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## CONTENTS.

Irish Bolsheviks and The International. By Cathal O'Shannon	Page 121
International Notes	" 123
Marx, The Great Unread. By M. W. Robieson	" 124
Connolly's Ideal for Limerick	" 125
Notes and Comments	" 126

Leader: Bread and Peace	Page 127
Labour in Ireland	" 128
Irish Automobile Drivers	" 129
Dublin Cafe Scandal	" 129
Hail, Russia!	" 132

# Irish Bolsheviks and the International

By CATHAL O'SHANNON.

### The Irish Mission.

The Irish Labour and Socialist movement is making strenuous efforts to secure support and a good hearing for Irish claims in the International and at the forthcoming International Socialist Conference. Another step in this direction was taken the week before last, when delegations from the National Executive of the Irish Trades Union Congress and Labour Party and the Socialist Party of Ireland crossed to England and interviewed the continental leaders of Socialism who were attending the British Labour Party's Conference at Nottingham. On the delegations the National Executive was represented by William O'Brien, Chairman; and D. R. Campbell, Treasurer; and the Socialist Party of Ireland by the present writer. Our mission was to enlist the support of the Russians and the French and the good services of the International Bureau in securing facilities for the separate representation of Ireland as a distinct unit in the International, to put and explain Ireland's position and Ireland's claims to our continental comrades, and to ask their assistance in propoganda abroad. We carried credentials from our respective Parties and, in addition, the S.P.I. charged us with the pleasant and welcome duty of presenting to the Russian plenipotentiary an address of congratulation to the revolutionary Bolshevik Government and the Irish memorandum and statement of claims to the Bureau and its national sections.

Except for the holding up for a few minutes of the Chairman of the National Executive by the aliens officer at Holyhead, the crossing was without incident. All three met in London on Sunday night, arranged our programme and, through the good offices of Bob Williams, of the Transport Federation, secured an early appointment on Monday with Maxim Litvinoff, first plenipotentiary of the first Socialist Republic.

### The Revolutionary Ambassador.

Litvinoff is a very pleasant, intellectual-looking Russian, apparently not much more than forty, and talks with ease

and fluency on all kinds of matters. He received us very cordially, said he was glad to welcome the delegates of the Irish working class in the name of the Revolutionary People's Government and, when the S.P.I. address was presented to him, entered into an animated conversation on Irish, Russian, and International affairs. The Irish people, he agreed, were entitled to the same rights and the same free and complete self-determination as other peoples, and in the International they would have all the help it was in the power of his people and government to give. The Irish claim would have Russian backing in an International Socialist Conference, although the Bolshevik view was that the time for such a Conference had passed and the new situation created by the Bolshevik Revolution had made it less necessary than before the Revolution. He agreed that the British Convention now sitting in Ireland did not represent the people and would not be taken as the practical application of the principle of self-determination; and when we expressed the gratitude of Ireland for Trotsky's declarations in that respect he discussed eagerly the composition and limitations of the Convention and asked many pointed questions on the strength, aims, progress and war attitude of the Irish labour movement, the Sinn Fein movement, the relations between the two movements, and appeared very much interested in the agricultural workers and expressed his pleasure that their organisation is now being taken up by the Irish Transport and other Unions.

### The Bolsheviks and Connolly.

It was with surprise that we learned how extensive and accurate is Litvinoff's knowledge of Ireland. He conversed easily on most aspects of the Irish question, and showed that in Russia, especially among the Bolsheviks, keen interest is taken in Irish movements. The big Dublin fight of 1913-14, the Irish Citizen Army, the Irish Volunteers, the Insurrection of Easter Week and the subsequent events, all seem to have made a deep impression on the Russian

minds. It was a great pleasure for us to hear him speak of James Connolly, and as he spoke I thought how Connolly's heart would have rejoiced at the success of the Bolsheviks, and how he would have handled the new situation. In Russia, Litvinoff told us, they had heard of Connolly and his work years ago, even before 1913. Lenin, he added, had read Connolly's book on "Labour in Irish History," had said Connolly must be a remarkable man and expressed a wish to know more about him. It was a tribute from a successful social revolutionist to a social revolutionist who had fallen in the fight. Again Litvinoff expressed his pleasure and interest in the Irish workers, and concluded: "The time for conferences and manifestoes is passed, the time for revolutions is come." We parted with heartily expressed hopes of mutual success in our respective aims.

The Revolutionary Plenipotentiary is a very busy man, and all day long an endless stream of visitors passes through his chambers. In his diplomatic duties he is assisted by a large staff, and amongst those present during our stay we noticed an old friend, Fineberg of the B.S.P. Attached to the embassy is a refugees' department, and this seems as busy as the embassy itself.

### The Man from Stockholm.

Camille Huysmans, the Secretary of the International Bureau since its foundation in 1900, was our next victim. He came straight from Stockholm, and we had to follow him to Nottingham on Tuesday. On the way we met Renaudel, the successor of Jaures in the editorial chair of "L'Humanite" and leader of the "majority" Socialists in France. He showed considerable interest in our mission, but as he had had a bad crossing we did not press our views upon him. He is a typical Frenchman with all the animation of his race, and as we talked at some junction or other I noted that our lively little group was an object of wondering interest to the stolid English delegates, who knew none of us. A Belgian captain in uniform accompanied his French comrade. But it was better game than a Majoritaire we were after.

Shortly after his arrival we met Huysman. He is tall and square of frame, well-groomed, and polished, the perfect secretary. France and Britain had not gone to Stockholm, but Stockholm had come to the Entente, for Huysmans is the incarnation of the International, and in spite of his unconcealed Belgium sympathies he has been one of the moving spirits of the Stockholm Conference, has held the balance even between contesting factions and with great self-restraint and against great odds has carried out the last injunction of Jaures to be true to, and carry on the work of, the International.

### Ireland and the International.

Huysmans told us how the Irish Labour Party's documents had reached him in Stockholm and how he had taken the matter up with certain national sections of the Bureau. He assured us that it would give him great pleasure to present all the information and knowledge of Ireland we could furnish at the disposal of the International. He recollected the affiliation of the Irish Socialist Republican Party at the Paris Congress in 1900, and explained the changes in the constitution of the International since that date. As an official of the Bureau he was compelled, as a matter of course, to take no side in differences that might arise within the International, but Ireland would have all the help he could give. We found that he was extremely well-informed upon Irish affairs. He realised, he said, the position and the claims of the Irish people, their intense nationalism and the causes of it. He thought he could realise that better than the English could because he knew something of our culture and civilisation, and a Belgian could not fail to realise the bearing these have on affairs. We must have lost heavily, he thought, in leadership after Easter Week, and he could readily understand that since Easter there should be a very widespread desire for organisation amongst the Irish workers. After a very satisfactory interview we parted with mutual expressions of good will, we for the International and Huysmans for Ireland.

### International Solidarity.

On Tuesday night the Labour Party had arranged a special reception for the continental delegates. The largest hall in Nottingham was packed and the meeting was in reality a demonstration of faith in the Socialist International. The "Red Flag" was sung lustily and the prevailing notes were of peace, of antagonism to war and of the International Conference. The pro-Entente speakers—Vandervelde, of Belgium, for instance—were listened to with respect, but all the enthusiasm was reserved for the Internationalists sans peur et sans reproche, like MacDonald, Litvinoff, etc. Of this more anon.

