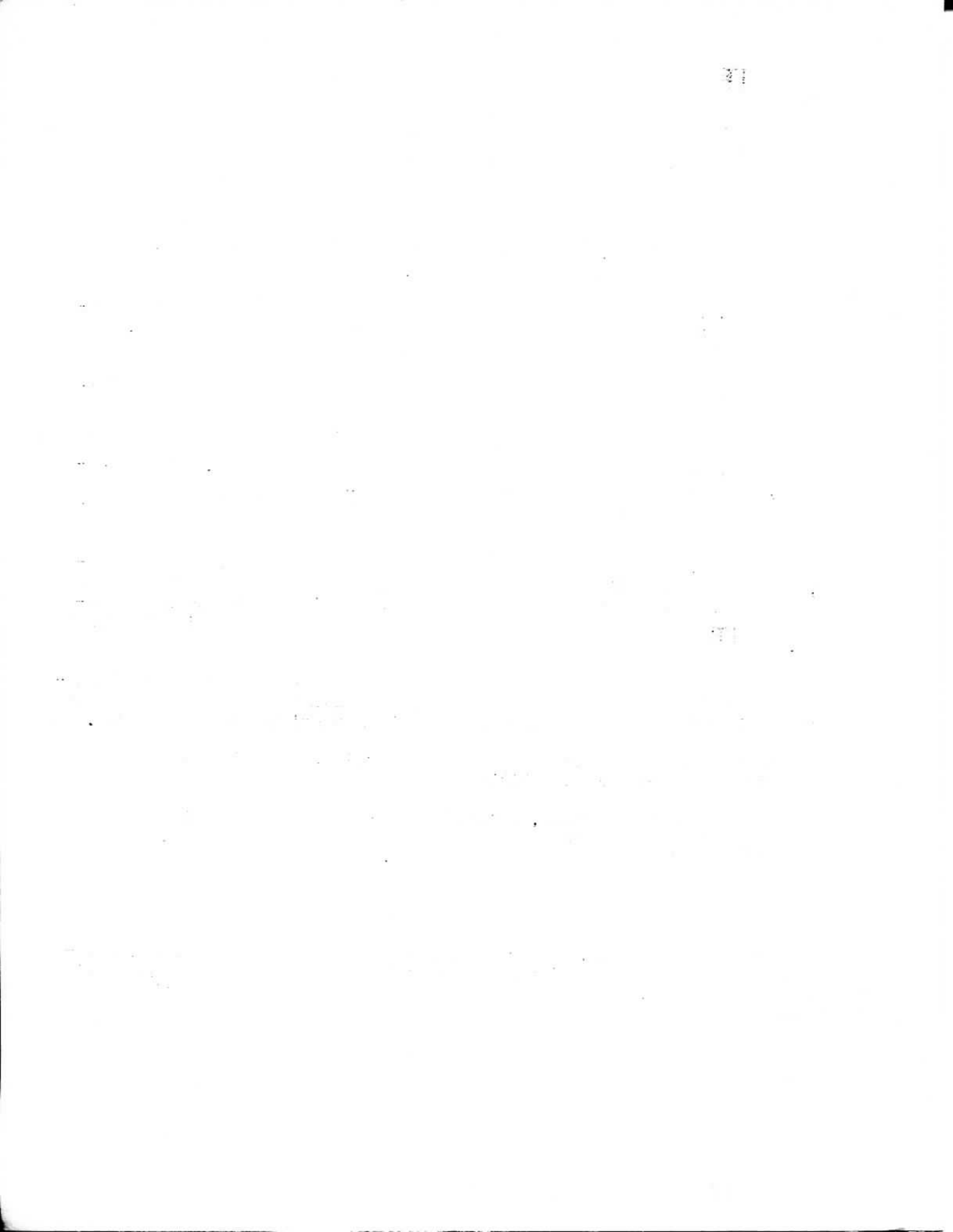
THAT this can only be attained through the thorough organisation of the workers in a thoroughly class-conscious political party as the SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND.

THAT as other political parties, refusing to recognise these principles, are only the expression of the interests of various sections of the capitalist class, there can be no fusion or amalgamation with them.

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"IN every historical epoch, the prevailing mode of economic production and exchange and the social organisation necessarily following from it, form the basis upon which is built up, and from which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch."

KARL MARX.



the historical basis of socialism in ireland

IN Ireland, as in every other country where the instruments of production and distribution are owned and controlled by private individuals, companies, syndicates, or trusts, the class-struggle is apparent.

THE class-struggle means that between the capitalists -- whose unjust appropriation of the wealth produced by the workers, enables them to dictate terms of existence to, and to govern the social opportunities of the workers -- on the one hand, and the wholly propertiless working-class on the other, a never-ending conflict is going on. This war of classes is such that, in its course, it causes untold suffering and ruin to the working-class. But, so mislead and stupified are the majority of wage-workers, by their belief in "the eternal fitness of things," that they are often heard applauding the hazy platitudes of alleged sane people, who tell them "the interests of labour and capital are identical", that "capital and labour must go hand in hand," and so on.

