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JAMES CONNOLLY'S INTEGRATION OF SOCIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF IRISH HISTORY

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JAMES CONNOLLY'S INTEGRATION OF SOCIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF IRISH HISTORY

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ABSTRACT

JAMES CONNOLLY'S INTEGRATION OF SOCIALISM, NATIONALISM, AND CHRISTIANITY IN THE CONTEXT OF IRISH HISTORY

By

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This study of the ideas of James Connolly (1868-1916) places his integration of his socialism to Catholicism and Irish nationalism within the framework of Irish history, from the late 18th century to the present. Connolly's execution after the Easter Rising posed the question as to his prioritization of these three values in his thinking. Since his death, his nationalism has been stressed at the expense of his socialism and Catholicism. In the first two chapters, this study examines the roots of his ideas by reviewing secondary literature covering 1770 through 1900, and, concurrently, Connolly's interpretations of the period. Chapter 3 focuses on Connolly's attempts to synthesize socialism, Catholicism, and nationalism in his writings. This is followed by an evaluation of the legacy of this synthesis, and an assessment. It concludes that, unlike his ethically-based socialism and Catholicism, his nationalism was merely a secondary concern, and is overly emphasized.

To Sarah

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

References

Harp	*The Harp*, New York.
LIH	*Labour In Irish History*,(Dublin 1910).
LNR	*Labour, Nationality And Religion*, (Dublin, 1910).
WR	*Workers' Republic / The Workers' Republic*, Dublin.

Organizations

CPI	Communist Party of Ireland
ICA	Irish Citizen Army
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
IRSP	Irish Republican Socialist Party
ISF	Irish Socialist Federation
ISRP	Irish Socialist Republican Party
ITGWU	Irish Transport and General Workers' Union
ITUC	Irish Trade Union Congress
OIRA	Official IRA
PIRA	Provisional IRA
SPI	Socialist Party of Ireland

INTRODUCTION

It seems rather pretentious to evaluate, or even approach a complex national-historical figure from someone else's country. The fact that James Connolly's ideas are still very much involved in the intricate problems that have re-ignited in Northern Ireland over the last quarter century only reaffirms my hesitations. However, in studying the principles for which Connolly lived and eventually died, I have come to the conclusion that his life and beliefs are relevant not only for the people who live on the small group of islands off the northwest coast of Europe, or for the people who lived there around the turn of the century. Indeed, the principles that he espoused have important implications wherever and whenever people live together in social situations, particularly when such situations involve the oppression and exploitation of one group of people by another. Therefore, Connolly's ideas are still very applicable in many areas around the globe today. I think that Connolly would agree.

As evidenced by Connolly's many writings and his important actions in his career, three main philosophical centers are discernible: nationalism, socialism, and Christianity. Born and raised in an Irish Catholic family, Connolly took up socialism at an early age. The rest of his life was spent explaining, combining, defining, shaping, and acting on these three guiding concepts. The question then arises as to what Connolly was, first and foremost: a nationalist? a socialist? or a

Catholic? In spite of the fact that many have tried to oversimplify it, his death, which many would call a martyrdom, does not decide the issue, but in fact restates the question in even stronger terms.

But obviously nationalism, socialism, and Christianity did not just suddenly manifest themselves in Ireland in the person of James Connolly. These three forces have been present throughout much of the history of modern Ireland, sometimes challenging, and sometimes complementing, but always co-existing with each other in the modern era. This paper is an attempt to explore the dynamic relationships of these three often incompatible elements in Irish history, but more notably in Connolly's theories, his actions, and his legacy.

CHAPTER ONE

In the last few years, the decline of Leninism and Stalinism as ruling ideologies has attracted world-wide attention. After over 70 years of existence, the Soviet Empire collapsed, to a large degree due to the failure of its leaders to control the nationalistic tendencies of many of their subject peoples. A year before the start of the Soviet social experiment, James Connolly died in the aftermath of the Easter Uprising in Ireland, an event that many believed to be nationalistic in its essence. However, one of the more famous observers in the socialist community at the time, V.I. Lenin, was one of the few to refuse to interpret the Easter Rising in nationalistic terms alone.[1] In *Sbornik Sotsial-Demokrata* of October, 1916, Lenin wrote:[2]

> The centuries old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interests...expressed itself in street fighting conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie *and a section of the workers* after a long period of mass agitation, demonstrations, suppression of the press etc....For to imagine that social revolution is *conceivable* without revolts by small nations in the colonies and in Europe, without the revolutionary outbursts of a section of the petty bourgeoisie *with all its prejudices*, without a movement of politically non-conscious proletarian and semi-proletarian masses against landlord, church,

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[1] According to Mike Milotte, Connolly and Lenin probably did not know of each other.

Mike Milotte, *Communism In Modern Ireland*, (Dublin, 1984) 20.

[2] Reproduced in Owen Dudley Edwards and Fergus Pyle, editors, *1916, The Easter Rising*, (London, 1968) 192-3; (Lenin's italics). Also published in *Berner Tagwacht*, 5-9-1916, and quoted in P. Berresford Ellis, editor, *James Connolly: Selected Writings*, (London, 1973) 36.

monarchial, national and other oppression--to imagine that means *repudiating social revolution*....Whoever expects a "pure" social revolution will *never* live to see it. Such a person pays lip service to revolution without understanding what revolution really is.

Connolly had reached the basic conclusion that guided Lenin and Trotsky, Mao Zedong, Ho Chi Minh, and other socialists who led revolutions on a national basis: that Marx's theories could be used as a guiding and driving force in revolutionary movements that developed within a national context, without being treated as infallible doctrine. Other more recent radical thinkers, particularly in Latin America, have synthesized the political ideology of class conflict with the duty to seek social justice which many see mandated in the Christian Gospels--focussing less on the national factor. The success or failure of these various revolutionaries in this century is debatable, depending on one's political perspective. But as for Connolly, a revolutionary figure who died without seeing his program in place, this much is evident: three-quarters of a century later--even as this paper is being written--significant parts of his country are still plagued by competing visions of nationalism, class antagonisms, and chronic sectarian violence. Most of his ideas cannot be evaluated from concrete manifestations, unlike those of the other figures mentioned, because Connolly's theories never reached that stage of actuality within the context for which they were developed. If this failure protects Connolly from the harsh evaluations levelled against many of the other figures, it also allows for the re-evaluation of Connolly's ideas without many of the complexities and prejudices that come with an historical analysis of actual manifestations of socio-political and religious ideologies.

Although his ideas have been largely overlooked outside of Ireland, James Connolly was one of the most original and creative socialists in Europe or America at the turn of the century, and arguably one of the greatest socialist thinkers to come from the British Isles. As one of the few significant socialist theoreticians who could truly claim membership in the working classes of Europe, Connolly used his experiences and his perspective as inspiration for his theories and actions. Born in 1868 in Edinburgh, Connolly led a remarkable life of hardship, poverty, profound thinking, and prolific writing until his execution in front of a British firing squad in 1916. At their last meeting, at his prison bed just before his execution, his wife mourned the end of what she described as his "beautiful life."[3] The principles that guided his life were rooted in his Irish-Catholic, working-class existence, and enabled him to make great strides in the integration of Marxism, nationalism, and Christianity. His determination to live out his principles resulted in his participation in the apparently nationalistic Uprising of 1916, an action that puzzled many in the international socialist community.

Far from a doctrinaire Marxist, Connolly used Marxism as a guide to help shape his vision of a truly free Ireland. In constructing a socialist philosophy to fit the unique situation in Ireland at the time, he had to harness the forces of nationalism to achieve the just ends that he saw exclusively in socialism, and he had to prove that socialism and Christianity were not only compatible, but mutually related in terms of tactics and objectives. But to Connolly, these

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[3] Nora Connolly O'Brien, *James Connolly: Portrait of a Rebel Father*, (Dublin, 1935, 1975) 321.

concepts were all inter-related.

To understand the significance of James Connolly's life and particularly his theories, one has to place Connolly within the broader trends of Irish history. Connolly's work and achievements focussed on three essential elements within Ireland in the last two centuries: nationalism, class struggle, and Christianity. Although these elements are hardly unique to Connolly's thinking, his attempts to unite these often contradictory elements make the analysis of the history of these elements, up to the time of Connolly's career, essential in understanding Connolly. Although there are many works that deal with the impact of religion and the phenomenon of sectarianism during this period, relevant material that deals with the relationship of religion with nationalism and socialism is not as available at the present time. Specific works on Irish socialism before Connolly are rare, as were Irish socialists before Connolly. But because the secondary literature on Irish history during this period is the most abundant on Irish nationalism, the following analysis generally examines the development of these three traditions by looking at the course of Irish nationalism, and to some extent, its relationship to socialism and religion. The fact that this sketch of Irish socialism, religion, and nationalism parallels the development of Irish nationalism should not be seen as an attempt to portray Connolly primarily as a nationalist, but only reflects the inordinate amount of historical material that deals with Irish nationalism, as opposed to the other two topics, and suggests the degree to which Irish nationalism lends itself to the study of these other two topics, since they are both often intertwined with nationalism.

Therefore, what follows over these first two chapters is a brief evaluation of

these three topics from the late 18th century to the time of Connolly's career, so that Connolly's profound influence on the three elements, individually and collectively, can be demonstrated. However, it should be noted that the following analytical overview of significant episodes of Irish nationalism--as a separate entity as well as its relationship to socialism and religion--is based on secondary sources. Subsequently, the nature of this overview offers the opportunity to study Connolly's analysis of these episodes as well, at least insofar as his commentary on these manifestations overlaps with this one.[4] By doing this, we can examine how Connolly viewed the history of Irish nationalism as it related to his own ideas. His views on these movements and their leaders are relevant to this part of this study because it reveals much about his thinking and where he placed himself within the broad range of Irish nationalist traditions. This analysis is divided into two chapters only for the sake of convenience. It examines Irish nationalism as it evolved up to Connolly's time, and is followed by a brief summary of his life and career in order to put his life in the context of his times. Significantly, Connolly himself looked to the era of the Volunteers and the Rebellion of 1798 for the precedents of much of his type of nationalism (in terms of non-sectarianism, elements of class struggle, and extra-parliamentary methods). Hence, it makes sense for this discussion to begin at this point also.

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[4] Connolly commented on many of these nationalist movements in *Labour In Irish History*,(Dublin, 1910).

Irish Nationalism, And Its Relationship To Socialism And Sectarianism In The Century Preceding Connolly: From The Volunteers To O'Connell

In examining the important manifestations of Irish nationalism in the last two centuries, it is important to note the complex and often contradictory nature of the various movements. Irish nationalism is and was far from a monolithic phenomenon. Different Irish nationalist movements disagreed on tactics, the roles of physical and moral force, social and political ideologies, the appropriate class basis of the movements, organizational structure, the role of parliamentary methods, and the place of religion in the movements, which then had implications for the place of sectarianism, or non-sectarianism, in Irish nationalism. Furthermore, Irish nationalists often disagreed on two other important issues: the definition of "Irishness", and the ultimate objective regarding the appropriate relationship between Britain and Ireland.

What actually defined the "Irish" was a subject of considerable contention among various trends within the broad range of Irish nationalist traditions. Were the people of Irish descent living in the urban areas of Britain and the United States, for example, still Irish? Did one's Irishness depend on one's denomination? Were landowners more Irish than the dispossessed? Were absentee landowners Irish? Were republicans more Irish than other nationalists who advocated the continuation of certain ties with Britain? Geography, religion, allegiance, socio-economic class background, and other factors all had roles in different definitions, with varying degrees of emphasis depending on the movement that was doing the defining.

Quite often, various Irish nationalist movements strongly differed in their views on the proper relationship between Britain and Ireland. Did Irish nationalism in its essence mandate complete separation from Britain? Did separation have to be economic and social as well as political? Was parliamentary separation, with maintenance of the monarchical ties, sufficient? Could Irish nationalism truly support allegiance to the British crown? Can Ireland ever truly be independent of the influence of such a powerful neighbor? These questions divided and defined the various Irish nationalist movements. The tension over this issue can be seen throughout the history of Irish nationalism, and is still evident in certain issues today. There has been a broad range of nationalist movements that have tried different methods to cultivate and/or capitalize on a sense of Irishness, despite the lack of agreement in defining that concept. Still, it must be remembered that Irish nationalist traditions, however nebulous, always served the purpose of expressing the varying degrees of discontent for diverse elements of the Irish population regarding the relationship of Ireland to Britain. (The most significant exception to this generalization, the nationalism of Protestant Ulster since the early 19th century, which has generally sought to achieve or maintain closer ties to Britain, is discussed in greater detail below.)

Therefore, to place Connolly within the context of Irish nationalism, we have to examine significant manifestations of Irish nationalism with regards to four defining factors: tactics, organization, religion (in terms of both denominational make-up and the views on or use of sectarianism), and socio-economic aspects (the class backgrounds and social philosophy of the nationalists). What follows is by no means meant to be a history of Irish nationalism since the Volunteers.

Instead, some significant manifestations of Irish nationalism are individually examined in chronological order so that continuities, trends, and phases can be discerned. By analyzing the complex phenomenon of Irish nationalism in regards to these four considerations, James Connolly's position within the broad range of Irish nationalism can be established.