### The Grandson of Karl Marx.

It was feared that Longuet would not be able to come, and deep was the disappointment of the crowd when on Tuesday night his place was seen to be vacant. When the rebel elements had opened the ball with the lusty singing of "The Red Flag" and had cheered to the echo for the International for Peace, and for Russia, the continentals spoke. In the middle of Renaudel's speech—just at the point where he was dealing with the question of Alsace-Lorraine—a great roar of welcome went up as Longuet unexpectedly stepped on the platform. Poor Renaudel had to cease speaking for several minutes until the audience had cheered itself hoarse. It was a thrilling reception, such as is seen only occasionally in England, though it is now a familiar manifestation in the Mansion House in Dublin.

Jean Longuet is, of course, the famous Seine deputy who has braved the fierce opposition of all the chauvinistic and many of the democratic elements in France since the beginning of the war. He is the leader of the gallant bands of anti-war Socialists who have now converted their one-time minority into a majority in the French Socialist Party. Grandson of Karl Marx, he is the Internationalist par sang, and has been to the French Party what Liebknecht has been to the German Party. Young in years, he is less the typical Frenchman than Renaudel, has little of the latter's clan, but has the more valuable qualities of coolness, undemonstrativeness, and bases his position on hard reasoning and cold logic. His blows are straight from the shoulder and are delivered with a sledge-hammer weight that drive them right home. Plain of speech, but fluent, he hits hard, but within there is within him a kindness and humanity that endear him to a class conscious audience. He is proud of his illustrious forebear, but none of the delegates whom we met—and all of the continentals, of course, are far above their English comrades in this respect—was so unassuming, so workmanlike, so Irish—if I may put it that way, as the brilliant leader of the French Minority. In fact, he is of the type of whom we have many in the democratic movements in Ireland.

### Longuet's Friendship for Ireland.

Longuet left the platform on Wednesday to speak to us, and at once we felt that here was a man after our own heart. He received us very cordially indeed and chatted familiarly for a long time. He showed an extensive knowledge of Irish questions and rather surprised us when he commented on the satisfaction it should be to us that the secretary of Belfast Trades Council should be in line with the rest of Ireland. He listened with very close attention to our case, put many pertinent questions, and expressed his unreserved agreement with our national claims and our claim on the International. Most people on the continent, he said, fell into error about Ireland because so many of the Irish people speak English. Only a few like himself knew that some of our people still speak Irish and know that we have a culture and literature of our own. But that error about language should not affect the issue, he said, for the Irish people have not only historical claims but have also the right of the people to determine their own future, and have shown that they want to exercise their right of self-determination. This turned the conversation to the Lloyd-George Convention, and Longuet displayed a keen interest in our views on its composition, limitation of powers, and the attitude of the

(Continued on page 132.)

# INTERNATIONAL NOTES

## German Democracy.

After Austria it is now the turn of Germany to make her response to the appeal of Bolshevik Russia to the democracies of Europe. It is not necessary to recapitulate the reports of the great strike wave which has been sweeping over Germany from Hamburg to Dantzic, in shipyards, arsenals, munition works and electrical plants. This is the reply of the German people to the heroics of the Fatherland Party. The dismay of the Allied champions of liberty finds expression in the newspapers, which have now added to their hymns of hate and lies regarding Russian democracy a similar misrepresentation of Germany. It was bad enough when liberty actually broke out in one of the Allied countries, but when the unspeakable Hun no longer lives up to the fictions of popular journalism, when he ceases to correspond to the servile automaton theory, then the case is serious for the stalwarts of imaginary freedom. After all the "blood and treasure" spilled to the glory of an impalpable idealisation, it is really too bad of these Russians, Austrians and Germans to insist upon tangible realisations. As rhetorical fuel for the production of hot air, democratic catchwords are invaluable to the Wilsons, Milners and Lloyd Georges of the day, but these "men of the world" are shocked by those ingenuous barbarians, who actually start putting into practice what is designed for mere oratorical effect. So we are warned by the kept press that Germany is not a free country, and that no German would strike unless ordered to do so by his diabolical masters. Peace "traps" are now replaced by strike "traps," cunningly reported by the Hun to mislead the Allies.

## Next, Please!

That dear friend of the working classes, the press, would not be so anxious to brand the German strikes as myths if it were not for the fear lest the example prove contagious. Auckland Geddes has, no doubt reported to his employers the "unpleasant" truth of his experiences at Glasgow, when 3,000 engineers resolved "to take action to enforce the declaration of an immediate armistice on all fronts," having previously decided "to oppose to the very uttermost" the call for more men. It would be sad, indeed, if the smouldering spark of revolt in England should burst into flame! Whether a few intellectual bombs may not fall within the Allied defences will depend upon the leaders and the press of the English, French and American Labour movements. We see that the ineffable Gompers refuses to countenance an international reunion of Labour. This American democrat, like the English Cecil and Curzons, does not trust Labour in such matters. Financiers and ecclesiastics from both sides have met to discuss their interests, but the purity of American patriotism might be corrupted if the United States had representatives of Labour at an International Conference.

## Reactionary Republics.

It is a curious fact that of all the belligerents, the two countries, where we cannot discover even the faintest glimmerings of democratic sense are France and America. Berlin and Vienna have their Soviets, if the "Koelnische Zeitung" may be believed, but Paris and New York are innocent of such innovations. Hervé, the former anti-militarist, excels even Lloyd George in his abuse of Russia. He is mightily concerned for those 14 milliards of francs which were so generously supplied by France to the Tsarist-Rasputin crusade for liberty. There is something symbolical in Hervé; he reminds us that the persons and countries most vociferous on behalf of theoretical revolution have failed remarkably to rise to the situation created by the most wonderful revolution the world is likely to see for some centuries. Beside the events of to-day the political revolutions of France and America were merely minor engagements in the great struggle for human freedom. It is tragic to observe the plight, in the face of this upheaval, of the countries which have heretofore passed for progressive. As the Dutch Socialist journal, "Het Volk," says: "France has become a gigantic prison. It was in July, 1789, that the French people destroyed the Bastille; since July, 1917, one may say that France itself has been made a Bastille in which thousands of noble spirits sigh for peace and the restoration of the international community. But the gaoler, Clemenceau, holds the keys. . . . The French Socialists must break down the Bastille, and Clemenceau and Lloyd George must go. So long as this is not done, it is useless to talk of Stockholm." As for America, the Censorship permitting, we have done our best to indicate the even more stringent imprisonment of liberty which has been imposed upon the country. When we are amazed by the much censored pages of the half-dozen French papers which have not gone war-mad, a sense of proportion is restored by the recollection that their American equivalents have actually been killed outright. We may yet see Russia and the Central Powers pleading for the democratisation of the Allies.

## The Alliance of "Free" Peoples.

If the Germans were given to that sort of cant, they might find "No peace with the Allied Republics," an admirable counterblast to "No peace with the Hohenzollerns." A Bill has just been introduced into the French Chamber to the effect that "All persons who since August 2nd, 1914, have uttered, written, printed or edited any statement advocating a premature peace, or who have taken part in a peace campaign, under any circumstances whatever, or who have dissuaded the fighters from fulfilling their duty, should be sentenced to death." The heavy type portions of this testimony to the modern style of republican freedom show how much the Germans have to learn, they who content themselves, like

their English cousins, with mere imprisonment for such "offences." The great Irish newspaper Boss, on the other hand, will recognise his kinship with his friends across the seas in the following characteristic judgment of an American judge, with the not altogether exotic name of Hayden. Judge Hayden, of Boston, declares: "If I had my way, I would suspend every labour law during the war, for the only people in this country who are disloyal are labourers; and if I could, I would have every man who dares to strike, put up against the barbed wire front line." The judge is perhaps a little premature, but at least he has the satisfaction of seeing things move steadily in the direction indicated. Alexander Berkman, Morris Becker, Louis Kramer, Emma Goldman, Gurley Flynn, Tresca, Giovanetti and Haywood, are all in jail for the "disloyalty" which excites the juriconsult, but they and the innumerable members of the I.W.W. in the same plight might have tasted the full flavour of Judge Hayden's democratic teaching. They might have suffered the fate of Frank Little, a member of the I.W.W. Executive, who was lynched at Butte, Montana, by six disciples of Woodrow Wilson's law-makers, of whom Hayden is only one amongst many of the same type.