NOW, the employing capitalist who purchases the skill, mental, or physical, of a worker, only does so, for the purpose of obtaining a profit out of the labour-power sold to him -- profit out of a raw material whether that material be wood, silk, pig-iron, labour-power, or any other commodity.

TO ensure the continuance of this flow of profits, a large supply of labour power is required; and while employed or in possession of its profit-producing abilities, the wage-worker receives, for his subsistence and to enable him to reproduce his species, a share of the products he, or his class creates, that is, food, clothing, and shelter.

THESE necessities he does not receive in their use form, but in the money form of wages. This wages system is the storm-centre of the modern class-struggle. The veriest tyro in economics will observe that the master's greatest interest is to obtain labour-power at the lowest possible price; as, at the lower the wages, the greater the profit. On the other hand, low wages to the worker means a low standard of existence. Thus, it will be seen that there cannot be any community of interest, whatever, between them. Added to this the important fact forces itself on one's notice, that if the wage-worker fails to effect a sale of his labour-power, or, in other words, if he fails to find employment he is reduced to a state of abject degradation in a few weeks -- or, in some cases, in a few days. This condition of affairs is necessary to the predominance of the capitalist class, and is buttressed up by the entire power of the modern capitalist state, whether the principles of government therein be autocratic, monarchical, or republican. Then, from time to time, the workers assail the power of the masters, as in the case of a strike, or an unemployed riot, military, police, and detectives are all at the service of the masters. For what? Hypocritically, we are told by the capitalist press, pulpit, and reformer, "to protect private property." But it is not. It is in reality, to subjugate the workers and to perpetuate the system of legal plunder by which it is made possible for a small section of the community to live and riot luxuriously on the produce stolen from the disinherited and wholly propertiless

working class.

FURTHERMORE, owing to the introduction and development of machinery, an increasing number of workers are being displaced, and poverty and misery are, consequently, on the increase. With the increase of poverty, and stress of working-class conditions, comes discontent, and discontent is the forerunner of REVOLUTION. At the mention of this word the smug complacency of the greedy parasites is disturbed, and the mere thought of an organised revolutionary movement throws them into consternation. Accordingly, it is found necessary, from time to time, to be-fool the workers, and to sidetrack their political activity, lest, during a lucid interval, they should remember "that labour is the source of all wealth," and by doing a little thinking on their own account, arrive at the inevitable conclusion "that wealth belongs to the producers thereof." Consequently, the workers are assiduously trained to look for the means of redressing their grievances to pure-and-simple nonsocialist labour bodies. Each and every one of these organisations concedes the right of the capitalist to exploit the workers. The only question with them being -- how much the worker is to be robbed of. The fundamental difference between these productions of topsy-turvydom and a clear-cut, scientifically-based socialist organisation is this:-- We believe and proclaim at all times and in all places, that the capitalist class is a non-producing class; that it is a grave injustice that any individuals should have the power to dictate terms of existence to the great majority of the people, and is a menace to the hardwon civilisation the human race has attained. Furthermore, that the possession by a class, of all the means of production -- and, mines, railways, factories, workshops, etc.-- and their operation for profit, to the detriment of the workers, is unjust, and can be rectified only by making these things the collective property of the entire people -- under whose control they will be operated for use and not for profit. Briefly, we work for the realisation of the SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, as the only constitution of society compatible with the further development of the human race. Having thus outlined the modern class struggle and the means for its abolition, it becomes necessary to trace through history, the causes which produced the effects we witness to-day. All past history is a chronicle of successive class-struggles. Wars and revolutions have not proceeded from the heads of men, or from something not understandable, but have always been outward manifestations of material conditions underlying them. Let us apply this test to the history of Ireland. For our purpose, it will be sufficient to begin with the Milesian Colonisation.

THE Milesians, coming almost direct from the East, the home of the Arts, were, in all probability, possessed of more culture than the other western tribes or nations, and their ancient druidic faith leads us to suppose they possessed some conception of man's duty to man. Yet, they came here in the role of conquerors, and imposed their civilisation on the natives -- just as many hundred years afterwards the Frankish conquerors imposed their yoke on the people of Gaul when they had conquered that country. As such, they were, of course, a ruling class. And it is interesting to remember in this connection, that a revolt of the un-free (Firbolg) clans against the free (Milesian) clans took place in Ireland 2,000 years ago. Production was then entirely for use. Such articles as were exchanged or bartered were, principally, dress or ornaments. Chattel slavery existed. The political development seems to have followed the general course, that is, a number of democratic tribes became united for purposes of offence and defence, under an absolute monarchy. After the introduction of Christianity, the ancient cohesion seems to have been shaken, and a species of clerico-feudalism became the greatest power in the land.

VAST quantities of land passed into the hands of the monks, and the monasteries were ruled by abbots who were very often chiefs sprung from great clans. Education flourished, and the schools of Ireland were thronged by the youth of all nations. Irish navigators carried the fame of their country to distant shores. Some writers have grown so enthusiastic on this period of early Christian Ireland as to style it the golden age of Irish history. However that may be, we are fairly safe in assuming that if the national development proceeded on the lines then laid down, we today would be much more likely to be the citizens of a progressive and enlightened state, than the resident helots of a province of the British Empire. The first interruption occurred in the sixth century, during the reign of King Diarmuid. A murder took place in Tara, the King's Court, and the culprit fled to seek sanctuary with St. Ruadan. The incensed King followed, and on the saint's refusal to deliver up the culprit, Diarmuid broke sanctuary and executed his man.