However, it should be noted that in examining these manifestations, this survey will concentrate mostly on lower-level, popular movements, as Connolly did in his own political activities, and as Connolly himself represented. Therefore, although Henry Grattan's Parliament was important for the nationalist tradition, it is the popular wing of the movement, the Volunteers, which receives the attention here. Likewise, while Charles Stewart Parnell is important for the parliamentary characteristic of Irish nationalism, it is the Land League, commonly associated with Parnell but actually inspired and directed by Michael Davitt, that is focussed upon here. Finally, Daniel O'Connell is examined here, despite his parliamentary career, because he was intimately connected with both the Catholic Association and the Repeal Association, both of which enjoyed widespread support. The parliamentary level of Irish nationalism is being neglected here simply because Connolly's brand of nationalism was basically divorced from this level. Thus, extended discussions of parliamentary figures and politics would be irrelevant.

The Era Of The Volunteers

The Volunteers first formed during the time of the American Revolution, with the purpose of aiding in the defense of Ireland against any possible attempt at an invasion by the French. However, their significance does not rest in their military accomplishments, of which there were none. The Volunteers were basically a network of middle-class Protestant social groups, usually led by a local aristocrat. Indeed, the Volunteers were more of a threat to the British because they were outside of the boundaries of government control. The Volunteers represented the genesis of a significant tradition among the middle and upper classes of Ireland: the willingness to establish and employ extra-parliamentary channels for change, without necessarily attempting to make essential changes within the structure of the governing system itself. The inability to achieve and maintain any effective form of control over the Volunteers was a constant point of concern for Dublin Castle and the British government, despite the avowed loyalty of the Volunteers to the British Crown.[5]

In addition to the lack of government control over these groups, the suspicions of the Castle can be explained, in part, by the fact that the Volunteers were heavily influenced by the Whiggish, liberal ideas espoused by the "Patriot" opposition in the Irish Parliament, led by Henry Grattan. The Patriots can be seen as part of a wider movement in Europe and America at the time. Groups in places such as France, the Netherlands, and the rebellious American colonies

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[5] Maurice O'Connell, *Irish Politics And Social Conflict In The Age Of The American Revolution*, (Philadelphia, 1965) 85-7.

held in common the ideals of the de-centralization of government power, liberal economics, and new ways of expressing affection for their respective countries. In Ireland their development is indicative of the evolution of a distinctly Irish "sense of national identity and independence" on the part of elements of the Protestant Ascendancy and Ulster Presbyterians.[6] The Patriots were led by the more liberal elements of the wealthy landowning classes, but enjoyed the strong support of radical elements within the middle classes, which hoped to benefit from reform of Parliament and the reduction of trade barriers implemented by the British mercantilist system. This support manifested itself in the form of the Volunteer groups.

The Volunteers expressed their support for the Patriots through extra-parliamentary pressure exerted through organized conventions, petitions to the government, demonstrations, and organized military exercises. Large bodies of uniformed men (often armed) drilled and paraded at key times and places, thereby contributing to the government's fear. They were organized in the rural areas as militia groups, with the local landowner usually acting as the organizer and leader of the corps, as well as the economic and social leader in the area.[7] In urban areas they were often organized by profession. The upper-level positions of leadership were held by the upper ranks of the nobility, whose members often held seats in the Irish parliament. The rank and file were largely from the Protestant middle classes. In rural areas the groups were predominantly

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[6] Ibid., 20.

[7] Ibid., 94.

comprised of respectable small farmers. In general, they were strongly predisposed to the defense of property and order.[8] Thus, the Volunteers were primarily middle-class in their composition as well as their outlook.

James Connolly's judgement of the Volunteers was mixed. In *Labour In Irish History*(1910), Connolly portrayed the Volunteers as victims of the weak Irish capitalist class, which was crippled by the English mercantilist system, but which also needed government support to survive. Connolly claimed that, if not for the unwillingness of the capitalist class to support the Volunteers in any issues beyond economic reform, political and social reform "would have been won under the guns of the Volunteers without a drop of blood being shed".[9] At a later date, however, Connolly saw the Volunteers in a different light: as[10]

> active members of the yeomanry who afterwards achieved notoriety for their crimes against Ireland, just as considerable sections of the volunteers of our day have become soldiers of the English army--active agents of the military army of the oppressors of their country.

In order to shed some light on Connolly's conflicting assessments, it should be noted that Connolly was erroneous in his characterization of the class background of the Volunteers. Connolly portrayed significant elements of the Volunteers as coming from "the people" and the "working class".[11] But, although there were representatives from lower classes in the Volunteers, Maurice O'Connell states

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[8] Ibid., 88-90.

[9] *LIH*, 58.

[10] *WR*, 1-8-1916.

[11] *LIH*, 56, 62.

that it is "abundantly clear that they were not made up of the lower classes."[12] The Volunteers were essentially middle-class in membership, and upper-class in leadership. Hence, the Volunteers were not "betrayed" by the middle classes; they primarily were of the middle classes. Connolly's over-emphasis (a tendency not unique to this issue) of lower-class representation was done in an apparent attempt to show continuity in the area of popular support from the earlier Volunteer movement to Connolly's own brand of nationalism.

In addition to the establishment of the extra-parliamentary traditions within the Irish political arena, the Volunteers are significant in the trend towards non-sectarianism in Ireland. In fact, the Volunteers were almost exclusively Protestant. However, the purpose of the movement was not to promote sectarianism, but to promote Ireland's interests, particularly in the economic and political arenas. This did not mean that the Volunteers were without religious prejudices. Although some Catholics were admitted in small numbers to some Volunteer units, most of the Volunteer corps were very uncomfortable with the idea of repealing the Penal Laws that kept arms from Catholics.[13] But many religious prejudices were simply remnants of the traditional discrimination which was practiced since the conquests and dispossessions of the 17th century. Some fears concerning supposed Catholic attempts to reappropriate the land still lingered, but there had not been any significant sectarian outbreaks for some time during the later part of the Penal Era.

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[12] M. O'Connell, 1965, 89.

[13] Ibid., 77, 79-80.

It was in this environment that the Volunteers arose. Their almost exclusively Protestant character was partly due to religious discrimination on the part of some Volunteer units, but it was more a product of the social and economic basis of the Volunteer participants. Protestants were much more likely to have a sense of political consciousness, tending towards the patriotic attitudes described earlier. In the Presbyterian communities of Ulster, for example, affinity was felt for the cause of the American radicals, not only because of the many familial ties that existed between Ulster and the North American settlements, but also because of a mutual identification with oppression and economic disabilities under a strong English government.

Protestants possessed the essential combination of political rights and economic power, which were manifested in the goals of the Volunteers. Middle-class people in other areas of Ireland, particularly merchants in the port cities, felt disadvantaged in relation to the English because of the many restrictions placed on Irish imports and exports. Finally, many members of the emerging middle classes felt at least partially excluded from political power. Not only were the middle and lower classes vastly under-represented in the decision making process, but proto-nationalist sentiments that were expressed by the Volunteers were largely in response to the apparent English control that was exercised over what was supposed to be the Irish Parliament.[14] Therefore, the Volunteers, acting as the expressions of these political and economic grievances, were significant in that greater religious discrimination was not among their objectives. Sectarianism was

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[14] Ibid., 22.

largely ignored and somewhat obsolete at the time.

However, the trend towards non-sectarianism that the Volunteers represented was largely a failure. The Volunteer-Patriot movement had won victories on the "Free Trade" issue in 1779 and 1780 (not so much free trade in the *laissez faire* sense as equalization of trading rights with the rest of Great Britain), and by 1782 had succeeded in obtaining legislative independence from Britain. But further constitutional reform, particularly on the issue of representation (since British influence in the Irish Parliament was maintained through Dublin Castle's patronage of borough-owning aristocrats) brought about a proposal, strongly supported by the Northern Dissenters, and particularly the Belfast Volunteers, to enlist the aid of politically conscious Catholics against the mobilizing conservative-aristocratic forces.[15] The potential for such unprecedented Catholic influence, particularly in a land issue, divided the Volunteers. Fears of a Catholic land restoration re-emerged, and the need to keep Catholics from political power, as well as from arms, was recognized. In the Irish Parliament, this division was evident among the opposition forces in the growing tension between Henry Grattan, himself a convert from an anti-Catholic position, and Henry Flood, who was taking a stand on the sectarian issue to support his return to the leadership of the Patriots. The split essentially undercut the Patriot-Volunteer forces in the face of growing British determination to limit concessions to the Irish.

Sectarianism was also a factor in the policies of the British government, at least in terms of the impact of those policies. The Catholic Relief Act of 1778 was an

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[15] Priscilla Metscher, *Republicanism and Socialism in Ireland*, (Frankfurt am Main, 1986) 48.

attempt to enlist the support of Catholics for the government in order to counter-balance the support which the Ulster Presbyterian community was voicing for the American revolutionaries. A similar Act in 1782 further undercut the overtures that the radicals were making to the Catholics. Significantly, these government actions were seen by many Protestants as typical of the British government's neglect for Protestant concerns, a feeling that was voiced frequently over the following two decades. The government's limited reform of the landholding system, the Tenantry Act of 1780, further undercut and marginalized the Patriot and Volunteer forces in the struggle for political power that was developing between the middle and upper classes.[16]

The Volunteer split, Grattan's failure to control the religious issue in Parliament, and growing Protestant resentment of Catholics set the stage for the quick decline of the Volunteers. Their demise was quickly followed by the rise of sectarianism, starting in Ulster, which had been one of the areas of the most vigorous Volunteer activity. Although the early 1780s had seen the most "rapid growth of peaceable relations and diminution of ancient rivalries" between the three main denominations in Ireland, by the middle of the decade sectarianism was rising in Ulster.[17] Economic competition in different levels of the linen industry, partially a result of the relaxed legal discrimination against Catholics, led to the creation of Protestant intimidation gangs such as the Peep O'Day Boys,

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[16] M. O'Connell, 1965, 294.

[17] Ibid., 358.

and their Catholic counterparts, the Defenders.[18] Thus, the combination of Protestant resentment--due in a large part to what appeared to many to be recent government favoritism of Catholics--and the threat of economic competition from a newly emerging and potentially overwhelming Catholic community, which was most apparent in areas where Protestant weavers were directly affected by a Catholic influx into their profession, resulted in the end of the period of relaxed tensions and brought about the sectarian divisions that can be traced to the present day. This sectarianism found its expression in the formation of the Orange Lodges, in the articulated fear of a Catholic attempt to reverse the 17th century confiscations, and in atrocities committed by both Protestants and Catholics. Although only certain elements of the Protestant and Catholic communities were involved in the movements at this time, the divisions and grievances which were formulated then remained basically constant for the next 200 years. Republican tradition still accurately blames the British administration for the sectarianization of Ulster. The Peep O'Day Boys were "Anglican-led and English-inspired", while Orangeism was started simply as an attempt "to drive a wedge between Catholics and Presbyterians who had occasionally managed to make common cause" in opposition to agricultural changes and the restrictive Penal Laws.[19]

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[18] Marianne Elliott, *Partners In Revolution*, (New Haven, 1982) 19.

[19] Kevin Kelley, *The Longest War*, (Dingle, 1982) 10.

The United Irishmen

James Connolly continually referred to the United Irishmen as his political-ideological predecessors. In Connolly's view, the United Irishmen were the first to mix separatist political attitudes towards Britain with a class-based philosophy. (The validity of this interpretation is discussed below.) In *Labour In Irish History* and other writings, Connolly constantly evoked images of proto-socialists fighting to save Ireland from England as well as from the pro-British ruling class of Ireland, before they eventually fell victim to the indecision of their own leaders and the French commanders.[20] Regardless of the accuracy or inaccuracy of Connolly's characterizations, the United Irishmen are important not only because of Connolly's self-proclaimed embodiment of their ideals, but also because they do represent a major phase in the development of Irish nationalism.

To a great extent, the United Irishmen grew out of the more radical remnants of the Volunteers, particularly in the Presbyterian community in Ulster where latitudinarian and unorthodox views were still accepted on a wide range of subjects. In addition to espousing the ideals associated with the progressive elements of the Volunteers, such as constitutional separation from Britain, free trade, and non-sectarianism, the early United Irishmen were also closely associated with parliamentary/franchise reform. They hoped that a more representative government system would make the Irish government more responsive to the needs of distinctly Irish interests, rather than those of influential

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[20] *LIH*, especially chapter 8; also *WR* 12-25-1915.

British and Irish aristocrats. At first their groups were simply social/political clubs that saw themselves as somewhat associated with a more widespread European reform movement. But with the growing repression that came with the French Revolution, and as their ideas became less acceptable, they were often looked upon as traitors, and were eventually driven underground.

As a consequence of the war-time repression, the United Irishmen became a more radical group. Similarly, Irish society became more polarized; loyalism and republicanism both flourished in the time following the 1793-5 repression. With the influence of Theobald Wolfe Tone, a founding member of the United Irishmen who had originally been a Whig reformer, the United Irishmen underwent a transformation from reformism to republicanism by 1796. Also, radical members of the artisan class were independently starting their own republican "United Irish" groups which demanded complete separation from Britain, and a government modeled on that of the French Republic.

Henry Grattan, one of the leaders of the opposition in the Irish Parliament, condemned the government of Ireland for fostering sectarianism through support for Orangeism, and manipulating Catholic hopes for total emancipation.[21] Even as the government was acting on further concessions to Catholics, and thereby antagonizing much of the Protestant population without necessarily gaining the loyalty of the Catholics, the United Irishmen reaffirmed their commitment to religious toleration and refused to capitalize on this pool of potential support.[22]

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[21] M. Elliott, 1982, 107.