## Silver Bullets.

Having listened to Chancellors of the Exchequer, who discoursed easily about the efficacy of the silver bullet, it may some day occur to us that these missiles are turned with equally deadly effect against ourselves. The philosopher in the food queue would do well to arm himself with a newspaper to while away his enforced leisure. When you cannot get any butter, and every substitute for your normal food is increasing in price, you may be interested to read the bank reports, and to learn that Ireland is saving the money you spend, that deposits show a marked increase. In France and Italy, too, the same happy state of things prevails; the bank deposits are swelling and the savings banks are doing well. With divine impartiality we contribute to the hoards of the humble farmer and the harassed shopkeeper, both of whom are struggling hard, they tell us, while the bank and Post Office receipts grow, and at the same time we help to provide the immortal Tino with his £20,000 a year British money, without overlooking the Duchess of Coburg, whose pension we pay, while her son does his bit in the German army. The Kaiser also is not forgotten by Allied finance, for he will draw 3½ per cent. on his American investments, the proceeds of which are being put into the Liberty Loan by the custodian of enemy properties in the United States. And so that nobody with money shall have a grievance the British Government has magnanimously undertaken to make good £7,515,000 worth of Russian commercial bills, and £10,000,000 of Nicholas-Rasputin Treasury Bills, which the Bolsheviks have repudiated.

# Marx: The Great Un-Read.

By M. W. Robieson, Queen's University, Belfast.

We trust this estimate of Father Larkin's book will induce many to study it, and in order to appreciate it, to read Marx and Marxist Literature. For it is to Marx that we owe gratitude for James Connolly's best work.

Most Irish workers must already have made the acquaintance of the "University and Labour Series," edited by Professors Smiddy and Rahilly, of University College, Cork, of which the first two volumes were Professor Rahilly's Bibliography and Father MacSweeney's investigation into Poverty in Cork. The third has just been issued: "Marxian Socialism," by W. Paschal Larkin, O.S.F.C., M.A. (Cork: Purcell & Co.) It extends to about 130 pages, and its appearance at the price of sixpence in these times is a lesson to all publishers.

The series as a whole is one of the products of the endeavour being made in Ireland to bring the Universities into as close a relation as possible to the workers, and as such, it deserves the warmest welcome. The editors of the series are responsible for the movement in the South, while the Workers' Educational Association has been doing similar work in Belfast. If the colleges in Dublin can now move it should be possible to bring about very great developments. The prospects of success seem in some respects greater than they ever were in England; as with younger Universities and a more plastic organisation of the Labour movement, adaptation to special needs should be easier. The business of the Universities, which should, after all, be the centres in the country of knowledge and learning, is not merely to train young men for degrees and do research, but to make that knowledge available for as many people as possible and to provide expert guidance on theoretical questions where it is required. No one who knows what he is talking about desires to popularise knowledge. It cannot be popularised without being destroyed. But no effort is too great to diffuse it as widely as may be. The writer of this book has appreciated that; and does not attempt to give us Marx without tears.

Father Larkin's book deals with the origin and principles and development of the doctrine of Marx and his disciples. Those who have tried to understand the theory of modern Socialism will recognise what a difficult task this is and how essential it is to attempt it. Marx is one of the writers whom everybody talks about and hardly anybody reads. The number of books on Labour, by writers who ought to know better, which betray no more than a nodding acquaintance with him is amazing. A really well-informed discussion of his work is rare, and I do not know of a good elementary book on him in English. This is a misfortune because no one can hope to understand even present-day Socialism or de-

velopments of the working-class movement in Europe or America who has not studied sympathetically Marx's position. Comparatively few Socialists, no doubt, are orthodox Marxists. The I.L.P. does not pretend to be: the Syndicalists, who claim to be the true Marxists, have "improved" the theory almost out of recognition: while Mr. Orage and his colleagues of "The New Age" have never paid sufficient attention to their predecessors. Nevertheless the basis of all these movements and their inter-relations is quite unintelligible unless you know a good deal about Marx. If you do not you may as well not even attempt to follow the Social movement on the Continent. Consider, for example, what lies behind the present state of Russia.

For an Irish Socialist the need is still more acute. All revolutionary Socialist thought is steeped in Marx's ideas, and some of them are quite antagonistic to things very characteristic of Ireland. He was exceedingly suspicious of peasant proprietorship. The Socialist Party of Ireland must show either that Marx was wrong in his view of this, or that it is compatible with Socialism; and it has not, so far as I know, set forth clearly its mind on the subject. Similarly with Nationality. International Socialism, which derives from Marx, is not obviously compatible with the propaganda of a claim for independence from another country equally capitalist—a claim largely identified with people who, whatever they are, are not workers, but small business men and employers who talk about "fair wages." And even though the Erfurt programme declared religion to be a private matter, it is not certain that any church can admit this, and in any case a mild acquaintance with Socialist literature betrays the fact that it is for the most part not Catholic and not Christian. In the bases of all Socialist parties there are enunciated ideas which involve the economic interpretation of history. No one can seriously doubt that the presuppositions this had in Marx were materialistic. Can it be defended on a theory compatible with the dogmas of Christianity? And if not, where is Socialism without it?

That Irish Socialists should attempt to answer these questions seems urgent, and this book will give them real guidance into the different elements of Marx's thought. There is a common misapprehension that the chief, if not the only, doctrine of Marx is his theory of value. The arrangement of Father Larkin's book dispels such an idea. He considers first of all the origin of Marxism and its relation to preceding economic and philosophical views. Then he discusses historical materialism (which is Marx's philosophy) and supplements and criticises it. In the chapter on "The Marxian Theory of Value," which follows, Father Larkin has a subject less attractive to him. The expository part is quite accurate on the

whole but the criticism contains little more than the usual arguments of anti-Socialists. This had not been the case in the first two chapters in which, even where he disagreed with Marx, Father Larkin had generally something to say which really advanced the discussion. The final chapter is again excellent and provides a brief but perfectly clear account of modern developments from Marx—Revisionism, Syndicalism, and Guild Socialism. That his own preference is for Mr. Belloc's Distributive State is clear enough; but it is unfortunate that he did not expand his criticisms of the others. As they stand they only provoke further questions.

Professor Rahilly contributes an admirable introduction, in which his great learning is used to full advantage. After discussing the disputed topic of the influence on Marx of the writings of William Thompson (who was, by the way, a Cork man) he deals with some general points in connexion with Marx. In one important particular he corrects Father Larkin. The latter maintains that the theory of surplus value is intended to have a certain ethical significance. This is not so; its only function is to make plain in what way the existing capitalist system is certain to collapse and give place to Socialism. That is what is meant by making Socialism scientific. The Utopian endeavoured to persuade people to bring it about by a change of heart. Marx desired to inform them that it was coming, and have it they must, whether they wanted it or not.