THE breaking of sanctuary was sacrilegious, and the thunders of the church were turned on Diarmuid; his followers deserted him and he was, ultimately, assassinated. This interesting sidelight is shown for its value in demonstrating the determined and progressive spirit of the ancient Irish. Let it be remembered the great clerical nobles were then the greatest power in the land, and Diarmuid threw down the gauntlet to them fully 900 years before Emperor Charles attempted to break the power of the German feudal nobles and bishops.

AFTER this, there were interminable struggles for the crown, and these quarrels left the country an easy prey to the marauding Danes. Yet, we owe something to the Danes. Their seaport strongholds of Dublin, Cork, and Waterford developed into cities, and the cities, as centres of trade and commerce, have played an important part in material development.

BEFORE proceeding further, it is well, now, to examine the constitution of the Irish clan. The clan lands were held in common. The chief differed vastly from a feudal baron, inasmuch as he was simply an elected leader, and was never regarded as a heaven-sent ruler. He was the guardian of the people's rights, and their military leader in time of war. As long as he proved faithful to his trust he was honoured and obeyed, but if he tried to exceed his authority in disposing of the commonly-owned land, his position at once changed. The correctness of this view is proved by an incident which occurred hundreds of years after the Norman Invasion.

SEVERAL Irish chiefs had repaired to the Court of Elizabeth and accepted titles and tenures of their lands, or more properly speaking, the lands of their clans, from the British monarch. But they reckoned without those sturdy democrats -- the clansmen. When the O'Brien of Thomond returned with a gold chain, some parchments, and the barbarous title of Earl, he found an Irish O'Brien installed chief. It had not occurred to his clan that a degenerate chief could upset their just and equitable system of land-holding. We are informed by Fynes Moryson that one of the charges brought against Hugh O'Neill was that, standing on the stone of Tulloghoge, he accepted a white wand, the symbol of chieftancy, and swore to preserve inviolate all the ancient former rights and privileges of his clan. Conspicuous among such rights and privileges was the guardianship of the commonly-owned lands.

AT the period of the Norman Invasion the invaders sought to carve out with their swords feudal seignories for themselves, making the land private property, and to reduce the freedom-loving Irish to serfs. The essentially feudalistic Normans, with

their visions of castle-fortresses, fiefs, tolls, villiage, vassalage, and all the rest of it, now found themselves opposed by men who, with their simple fare, their rude arms, and their stern indomitable belief in the right of the people to their land, were to lay many knight and squire low, ere the hateful system of the private ownership of the means of production should be thrust on them.

THESE men were not chiefs or bards, or Brehons, but the Irish clansmen -- fore-bearers of the modern Irish proletariat. The great guiding principle of common ownership of the land was the material reason for the incessant struggle maintained by the Irish clans against the English aggressors from 1171 to 1608, and has continued, though in other forms, down to our own day. For, be it remembered, the expatriated Irishman has never yet waived his right to the land.

WHEN finally, the British system of landlordism was established, the Irish free-man was divorced from the land and brought to the level of a peasant. The flight of O'Neill and O'Donnell, the plantation of Ulster, the expatriation of the native Irish, the rise of the Anglo-Irish aristocracy, and the going over to the British, or becoming "loyal" of a section of the old Irish, in order to obtain the coward's permit to grow rich at the expense of their fellows, are all historical events of importance directly traceable to this change. Consequently on this change also, the affairs of the two countries, England and Ireland, became closely interwoven, and to understand fully the deductions of this paper, it becomes necessary to examine the development of the British middle-class.

AT this period the last traces of feudalism were disappearing in England; and on the rise of the great middle-class, a change in governmental institutions became necessary. The discovery of America greatly strengthened the power of the rising bourgeoisie. New trade routes to the Indies had followed Vasco de Gama's rounding of the Cape. No longer were the great mercantile cities of Genoa and Venice the centres of distribution for the products of the East. The dominance of the markets of the world was slowly but surely changing to London.

OWING to her peculiar geographical position, and the adventurous exploits of her mariners, the wealth and teeming products of the new world began to pour into England. The British middle class now perceived that, in order to ensure their development, it was imperative they should dominate the power of the State. These inarticulate promptings found expression in the republican teachings of Pym, Hampden, and others. Action came later in the overthrow of absolutism in the person of Charles I, and the ultimate reduction of the aristocratic cavaliers. As in every other great historical manifestation, this movement had its ebb as well as its flow; and the ebb may be attributed to the side-tracking of the movement by Cromwell, and his assumption of almost all the prerogatives of a King, while nominally styling himself Protector of the Commonwealth. This action of Cromwell's made possible by a wave of religious fanaticism, had the effect of paving the way for the British reactionaries to effect the restoration of the monarchy. But the development was only temporarily checked, and in 1688 the English middle class Revolution became an accomplished fact.