[22] Ibid., 38-9.

Confronted by the Catholic Emancipation Crisis and consequent sectarian strife of 1792-5, the parliamentary opposition decided to support the anti-Catholic sentiments in the Protestant community, and thus split from their traditional areas of support, which at that time were typified by the United Irishmen. Thus the United Irishmen were further isolated from mainstream political and social arenas, and suppressed by the government. Meanwhile, the government paid lip service to the ideas of religious toleration, but concurrently cultivated sectarianism and promoted sectarian violence in the form of the Protestant-dominated civil militia. One British commander openly admitted his intention "to increase the animosity between the Orangemen and the United Irishmen."[23]

As the sectarian violence continued and even intensified in Ulster, the Catholic Defenders organization grew in strength. The Defenders were a reaction to Protestant attacks, but they also showed contempt for the Catholic hierarchy, and had sought ties with the revolutionary government of France before the start of their association with the United Irishmen. The United Irishmen's commitment to non-sectarianism stemmed from (and was primarily limited to) the radical elements of the Protestant middle class, and was detested by much of the rest of the Protestant community. However, by the middle of the 1790s the Defenders, without any real structure or leadership, and the United Irishmen, without any real base of broad popular support, found it advantageous to merge their two organizations. Catholics again had seen their reformist ambitions frustrated in 1795, concurrently with the start of the Peep O'Day Boys attacks on Catholics

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[23] K. Kelley, 1982, 10.

(which, to the Catholics, appeared to be sanctioned by the government), and explicitly joined forces with the United Irish radicals. This merger gave the United Irish cause, which had been primarily a political movement, a distinctly social dimension. The merger also essentially destroyed the effect of the century-old Penal Law system, which had effectively kept the majority of the Catholic population de-politicized and leaderless. Significantly, the result was that much of the Catholic lower class was politicized for the first time by radical republican members of the Ulster Presbyterian community, while much of the upper-class Catholic population, particularly the Catholic hierarchy, began to realize a share of the ruling institutions, and thus opposed calls for change. The United Irishmen essentially became a Protestant-led organization with a largely lower-class Catholic following.

When their views became more radical, and their organization became less acceptable in upper-class circles, the United Irishmen began to look to France for more than inspiration. Contacts were made with the French in order to facilitate invasion plans, and arrangements were made in Ireland in order to organize and attack the British during such an invasion. During these preparations, the leadership of the now enlarged United Irishmen tried to set contingencies that would keep a successful invasion/rebellion from simply replacing the British-dominated government with French tyranny in Ireland. The main attraction towards the French for the United Irishmen was not co-religious affinity or cultural ties, but a strategically convenient partnership against Britain that was strengthened by republican attitudes. This partnership blossomed with the French decision to invade Ireland as part of their general strategy in their war against

England.

Because of logistical and communication problems, the French expedition to Bantry Bay in late 1796 failed, as did later, less significant attempts by the French to attack the British in Ireland. This initial invasion attempt was extremely uncoordinated between the French and the local United Irish leadership, since most of the important leaders had already left Ireland for France and other places. This problem reveals the general lack of current information to which the exiled United Irish leadership had access, demonstrating that they were quite out of touch with the on-the-spot situation in Ireland. The lack of information available to the United Irish leaders in France became even worse with the growing repression that followed the invasion attempt, as martial law was declared in March of 1798. The situation reached a peak in the crisis atmosphere of May, culminating in the famous '98 Rising. Not only did the remaining United Irish leadership fail to time the uprising to coincide with a French invasion, they also failed to take advantage of the strong United Irish influence in Britain: including contacts with United groups in England and Scotland, sympathizers in the radical London Corresponding Society and the Society for Constitutional Information, and particularly the strong elements of the United Irish membership in the British Navy, which played an integral part in paralyzing British military power at the Spithead and Nore mutinies.[24] But the rising itself was generally a sporadic, regional, and basically uncoordinated reaction to increasing government sponsored Orange terror that accelerated again in early 1797. The United Irish

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[24] M. Elliott, 1982, 121-50.

leadership did not fail to control and direct the rebellion as much as they were incapable of exercising any type of command over the largely spontaneous outburst. Thus, it was essentially not a United Irish rising. Although plans and provisions had been made, the repression and consequent secrecy of the leadership, combined with the cultural gulf between the leadership and most of the membership made the United Irish leaders impotent at the crucial moment. Finally, the United Irishmen were crippled by rampant individualism and even egomania among both the exiled and local segments of leadership.

With the frequent failures and frustrations of the United Irishmen's ambitions, the group became more and more marginalized and increasingly obscure. The divisions in Irish society, although basically social and political, seemed primarily denominational to many during the conflict, and, in fact, helped the strife to degenerate into a sectarianized struggle over property ending with the desertion of the remaining propertied elements from the United Irishmen during "the great Orange fear of 1798."[25] When the French finally invaded Ireland again, in August 1798 to aid the rebellion that had already collapsed, they did not find an Irish people struggling against an English-dominated aristocracy as they had expected, but Catholic fighting Protestant. This sectarianization aided the government forces by successfully undercutting the last relic of the old United Irish structure: the exiled Protestant middle-class leaders. By the time of Robert Emmet's "Rebellion" in 1803, the United Irishmen were obviously a defeated organization, barely a shadow of their formerly formidable presence. Although

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[25] Ibid., 197.

the United Irishmen existed in name until the second decade of the 19th century, their remnants were essentially scattered throughout the English-speaking world, and also absorbed into the French military.

In evaluating the United Irishmen, care must be taken to avoid generalizations that may not necessarily be fitting for the entire span of the existence of the United Irishmen. The ideas espoused by the United Irishmen evolved over time, as did the nature of the organization's composition. Although it is not entirely desirable to cram the United Irishmen into various stereotyped categories, it is essential that some generalizations are made about this substantial manifestation of that experience for the present purposes of finding James Connolly's relationship to the continuities and trends of Irish nationalist experiences. For this study, the focus should be on the movement in the middle to late 1790s, when the United Irish activity and strength were both climaxing in response to growing government repression and Orange intimidation. Even as the leadership became more and more radical, the membership of the movement reflected a wide and growing base of popular support. Therefore, it is in this significant period of the United Irish development, if in any, that we should look to for generalizations about the movement.

At this stage in the United Irish evolution, the movement was organized around the guiding principle of secrecy. Local cells, both urban and rural, were formed around local issues, but were theoretically part of a movement that encompassed all of Ireland, as well as other parts of the British Isles. The causes that brought the adherents together on a local level would often include mutual defense against government oppression and Orange attacks, proto-national and

anti-English sentiments, basic cultural prejudices, and, of course, simple anti-Protestant bigotry. Recruitment usually involved secret oaths, often taken when civil strife came to the area, and administered by local members to their associates. At the upper levels, the United Irish organization was led by radical middle-class professionals, usually urban in background, and included a large proportion of representatives from the traditionally Presbyterian Ulster-Scotch community. Because of arrests, persecution, and exiles, there was a relatively disastrous turnover of United leaders in Ireland. The secrecy that became more and more essential as the 1790s progressed also became quite a hinderance to efficient administration of the organization. Efforts to limit knowledge of the identity of the leaders, combined with the high turnover, meant confusion in policy, information, and the chain of command.

During the period in question, United Irish tactics varied. At first, before wide-scale repression was achieved, the United Irishmen tried to present their radical case for political reform at every available opportunity: in pamphlets, through the press, and at meetings, despite mounting public (middle and ruling-class) disapproval of their positions. As the official and unofficial repression increased, and the United Irish ideas became more radical, their tactics reflected their move to the underground: cells were created throughout the British Isles and in the British military, arms were gathered and stashed, contacts were made with other radicals, and overtures were made to the French in conjunction with specific plans for an uprising in Ireland.

In view of the rising tide of sectarianism in the 1790s, the United Irishmen stand out as one of the few significant forces to substantially ignore religious

denominations when formulating the movement's definition of "Irishness". For the United Irishmen, a common opposition to the nature of Britain's role in Irish affairs was far more important than denominational preference. The movement was remarkable in that it was able to maintain this stand even as much of the traditional base of support for recent Irish radicalism at the time, the Ulster Presbyterian community, sank into the rampant sectarian conflict that was re-emerging. The charge could be made that, in incorporating the Catholic Defenders into the United Irish organization, those combined groups then had a share in the spiralling sectarianism. Although there is probably some validity to such a claim, Defenderism was primarily a reactive phenomenon which represented a Catholic response to the attacks of such lower-class Protestant intimidation groups as the Peep O'Day Boys in the weaving districts of Ulster. Atrocities in the sectarian violence did occur from both sides, but once the United Irishmen merged with the Defenders, they tried to propagate the idea that sectarian violence among the Irish was only an unfortunate and avoidable consequence that resulted from the divide and rule tactics employed by British policy makers. Any conflict that the United Irishmen joined in that had sectarian overtones to it merely reflected the fact that much of the Irish population had been divided over the issue of loyalty to Britain along denominational lines; and these lines were quite reflective of class divisions in many areas. But for the United Irishmen, such conflicts were primarily political and national, rather than religious or (as will be argued) social or class-oriented in nature.

As noted earlier, James Connolly looked to the United Irishmen as the originators of radical republicanism based on class struggle in Ireland. He

reached this conclusion, in part, because he was somewhat of a romantic who recognized the power of imagery related to the United Irishmen in a tradition-steeped country such as Ireland; but also because of two statements made by the popular nationalist hero, Theobald Wolfe Tone. The first was Tone's manifesto of June 1791, when the United Irishmen were still a part of the accepted political process in Ireland, and had yet to become a radical republican organization, but were instead focussed on political reform. Connolly reproduced the manifesto in *Labour In Irish History*, and said of it:[26]

> It would be hard to find in modern socialist literature anything more broadly International in its scope and aims, more definitely of a class character in its methods, or more avowedly democratic in its nature than this manifesto, yet although it reveals the inspiration and methods of a revolutionist...(t)he Irish Socialist alone is in line with the thought of this revolutionary apostle of the United Irishmen.

The manifesto was simply the vision of Tone, one of the most radical founders of the United Irishmen, regarding what shape the organization should take. It was international in character, as were many of the views of the early Volunteers, the Patriots, and the liberals in Ireland, as well as others in Europe at the time. The document gave no specific program for the complete democratization of Ireland, but Benthamistic phrases could easily be interpreted by a reader, such as Connolly, as a call for radical democracy. Tone's only reference to social classes is a smattering of anti-aristocratic rhetoric. But besides being far from unusual at the time for a middle-class activist, this prejudice is evident only in his proposed methods for political action, and does not reflect a vision of a future radically egalitarian society. Furthermore, Connolly basically ignored Tone's affirmation of

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[26] *LIH*, 83-4; the manifesto is reproduced on pp. 82-3.

middle-class individualism, which would have been difficult for him to reconcile with his interpretation.[27]

The second was a now-famous quote from Tone, that Connolly referred to repeatedly:[28]

> Our freedom must be had at all hazards. If the men of property will not help us they must fall; we will free ourselves by the aid of that large and respectable class of the community--the men of no property.

In referring to this quote, Connolly was trying to portray the United Irishmen (in general) as a republican organization that, when frustrated by the reactionary middle class, saw the light of hope in the cause of the laboring classes and,

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[27] But the manifesto is significant for Connolly in that it parallels his tactical program with Tone's, revealing a strong degree of continuity from Tone's tactical (but not necessarily philosophical) ideas to Connolly. (But it must be remembered that Tone was not always representative of the rest of United Irish opinion.) It should be pointed out here that the three main points of Tone's program for the United Irishmen, outlined in the manifesto, were indeed "in line" with Connolly's tactics. First, Tone emphasized "publication, in order to propagate their principles and effectuate their ends." This was also probably the key activity in Connolly's career, as he was a prolific writer and publisher of social and political thought. Secondly, Tone called for "communications with the different towns" in order to apply political, and if necessary, extra-parliamentary pressure to achieve their stated reforms. Again, Connolly's tactics followed the same pattern (as is demonstrated below), by his focus on urban issues, and in his revolutionary and socialist organizing efforts to embrace like-minded elements in urban areas throughout Ireland. Finally, Tone wanted "communications with similar societies abroad--as the Jacobin Club of Paris, the Revolutionary Society in England, the Committee for reform in Scotland. *Let the nations go abreast.* Let the interchange of sentiments among mankind concerning the Rights of man be as immediate as possible."(Tone's italics) A few lines earlier, Tone had proclaimed that the great goal of the new Society was to be the "Rights of Man in Ireland." He wanted a "free nation" that would "stand in insulated independence". This mix of nationalism and internationalism was not unique to Tone at the time. However, in Connolly's day, socialism was seen as contradictory to nationalism. Connolly clearly stated his position in blending the two ideas, (see Chapter 3) in effect agreeing with Tone again.

[28] Quoted from *LIH*, 69.

therefore, sought to achieve the just ends of national liberation through the virtuous section of society: the poor and oppressed. Although this arrangement fits in nicely with Connolly's perceptions of early 20th century Ireland, it does not fit into the real situation of late 18th century Ireland, upon which he tried to impose this imagery. In fact, the policy-making elements within the United Irishmen supported property rights, as when provisions were made to guarantee private property in the event of a French invasion.[29] The leadership of the United Irishmen came predominantly from propertied classes, and a radical transformation of the existing social order was not one of their goals.