In a volume dealing with so controversial a subject as Marxism, there is necessarily a great deal that must seem to other people than the author to be disputable, but "Irish Opinion" is not the place to enter on a controversy about technical points. I need do no more than congratulate Father Larkin and Professor Rahilly on their book and recommend it heartily to all Irishmen, who ought to know about Marx.

'They have a Special Appeal for Labour.'

This is what W. P. RYAN, writing in *The Herald* (London), says of John Mitchel's Letters to Ulster Protestants,

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# Connolly's Ideal for Limerick.

## ORGANISING THE WORKERS. MEETING IN LIMERICK.

A general meeting of Limerick No. 3 Branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union was held on Sunday, 27th January, at 4 p.m. in the Town Hall, Limerick, kindly placed at the disposal of the Branch for the purpose by the Mayor. The accommodation of the hall was taxed to its utmost capacity when the meeting was called to order by the Branch President, Mr. Cramer. In a short address he outlined the objects of the meeting and called upon the secretary, Mr. J. Byrne, to submit the Branch report.

Mr. Byrne told of the starting of the Branch a few months ago and the steady progress made since then, how the membership was all the time on the increase and the financial position good, as appeared from the financial statement which he read. The report was adopted unanimously.

### Food.

A letter was read from Mr. Grimes, hon. secretary Limerick Food Committee, drawing attention to the question of profiteering in the city and asking the co-operation of the Branch to help the Committee in its work. On the proposition of Mr. P. Manns, it was decided to give the Food Committee every support, and two delegates were appointed to represent the Branch on the Committee.

### Housing.

The hon. secretary, Limerick Housing Association, wrote re the provision of suitable houses for workers, that the most practical solution of the problem was on the basis of eight houses to the acre, meaning a plot of land for each worker to till and thus aid the conservation of the country's food supply. The following resolution was passed unanimously: "That we, the members of the Limerick No. 3 Branch, I.T.W.U., recognising the lamentable want of suitable dwellings for the workers of Limerick, unanimously add our demand to that of the Limerick City Housing Association for an immediate grant from the Government of a sufficient sum of money to provide at least 2,000 working class dwellings, each with one-eighth of an acre of land attached."

### Unity Pays.

Mr. J. Flood, president No. 1 Branch I.T.W.U., said he was glad to see such a fine meeting of No. 3 Branch. Though not long established in Limerick the Union had done much good there. The members of his own Branch realised what a tower of strength it was to them and the number of concessions it had obtained as regards wages and conditions of labour. They were not out to create strikes or trouble. They wanted to have all unskilled and semi-skilled workers in the Union—the best guarantee that there would be no strikes. (Applause.)

Mr. J. Sheehan, president No. 2 Branch, hoped that No. 2 Branch would

continue to progress for the future as it did for the short time it was established. Like Mr. Flood he knew what could be gained by an effective organisation like the I.T.W.U. (The members of No. 2 Branch had all benefited in the shape of increased wages since they joined the Union. It was about time the working man profited by experience. Let him remember that his one sure safeguard was being organised and belonging to a big, powerful Union like the Transport Union. (Applause.)

### Women's Needs.

Mr. R. P. O'Connor, said he was pleased to learn of the progress made by the Branch as outlined in the secretary's report. The food question was a serious one and should be tackled at once, else it might be too late to take any effective action. The unskilled workers in Limerick—especially the female workers—were not receiving by any means a living wage. He was once asked by a visitor to Limerick what women and girls were paid, and he was ashamed to tell him that the majority of them were working for 3s. or 4s. a week. The Transport Union had done good work, but it would still do more when every eligible worker was within its ranks. Any help he could give at any time would be freely and gladly given.

Mr. Byrne, secretary, said a few months ago unskilled labour in Limerick was helpless and hopeless, but the large audience there that day proved that that state of affairs no longer existed, thanks to the I.T.W.U., which had banded the workers together. They were near great political changes in the country, but they should see that the voice of labour is heard, and as one who fought in Dublin, he believed in Connolly's ideal, that a free Ireland must mean freedom for the Irish workers. In conclusion he appealed for financial help for the members in Portarlington, who had been locked out by Messrs. Russell for belonging to the Union.

### Labour in Politics.

Mr. B. J. Dinneen, secretary Limerick Trades Council, joined in the congratulations given expression to by the previous speakers on success attending the Branch. It was well-nigh time for the workers to wake up and see for themselves that they could only hope to better their conditions and redress their grievances by means of united action. The Irish Labour Party, recently formed, bid fair to be a power in the near future. It was up to every worker to be a subscribing member of that Party. The cost was little and the benefits to be gained by well-directed action were innumerable. He advised every worker to take out a card and help the movement along. (Applause.)

Mr. M. J. O'Connor, organiser, who was received with applause, dealt with a variety of matters affecting the members and unskilled and semi-skilled workers in general. Though but a few months formed in the city of the Violated Treaty, the

benefits gained by the I.T.W.U. for its Limerick members were surprisingly great. For instance, the increases in wages alone amounted to £8,000 a year. (Hear, hear.) But the Union was not merely a wage-increasing organisation. They had other praiseworthy objects. They wanted to educate the worker up to the fact that he was entitled to be treated as a human being by his employers who themselves were fashioned out of the same clay as their employees. They desired to have healthy, happy homes provided for the workers and their families instead of the miserable unhealthy, insanitary hovels in which they were forced to eke out a precarious existence. For that reason the City Housing Association had their whole-hearted support. (Hear, hear.) As for the food question, well, they meant to make their voices felt, and when a concerted plan of action was outlined for the whole country the members of the I.T.W.U. would not be found wanting. They should see to it that a repetition of black '47 was not going to occur—that the people of Ireland would not starve the while food was being exported. (Applause.) The scarcer the food got the dearer it became on the working classes.

### Bonar Law's Blood Money.

But a great deal of the high cost of the imported necessaries of life was due to the charges of the shipowners, who were making enormous profits. Mr. Bonar Law, in the House of Commons, recently admitted he had five investments in various shipping companies, amounting in all to £8,100. In two years he received a total revenue of £9,521. In other words he got all his money back plus a profit of £1,421, and he still had £7,900 steadily earning more profits. The speaker then gave similar instances of the huge profits made out of the necessaries of life by big companies. The remedy for all the grievances which the workers laboured under lay in organising on national lines. The I.T.W.U. was a purely Irish Union, managed and controlled by Irishmen. It had an ever-growing membership of 25,000 with strong funds and branches all over the country. It had powerful opponents from time to time, but neither capitalist forces against it in 1913 or the military forces in 1916 had wiped it out. It was at present stronger than ever, though it had lost such brave men as James Connolly and William Partridge. He was sure now that the Union had found its feet in Limerick it would continue to progress. Let them each do his part, and in the words of Abe Lincoln: "With charity towards all, with malice towards none, with firmness in the right as God gives to see the right, let us strive on to finish the good work we have begun." (Applause.)

The re-election for 1918 of the Branch Committee, with power to co-opt, finished the business of the meeting.