DURING this period how fared the expropriated Irish. On the one hand, were the broken clans sunk in misery and hungering for a return to earlier conditions? On the other, were the sons and grandsons of the chiefs proud in their lineage, and scornful of the greedy hordes of English planters who had over-run the country and grabbed the land. These dispossessed classes constituted the old Irish party.

THERE was, of course, also the new Irish party. These were the Anglo-Irish descendants of the Norman invaders, constantly looking at the English kings and governments for protection, and always protesting their cringing loyalty and seeking only reforms. They were the fitting prototypes of the "respectable constitutional nationalist," the "Cawstle Cawtholic," and the lick-spittle shoneen of today -- men on whose lips patriotism means compromise, and freedom high dividends.

AT length the exactions and oppression of the ruling class became unbearable. Then the glorious spirit of liberty entered the minds of the oppressed. Then the brave Irish spirit, pulsating with revolutionary ardour, strong in the justice of its cause, fearless in the advocacy of its rights asserted itself. The result was the insurrection of 1641. This was a union of the new Irish with the old Irish. The scientific truth that every organism contains in its inception the germs of its decay could not receive a greater exemplification than this Confederation. Over its dissensions and broils it is not necessary to linger. It perished of its own ineptitude, and again the Irish plebians passed through a wilderness of suffering to an abyss of despair. The Cromwellian settlement followed, and new adventurers displaced both old and new Irish. The lower classes were swollen by an increment from above -- just as, at the present day the proletariat is being augmented continually by members of the middle class, who are crushed out by the competition among themselves.

MEANWHILE the English middle class were daily strengthening themselves. When, finally, they kicked out the miserable James II, the Irish espoused his cause, believing that in the event of his success the then exploiting class -- the now planters -- would be dispossessed, and that the land would revert to themselves.

AFTER the Siege of Limerick began the real agonies of the people. The infamous enactments against the Catholics degraded and brutalised the peasantry, and the proscription of education left a mark on the national character which, even today, has not been eliminated. Yet the economic development of the Irish middle class proceeded. Industry made great strides. The speeches and writings of Swift, Lucas, and Molyneux gave a great impetus to Irish manufacture. There now commenced a struggle between the exploiting (British) middle class and would-be exploiting Irish middle class. William III had, in duty to his English subjects, almost killed the woollen industry; for the British, anxious to attain industrial supremacy, would not brook the competition of the Irish. Henceforward, the struggle, as between English and Irish assumes a different aspect.

HERE we have a struggle between two classes differing racially and politically, but absolutely united on the one point -- namely, in their firm belief that God sent them into the world to exploit the working class. The more highly developed British capitalist class became extremely intolerant in their antagonism to the embryo Irish capitalist class, and as they had found freedom to exploit in the capture of political power, they recognised in the efforts of the Irish middle class the same aspirations as had actuated themselves in their struggle. Furthermore, they were conscious that dangerous industrial competitors at their very doors would be ruinous to themselves. Accordingly, to the old spirit of racial animosity is joined the modern spirit of competition for profits; the workers being used in the struggle much the same as pawns in a game of chess.

THE efforts of the Irish middle class culminated in the volunteer movement of 1782, by which the concession of legislative independence was wrung from the British

Government. Having this far traced the rise of the modern Irish capitalist class, it becomes necessary to consider the position of that class by whose expenditure of blood, toil, and labour, the rise of the middle class was made possible.

THE Irish middle class could not have attained such prominence unless with the aid of the subject working class. This working class consisted of two sections. The most powerful, perhaps, certainly the most progressive, were the working class Protestants and Presbyterians of the North. They had the advantage of education, of a sort, and by virtue of their status as a component part of the conquering race were possessed, although in a limited degree, of the franchise.

THE other section was the Catholic Peasants, artisans, and labourers. These were denied by law the right to education, their religion was proscribed and their race condemned. They were crushed almost out of existence by the exactions of their landlords, and by the extortions of tithes for the upkeep of a clergy whose teachings they did not accept. Their disabilities were so numerous as to be overwhelming; hence they resorted frequently to the only means left to them of arranging their wrongs -- namely, force.

THE country became honeycombed with secret societies, called "Whiteboys", etc. John Mitchell, who is, probably the most reliable historian who deals with this period (1740-1770), says "The instinct or meaning of all these organisations is the instinct of resistance to legal oppression. All the laws were not made for, but against the mass of the people. The proscribed race saw only enemies on the bench and in the jury-box." History repeats itself. Today all capitalistic justice is dispensed with the object of protecting the interests of the exploiting or ruling class. The external appearance of oppression is veiled by legal forms. Rend these forms, and it stands revealed in all its hideous nakedness.

A few other extracts from Mitchell will give us a clear conception of this eighteenth-century class struggle; - "The immediate cause of the first breaking out of these disorders was that many landlords in Munster began to enclose commons, on which, up to that time, their rackrented tenants had enjoyed the rights of commonage -- in Waterford, Cork, and Tipperary, angry crowds assembled and tore down the enclosures." Large bodies of troops were sent to the seats of the disturbances, and many brutal executions took place; these in their turn were followed by fierce reprisals on the part of the peasantry. On the whole the Whiteboy movement was on a par with the revolts of the poor in other European countries in earlier times; such as the risings in England headed by John Ball and Wat Tyler; the insurrection of the "Jacquerie" in France, and the peasants in Germany. But not alone were the expropriated Catholics of the South in revolt, the bulk of the Northern Protestants and Presbyterians were also approaching the same condition.