Connolly's use of the quote reveals a desperate attempt to grasp a minor statement and turn it into a guiding policy of the United Irishmen. Indeed, the United Irish leadership was willing to embrace the lower classes in an attempt to gain support for their primary goal: a radical transfiguration in the nature of the relationship between Britain and Ireland. However, Connolly misinterpreted the tactics of the United Irishmen and Wolfe Tone, specifically their use of some elements of social tensions based on class antagonisms, to promote a vision for a new Irish society. The United Irishmen lacked "any major social programme" and, in fact, repeatedly displayed a fear of the masses of the Irish people, leading Marianne Elliott to call this "one of the principal contradictions in United Irish thinking."[30] This fear of the unpropertied majority drove the Protestant United Irish leadership to seek French aid even when, according to Elliott, Ireland was

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[29] M. Elliott, 1982, 177-8.

[30] Ibid., 369.

capable of freeing itself from foreign control.[31] Any meaningful calls to actually change the essence of the social structure came from lower echelons of the organization, and were basically ignored. Even if these quotes from Tone are indicative of an underlying proto-socialistic tendency, which is doubtful, it must be remembered that Tone--although of symbolic importance to later Irish revolutionaries, and of philosophical and spiritual importance to many Irishmen in the early 1790s--became a more peripheral figure as the decade progressed. He was always seen as one of the most radical figures within the United Irishmen, but whatever real influence he possessed waned with his exile to France.

Thus, even though the United Irishmen did not fit into Connolly's imagery of socialist revolutionaries, they are still significant in terms of shaping many of the patterns of Irish nationalism, some of which were to be continued by Connolly. Their use of propaganda and political literature to educate and influence the Irish population was apparent in Connolly's work. The militaristic structures and covert measures utilized by the United Irishmen reappeared later in Connolly's activities. Like the United Irishmen, Connolly looked at Ireland's problems and came to the conclusion that separation from Britain, in one form or another, was the necessary remedy. (Although in Connolly's view, distinct Irish nationhood could only be one part of the overall solution because, as will be demonstrated, he believed that political revolution without social revolution was generally useless.) And both Connolly and the United Irishmen saw the potential strength of the lower classes of society as being the key to achieving this end. But the

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[31] Ibid., 4.

most significant and lasting impact of the United Irishmen was their non-sectarianism. The United Irishmen insisted on preserving their vision of a non-sectarian struggle at a time when institutions were creating religious strife in order to keep control, and thereby creating a lasting notion that loyalism translated into Orangeism and was associated with property; while conversely, Irish Catholicism became equated with poverty, rebellion, and disloyalty. Connolly also felt that he had to cultivate religious toleration in the face of growing labor unrest that was taking on a sectarian nature. Connolly saw parallels between the United Irishmen and himself, since he believed that pro-British capitalists in Ulster were primarily responsible for the sectarian violence because of their need to divide and rule the working class.

Irish Nationalist Sentiments At The Time Of The Act Of Union

In addition to the United Irishmen, there were other manifestations of various forms of Irish nationalism during the period of warfare between Britain and revolutionary France. The Act of Union (1801) offers a window into the views of the politically active classes that saw the United Irishmen as representing too radical an expression of nationalism to be acceptable in their political spectrum. Obviously, the passing of the Act of Union is not generally accepted as an expression of Irish nationalism; and, due to the working-class focus of most of Connolly's historical commentary, he essentially ignored the event.[32] However,

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[32] In *Labour, Nationality and Religion* (Dublin, 1910), Connolly claimed that "On 1 March 1800, no less than thirty-two Orange lodges protested against the Act of Union, but the catholic hierarchy endorsed it." (p. 12) This statement was

the controversy surrounding the Act and the reaction it inspired offers much insight into the development and relative importance of Irish nationalist sentiments at the turn of the century and beyond. It also reveals the profound differences between various definitions of Irish nationhood, as well as attitudes towards these different definitions. The debate over the Act itself demonstrated the tension over the definition of Irishness: whether Ireland was to be a part of Britain, or constitutionally distinct. Obviously, other factors were involved in the controversy, particularly political, financial, and economic considerations. But the Act polarized the political forces in Ireland over the position of Ireland within the British Empire. Although for various reasons the view of Ireland as an integral part of Britain prevailed at the time, the defeated political forces were themselves indicative of dissenting views of Irishness.

In *The Passing of the Irish Act of Union*, G.C. Bolton divides the anti-unionists into two general categories: the liberal minority was represented by Henry Grattan; and the more prevalent political opposition to the Act was associated with the views of the Protestant Ascendancy. The liberal group "looked to the growth of an Irish nation in which all should have the opportunity of deserving citizenship, and which would combine its own distinctive ethos with a firm loyalty to the British connexion", while the dominant opposing view was that "the

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not meant as a denunciation of Orangeism, per se, or even the Act of Union, but of the Catholic hierarchy. This was one part of a long list of grievances that Connolly used to indict the class-based policies of the Catholic Church throughout Irish history: exemplifying his preference for putting class divisions ahead of religious differences. However, his condemnation of the Church's support for the Act obviously indicates dissatisfaction with the Act itself.

autonomy of Ireland meant the autonomy of the Protestant Ascendancy."[33] The failure of the political forces opposed to the Act to agree on an alternative vision of Irishness in resisting the Union displayed many of the ubiquitous contradictions and complexities of Irish nationalism.

However, it was in the response of the Irish outside of the central political arena where the broad varieties of Irish nationalism were most evident. Much of the support for or opposition to the Union was given on a denominational/geographical basis. Many of the politically conscious Catholics in the south and west supported the Union in the hopes of greater civil liberties for Catholics under the British Parliament. Meanwhile, Protestant positions were divided. The traditionally radical Presbyterians, mostly from the areas of Ulster that were dominated by the plantation communities, were becoming increasingly conservative and sought the stability offered by the Union.[34] This view of Ireland as an integral part of Great Britain was quickly becoming closely associated with the Ulster Presbyterian community, which still strongly upholds this vision (although on a more limited basis now), and should be seen as a competing, though still valid definition of Irishness. Therefore, this period was essentially the culmination the Ulster Presbyterians' conversion from the radicalism and republicanism of the 1780s and 1790s to conservative Unionism, and represents a watershed in the history of that community. Most of the other Protestant communities in Ireland, especially in the "frontier" areas that were confronted by

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[33] G.C. Bolton, *The Passing of the Irish Act of Union*, (London, 1966) 218.

[34] Ibid., 135.

a large local Catholic population, opposed the Union, fearing an "English 'softness' towards the Catholics who outnumbered and surrounded them, and thus often sought their refuge in the sectarian Orange groups.[35]

However, reaction to the Act of Union was almost entirely constitutional during and after the debate. Even Emmet's Rebellion of 1803 was not specifically a response to the Act. This incident was more of a protest of the general relationship between the two islands, in addition to being a consequence of the basic lack of contact between the exiled United Irishmen and the actual situation in Ireland at the time.[36] Still, the rebellion and the increased sectarian reaction that followed it indicate that sectarian, extra-parliamentary, and even violent actions were hardly discarded as weapons of competing visions of Irish nationalism at this time, but they were not employed over the issue of the Union.

The basic catalysts for the legislation of the Union were political and economic. After the Irish drive for political/legislative independence two decades earlier, the British government hoped to put more of an official limit on Irish autonomy, although unofficial means had been utilized when they were needed. The incessant political and social strife in Ireland had not abated with the granting of greater independence to Ireland, but actually had increased over the previous decade. The British government hoped that tighter control of Ireland could increase its ability to manipulate and channel the forces in the highly unstable social situation, and would help the government to limit excess sectarian

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[35] Ibid., 139-40.

[36] M. Elliott, 1982, 302-3.

atrocities, which "sounded archaic" to the English people, and was becoming a source of much embarrassment.[37]

Furthermore, the Irish government had become quite a drain on Britain's finances, and the events of late 1796 to 1798 amply demonstrated the inability of the Irish government to effectively deal with internal and external threats through preparation for and recognition of danger. The passing of the Act displayed that while the British often viewed the Irish as incompetent, they saw Ireland as an integral part of the Empire, as in Lord Cornwallis's contention that "without an Union the British Empire must be dissolved."(8 June 1799)[38] But the debate over the representation to be granted to the Irish in the enlarged British Parliament demonstrated a poor regard for the Irish by the British ruling class. The controversy revolved around the issue of how to arrive at a fair number of representatives from Ireland: a representation proportionately equal for the English and Irish populations would have enlarged the British Parliament by about 40% (while Scotland was already under-represented); but restricting the influx to a much less equitable proportion--100 new MPs in the House of Commons--would maintain English hegemony.[39] Bolton claims that the second option triumphed because of a "wish to enfeeble Ireland" and protect British ruling interests. However, the debate revealed the prejudice of the English parliamentary leadership against the "wild Irish" and the "Paddies"--and not just

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[37] Ibid., 9.

[38] Quoted from G.C. Bolton, 1966, 157.

[39] G.C. Bolton, 1966, 85-6.

the lower levels of Irish society, but also against the Irish (and specifically the Anglo-Irish) classes which would provide the MPs.[40]

In addition to these political motivations, related economic causes were also influential in encouraging support for the Act of Union. Again, by looking at geographical areas of support, it becomes apparent that Dublin was squaring off against the other port cities of Ireland on the issue, thereby revealing some of the economic considerations that came into play. The Dublin metropolitan area and the surrounding counties supported a population that was strongly anti-unionist. The residents of Dublin recognized that they were in a privileged position because of the economic benefits that came with being the seat of government in Ireland. The surrounding residents realized that commercially, they were largely dependent on this market.[41] But in Londonderry, Cork, and Galway, pro-unionist sentiments were stronger, largely due "to the hope of greater prosperity" in commerce after equality with Britain was achieved.[42] Although religious considerations had some influence on the way an area was to approach the issue, in the cities the merchant class was deciding the question according to simple self-interest. The leaders of Belfast generally gave their support to the measure, although not explicitly--since it had not been long since this area had been the hotbed of republicanism. But the middle classes of Ulster had been the beneficiaries of recent prosperity, which led them to turn their backs on their

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[40] Ibid., 86.

[41] Ibid., 130-1.

[42] Ibid., 138-44.

traditional reformist impulses and to emphasize security concerns instead.[43] Significantly, the tension that was evident between Dublin and Belfast over the issue would later reappear in Connolly's time, when Belfast's markets were more closely tied to the British Empire than were Dublin's, and therefore the views of the merchants of the two cities regarding Ireland's relationship with Britain were still divided along the same lines.

Much of the Irish nationalist tradition holds that the underlying reason for the Act of Union was to destroy the fledgling Irish industries, particularly linen. In the most recent period of the troubles in Northern Ireland, starting in the late 1960s, significant elements within the Irish republican tradition, which incorporates a strong dose of Irish socialism from Connolly, still hold that the linen industry was the real target of the Act of Union, for the benefit of competing British textiles.[44] The linen industry, strongest in Ulster, was a key factor in this economic equation. The weaving areas of Armagh, in particular, had been the scene of the rise of sectarianism, which was initially caused by the competition between weavers of the different denominations, and the linen culture may have been a key factor in gathering lower-class Protestant support for Orangeism instead of republicanism.[45] Since the Irish Parliament had become independent, the Irish government had been trying to protect Irish industries such as linen. With the Union, legislated protection of Irish goods was to be gradually

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[43] Ibid., 135.

[44] Bernadette Devlin, *The Price Of My Soul*, (New York, 1969) 51.

[45] R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972*, (New York, 1988) 272.

rescinded, making Ireland vulnerable to the British economic powerhouse. In fact, the Irish linen industry did contract from a wide geographical base to the settlement area of Ulster, but this was only a continuation of a consolidation process that had been happening since the industry had reached its peak in the 18th century.[46] Technical innovations and changing economic conditions had much more to do with the retarded growth of Irish industry than the ulterior motives of British policy-makers.[47] However, the Union agreement resulted in an approximately 250% increase in the Irish national debt, which, along with the system of absentee landlords, took investment capital away from new Irish industries.[48] The subsequent general decline in industrial growth prevented cities from developing the capability to absorb excess rural population, a handicap which would prove to be fatal in the 1840s.

The Act was eventually passed through the Irish Parliament, which essentially voted itself out of existence. The British government made full use of its ability to dispense patronage by bargaining for votes for the Act with money and positions.[49] But Bolton points out that these practices, which seem so corrupt now, were much more acceptable at the time in that social-political level of British society.[50] However, even more significant is the fact that the British

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[46] Mary E. Daly, *Social and Economic Historyof Ireland Since 1800*, (Dublin, 1981) 65-6.

[47] Ibid., 87-8.

[48] P. Metscher, 1986, 74.

[49] G.C. Bolton, 1966, 184.

[50] Ibid., 184, 216-7.

government, in its determination and desperation to get the Act passed, made promises of further concessions towards the emancipation of the Catholic population in order to gain the support of the Catholics and other reform-minded Irishmen. The failure of the British government to make sure that the Catholic hopes were realized in the early part of the 19th century assisted the rise of a leader who personified the ambitions of the Catholics: Daniel O'Connell. But religious differences and political promises were not the only reasons for the continuation of Irish nationalism. Irish nationalists who opposed the vision of an Irish nation as a part of a larger whole--Great Britain--had encountered crucial setbacks over the previous decade, but were to become more vocal in the 19th century. Bolton concludes that "Irish separatism survived, not because of cultural and religious peculiarities--similar factors existed in Wales and Scotland--but because these peculiarities were mingled with economic and social grievances which went unredressed."[51] A new generation of Irish nationalists were willing to capitalize on the issues that the British government had brushed aside or ignored.