# Notes and Comments

## "Ulster" Capitalism v. Irish Democracy.

Carson arrived in Belfast and conferred with his war staff of the Unionist Council. At the meeting were seven peers and eight members of Parliament, but at the railway station to meet the "Chief," the daily Press informs us, were assembled "three thousand shipyard workers in brown overalls." There are few other countries in Europe to-day where peers and nobles are treated as leaders of the workers. Ireland is one of the few countries, and Belfast, the modern industrial city, is the only place in Ireland where such an entente is possible. The shipyard workers of Belfast and the shipyard workers of the Clyde, what a contrast! The Belfast men have not yet become class-conscious; the only distinctions they seem to understand are those of religion and politics. The Belfast Trades Council is not good enough for the Queen's Island, nothing but the "strawberry leaf" of the blue-blooded aristocracy will satisfy it. Armaghdale and Abercorn are the shipyard workers' leaders rather than Campbell and Johnson. This is all the more remarkable when we remember the close connection between Belfast and Glasgow and the constant interchange of workers between the Lagan and the Clyde. "The Belfast Unionists do not want the Home Rule question to be settled," says Philip Snowden in the "Labour Leader." "They are fortified in their resistance by the assurances of Mr. Asquith, Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. Bonar Law, that in no circumstances will Belfast be compelled to accept any scheme of Home Rule against its wishes. The promise reduces the right of self-determination to nonsense, for it means that one-tenth of the population of a nation can dictate the form of government to the nine-tenths. The opposition of Belfast to Home Rule is at bottom economic. So long as the Belfast capitalists can keep the Home Rule question to the front they can prevent the workers uniting on economic issues. The Home Rule question must be settled so that Irishmen can take their places in the great world struggle of the workers." Capitalism and Labour is an unholy alliance, but it is a fact in Belfast.

## A Crisis in Linen.

We are informed that a very serious crisis is imminent in the Ulster linen industry. In a very short time it is anticipated that some thousands of workers will be either unemployed or on short time and demands are being made upon the British Government to provide alternative "war work" for the people affected. For some time these demands came only from the Belfast Trades Council, but now the aristocrats, who would not touch the Trades Council with a forty-foot pole, are beginning to cry out also. The linen industry has been very severely upset by the war. The market for the linen of Ulster is not in Ireland or in Great Britain; the linen market is the entire world, and with war raging from

China to Peru it is naturally affected. The state of shipping has caused some trouble, but the main cause of the dislocation is the shortage of raw material. Hitherto Russia, Holland, and Belgium have supplied the bulk of the raw material for conversion into "Irish" linen. In its early days the industry depended upon Irish flax, but as time passed Irish flax was sacrificed to cheapness, and Russian, Dutch and Belgian flax took its place. Now all this is cut off and the industry is faced with perhaps the greatest crisis in its history. Industry merely for the sake of industry is not our concern; we are only concerned with industry for the sake of livelihood and all that that word connotes. We are therefore concerned, deeply concerned, for the future of the Belfast and Ulster linen workers. Our own opinion is that unemployment should be a charge upon the industry affected, but that opinion is unlikely to be adopted now. But something must be done to preserve these thousands of workers from destitution. We are pleased to note that an effort to spread the cultivation of flax within Ireland is now being made, and we wish it every success. Such an extension of flax cultivation need not, as is feared in some quarters, impede food production in any way. Should this effort be successful the crisis may not be so severe as is expected.

## Mr. Devlin and Labour.

Now that the election in South Armagh is past we may say that no labour issue was anywhere involved. Inasmuch as Dr. McCartan represented the idea of self-determination in its fullest significance, we regret the result of the contest. We know Dr. McCartan to be a true democrat, and we are not at all certain that the elected Mr. Donnelly is a democrat at all. During the progress of the election Mr. Joseph Devlin went out of his way to speak of labour. He thinks that the interests of labour are vital interests, and that the grievances under which Irish labour suffers brook no delay in the application of remedial measures. Mr. Devlin is right. Irish labour has many grievances and in so far as labour itself can remedy those grievances no delay, at least no unnecessary delay, will be made. The assistance of all will be welcomed in our attempt to remedy those grievances. We shall be pleased, therefore, to have the assistance of Mr. Devlin in our efforts. We would point out, however, that many years have passed since Mr. Devlin was first hailed in Irish public life as a "true democrat," and then some people looked upon him as a future leader of the Irish workers. Much water has passed under our bridges since those days, but Mr. Devlin, the leader of democracy in Ireland, has not materialised. The "hope of Irish democracy" instead, became the chief of a sectarian organisation which is as undemocratic as it well can be. Devlin, like Lloyd George, lost his opportunity; and now, still like Lloyd

George, he remembers his former opinions when they are likely to prove most useful to his party and to the job in hand. At present Mr. Devlin's job is to preserve the "Irish" Party from extinction, and he will use every weapon in his armoury to that end. Irish labour must look to itself only for redress of its grievances, and for the realisation of its own aspirations. It must not be diverted by words.

## The Clerks' Unions.

The pressure of the cost of living is having its effect. The columns of our daily press bear witness to the fact. Almost every day many letters may be read in which grievances are aired for the public benefit. Recently the correspondence refers particularly to clerical workers. The bank clerks have grievances, as they have always had, and the law clerks have discovered theirs also. The editor of one daily paper advised the bank clerks that "the time for waiting had passed and the time for action had arrived." We understand that the bank clerks are considering that advice. They are considering the advisability of forming an organisation to voice their grievances and to enforce the remedies. The law clerks are in a restive state, and surely it is none too soon, when a man with twenty years' experience is, as confessed in his own letter, paid only 32s. 6d. per week. It is surely time these men had a trade union to help them. The shipping clerks have formed an organisation too, and have had their first victory in Dublin. We hope, however, that the bank and law clerks will not start new unions for themselves only. The multiplication of small unions is not calculated to make the labour movement the great, strong movement it ought to be. There are already several clerical unions in existence and there is no necessity whatever to form new ones. Why not a big union for Irish clerks? But we will not have that if every section and grade of clerks form a union for themselves. Union is strength, we must remember, and the greater the union the greater the strength will be. We shall be pleased to see the bank and law clerks join the existing unions, and then an amalgamation of unions.

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# IRISH OPINION

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A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF INDUSTRIAL AND POLITICAL DEMOCRACY.

EVERY THURSDAY, ONE PENNY.

Literary communications should be addressed to the Editor, and business communications to the Manager, at the Office, 27 Dawson Street, Dublin.

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## Bread and Peace.

A meeting of 3,000 engineers in Glasgow, assembled to hear an explanation from the Minister of National Service for Great Britain, with only six dissentients passed the following resolution which we take from the eminently respectable columns of the "Glasgow Herald":—(1) That having heard the case for the Government, as stated by Sir Auckland Geddes, this meeting pledges itself to oppose the Government to the very uttermost in its call for more men. (2) That we insist on, and we bind ourselves to take action to enforce, the declaration of an immediate armistice on all fronts. (3) And that the expressed opinion of the workers of Glasgow, from now on, so far as this business is concerned, is that our attitude should be to do nothing all the time and every time in support of carrying on the war, but to bring the war to a conclusion." In this resolution we have stated for the first time by British workers a determination to resist the "knock-out blow" people. These Glasgow workers have discovered for themselves a further alternative in addition to those discovered by Lloyd George. The alternatives are not as Lloyd George stated only "to go on or go under." There is the alternative of a negotiated peace now if the war capitalists are compelled to enter into negotiations. And that they can be compelled we have no doubt whatever. The workers of Russia have demonstrated this fact, that no war can be carried on without the consent and the good will and support of the workers. It is the workers who fight, the workers who die, the workers who supply the munitions, the workers who pay, the workers who starve, and only the workers who are not consulted. If British Labour follows the lead of the Glasgow engineers the way to peace will be immediately manifest to all. War is profitable to the capitalists and they do not desire to have their profits curtailed. Democracy must make the world safe for itself. A democracy made safe by aristocrats, autocrats and bureaucrats will not be a democracy at all and it will certainly not be safe. Democracy must enforce its own views and its own terms if it is to make the world safe.