IF the South had its Whiteboys, the North had its Oakboys and Hearts of Steel. Of the factors which produced them two at least were always fertile in creating revolutionary feeling. These two factors were the extortions of the land-lords and the exactions of the clergy. But added to these was a newer and more powerful factor. This, the historian tells us, was "the alleged injustice of the employers of manufacturing labour."

IT is well to remember that the majority of the descendants of the Colonists or Planters in Ulster were skilled workers, and what may be described as home industry had been brought to a high state of development among them. They, as well as the

old Irish, produced all the necessaries their condition of life required, in their own homes. They grow their flax, cured it, and manufactured it into articles of dress. They possessed their own cattle and sheep; tanned their leather; carded their wool; were their own butchers, bakers, weavers, tailors, etc. When some grew richer than others, or, to be more correct, with the arising of the middle class and the gradual concentration of capital in fewer hands, the Northern Protestants and Dissenters were, as well as their brother-Catholics, slowly but surely dispossessed; that is being deprived of the individual ownership of the means of production, they were rendered dependent on their labour power -- and became wage slaves. So when the enterprising capitalist class opened mills all the essentials were to hand -- raw material, the proper kind of labour, and that glorious adjunct of capitalist civilisation, a labour market, where the workers bid against one another, each endeavouring to undercut the other for the right to work, or to be exploited. One more quotation from Mitchell proves the truth of this: -- "The troubles in Ulster were produced by hardships and oppression. The Presbyterians in the North were now, as well as the Catholics, suffering, not only from the Test Act and the Tithes, but also from the difficulty of earning an honest livelihood."

Of course the rising middle class were "friends of the poor," and by advocating reforms which were calculated to benefit the aforesaid poor they secured the support of the vast majority of the people. Opposed to these were the Government officials and "hangers-on", the agents of the jealous English bourgeoisie, who saw that the Irish were developing into dangerous industrial competitors, and that they must be overthrown if their own commercial supremacy was to be maintained. Also, against the progressive forces were arrayed the aristocratic boodlers, title-truckers, and place-hunters, and these guileless exponents of the policy of laissez faire, the High Church clergy.

THE American Revolution gave considerable encouragement to the progressive movement, and many who hesitated before now boldly took their places. Of course, compromising politicians came to the surface, like bubbles on a river, but the great moving force, strong, vigorous, and overwhelming, was the democracy. Industry developed with great rapidity, and complaints were heard from various parts of England of the injury done to British trade. Some repressive measures were passed by the British Parliament, and its Irish poodle in College Green failed to offer any effective resistance. This caused a wave of popular indignation. The Volunteers paraded with cards hung on the mouths of their cannon bearing the legend: -- "Free Trade or else ---". The rival Henrys -- Flood and Grattan -- nearly smothered the nation with eloquence. Even the more intelligent section of the landlords, foreseeing the material advantages likely to accrue to them became "patriotic", and so Legislative Independence was won.

BUT how fared the democracy? They found their condition unimproved. True, there was a momentary prosperity for the shop-keeping class, but the general body of the people found themselves in as bad, if not in a worse condition, under the Independent Legislature than they had been under the old régime. Matters stood thus at the time of the formation of the Society of United Irishmen.

IN the meantime, however, a new element had arisen. This was the Orange Society. The establishment of this society was characteristic of the Irish reactionaries. They recognised that if the two great sections of the Irish democracy united for the attainment of their ultimate aim, that is, economic freedom, it would sound the death-knell of parasitism in Ireland. They observed with horror the Protestant

Volunteers demanding equal political rights for their Catholic fellow-countrymen. They knew that the material interests of the Catholic peasant and the Protestant artisan lay, and would be sought, in the same direction. Hence "Divide and conquer!" The flames of sectarian animosity were raised in the minds of the unthinking. The ghoulis monster of religious bigotry was unchained. Cruel depredations were perpetrated by the Orangemen on their unfortunate fellow-countrymen, particularly in the County of Armagh, where thousands of Catholic peasants were driven from their homes. A Catholic Association of equal ferocity now came into being, and deeds of stern and bloody vengeance were committed. So effectual was the method employed by the kid-glove scoundrels who brought this society into being with the object of keeping the workers disunited, that even now, after the lapse of one hundred and twenty years, we are frequently entertained with the delectable spectacle of underpaid and poorly-fed workingmen engaged in the idiotic occupation of battering each other's heads for the glory of God and the honour of their respective religions.