Daniel O'Connell: The Emancipation And Repeal Movements

As the actual passing of the Act of Union faded into the past, many elements of the Catholic community became increasingly frustrated with the British government's failure to fulfill its promise of Catholic emancipation. Upon this dissatisfaction, Daniel O'Connell built his political career, including his successful

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[51] Ibid., 221.

drive to achieve Catholic emancipation and his failed attempt to repeal the Act of Union. James Connolly, however, essentially viewed Daniel O'Connell, the "Liberator" for Irish Catholics, as a class enemy. Connolly saw O'Connell as the personification of all that was wrong with middle-class nationalism, a tradition that was still very strong in Connolly's day, and that was still directly related to Daniel O'Connell. Connolly saw a man who, in a crunch, would put class privileges before country; who was involved in the violent suppression of Emmet's Rebellion as a member of the forces of reaction; and who used his parliamentary position and popular base of support to actively oppose even the most basic alleviations of the misery of the laboring classes. Whether or not Connolly's interpretation is accurate (this is discussed further below), it is understandable as Connolly's attempt to disgrace the Home Rulers, the dominant middle-class nationalists of his own time, by exposing their symbolic leader as a enemy of "true" Irish nationalism.

Daniel O'Connell came from a Catholic landowning family from County Kerry. During his education in France he witnessed some of the bloody events of the French Revolution, and thus formulated his commitment to reject political violence. However, his early political views were greatly influenced by some of the ideas behind the French Revolution, and, to a greater extent, the American Revolution.[52] By 1798 he was called to the Irish Bar. While in the Bar, he joined a militia unit composed of members of his profession, which was involved

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[52] T. Desmond Williams, "O'Connell's Impact On Europe" in *Daniel O'Connell*, Kevin B. Nowlan and Maurice R. O'Connell, editors, (New York, 1985) 100.

in the suppression of Emmet's Rebellion, of which Connolly wrote. Professor Maurice R. O'Connell, one of Daniel O'Connell's descendants, writes that Daniel O'Connell had become distinguished in his work by 1805 and had become very successful financially by 1813, but was barred by the Penal Laws from promotion.[53] At that time O'Connell was involved in the politically charged trial of the newspaper man, John Magee. Magee was targeted by Robert Peel as "a protagonist of Catholic Emancipation, and thereby hung the reason for the trial."[54] Raised to be a leader among his co-religionists, O'Connell turned the trial into a political protest of the Catholic condition. O'Connell lost the trial, and was condemned by his wealthy land-owning uncle for his tendency to play upon the emotions of the crowd, but he launched himself into politics.[55]

O'Connell was a radical member of the old Catholic Committee until he split with the organization to found the more confrontational, but still constitutional, Catholic Association in 1823. His election to the British House of Commons in 1828 forced the issue of Catholic Emancipation, which was granted the following year. After this success he set his sights on the repeal of the Act of Union, which he blamed for Ireland's problems, and founded the Repeal Association for this purpose. He formed the first cohesive group of Irish MPs, but for political reasons did not press the issue of Repeal wholeheartedly until 1841. After organizing the "monster meetings" in the "Repeal year" of 1843, he was challenged

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[53] Maurice R. O'Connell, "O'Connell: Lawyer And Landlord" in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 107.

[54] Ibid., 110.

[55] Ibid., 111.

by the government. Committed to constitutional methods, O'Connell backed down, and the tactics which he personified were largely discredited. The Repeal Association split with the more radical Young Ireland group, and the advent of the Famine in 1845 only magnified his failure to achieve what he believed would be the remedy for all of Ireland's problems. He died in 1847 during a pilgrimage to Rome.

The whole of O'Connell's political career was based on the premise that Ireland's problems were a result of Britain's inability or refusal to effectively and fairly govern Ireland. Irish political and social development, and the consequent problems, which were often related to the system of land distribution, were quite different from that of Britain, where "Free Trade and Chartism dominated the political scene" at the time.[56] Britain's inability to correct problems in Ireland after the Act of Union led O'Connell to promote the idea of a re-established Irish Parliament, with continued loyalty to the British Crown. Thus, all of O'Connell's aims eventually centered around the idea of legislative separation from Britain, and continued constitutional ties to England, with a reliance on constitutional avenues to achieve that goal.

If this is what O'Connell stood for, what he became in the eyes of the people--particularly in later generations--is something else. The legacy of O'Connell included many myths from his contact with the Irish peasantry, and represented their wishes for Ireland. According to John A. Murphy, O'Connell was a typical "Gaeltacht man", in that he was "pragmatic, adaptable, non- or even anti-

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[56] Kevin B. Nowlan, "O'Connell And Irish Nationalism" in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 12.

republican, and entirely without sentimentality" regarding the Gaelic language or lifestyle.[57] Indeed, O'Connell refused to take the leadership of movements organized to protect the Gaelic language, seeing them as reactive.[58] But the peasantry idealized and even deified O'Connell as a long-awaited saviour of their people. This idealization took on religious connotations and imagery, and, significantly, a strong dose of anti-English sentiment. Much of the folklore from this period includes references that focus on O'Connell as the personification of the long awaited retribution that Catholic peasants hoped would be inflicted on the "Sasanaigh" (English) and the Orangemen.[59] Despite many of the gross inaccuracies that abound in such legends, particularly the references to violent retribution which was supposed to be administered by a person who was effectively a pacifist, these tales are significant in that they reflect O'Connell's deep and broad base of popular support, even if that support was often based on misconceptions and idealizations.

O'Connell's social and political ideas, if they can be classified, tended towards typical middle-class liberalism of the time, with patriotic, Catholic, Gaelic, and Bethamite influences apparent.[60] In practice, O'Connell presented an ambiguous record of his ideas. In his career in Parliament, he hedged on political

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[57] John A. Murphy, "O'Connell And The Gaelic World" in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 35.

[58] Ibid., 42.

[59] Diarmaid O'Muirithe, "O'Connell In Irish Folk Tradition" in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 60-2.

[60] Joseph Lee, "The Social And Economic Ideas Of O'Connell" in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 72.

applications of the philosophies he supported, repudiated much of what other Benthamites (and the classical economists) held dear, and, in his private affairs, deviated from the strict application of the philosophies he embraced.[61] Therefore, Joseph Lee suggests that O'Connell's "eclectic" opinions on economic matters indicate that O'Connell did not have a good grasp of "the economic theories he invoked."[62] Essentially, O'Connell was an advocate of Catholic liberalism: his Benthamism was tempered by his religion.[63] He let his religious values influence his private ideas, as he usually supported "traditional" values and was rather paternalistic towards his tenants, which was not unusual for a person in his position.

But O'Connell's ideas and actions regarding the growing laboring classes drew the most criticism from Connolly. Connolly was especially harsh on O'Connell for his stand on labor organizations in Dublin and child-labor legislation. On the issue of trade unions, Connolly portrayed O'Connell as the capitalists' tool in Parliament against the attempts by workers to organize.[64] Although Connolly called O'Connell "the most bitter and unscrupulous enemy of trade unionism Ireland has yet produced", Joseph Lee points out that O'Connell was not opposed to trade unions in principle--the case in point involved craft unions in Dublin--but opposed the tactics, the exclusionary tendencies, and the substantial degree of

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[61] Ibid., 72-6.

[62] Ibid., 74-5.

[63] Ibid., 79.

[64] *LIH*, 125-6.

control employed by these associations of upper-level workers.[65]

Connolly's argument against O'Connell on the child labor issue revolved around O'Connell's opposition to an attempt to legislate stricter enforcement of the Factory Acts (1833), which offered some limitations on child labor. Connolly claims that O'Connell was serving "the interest of English and Irish capitalism" in maintaining that the Acts "had legislated against the nature of things, and against the right of industry."[66] Again, Lee refutes Connolly's charge, this time claiming that O'Connell tried to stop the motion in order to keep another important issue, the Irish Tithes Bill, on the agenda. Furthermore, since O'Connell did indeed recognize the suffering of these working people, Lee claims--without supporting evidence--that O'Connell was simply trying to protect the workers from "even worse unemployment in what was already a bitter slump year."[67] This justification for O'Connell's position disregards the fact that, in what was apparently only a procedural issue, O'Connell venomously belittled such altruistic interests as those who "go about parading before their world *their ridiculous humanity*," and whose regulations would impoverish the owners.[68] In his argument, O'Connell's concern did not focus on the workers.

Connolly's attacks on O'Connell are significant in that they demonstrate his willingness to criticize a national hero because O'Connell's brand of nationalism was considered impure, or inadequate by Connolly. As Lee demonstrates

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[65] J. Lee, in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 76-7.

[66] *LIH*, 126-7.

[67] J. Lee, in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 76.

[68] *LIH*, 127. (Connolly's italics)

throughout his essay, there is much evidence that O'Connell did recognize the plight of the poor--both urban and rural--in Ireland.[69] However, the range of O'Connell's actions lends itself to ambiguous conclusions at best. There is enough contradictory evidence from his private writings and actions, both as a politician and a landlord, to support both positive and negative evaluations--each with some validity--of his record on these issues. But his political philosophy can still be recognized from the generalities of his public career. Basically, O'Connell was a moderate Irish nationalist whose liberalism was contained by his Catholicism: the "universalism of his Catholicism subordinated the intrinsic relativities of socio-economic issues to moral absolutes".[70] For many in the British Isles as well as on the continent, O'Connell represented the new Liberal Catholic.[71] His contributions to Ireland were that he established Ireland's distinctive place in British politics, and he placed Irish nationalism within British constitutionalism, thereby setting the pattern for Parnell, the Irish Parliamentary Party, and the later Home Rule movement well into the Free State era of Irish politics.

The way in which O'Connell went about promoting his ideas involved the extension of the older extra-parliamentary tactics of mass organization pioneered by the Volunteers, mixed with his strictly constitutional philosophy and utilization

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[69] J. Lee, in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985; for example, see pp. 74-5 for O'Connell's concern for starving peasants, or p. 76 for his views on the exploitation of workers.

[70] Ibid., 83.

[71] T. Desmond Williams, in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 101-3.

of the political process. But his innovations, embodied in the structures of the Catholic Association and the Repeal Association, represented a revolution in the attainment and use of political power in Ireland. The Catholic Association was built on the issue of emancipation, which had been primarily a concern of the Catholic middle class. But the ideas behind the Catholic Association were not really new except in the sheer size of the undertaking. The Catholic Association was also able to generate some appeal beyond the traditional parameters of religion (in that elements of other excluded groups, such as some Protestant dissenters, were mobilized) and of class, thus engaging the support of the peasantry.[72] O'Connell organized the Catholic peasantry by utilizing the network of sympathetic lower clergy to gather the easily affordable "Catholic Rent" from members. Sustained by this mass support, O'Connell then manipulated British politics, where he sometimes held the balance of power, but quite often worked with the Whigs. Thus, the extra-parliamentary extremism of mass organizations, militaristic assemblies, and emotional rhetoric was blended with a strict constitutionalism evident in his parliamentary moderation.

With the decline of the Whig governments of the 1830s (governments with which O'Connell basically cooperated), he decided to actively pursue the repeal of the Act of Union. In 1840 O'Connell tried to duplicate the success he had with the Catholic Association by creating a new organization patterned on the previous one. After a slow start due to political apathy, the Loyal National Repeal Association accelerated its activity in late 1842 and climaxed in the

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[72] A.D. Macintyre, "O'Connell And British Politics" in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 89.

"Repeal Year" of 1843.[73] In keeping with the idea that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity, O'Connell hoped to take advantage of Britain's apparent imperial problems (of overextension) and economic problems (of increased competition) by abandoning his recent parliamentary emphasis and concentrating on agitation in Ireland. His plan for Repeal included five reforms: abolition of the tithes, fixity of tenure for the peasants, protection for Irish industry, enlarging the franchise and establishing the secret ballot, and abolishing the poor law.[74] However, even the image of hundreds of thousands of supporters gathered into symbolic formations at historically significant sites for the "monster meetings"--which often included men in uniforms and some drilling--failed to overcome the political obstacles to repeal.[75] Tactically, O'Connell was trapped between two classes of his supporters. He tried to appease the peasantry, which hoped for land tenure; and he had to maintain the middle class's (and the hierarchy's) need for stability. Furthermore, despite O'Connell's practical pacifism, he was relying heavily on "quasi-revolutionary rhetoric" to conceal the fact that his movement was purely political and would not employ the violence implied by the militaristic formations.[76] The rhetoric itself often implied violence, as in this excerpt from a speech at Mallow:[77]

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[73] Gearoid O' Tuathaigh, *Ireland Before The Famine, 1798-1848*, (Dublin, 1972) 184.

[74] Richard Davis, *The Young Ireland Movement*, (Dublin, 1987) 37.

[75] Ibid., 75.

[76] Ibid., 12, 42.

[77] T.A. Jackson, *Ireland Her Own*, (London, 1970) 234; (Jackson's italics and parentheses).

Are we to be trampled underfoot? Oh, they shall never trample *me* at least! (Shouts of 'No! No!') I say, they *may* trample me, but it will be my dead body they will trample on and not the living man!