Almost every country in Europe to-day is faced with a resurgent democracy. The ideas of Russia have per-

colated with greater rapidity than was thought possible even by revolutionaries. And the ideas have been followed by action. The workers of Austria heard the message and responded. They demanded peace and they will very probably enforce their demand. And now the German workers have responded with demands almost identical. The great strikes in Austria and Germany are at least an indication that the workers of those countries do not desire any further prolongation of the war. They are not prepared to suffer and perhaps to die for Empire. They are not prepared to sacrifice themselves for the acquisition of coaling stations, strategic positions and economic spheres of influence. The treaties given to the world by the Maximalists in Petrograd have opened the workers' eyes to the real significance of the war. The workers were to suffer and to die so that their "betters" might have greater opportunities for exploiting humanity to the enrichment of themselves and their friends. The workers rally now to the formula of the Russian Revolution. "No annexations, no indemnities and the right of peoples to determine their own government." This formula sums up a policy that will make the world safe for democracy and will at the same time make democracy safe in the world. The war to end war may become a reality, to those who uttered the words early in 1915 the words signified merely the defeat of what they were pleased to term "Prussian Militarism." Since then the military capitalists of the other countries have been shown to the world in a light much more unfavourable than that in which Bernard Shaw showed up Blanco Posnet. Even Mittel-Europe was tame and weak when compared to those treaties given to the world from Petrograd. The workers evidently now understand and will take action.

It is only the Governments of the belligerents that now are at variance with each other.—The workers in every belligerent country in Europe are unanimous in their demands. The strikers of Berlin call for "Peace, Liberty and Bread." The workers of Vienna, of Warsaw, of Paris, of Petrograd, of Turin and of Nottingham call for the same things. Peace, liberty and bread are the three things that the world most desires now, and they happen also to be the three things that the world cannot go without. Humanity the world over is sickened of blood and mud and desires a return of peace, liberty and bread. The world wants peace and bread and yet neither peace or bread comes. Why? Because the imperialist ambitions of capitalist governments block the way. Capitalism lives for power and power to the worker stands for slaughter, bereavement, starvation and the gradual extraction of every sweetness from life. Capitalism and imperialism are merely the obverse and reverse of the same medal. Capitalism is the enemy of the worker, imperialism is the enemy of democracy. The call from Berlin for Peace, Liberty and Bread has not gone unanswered. The cry has been re-echoed around Europe, for the great fact in our lives to-day is Bread, or rather it is the absence of Bread. Bread will compel peace. Even if we were willing to tolerate the slaughter and the waste we cannot sit down to starve, and every nation in Europe, belligerent and neutral alike, is now faced with starvation. A hungry populace will face any danger.

# LABOUR IN IRELAND.

## Dublin.

Nothing so brings out the truth of the statement that "money is not everything" as the present situation in regard to food. Nearly all workers in Dublin district have recently got increases in pay to meet "the increased cost of living," but at the end of their anxious struggles they find themselves as badly off as at the beginning. Food is three times the old price, when at all obtainable. Moral: What's wrong is the social system, not the rate of wages. As long as the necessaries of life—food, fuel, shelter and clothing—are the objects of unbridled competition, so long will the bulk of the population be in misery. Until the people as a whole control the supplies of these necessaries and arrange the distribution of them on a system free from competition, the lives of our people will continue to be an ignoble struggle for a squalid existence. Until Trade Unions frankly put social reconstruction in the front part of their programme and put the wage programme in the background, they will continue as at present to beat the air.

The attempts to find a solution of the Food Question made definite progress on Monday, 28th January, when the All-Ireland Conference, summoned by the Lord Mayor of Dublin, met in the Mansion House and adopted a scheme put forward by a group representing Labour, Co-operation, Sinn Féin, and the Dublin Provision traders. Under this arrangement, all local food work would be carried out by parish committees, formed by members of Labour, Co-operative, and political associations, with representatives of any important interest concerned. Town committees for towns and county committees on the same basis would look after the towns and counties. An All-Ireland Committee similarly constituted would co-ordinate local effort, collect information from all sources, and arrange for transfers of food supplies between contiguous districts. All financial and business communications would be carried out by a Central Food Exchange, having an office in Dublin under the control of the All-Ireland Committee. This scheme has been formally adopted by the Dublin Trades Council, and has the backing of the Irish Transport Union and the N.U.R. Dublin District Committee. It has the business machinery of the Co-operative Movement and the executive power of organisations who control large masses of people behind it. An endeavour is being made to have it put into operation at once.

The casual dockers employed by the Bristol, Sillith and Cardiff steamers have given a month's notice of a series of new demands relative to rates, and working hours and holidays—the main

features of which are increases of 2s. per day and overtime at 2s. per hour, to date from 1st March. The founders employed in the Irish Glass Bottle Company, Ringsend, have given the firm a week's notice of their intention to cease work because of the firm's refusal to grant increased rates. There is much unemployment in the glass bottle industry at present, as, indeed, in most branches of labouring work. The recent sinking of Dublin steamers has tended to accentuate the unemployment while causing crews engaged in working the ships to make a demand for a convoy to accompany each ship—a demand which the Government has refused. Naval men are now working the ships instead.

## HOMO.

**S.P.I.** Mr. W. O'Brien presided at the usual meeting last Friday, when it was decided to hold a public recruiting meeting in the Trades' Hall, Capel St., on Sunday, 10th inst., at which Comrades O'Brien, C. O'Shannon, P. Coates, and Tom Kennedy will explain the principles of Socialism. This is the beginning of a forward move which will link up in the ranks of the Party the growing number of Socialists in Ireland. All unattached Socialists are expected to help the good work, and, whether in city or country, should communicate with the secretary at once.

## Portarlington.

The lock-out here has reached an interesting stage. Russell's are summoned to appear before a munitions tribunal. Organiser Dowling is on the ground, after being kidnapped by the police and undergoing the brutality of forcible feeding. Funds for the support of eighty-two men and boys who have been victimised are wanted at once! We have some books of tickets for sale for their benefit. **Will Trade Unionists apply at once to 27 Dawson Street for these tickets?**

## Portadown.

We are proud of our town. It is the most progressive, most loyal, most "religious" (1) and altogether the most to be envied town in the North of Ireland. As King Edward of Ulster says, "Home Rule will never get beyond Portadown." We look with pity, with a generous mixture of contempt upon the "South and West." The denizens of those parts, poor souls, don't know what prosperity means! And yet our municipal workers, employed by the Urban District Council, have been on strike for the past four weeks for an advance of wages beyond a paltry 23s. per week! General labourers in the town are employed at 18s. and 19s., and these also have the audacity to seek, in these days of the Empire's travail, an advance of wages. Shame upon them for a disloyal crew. It is nothing to us that the towns of Rebel Cork and the so-called Kingdom of Kerry pay their

labourers 30s. per week—our minds are not fixed on pelf, we look to higher things; we have only one thought for the moment—victory over the Huns. When that is achieved we shall have still only one supreme purpose, to repel Home Rule. We shall not allow our minds to play upon such mean things as bread and margarine, clothes for our children, furniture for our homes. "Loyalty and a pound a week" is the motto of the Portadown labourers, as set by the employers whom we have elected to guide our destinies. "A pound a week and to Hell with the Pope." God help us!