HOWEVER, all the Protestants did not become Orangemen; and in order to try and unite all creeds in an effort to improve the conditions of life in their common country, a body of the more advanced thinkers founded the Society of United Irishmen. At first, we are told, it was purely a Reform Society, but doubtless catching the spirit of '89 they became aware that when the State waxes servile, Revolution is not alone desirable, but unavoidable. The founder and leading propagandist of the society was Theobald Wolfe Tone. He is the first great Irish revolutionist. How clear he was in determining the means to realise his ideal (an Irish Republic) is exemplified in his writings, particularly in a passage which has been chosen as the maxim of the Socialist Party of Ireland, to wit: -- "Our Independence must be had at all hazards. If the men of property will not help us they must fall; we can support ourselves by that numerous and respectable class -- the men of no property." Apart from his heroic self-sacrifice and courageous efforts in the cause of political freedom, this one opinion, this clear-cut recognition of the great truth that the men of no property, the expropriated workers, the ever-faithful democracy who have nothing to lose but their chains, are the great motive power for progress, proves Wolfe Tone to have been not alone a patriot and a hero, but a man who saw beyond the Cimmerian darkness of conventional thought, and entitles him to have his memory enshrined in the minds of the militant proletariat.

OF the three great causes which lead to the Insurrection of 1798, the most powerful was the poverty of the vast majority of the people. The other two causes were the wretched servility of the so-called Irish Parliament, and the spread of revolutionary thought consequent on the great French Revolution. As all know, the Insurrection was drowned in blood. Failure is generally looked upon with contempt, yet in some cases failure even is sublime. To seek to palliate or excuse the failure of '98 would be nothing short of an insult to the memory of those who died "rightly struggling to be free."

THE opening years of the nineteenth century witnessed the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, and the gallant but ill-starred attempt of Robert Emmet to accomplish what the United Irishmen had failed to achieve. With the opening of the nineteenth century, too, was witnessed the growth and development of that power, the rule of which was to become more fiercely oppressive on the masses of the Irish people than had ever been that of foreign king, or hireling plunderers, namely, Capitalism. The old system of industrial production had undergone a complete change; the independent producer owning his own tools, working when he liked, and taking holidays when he wished, was rapidly disappearing before the concentrat-

tion of capital and the highly developed system of factory production. The vast bulk of the people, however, were dependent on agriculture, and the peasant -- always slow to move -- remained like a mole in his potato patch.

IT has been shown that the Irish middle class had failed in their immediate object -- the capture and operation of political power in their own interest -- but they were not slow to perceive other sources of income. Were there not Judgeships, K.C.-ships, and thousands of well-paid sinecures in the gift of the Government? Of course, as the law stood, no Catholic could hold any of these delightful jobs, and the first step on the road to the Mecca of respectability, beloved of the bourgeois heart, was Catholic Emancipation. The support of the clergy was, of course, certain; the democracy was to be used according to the old familiar rule, and a capable exponent of middle class aspirations was found in the person of Daniel O'Connell. Vast meetings were held, and fulsome loyalty to the throne and persons of British monarchs asseverated when occasion served. At this point let us examine the cause which brought about this change.

HITHERTO the Catholic bourgeoisie had been disloyal: now they were protesting loyalty with might and main. Such an astonishing change of front at first sight appears inexplicable, and yet a few simple words explain it. It had been found that loyalty paid.

BUT the democracy was not loyal; they had to be cajoled. They were overwhelmed with an avalanche of sunburstry, flag wagging, and mind-befogging oratory, and finally hypnotised into the belief that they were taking part in a great national and religious movement. The sordidness of the material basis of the agitation was sedulously hidden from them, and continually dinned into their minds were the characteristically lawyer-like maxims -- "Liberty's not worth the shedding of a single drop of blood," "Everything will come right in the end," "You are never so strong as when you appear weak," and so on ad nauseam.

WELL, Catholic Emancipation was accomplished by the grace of the British middle class, for with their usual astuteness they recognised that by conciliating their erstwhile rivals they would be serving their own ends and saving themselves trouble in the future. The exploiting classes of both nations were now drawn closer together than ever before, and the Catholic Hierarchy were bound by stronger ties to the British Government. But let us see how fared the peasant labourer and the artisan.

WHEN the shouting was over what proportion of the spoils remained for the rank and file? Spoils, indeed; sure, couldn't they return to their potatoes and skimmed milk, their mud cabins and misery. Hadn't they emancipated Catholic Landlords to whom they could pay their rackrents, and emancipated Catholic bailiffs and policemen to evict them if they didn't. If they were inclined to be rebellious weren't Catholic judges to try them, Catholic hangmen to execute them, and glory of glories, Catholic coroners to prove to everyone's satisfaction that their spinal columns were properly dislocated, -- and what more could the unreasonable scoundrels require. But enough. There is no movement of this kind engineered by the respectable classes which is not a mere red herring drawn before the proletariat, with the object of distracting his attention from the real issues at stake. Nothing proves this truth more than the position of the worker at the close of the struggle; whether it is lost or won he is the greatest sufferer or the least gainer.

ON the ensuing Repeal movement it is not necessary for us to linger. The terrible and unexampled famine of '45, '46, and '47 now claims our attention. If this famine had been the result of an unforeseen and unavoidable calamity there would be little to say with reference to it. But this was far from being the case. So far back as 1790 Dr. Drennan of Belfast had called attention to the danger of the failure of the potato crop, and up to the last day of his life never ceased to denounce reliance on the potato, or, as he styled it, "the lazy root." But his advice passed unheeded; and the over-burdened peasantry, owing to their poverty, were forced to continue to use it as their staple article of food. Yet even in the darkest and most dismal of the famine years -- '47 -- sufficient food was produced in the country to feed more than the entire population. Wheat and barley, cattle and sheep were exported just as if there was no one dying of hunger in the land. Could there be amore damning indictment of the atrocious system of private ownership in the means of production!