But Peel's administration understood that such words were coming from a man who had based his career on the idea that no political end warranted violence. Thus, the government called his bluff, banned the planned meeting at Clontarf, and forced O'Connell to back down, thereby discrediting him in the eyes of many.

Although the mass mobilization of the population by the Repeal Association was rather easily controlled by the British government, the movement had already been hindered by the threat it represented to many of the Irish people, particularly in its sectarian character. Despite O'Connell's best intentions and efforts, the Repeal Association was never able to shake its essentially Catholic image (which was not entirely undeserved) in the eyes of many Protestants. O'Connell's success with the Catholic Association gave him a wide base of Catholic support, which was very noticeable to the non-Catholic population of Ireland. Although it was not necessarily meant to be that way, the nature of the Catholic Association did give it an overwhelmingly Catholic membership, and fueled Protestant fears of a monolithic Catholic force in the form of politicized masses, which appeared to oppose the security concerns of many in the minority denominations. With the rise of the repeal issue, many Protestants again associated one of the greatest agitators of the time exclusively with the larger and apparently threatening section of the population, despite the fact that, by the mid-1830s, over a third of the MPs in O'Connell's Irish Repeal Party were

Protestants.[78] Furthermore, on subsequent issues such as education, O'Connell, and to an even greater extent his son and apparent successor, John, were influenced by the nationalist Gallician element within the Catholic hierarchy, led by repeal supporter Archbishop John MacHale, and did in fact become more Catholic in their orientation in directing the Repeal Association.[79] Most failed to see that O'Connell's apparent reformist policies and extremist rhetoric were balanced by a conservative perspective regarding the status quo. O'Connell's failure, despite great efforts, was his inability to convince the influential Protestant communities of Ireland that he was offering an inclusive definition of Irishness that did not put them in jeopardy, while at the same time maintaining Catholic support for his career.

Somewhat ironically, the fact that the Repeal Association was seen as primarily Catholic did not mean that the movement had the support of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. Conservative Catholic leaders in both the Vatican and Vienna were suspicious of mass organizations and reform, or anything that could be perceived as revolutionary, such as monster meetings or "the ideology of romantic nationalism" in general.[80] The Vatican, which generally supported his ideas of Catholic emancipation but was more suspicious of his ideas on repeal, was afraid of his tactics. The Irish hierarchy, who themselves were not in total support of O'Connell, were directed not to encourage support for O'Connell, but often

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[78] Maurice O'Connell, "O'Connell, Young Ireland, And Violence" in *Thought*, (Vol. 52, No. 207) December, 1977, 382.

[79] R. Davis, 1987, 67-8.

[80] T.D. Williams, in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 102, 104.

ignored such warnings.[81] Still, it must be remembered that the base of O'Connell's organizations was often the local, lower clergy, who gathered money and support for the "Liberator."

The first half of the century preceding Connolly was a period of time that he looked to for a romantic inspiration for his own ideas. As far as Connolly was concerned, the Rebellion of 1798 and Tone's image as a social-republican brought the ancient Irish tendency towards an independent cooperative society into the modern era. The binding of Ireland to Britain, particularly with the Act of Union, was an anti-Irish measure that, along with the economic and cultural conquests, according to Connolly, attempted to complete the domination of Ireland through British control of the political sphere. The early Volunteers, the United Irishmen, Emmet's Conspiracy, and the mass movement of O'Connell's extra-parliamentary forces were, in varying degrees, simply reactions to British domination. These early manifestations of protest contained many of the seeds, real or romanticized, for Connolly's later actions and ideas, particularly in the areas of non-sectarianism, popular politics, the use of force, and social-republicanism. But the next half century would also present figures and movements that foreshadowed Connolly, both in terms of methods and ideology. Although Connolly took a less romanticized view of these later groups and individuals, in many ways his career was more closely related to, and, in some

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[81] Ibid., 104.

respects, an outgrowth of these later manifestations of protest. The next chapter studies some of the important elements of Irish nationalism as they relate to socialism and religion from the time of Young Ireland through Connolly's own career.

CHAPTER TWO

Irish Nationalism, And Its Relationship To Socialism And Sectarianism In The Century Preceding Connolly: From Young Ireland To James Connolly

Young Ireland And The Great Famine

If Daniel O'Connell represented "old Ireland" in terms of his political outlook and his nationalist philosophy, then the "old Ireland" of O'Connell's time effectively died in the Great Famine. The new generation of Irish nationalists, particularly those who came to be known as "Young Ireland", represented a significant departure from O'Connell's nationalism, tactics, and organization, but were still an integral part of the Repeal Association during the years of its greatest agitation. It was within the Repeal Association that these young nationalists advocated the most radical nationalism in pre-famine Ireland since Tone, but eventually became frustrated with the politics and compromises of the old-style nationalists. Because of the short life span of this movement, it is generally seen as being of secondary importance in the pantheon of Irish nationalism. Richard Davis claims, "Only the Provisional IRA takes seriously Young Ireland's role in

the tradition it claims to defend."[1] But the ideas of the Young Irelanders on such subjects as tactics, Irishness, race, and, religion represent such a significant departure from those of their predecessors, and are still relevant on issues such as violence and "liberation theology," that they are essential in understanding Irish nationalist traditions.[2] Their significance caused Desmond Keenan to point to the Young Ireland era as the beginning of modern nationalism in Ireland because of their creation of a sense of a "national ethos" and "national destiny".[3]

O'Connell had been facing the biggest political challenge of his career since Clontarf and was heavily reliant on the Whigs for political support. The Young Irelanders were the section of the Repeal Association that disliked the Whig alliance because it did not fit with their ideas of a self-sufficient Irish nationalism. They increasingly saw themselves as the proponents of true nationalism--as opposed to O'Connell's reformism and conciliatory political practices. The leaders of Young Ireland had played an essential role in publicizing O'Connell's repeal agitation, but gradually diverged from his leadership because of questions of strategy. The Repeal Association was experiencing internal factionalism by the mid-1840s, and by 1846 the Young Ireland group openly split from the Repeal Association.

The reasons for the split are complex. On the surface, at least, the issue which brought about the split was the matter of non-violence. O'Connell had based his

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[1] R. Davis, 1987, 1.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Desmond J. Keenan, *The Catholic Church In Nineteenth-Century Ireland*, (Dublin, 1983) 190.

career on exclusively non-violent methods for political change. At a Repeal Association meeting in July 1846, the Young Ireland group refused to surrender the abstract right to use violence for political purposes, even though they did not see violence as a real avenue of action at that time. The Young Irelanders felt that excluding such a possibility was not in the interests of what they hoped would be a self-sufficient nation.

But the issue of non-violence does not adequately explain the split because the depth of O'Connell's pacifism becomes an issue in any analysis of the event. Although his methods made him appear cowardly to such groups as the Orangemen, his position on violence was more of a practical than a principled stand. He had been repulsed by the bloodshed of the French Revolution, but he had also mortally wounded a man in a duel in 1815. The violence implied in the language he used at the gathering at Mallow, reproduced above, also casts doubt on the extent of his pacifism. O'Connell claimed that "if I were a Quaker I could not abhor violence more than I do."[4] But O'Connell qualified his claim by then rejecting the arguments of the Quakers--such as repeal supporter Ebenezer Shackelton--for complete non-violence. In the "Peace Resolutions" that O'Connell introduced before the Repeal Association, and which led to the schism, O'Connell again hedged:[5]

> It has been said very unwisely that this principle prohibits the necessary defence against unjust aggression on the part of a domestic government, or a foreign enemy. It does no such thing. It leaves the right of self-defence perfectly free to

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[4] Ibid., 96.

[5] From the Peace Resolutions introduced to the General Committee of the Repeal Association on 11 July 1846; quoted from Maurice O'Connell, "O'Connell, Young Ireland, and Violence" in *Thought*, December, 1977, 401-2.

the use of any force sufficient to resist and defeat unjust aggression. The implications of such a support for self-defense, a doctrine rejected by the Quakers, obviously had the potential for extremely broad interpretation within the Irish context. This was probably the major inconsistency in O'Connell's pacifism. Although these facts do not prove that O'Connell's pacifism was not genuine, they do cast doubt on the depth of his convictions, show a degree of hypocrisy, and present a more ambiguous attitude towards non-violence. Furthermore, they cast doubt on his specific motives in arranging the debate over the issue of non-violence.

Thus, although the two factions split during the debate over the use of violence, most scholars see the issue as merely a device to rid O'Connell's organization of his critics. The real point of contention was more likely the issue of a renewed alliance with the Whigs. Although Robert Peel had talked much of reform, his ministry had in fact done little except for some sporadic attempts to court the Catholic middle class and the hierarchy. 1846 saw the return of a Whig government and the possibility for O'Connell to return to his parliamentary tactics to further the cause of reform. With Clontarf, repeal had essentially been defeated as a mass political issue, and O'Connell had to hope for limited success with the Whigs. The Young Ireland group saw themselves as the embodiment of high principles of Irish nationhood and condemned "the wheeling and dealing which was the central feature of O'Connell's political style."[6] The Young Irelanders had supported O'Connell's decision to back down at Clontarf, but now

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[6] G. O' Tuathaigh, 1972, 187-8.

opposed O'Connell's conclusion that repeal was impossible, and that lower goals had to be sought. Therefore, Metscher claims that the split was "artificially invoked"; Gearoid O' Tuathaigh sees the "continued sniping" of the Young Irelanders over O'Connell's "alliance with the Whigs" as an annoyance for O'Connell, who then decided "to force them to submit or withdraw"; and Richard Davis attributes the split to the Young Irelanders' attachment to an enthusiastic type of romantic nationalism and "total rejection of the Whig alliance."[7]

However, Donal McCartney sees the split as being primarily caused, in fact, by the refusal of the Young Ireland group to give up the theoretical right to employ violence under certain contingencies to achieve Irish independence, and thus O'Connell's refusal to sacrifice what McCartney views as a principle of non-violence, rather than just a preference for moral over physical force.[8] Maurice O'Connell also offers a dissenting position on the issue, claiming that the renewal of the Whig alliance was not the primary cause of the split. Instead, Maurice O'Connell claims that "the principle of moral force was in danger" because of the Young Ireland faction's physical force rhetoric.[9] After weeks of verbal attacks on his policies, but not his leadership, Daniel O'Connell introduced the Peace Resolutions to the Repeal Association in order to protect the policy of non-violence, and thus the legality of the organization, which was his primary concern-

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[7] P. Metscher, 1986, 95; G. O' Tuathaigh, 1972, 195; R. Davis, 1987, 104 (respectively).

[8] Donal McCartney, "The Changing Image of O'Connell" in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 21.

[9] Maurice O'Connell, "O'Connell, Young Ireland, and Violence" in *Thought*, December 1977, 384.

-not the purging of the Young Irelanders. Maurice O'Connell claims that Daniel O'Connell had more than just a practical abhorrence of political violence, but that he understood the phenomenon of violence in Ireland and its horrible potential very well, and therefore was committed to a principle of non-violent agitation. Yet even Maurice O'Connell's argument is inconsistent, since he points to Daniel O'Connell's intent to use the issue to purge his organization of the young nationalists when he quotes him as stating, "I drew up this resolution to draw a marked line between Young Ireland and Old Ireland (cheers)."[10] James Connolly's commentary on the subject, in *Labour In Irish History*, indicates that he also saw the issue of moral versus physical force as no more than an "academic question" that hid the true issue of democracy--at that time in its bourgeois form represented by the Young Irelanders--versus O'Connell's aristocratic forces.[11] It should also be pointed out that the Young Ireland leaders present at the meeting felt that the issue was really over the Whig alliance.[12]

The schism is significant in that it reveals the growing differences between the tactics of various traditions of Irish nationalism. The issue of moral versus physical force was not settled with this split, but continued and continues to define and divide Irish nationalist traditions up to the present day. The split also highlighted other issues such as the relationship of Irish nationalism to British politics, and the religious and cultural components in definitions of Irishness. But

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[10] Ibid., 404.

[11] *LIH*, 129-30.

[12] R. Davis, 1987, 3, 99-100; D. McCartney in *Daniel O'Connell*, 1985, 26.

in general, the split emphasizes the tendency of Irish nationalism to splinter over tactical issues and definitive questions, despite a common cause regarding the objection to the British relationship to Ireland. In spite of the obvious advantages of tolerating differing views, "political pluralism...has always proven difficult to contain within Irish nationalism."[13]

Religious differences were symptomatic of the increasing failure of the two sides to find any common ground. Although they supported the principle of religious toleration, the Young Irelanders were cornered on the religious issue by the Catholic hierarchy, which was exerting pressure through its increasing influence on the leadership of the Repeal Association. The continuing debate over the relationship of the Catholic Church and the state in the area of education--specifically over the issue of universities that were acceptable for Catholics--furthered the divisions in the repeal movement. The O'Connellites wanted greater Catholic control of education, while the Young Irelanders saw this as an opportunity to further the cause of non-sectarianism; and they consequently invited much resentment from the Catholic hierarchy against themselves. In general, the hierarchy--although by no means a monolithic entity--supported the tactics employed in the O'Connellite tradition rather than the Young Ireland movement. This is not surprising when one considers the growing rapprochement between the Catholic hierarchy and the British government since the conclusion of the Penal Period, a relationship which encompassed issues such as government support for the Maynooth Royal College (to train clergy, but also to keep them

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[13] R. Davis, 1987, 81.

free of subversive continental influences), the agreement on the non-sectarian national education system (established in 1831), and the Papacy's willingness to concede the Veto of ecclesiastic appointments to the British government.[14] However, this is not to suggest that the Catholic hierarchy had developed an intimate relationship with the Protestant communities of Ireland. Although there had been a lessening of sectarian tensions among some elements within the upper classes of Irish society in the early part of the 19th century, the Catholic Church played a major part in the rising religious tensions that dominated Ireland for much of the century, a trend that accelerated especially with the Tithe War in the 1830s. The Catholic Church insisted on portraying itself as the persecuted guardian of true Irishness, a limited concept that did not include Protestants.[15] This bigotry was eventually personified by Cardinal Paul Cullen, who--from his position in Rome, and later in Ireland after the Vatican sent him there--attempted to make the hierarchy even more influential in politics. Cullen took the lead in promoting an image of a "Catholic Ireland" by encouraging a self-imposed social segregation from the Protestant community.[16] Cullen came to control the dominant faction of the hierarchy in denouncing the non-sectarian Young Ireland group, and in influencing the pro-Catholic tendency within the Repeal Association.