## Belfast

The Linen Workers have received the award of the Committee on Production on their claim for 10s. a week advance for men and 7s. 6d. for women. The award grants only 4s. for men and 2s. for women, but allows that all war bonuses shall be treated as wages—which would make a difference in overtime rates if there were any likelihood of overtime. But as all mills and factories are now on short time and likely to be very much further restricted owing to the shortage of flax, the benefit of the change is hard to find. With every reduction of hours the workers must demand an increase of rates. It costs just as much to provide a dinner for a man working five hours a day as if he were working ten hours, and the employers must be made to pay accordingly! It is not the workers' fault that there is no flax.

A meeting was held in the Engineers' Hall on Saturday last to hear Mr. Wm. Gallagher, of the Clyde Workers' Committee, explain the working of the shop stewards' system in Great Britain. The meeting was convened by the Belfast shop stewards and was confined to the trade concerned. Mr. Gallagher dealt solely with the industrial question before the meeting, but he was interrupted by a band of half-a-dozen agents of the Provisional Government at the Old Town Hall. The press reports of a lively meeting are much exaggerated. There was no disorder, and the meeting terminated quietly, the interrupters having left before "closing time."

A further meeting on Sunday, under the same auspices, was arranged for Sunday, but the Old Town Hall brigade forbade the letting of the Engineers' Hall. The I.L.P. came to the rescue and granted the use of their hall.

## ANSWER TO CORRESPONDENT.

M. O'C., M.D.—Your letter has been handed to contributor for reply. Our columns are open to all fair expressions of opinion. Free criticism is the weapon to slay factionism.

**NEXT WEEK**  
**Special Irish Article**  
**3aeóilís iní na**  
**Dunroileannaib**



# Irish Automobile Drivers and Mechanics' Trade Union.

The 8th Annual Meeting of the Union was held in the Trades Hall, Dublin, at 8 p.m. on 31st ulto.

Mr. Mitchell (Vice-President) presided. He was supported on the platform by the outgoing Committee of Management—Mr. J. Madden, Mr. J. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Traynor, Mr. E. Lacey, Mr. J. Nolan, Mr. J. Fay, Mr. P. Boyle (Sec.), Mr. P. Talbot (Treasurer), Mr. W. Dunne (Hon. Sec.). There were also present—Mr. Scannell and Mr. Quinn (Limerick Branch), Mr. M'Loughan and Mr. Canning (Derry Branch), Mr. R. Dooley (Cork Branch). The members of the Dublin Branch rolled up in large numbers, and in looking over the audience one was encouraged at noticing so many new faces.

Unfortunately some faces were missing, faces which will never be seen at our annual meetings again, men who, for various reasons, joined the ranks of the Army, and whose bones now lie bleaching on foreign shores. Whatever views we may hold about the war, it is to be hoped that when the history of the Union is written, their names will find honourable mention.

Mr. P. Boyle (Secretary), in giving the report of the year's working, reminded his listeners that, in the early part of last year, restrictions were imposed on the use of motor spirit which seriously threatened their livelihood. The Management Committee had kept this question well before them during the year; had raised it at the Irish Trade Union Congress; had, after considerable trouble, ascertained the number of persons dependent on the industry in Ireland (750,000), and laid this information before the Petrol Control Committee; had succeeded in getting a more liberal supply for commercial vehicles, and raised the allowance for taxi-cabs from 20 to 50 gallons per month. In concluding, Mr. Boyle said that although the conditions in the motor industry were far from ideal, they would be infinitely worse were it not for the strenuous efforts of the Union during the year. Mr. Traynor next addressed the meeting. He said that it gave him particular pride to welcome the delegates from Derry, Limerick, and Cork, as he had opened the Branches in those cities. Although the county Branches had only been started a few months ago, considerable advances in wages had been won for the members in Limerick and Cork.

Referring to his appointment as delegate to the Dublin Trades Council, he stated that he had only missed three meetings during 1917, a record which he considered was not bad for a taxi-driver. Continuing, Mr. Traynor mentioned that the garage owners, who had declined to help the Union in fighting the petrol restrictions, were now asking the Union for its support; that support would only be given in return for a definite pledge—that the interest of the Union's members would be safeguarded. In concluding,

Mr. Traynor remarked that last year the Union had no Branch outside Dublin; now it has got four, including Midleton; and expressed the hope that the increase would continue in geometrical ratio.

The balance sheet was next read, a copy of which had been supplied to each member and delegate,—and all present seemed quite satisfied.

This harmonious state of affairs did not suit Mr. E. Lacey. Addressing the meeting, he said that as a member of the Committee he was satisfied with the balance sheet; he thought it was a good one, and he was prepared to defend every item in it; nevertheless, if he was in the body of the hall he would pick it to pieces.

The speaker's appeal had the desired effect. Information was asked for respecting several items in the balance sheet, and the answers given were considered satisfactory. Mr. Lacey was apparently satisfied, as he wore a contented smile for the rest of the evening.

The Chairman announced the result of the voting for officers and Committee members:—

President, J. Traynor; Vice-President, James Mitchell; Trustee, Peter Boyle; Hon. Secretary, Eugene Lacey; Hon. Treasurer, Patrick Talbot. Committee—C. J. Cosgrove, J. Madden, James Fay, John Nolan, James Fitzpatrick, Peter Lynch, Richard Tynan, Joseph Donnelly, James Dillon, Andrew Dunne.

The delegates from Limerick, Cork, and Derry reported satisfactory progress in their respective districts. The cities of Cork and Limerick are now non-union proof as far as motor drivers and mechanics are concerned.

Vigorous and rousing speeches from Messrs. Boyle, Traynor, Mitchell, and Lacey brought the proceedings to a conclusion. On all hands it was agreed that the meeting was the best-attended and most enthusiastic in the history of the Union. The membership is now five times what it was at the end of 1916.

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## Dublin Cafe Scandal.

### SMOKE ROOM SLAVES.

[We have been asked to publish the undernoted statement, and do so with pleasure.—Editor, "Irish Opinion."]

In the smoke room of a celebrated Dublin restaurant, situated in a leading street and owned by a well-known public man, the following "wages" are paid to the waitresses:—"A," age 16, 2 years' service, 5s. weekly; "B," age 18, 2 years' service, 5s. weekly; "C," age 18, 24 years' service, 6s. weekly; "D," age 20, 5 years' service, 7s. weekly; "E," age 21, 7 years' service, 8s. weekly; "F," age 28, 12 years' service, 11s. weekly.

The girls, out of these sums, have to be respectably dressed in black; provide themselves each morning with newly-washed aprons; and pay for all the food supplied to them in the cafe! These are ascertained facts.

No "tips" are allowed and none given. No war bonus granted.

The perpetrator of this outrage on civilisation occupies a prominent position in the "religious," political, civic and commercial life of Dublin.

Note.—The foregoing facts are recorded without names, but if any employer feels aggrieved by their publication the authors of this statement undertake to publish the facts over their names, in response to a public challenge.

Unless the wages named are at once doubled, or if any victimisation of the girls—none of whom have been party to this publication—is attempted, a full public exposure will be made.

St Eden Quay,  
Dublin.

January 26th, 1918.

(To the Editor, "Irish Opinion.")