AND was there no one to arouse the people from their agonising lethargy? Yes; one brave man -- James Fintan Lalor -- in the "Irish Felon" boldly sent forth the message that the land and all that came therefrom was the common heritage of all, and advocated the great guiding principles of collectivism as he understood them. In explaining his principles and formulating his policy, Lalor wrote:-- "Not to repeal the Union then, but the conquest -- not to disturb or dismantle the Empire, but to abolish it forever -- not to fall back on '82, but to act up to '48 -- not to resume or restore an old constitution, but found a new nation and raise up a free people, and strong as well as free, and secure as well as strong, based on a peasantry rooted like rocks in the soil of the land -- this is my object as I hope it is yours; and this, you may be assured, is the easier as it is the nobler and more pressing enterprise." ... "The principle I state, and mean to stand upon, is this, that the entire ownership of Ireland moral and material, up to the sun and down to the centre, is vested of right in the people of Ireland; that they and none but they are the landowners and law-makers of this island. In other if not plainer words, I hold and maintain that the entire soil of a country belongs of right to the entire people of that country and is the rightful property not of any one class, but of the nation at large.... The rights of property may be pleaded, no one has a higher respect for the real rights of property than I have; but I do not class among them the robbers' right, by which the lands of this country are now held in fee from the British Crown. I acknowledge no right of property in a small class which goes to abrogate the rights of a numerous people."

IN vain! The paper was suppressed, and he imprisoned. The light of reason failed to penetrate to minds darkened by cant. In vain the gallant Mitchell strove to rouse his countrymen to action. In vain the bright band of Young Irelanders braved the gibbet, the dungeon, or the horrors of the chain-gang. Forty years of O'Connellism had accomplished its manhood-killing mission. On his fireless hearth the broken-spirited, famine-stricken slave dropped his head and died. The famine passed and left a country strewn with corpses. Two millions of the Irish democracy lay dead. Had these two millions the courage to demand their own, they could at least have died like men instead of crawling like unspirited worms to their famine graves.

THE great exodus followed, and the world has since witnessed the saddening spectacle of a people flying from a fair and bountiful country to the grime and smoke of the factory-hells of England and America. Irish "Patriot" leaders became British Imperialist Politicians. The land left vacant by the exiles and the dead was turned into grazing ranches. The remnant of the Irish democracy are being steadily

forced into the towns and cities, there to add to the pressure on the already overstocked labour market. Save the one brief flash of the old revolutionary spirit in '65, there has not been any effort to break the chain. The socialistic poetry of John Boyle O'Reilly and J.F. O'Donnell show us that there were men in the Fenian movement who clearly saw that it was through the proletariat alone, by the efforts and sacrifices of those who have nothing to lose but their chains, that the revolution could be brought to a successful issue.

THE great land agitation, coupled with the demand for Home Rule, is the next event of importance. By means of the land agitation the farmers, aided by the power of the workers, industrial and agricultural, won many concessions from the landlord, or aristocratic class. But here again middle class idiosyncrasy has manifested itself, for in many parts of the country the capitalistic farmers bitterly oppose the claims of the labourers for better conditions, thus again demonstrating that the workers are only used as catspaws in the interest of the "better class."

THE Home Rule movement has always been of a middle class character, and, save at election times, its leading lights have never expressed anything but contempt for the aspirations of the workers. But this movement has not practically spent its force, and many of its members and adherents are as conservative as the Conservatives themselves. There are of course other agencies at work, such as the efforts of the Gaelic League to popularise our native language and customs. Commendable as these efforts are, would it not be advisable to look a little deeper into the economic condition of the workers.

THREE-FIFTHS of the Irish people are engaged in a struggle for existence so keen and bitter that it demands all their energies and faculties to enable them to exist, and they have neither time nor opportunity to study. It will be held, of course, that the study of the language will render those who engage in it more thoughtful and enlightened. It may be so. Yet even those nations which have preserved their own languages have not escaped the obscenities of the low music-hall, or the contamination of the sensational and rubbishy alleged literature, which is devoured by so many of our countrymen and women. Overworked and illpaid wage-slaves crave for unnatural and irrational amusement because their conditions of life are unnatural and irrational. This fact brings us back to economic basis. With free access to the tools requisite for the production of the necessities of life, man's whole moral, political, and intellectual status will change, as has happened even with the change in tools themselves as witnessed by the transformation produced in the entire social fabric by the vast development of machinery due to the discovery of steam-power, etc.

ANOTHER phase of the present Irish movement is the industrial revival. By many earnest people it is held that if a grand capitalistic development took place in Ireland we would stem the tide of emigration, produce all we require for home consumption, protect ourselves against foreign competition, have employment for all, and become economically free; and various measures are advocated to assist in bringing about this development, with the result that much time is wasted and no real good accrues to the great body of the people, for the entire thing is a fallacy.