The lower-level clerics who supported the new nationalism--some

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[14] D. Keenan, 1983, 178.

[15] Ibid., 30-2.

[16] S.J. Connolly, *Priests And People In Pre-Famine Ireland, 1780-1845*, (New York, 1982) 15.

foreshadowing modern liberation theology by uniting "politics and the very existence of the people"--were forced into submission.[17] But it should also be noted that in their relationships with the peasantry, the clergy often did not exert as much influence as might be expected. Not only were the clergy often unable to control peasant disturbances--even with primarily Catholic organizations and movements--but the clergy themselves were often targets of peasant agitation when they had violated conventional morality.[18] A priest was accountable to a competing legal/moral system advocated by the peasants if he refused to charge reasonable fees for services or was involved in the eviction and land clearance process that the agrarian agitators were combatting.[19] Consequently, the Catholic Church and Catholic landowners such as O'Connell denounced agrarian movements, and the Church played an active role in their suppression. However, the Young Irelanders failed to recognize or take advantage of the potential power of the peasant movements (as is demonstrated below).

The Young Ireland movement gathered around a core of three figures who first cooperated in 1842 with the founding of their mouthpiece, the *Nation*. Thomas Davis was a Protestant from Trinity who made his career in law. He died in 1845, before the final split with the O'Connellites. His death made it easier for pro-Catholic elements within the Repeal Association, led by Daniel O'Connell's rather inept son John, to influence the policies of the Association. Charles

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[17] R. Davis, 1987, 159.

[18] S.J. Connolly, 1982, 256; also see Michael Beames, *Peasants And Power*, (New York, 1983).

[19] M. Beames, 1983, 28, 114, 190-1.

Gavan Duffy was a Catholic journalist from the north who would later act as the historian of the Young Ireland movement, and would also become Prime Minister of Victoria, Australia. John Blake Dillon, another Trinity graduate, was from a wealthy Catholic family from the west. In these three men one can see the elements of the new kind of nationalism that they promoted. They defined Irish nationhood in spiritual and cultural, as opposed to religious or ethnic, terms. If O'Connell's nationalism was basically utilitarian, tinged (in a large part, due to their influence) with romanticism, they were essentially romantics, focussing on traditions of Irishness. The thrust of their tactics is evident in a saying associated with Thomas Davis: "Educate that you may be free."

The Young Irelanders were not internationalists. Despite the popularity in different parts of Europe at the time of many of the "Young" groups that followed the Italian example, the "Young" label was fixed on the Irish group, even though they themselves rejected any resemblance to their contemporaries.[20] On the other hand, Giuseppe Mazzini, the leader of Young Italy, repudiated the Young Irelanders for not fitting into his definition of a nationalist movement, and advised the Irish "to come to terms with being an integral part of the United Kingdom".[21] The Young Ireland group did share the same sense of romantic nationalism with the other groups, though, and they also shared O'Connell's hatred of class politics. Significantly, the Young Irelanders based the cause of the

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[20] R. Davis, 1987, 1.

[21] Peter Alter, *The Irish Nationalist Movement Between Parliament And Revolution: Constitutional Nationalism in Ireland 1880-1918*, (Munich, 1971) 183; R.F. Foster, 1988, 312.

Irish nation on the conversion of the land-owning class to their ideas.

The early Young Ireland group hoped that by rekindling the nationalist spirit with remarkable examples of poetry, prose and editorializing in their paper, the *Nation*, they could further the cause of repeal. Together, they were a significant force on the Repeal Association's directing committee, but they were careful to emphasize unity with the older O'Connellite nationalists for the common goal of repeal. The impact of their movement was both enhanced and diverted through the arrival of several new figures to their group. As the group expanded, the latitude of secondary views on various topics became evident. The biggest name of the new additions was that of William Smith O'Brien, a Protestant landlord and MP for Limerick who led a parliamentary career independent of O'Connell's influence, but often parallelled his positions, until he joined the Repeal Association at the highest echelons of that organization in 1843. More than any other individual, O'Brien can be described as the bridge between the Young and Old Irelands up to the point when the split found him siding with the new nationalism.

Another notable figure to join the movement was John Mitchel, the most radical and militaristic of the group--to the extent that at one point, he quit Young Ireland because he felt that they were too moderate. An Ulster Dissenter, Mitchel made his name as the most blatant revolutionist of the *Nation* writers, and he eventually left that publication to start the *United Irishmen* "'specifically as an organ of revolution', which took as its motto Tone's tribute to the 'men of no

property'."[22] Although Mitchel's ideas were among the most progressive of the Young Ireland movement, he is enigmatic in that he celebrated the slaughter of workers and socialists during the 1848 June insurrection in Paris, and later fought to defend slavery for the Confederacy in the U.S. Civil War.[23] These facts display the nationalist bigotry and even racism, as opposed to democratic internationalism, that was evident in some elements of Young Ireland. But surprisingly, these facts did not stop James Connolly from elevating Mitchel as a model of a progressive Irish revolutionary.[24]

Mitchel was greatly influenced by the dynamic (and essentially neglected) James Fintan Lalor, a peripheral and yet significant member of Young Ireland. Of all of the figures in Young Ireland, Connolly held the most respect for Lalor, who was probably the most socialistic thinker in the movement. (Connolly edited some of Lalor's writings: *The Rights Of Ireland* and *The Faith Of A Felon.*) Lalor differed from the other nationalists of the time in that he based his plan for Irish freedom on the land issue, as opposed to simple repeal of the Act of Union. Unlike the other Young Irelanders, Lalor came from the peasantry, and thus detested the landlord class, which the other Young Irelanders were trying to woo. Instead, he hoped for a social as well as national revolution. He sought a remedy to Ireland's problems in the nationalization of land: the forming of a new "social

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[22] P. Metscher, 1986, 101.

[23] Ibid., 104.

[24] *WR*, 11-13-1915; and *LIH*, 134, 140-4. In *LIH*, Connolly tried to justify Mitchel's harsh words about the Paris insurrection as being due to "garbled reports" he was getting from the English press while he was in prison.(p. 144) Connolly did not explain Mitchel's defense of slavery.

contract" in which the "people would confer new and valid titles to land on landlords who recognized their right of occupancy, i.e. to landlords prepared to grant security of tenure to tenants."[25] Based on this general theory of agrarian socialism, which he promoted in his own publication, the *Irish Felon*, Lalor worked out a plan of action that embraced elements of mass unionism in both the rural and urban settings, and was summarized as such:[26]

1. To refuse all rent and arrears beyond the value of the overplus of harvest remaining after due provision for the tenants' subsistence for twelve months.
2. To resist eviction under the English law of ejection.
3. To refuse all rent to the usurping proprietors, until the people, the true proprietors, had decided in national congress what rents were to be paid, and to whom.
4. That the people should decide that rents should "be paid to *themselves*, the people, for public purposes, and for behoof and benefit of them, the entire general people."

Although he paid lip service to peaceful agitation, Lalor planned on violent insurrection to protect the rights of the oppressed: "I want a prepared, organized and resistless revolution."[27] Lalor believed that a revolution with such a foundation "would propagate itself throughout Europe."[28] However, Lalor, who suffered from several disabilities, was basically ignored by most of the Young

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[25] G. O' Tuathaigh, 1972, 198.

[26] Lalor, quoted in Padraic (Patrick, also sometimes spelled Padraig) H. Pearse, "The Sovereign People" (3-31-1916) in *The Collected Works of Padraic H. Pearse*, (Dublin, no date) 360; (Lalor's emphasis). (The binding title is *The Complete Works Of P.H. Pearse: Political Writings And Speeches.*)

[27] P. Metscher, 1986, 99. Connolly's later career emulated this tension between moral and physical force, such as when he praised the use of peaceful means, as advocated by his friend Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, but made specific plans for the use of violence, which he later employed without any immediate success, like Lalor.

[28] Lalor, quoted in P. Pearse, "The Sovereign People" in *The Collected Works of Padraic H. Pearse*, 361.

Ireland leadership. He led a small insurrection--actually just an attack on a police station--in 1849, and died soon after; but his ideas were to influence later generations of progressive Irish nationalists.

Through Connolly's influence, Patrick Pearse was exposed to Lalor's writings, and strongly identified with them. In his last work, "The Sovereign People", Pearse quoted Lalor extensively. In particular, Pearse was impressed with Lalor's idea that[29]

> 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...To any plain understanding the right of private property is very simple. It is the right of man to possess, enjoy, and transfer the substance and use of whatever HE HAS HIMSELF CREATED....But no man can plead any such title to a right of property in the substance of the soil. The earth, together with all it *spontaneously* produces, is the free and common property of all mankind, of natural right, and by the grant of God....The sole original right of property in land which I acknowledge to be morally valid, is this right of common consent and agreement.

Thus, Lalor's contributions were not really appreciated until after his death.

After the split with O'Connell's repealers, the Young Irelanders found themselves without any base of popular support. Despite the success of their *Nation*, the Young Ireland group had used the paper primarily to promote the Repeal Association, and therefore had little individual fame outside of that organization. However, O'Connell, who commanded the immense popular support associated with repeal, was to see his fortunes decline because of the alliance with the Whigs. Since he had been willing to set aside demands for repeal in return for reforms granted by the Whig ministry, O'Connell opened himself up to criticism when the disaster of the Great Famine struck. Since the

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[29] *Ibid.*, 354, 359-60; (Lalor's emphasis).

repeal movement had been based upon the premise that justice could be won for Ireland only through the repeal of the Act of Union, vacillation on this point was devastating to O'Connell's career when it became evident that O'Connell's allies were unable or unwilling to deal with the catastrophe, particularly at the height of the suffering in 1846-7. The famine transformed the Whig alliance into "the kiss of death for the O'Connellite forces," and offered Young Ireland a new opportunity.[30] In early 1847 the Young Ireland groups formed into the Irish Confederation to promote a more radical solution to Ireland's problems.

The new situation in which the Young Irelanders found themselves required them to transform themselves in order to survive as a substantial force and as a distinct nationalist philosophy. But there were no significant achievements until the atmosphere was injected with excitement over the February Revolution in Paris in 1848. Just as with the United Irishmen, the Young Irelanders were radicalized by revolutionary events in France. The Confederates started to make overtures to the Chartists, a movement that they had previously rejected. Repealers and Confederates started to call for a republic in Ireland. Mitchel was drawn back into the Young Ireland circles from which he had drifted, and talk of actual revolution accelerated.

But as was the case with the United Irishmen in the 1790s, it was the government suppression that eventually transformed nationalist sentiments, contingencies for rebellion, and excited tension into revolutionary violence. In March, some of the Young Ireland leaders, including Mitchel and O'Brien, were

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[30] G. O' Tuathaigh, 1972, 196.

arrested. Although O'Brien was acquitted of charges of sedition, Mitchel was sentenced to 14 years transportation. His calls for rebellion and rescue were frustrated, but they probably helped to further enflame revolutionary sentiments. The Confederates started to draw up specific, but still "cautious" plans for an uprising, based on the following three points:[31]

1. Upon an insurrection in the Autumn when the crops had been gathered in;
2. Upon simultaneous revolts in the rural districts;
3. Upon a strict preservation of the peace until the Government struck the first blow.

However, plans for a rebellion were easily monitored by government spies, and Lord Lieutenant Clarendon suspended habeas corpus on 22 July.

The suppression was the immediate cause of the "rebellion", if that term is appropriate for the fiasco that took place. When the offices of the *Nation* were raided by police, the Confederates realized that rebellion was their only remaining option besides submission, despite the fact that they were still basically unprepared for such an avenue of action. Their attempts to rouse the Irish people were largely ignored by a population devastated by the famine, except for some minor elements in the Tipperary-Kilkenny area. Smith O'Brien was notable for his attempts to lead the rising, and particularly for the romantic approach he took to the whole debacle; but the attempt was basically still-born. It ended in a tragicomical skirmish with police in a widow's cabbage patch at Ballingarry. The Young Ireland movement died in the anti-climactic surrender, arrests, and little-noticed transportation, of its members. The rebellion fiasco is hardly worthy of comment except for the fact that it reveals a general lack of popular support for

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[31] P. Metscher, 1986, 107.

broad nationalist revolution in Ireland, a sentiment which was to dominate for over a half of a century. Furthermore, the lack of attention given to the trials and sentencing of the rebels further indicates that their ideas failed to take hold of the population at that time.