Dear Sir,—I must say I think you are very hard on English Labour M.P.'s, whom I regard as strictly honourable men. You write as if you actually thought that their first duty is to Labour. Is an Irish Member of the English Parliament bound to put Ireland first? No! Men of both parties take a most solemn oath of allegiance. It seems to me that once this oath is taken, an M.P.'s first duty is to maintain the monarchy and, I suppose, the aristocracy also. He is certainly bound to oppose anything that would conflict with monarchical principles. If the interests of royalty and Labour conflict, the Labour man must put royalty first.

If the Irish Labour Party, either in Ulster or the rest of Ireland, sends any man to Westminster to take that oath, then they must as honourable men, cease to profess republican principles. If there are in Ulster any Labour-Unionists who would like to change Empire into a Republic, they would do well to consider whether they can consistently desire Labour representatives at Westminster.

MAUD EDEN.

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## SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND.

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On SUNDAY next, 10th Feb., 1918,

At 8 o'clock Sharp—

Chairman: W. O'BRIEN.

Speakers—Cathal O'Shannon, Ptk. Coates,  
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Questions and Discussion Cordially Invited.

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### THE ONE BIG UNION.

To the Editor "Irish Opinion."

Dear Sir—As a believer in the O.B.U. I have been a member of the Industrial Workers of the World—British administration—nearly five years. Everyone ought to be able to see by this time that Trade Unionism or Sectional Unionism is practically useless in fighting employers who are united in Master Builders' Associations, Colliery Owners' Association, Shipping Federation, Port London Authority, to take only a few as an example. Now we ought to recognise if we can produce for masters, we can produce for ourselves. And seeing there are only two nationalities viz., working class and the shirking class, only two flags are necessary—the Red Flag for the workers, the Skull and Crossbones for the pirates or shirkers. As everybody is a consumer by wearing clothes, boots, housing accommodation, etc., they

should therefore be producers if mentally and physically able. So the best way is to organise by industry instead of by craft with its never-ending disputes over demarcation lines into The One Big Union. Now, if the workers of Ireland organise on those lines they will back each other up and refuse to let the results of their labour be stolen from them and sold across the water for higher profits, whether manufactured goods or foodstuffs, which are sadly needed at home in Ireland. By working on those lines they will strike such a blow at the capitalists and parasites who batten on them. They will bring the day of their emancipation much quicker than can be accomplished by the thousand and one Trade Unions.—Yours for the O.B.U.,

MICHAEL JOHN O'ROURKE.

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IRISH BOLSHEVIKS AND THE INTERNATIONAL—Continued from page 122.

Irish people. Into all these we entered fully, and had no difficulty in convincing him that, contrary to the belief of certain parties in England and France, the Convention is in no sense the practical application of the principle of self-determination. From this again we turned to the influence of the Insurrection of Easter Week—the Liberty Hall Insurrection, Longuet called it. He expressed a deep sympathy for the Irish people in the loss of their leaders, and asked particularly about Shéehy-Skeffington. Skeffington, he said, had corresponded regularly with him; he had read his book on Davitt, with whom he had been acquainted; and, indeed, his own interest in Ireland was derived from the study Karl Marx had made in Ireland in connection with foreign policy. Questioning us on the Sinn Féin movement, and the growth and strength of the Labour movement in Ireland, he thought that for a people of our population we were making excellent progress. After hearing our views on the war, on the International, and on the Socialist Conference, he—and we—thought that between Irish Labour and his own party there was much in common, and I thought I

detected a half-expressed regret that he could not have our support, along with that of the Italians and Russians, to the Inter-Allied Socialist Conferences. "But," said he, "you are in the war against your will, and I can quite understand your attitude and position." Finally, he repeated his own expression of sympathy for Ireland and his ready will to assist us in every way in his power. After hearty handshaking we parted, highly satisfied with our labour and glad that we had enlisted so doughty a champion on our side.

**"A Guid Conceit."**

We left Nottingham mightily pleased with ourselves and the success of our mission. One regret only marred our pleasure. Owing to pressure of diplomatic business Litvinoff could not accept our invitation to come over to Dublin and speak at our Russian meeting in the Mansion House. On the other hand, Longuet has promised us to come and speak in Dublin as soon as he can make arrangements. We shall have a right democratic welcome for the grandson of the founder of the International.

**Hail Russia! Great Mansion House Meeting.**

Last Monday's meeting to hail the Russian Revolution may well be historic. The attendance far exceeded the too modest expectations of the promoters, and the gathering overflowed from the Round Room into the anterooms and passages and out into Dawson Street. The Irish Citizen Army rendered good service in regulating the entrance of the cheerful multitude. The gathering proved the revolutionary spirit of the Dublin citizens. We may well omit reports of the speeches, for men and women, fired to eloquence by the greatness of the occasion and the enthusiasm of the crowds, had to pass in turn to each of the three great gatherings.

Not the speeches nor the speakers, but the fervent spirit of the people will be our lasting memory of the gathering. The keynote of the occasion was the recognition that the Russian Republic had accomplished a social revolution which paled merely political aspirations to shadows. There was gratitude for the Russians' insistence that the right of self-determination must be applied to Ireland, and for their understanding that the English Convention was bourgeois, not democratic.

Those who love to seek for evidence of rupture between Sinn Féin and Labour must have been disappointed at the unanimity of speakers and audience. There was no shadow of division, and speakers of both Sinn Féin and Labour parties re-united on the Mansion House platform, who had both fought and worked side by side elsewhere. Representatives of Cork and Belfast made the gathering national in its significance. At a late hour thousands remained in Daw-

son Street listening to a powerful oration by Mr. P. Coates.

We append the resolution, which was carried with acclamation at each of the great gatherings.

"Whereas the All-Russian Bolshevik Revolution has proved to be the first people's authority in the world which has applied its professed principles of no annexations and self-determination of subject races and territories within its own boundaries.

"Whereas it has fearlessly challenged the British people to loosen its grip upon Ireland and other so-called dependencies as incompatible with the aforesaid principles.

"Whereas, it has so successfully hastened the realisation of suffering mankind's hopes for a genuine people's peace on all fronts and the elimination of international chaos and national animosities.

"Therefore be it resolved that this mass meeting of Dublin citizens hails with delight the advent of the Russian Bolshevik Revolution; appreciates its epoch-making political and economic achievements; congratulates the workers, soldiers, and peasants of Russia on their weary years of struggle and conflict; rejoices with the people of Russia on the issue of their battle for social and economic freedom; expresses a fervent conviction that the Bolshevik Revolution will continue to uphold the purity of its noble principles against all its enemies; declares the people of Dublin are at one with the Bolsheviks in accepting the broad and democratic programme proclaimed; thanks in an especial manner Litvinoff, Lenin and Trotsky for their application of the principle of full and free self-determina-

tion to Ireland; maintains that the Russian interpretation of the principle is the only interpretation that will be acceptable to the people of Ireland; hopes the mission of the Revolutionary delegation at Brest-Litovsk will be crowned with success; demands that the democratic parties in the belligerent countries, and especially in the Entente countries, shall bring pressure on their governments to support the Russian Republic; and calls upon all Irish men and Irish women outside Ireland to use all their influence in support of the heroic Russian Revolutionists and of the claims of Ireland to self-determination without restriction or reserve.

"And be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Russian Ambassador, M. Litvinoff, for his kind conveyance of same to the proper authorities in Petrograd."

**Socialist Party of Ireland.**

Cumannacht na hÉireann.  
(Founded by James Connolly.)

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