LET us suppose a higher state of capitalistic development here in Ireland. What would be the first result? A great influx of English, Scotch, Germans, and others. But it will be asked, why should this be so. Well, capitalism presupposes wage-labour. Wage-labour means labour-power purchased to be used in the production of

commodities. This labour-power itself is a commodity, and like other commodities its price is regulated by the law of supply and demand. Consequently, wherever capitalists require labour-power their wages will run high so long as there is a bare sufficiency of labour-power on the market. But the high wages attract workers from all parts, and very often workers whose standard of existence is lower than the natives. The labour market becomes glutted, and unemployment results. The industrial competition forces the capitalist to exploit his workers to the utmost, and the class struggle is intensified.

TO illustrate this still further let us examine the position of the wage-earner with regard to what he calls his native land. Well, under capitalism the wage-earner has no country. Irish, English, Germans, Bohemians, Scandinavians, Canadians, Japanese, etc., throng to the United States in the hope of obtaining better conditions than exist in the countries of their nativity. Russians, Hungarians, Poles, and others rush to Germany, France, etc., all propelled by the same great force. A short time ago it was comparatively rare to meet a workingman who had been in "foreign parts"; now you meet such on all sides. To put an end to this senseless rushing about from country to country, and the consequent misery and sorrow it causes to women and children, is one of the objects of Socialism. To produce all we require for home consumption and to cease at that and avoid over-production is impossible under capitalistic conditions. The genesis of capitalism is production for profit -- the very opposite of production for use, so here we have a contradiction. Does the capitalist employ labour and carry on his business for the purpose of doing a service to mankind? By no means; his object is to produce commodities as cheaply as possible and sell them at as high a price as possible. Were it otherwise with him he would soon find himself in the Bankruptcy Court. Again, we produce plenty of beef and mutton in Ireland and export it. Yet the vast majority of the working class have to content themselves with American Bacon. Why? Because the capitalists, who control the cattle trade bring their cattle to the places where they will procure the highest profit. To complete the picture, the Chicago pork-merchant, by the greater power his wealth gives him, can pay freightage and be content with a small profit on his alleged pig when he sells it here, although all the time there will be people in Chicago starving.

THE contradictions and anomalies of the capitalist system are endless, and those who wish to give it a new lease of life certainly do not understand its real character, which is that of planless production and anarchical competition. So we say to the industrial revivalist: -- If what you are after is peace and plenty for all, if what you want is production for use, work with us for the Socialist Republic. Earth, air, and water teem with innumerable treasures which can be utilised for all. Every invention, every discovery in science, brings Socialism nearer. Do you want incentive to effort? Are you truly patriotic? If so, work with us to save the race.

WE have tried to trace through history the rise of the modern Irish proletariat. Where formerly there were various reasons, sentimental, political, or religious, which bound sections of the masses to their masters, there is now none. Capitalism has drawn the hard and fast line of demarcation. Every tie has been broken. On one side stand the masters, on the other the wage-slaves. There is no more community of interest between them than there is between the footpad and his victim. One lives on the produce stolen from the other. The workers as they gradually become class-conscious recognise this and demand the full product of their toil, but this demand is puerile unless expressed by means of a vigorous revolutionary organisation.

TO supply this need the Irish Socialist Party has come into being. There can be no resting, no peace, until the goal is won. Into the party there must enter neither fraud nor carpetbagger. It shall be the union of the thinker and the worker. All over the world, wherever a brave heart beats for freedom, or a strong brain grows warm in its hatred of oppression, there is a Socialist thought guiding, cheering, and animating the poor, the weak, and the oppressed to the heritage of the proletariat -- The Socialist Republic. Will the Irish worker alone stand nerveless and apathetic while his brothers in every clime are shaking the earth with their myriad feet. While the psalm of triumphant gladness is moving the revolutionary working class to the accomplishment of the greatest conquest ever attempted, shall ~~his~~ alone be the coward's wail? No! a thousand times no! the race has endured so much and is still young and virile must not, cannot sink into the oblivion of those who were not fit to witness the glorious sunlight of perfect freedom.

LET the Irish workers remember the sad fate of the forefathers who were stricken in the famine years. Let them hearken to the revolutionary teaching while they are yet an effective force. Every day sees some of their fellows struck down by accidents due to the lack of ordinary precautions, or by premature decay brought on by unhealthy conditions of toil. These fallen workers are as surely struck down by capitalist greed as ever was a soldier on the battle-field. Let us resolve each and all to do men's parts in bringing about the overthrow of the existing social slavery. No tinkering, no one-thing-at-a-time style will do. We are under no delusion as to the value of palliatives so-called. We know that every concession won from the capitalist class, no matter how beautiful it may be theoretically, is in practice only a shadow of what it ought to be. For, so long as the capitalist class hold the political power, so long will they, by the exercise of their administrative power, be able to nullify whatever good effects such palliatives, concessions, or reforms might have. Hence the whole force of the workers must be concentrated for the capture of political power.

THE Socialist movement supplies the education requisite for him who would be free. Read the literature. Join the Socialist phalanx. You cannot be fooled, cajoled, or misled by scheming politicians, but strong in the justice of your cause, and invincible in the impregnability of your position, you will become a force making for the overthrow of the last stronghold of tyranny and the bringing about of the free society of the future.

speed the day

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