The rebellion is also relevant in that it offered James Connolly the opportunity to criticize the Young Ireland group. Connolly supported many of the ideas of the Young Irelanders, particularly the more progressive concepts associated with Lalor and, to a lesser extent, Mitchel. Connolly viewed them as nationalist revolutionaries in spirit, but, with the notable exceptions of Lalor and Mitchel, claimed that they did not grasp the social implications--that is to say, issues involved with the right to private property--of revolutionary activity at the time of the Great Famine. In their attempts to win the landlord class over to their version of nationalism, the Young Ireland leadership neglected what Connolly saw as their ethical, national, and social duty:[32]

> ...the chiefs of the Young Irelanders were as rabidly solicitous about the rights of the landlord as were the chiefs of the English government. While the people perished the Young Irelanders talked, and their talk was beautiful, thoroughly grammatical, nicely polished, and the proper amounts of passion introduced always at the proper psychological moment. But the people still perished.

By focussing on the actions of the leadership, particularly those of Smith O'Brien, Connolly tried to show that, in the final analysis, the Young Irelanders had failed to understand the need for a complete social and political revolution, as he advocated. With a few notable exceptions, Connolly listed the Young Ireland leaders, described their actions, and displayed how they had failed to advance the

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[32] *LIH*, 134.

cause of national liberation because of their commitment to property rights. The largest share of criticism was reserved for Smith O'Brien:[33]

> He wandered through the country telling the starving peasantry to get ready, but refusing to allow them to feed themselves at the expense of the landlords who had so long plundered, starved, and evicted them; he would not allow his followers to seize upon the carts of grain passing along passing along the roads where people were dying for want of food...

Only James Fintan Lalor and John Mitchel met Connolly's approval, for advocating a rent strike and the widespread use of force to protect the food that the peasants had cultivated. Of course, Connolly also went on to condemn the government for its policies: "England made the famine by a rigid application of the economic principles that lie at the base of capitalist society."[34]

But the evils of Britain's capitalism could not be held solely accountable, as far as Connolly was concerned. Most of the Young Irelanders also shared a degree of responsibility, if only because they failed to realize the duties that went along with political leadership, and to harness the potential power the distressed peasantry could offer if it was properly directed, particularly before the Famine had taken its toll. Except for men like Lalor and Mitchel, Connolly concluded that[35]

> the Young Ireland leaders of 1848 failed to rise to the grandeur of the opportunity offered them to choose between human rights and property rights as a basis of nationality, and the measure of their failure was the measure of their

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[33] *LIH*, 135.

[34] Ibid., 131. Connolly made a close evaluation of the policies of the government, the economic considerations, the economic/agricultural output of Ireland, and the needs of the population of Ireland, and then concluded that if socialist principles had been in force in Ireland, there would not have been a disaster.

[35] Ibid., 138.

country's disaster.

The Young Irelanders were largely from the middle classes. Many of the members came from professional backgrounds, and a large number of journalists and writers participated in the movement. There were also some elements from the landowning class of society, the most notable being William Smith O'Brien. Since the movement never had a popular base of support, as did O'Connell's associations, the membership came primarily from one class. But this group also had one of the most tolerant attitudes towards religion at the time, in contra-distinction to the growing Catholic influence over the O'Connellites. The leadership was composed of representatives of all of the major denominations in Ireland, and thus religious doctrine was largely unimportant in their broad definition of Irishness, which emphasized cultural considerations, such as language. They promoted a spiritual, cultural nationhood through popular education, propaganda, and poetry that glorified Irish consciousness, and sometimes violence. These tactics and ideas were to be influential in the middle-class nationalism of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and particularly with Connolly's associate in the 1916 Rising, P.H. Pearse, who advocated a more mystical kind of cultural nationalism.

Politically and socially, the Young Ireland ideas are significant to two trends within Irish nationalism. They set the precedent for middle-class cultural nationalism. Their definition of Irishness was broad, non-sectarian, and essentially political and cultural. Their hope was that a dissolution of the Union with Britain would bring justice to Ireland. Most of the Young Irelanders hoped to work within the Repeal Association, and to maintain some constitutional ties

with Great Britain. Despite their debate about the theoretical use of violence, and the eventual attempt to employ violent means, the primary focus for most of their existence was on peaceful tactics of education and propaganda, mixed in with some elements of contentious rhetoric. They did try to make use of political avenues, but, as the split with O'Connell indicated, without compromising their values. Thomas Davis, for instance, proposed the withdrawal of Irish MPs from the British Parliament, a tactic later employed effectively by the Sinn Fein delegation in forming the Dail Eireann.[36] During Connolly's time, their cultural definition of Irishness was evident in the Gaelic League, Sinn Fein, and the Gaelic Athletic Association, as well as in individual figures such as Pearse, Douglas Hyde, Arthur Griffith, and some of the IRB conspirators.

On another level, a different trend within the Young Ireland movement has been significant. The more radical wing of the Young Irelanders wanted some form of a social/democratic revolution to support a nationalist revolution in Ireland. Exemplified by Lalor and Mitchel, this group operated at the fringes of the Young Ireland group for much of the time, and was the strongest proponent of armed insurrection and republicanism in the era after the split with the O'Connellites. They attempted to link the land issue--and more specifically the underlying issue of the institution of private property--to the forces that had the potential to be unleashed and directed when the Famine struck. In the end, their ideas were rejected by the other Young Irelanders, and they were also defeated. But Connolly traced his own nationalism, from the tradition of Wolfe Tone,

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[36] R. Davis, 1987, 88.

through them.

Fenianism And Cultural Nationalism

As one of the greatest Irish nationalists and advocates of social reform in the second half of the 19th century, Michael Davitt was associated with two distinct movements in Irish history, Fenianism and the Land League. This section and the next examine some of the most significant organizations of the period, highlighting both the mutualities and the distinctions of the different movements. The focus of this section is Fenianism, and its relationship with other nationalist movements, because it exemplified the constant tension within Irish nationalism over the issue of moral and physical force. The career of Michael Davitt, who was in many ways a product of Fenianism, but who also built upon the foundation offered by the Fenians, is examined in the following section.

Fenianism was an integral part of one of "the three main political strands" of Irish nationalism, according to Desmond Keenan.[37] In addition to the aristocratic-parliamentary tradition represented by the Whigs, and the parliamentary-mass movement tradition of O'Connell, the republican movement offered one of the main channels for the expression of nationalist sentiment. Along with some of the more radical elements within Young Ireland, Fenianism was the link between the earlier republican revolutionaries, such as Tone and

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[37] D. Keenan, 1983, 178.

Emmet, and the militants of the 20th century.[38] Although it was an unsuccessful movement in the immediate sense, Fenianism played a leading role in keeping the militant republican tradition alive, even when other channels of Irish nationalist sentiments were enjoying much greater success, and it gave birth to the figures who were to play an active role in the creation of modern Ireland.

After the quick decline of the Young Ireland movement, some surviving activists and other nationalists formed a new organization that would start where Young Ireland left off, and would make changes in consideration of the inherent weaknesses of the failed organization. The actual beginning of the Fenian movement is less clear than is the development of the IRB organization itself.[39] Fenianism sprang from discontent with Ireland's relationship to England, and dissatisfaction with the other options for expressing nationalism. Fenianism was a discernable movement in New York in the mid-1850s, and a few years later it was brought to Ireland. The specific organization, the IRB, was founded in Ireland in 1858 as a secretive organization "to make Ireland an independent democratic republic", but the reference to democracy was removed from their oath in later

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[38] P. Metscher, 1986, 167.

[39] The Initials, I.R.B., were very ambiguous for quite some time. As late as the end of the 19th century, there was still some uncertainty as to whether they stood for the Irish Republican Brotherhood, or the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood. (See Kevin Nowlan, "The Fenian Rising Of 1867" in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 23.) Of course, as the movement progressed, the republican meaning dominated, but the I.R.B. was most often referred to by its initials or as "the organization". Fenianism takes its name from the legendary Finn Mac Cumhall, leader of Ireland's defenders in an ancient saga.

years, indicating a desire to present a more general, and yet purer nationalism.[40] Because of the longevity and influence of this organization, its establishment can be regarded as the beginning of the modern Irish revolution.[41]

In the United States at that time, there existed a large Irish immigrant community--largely a product of the Famine era--which, because of the deep resentment it harbored for Britain, and the lack of an organized revolutionary movement in Ireland, was becoming the center of Irish revolutionary activity. These militant Irish-Americans in the early Fenian movement worked to cultivate a revolutionary organization in Ireland. In Ireland, under the direction of James Stephens, the organization undercut all potential rivals, such as remnants of the obsolete Young Ireland structures, and built up the IRB in the old Confederate strongholds in south-eastern and southern Ireland, and then in Dublin.[42] The IRB rank and file came largely from the rural laboring class, so that the organization effectively replaced the old agrarian secret societies such as the Whiteboys and the Ribbonmen.[43] Although it was still not a formidable threat to the British, the IRB probably reached its greatest strength--in terms of an anticipated rising against the British--in 1865. The government, acting on information from its efficient network of informants, suppressed the organization

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[40] E.R.R. Green, "The Beginnings of Fenianism" in *The Fenian Movement*, T.W. Moody, editor, (Dublin, 1968) 17; P. Metscher, 1986, 126.

[41] Tom Garvin, *Nationalist Revolutionaries in Ireland 1858-1928*, (Oxford, 1987) 5.

[42] E.R.R. Green, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 21.

[43] P. Metscher, 1986, 114; Kevin B. Nowlan, "The Fenian Rising Of 1867" in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 23.

starting in September of that year.

This early period of Fenianism, up to the time of the 1867 rising, was characterized by the singularity of purpose in Ireland, and factionalism in the United States. Power struggles were not infrequent, and there were major schisms within the movement based on personalities and philosophies. One of the two main factions in America rejected the focus on direct action in Ireland, and planned and staged a few "invasions" of Canada, in 1866, 1870, and 1871, in the hopes of provoking the United States and Britain into a conflict, and thereby harnessing the anti-British sentiments that remained in the U.S after the American Civil War. The invasions were failures and the hopes were unrealized. In Ireland, however, up to the time of the suppression, James Stephens kept tight--some would say authoritarian--control of the organization. He directed the movement as it branched out through literary organizations, old Ribbon Lodges, and Irish elements within the British military. But the IRB was constantly pressured by the American Fenians for action, and a considerable number of Irish-American veterans from both sides of the U.S. Civil War were sent over to help organize and lead a rising in Britain and Ireland.

The long-awaited uprising was finally planned for 1867 by the Fenian leaders who had escaped prosecution or been rescued from captivity, as James Stephens had been. Pushed by the militant Fenians in the United States, whose ranks now included recent political refugees from Ireland, such as Stephens, the remaining IRB launched two separate uprisings. The first, in February of 1867, was called off at the last moment because of the success of government surveillance. However, not all local groups got the message, and a minor disturbance in Kerry

was the only noteworthy event. The actual coordinated rising, which took place in March, only amounted to simultaneous disturbances in many urban areas, but notably not in Ulster and generally not in Connaught. The rising highlighted the Fenians' lack of arms, but also exposed their plan to hold out long enough to capitalize on anti-British sentiments in the U.S.. However, the attempt collapsed before aid could be sent from the Irish-American community, and long before anti-British feelings could be transformed into political results in the American political process. A late expedition from the American Fenian community ended in the arrests of that force.

The aftermath of the rising saw mounting criticism of the insurgents in Britain and Ireland. Even within the nationalist community in Ireland there was little sympathy for the Fenians. However, the subsequent treason trials of the leaders did evoke some calls for leniency, even from such opponents of the movement as Cardinal Cullen. The fact that Fenians had not attacked private property, and the relatively small number of casualties--police estimated twelve deaths--helped get death sentences commuted. But a successful rescue attempt of some of the leaders resulted in the unintentional death of one of the guards. During the public outrage that followed, three men were convicted on questionable grounds. The execution of these so-called "Manchester Martyrs" created a symbol for the Fenians, but represented the general public outrage in Britain against Fenian violence. The British public was left with the impression that a broad underground threat existed within their own country.

After the rising, the IRB continued its policy of adhering strictly to non-constitutional methods. It competed with other nationalist movements, such as

Charles Stewart Parnell's Irish Parliamentary Party, for the loyalty of Irish nationalists. Although many of its members participated in Michael Davitt's Land League, the organization as a whole refused to support that cause. Splinter groups supported terrorism as a means to nationhood: the most famous factions included the "Untouchables", who were responsible for the famous Phoenix Park murders; and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa's faction, which staged the Dynamite War of the 1880s. However, these tactics basically "did little else except discredit the nationalist cause."[44]

In the next generation of Irish nationalists, the IRB finally saw its plans come to fruition. With the decline of Parnell's political influence, the IRB started to re-emerge from the failures of the 1860s and 1870s, although the organization was still not a nationalist force equal even to that of the weakened Parliamentary Party. Members of the IRB were instrumental in the planning of the 1916 Rising. The most militant wing of the Irish Volunteers' leadership "consisted essentially of the supreme council of the I.R.B."--including Patrick Pearse, Sean MacDermott, and Tom Clarke--and was, along with Connolly, the force that was responsible for launching the 1916 Rising when other elements in the Volunteers, including their commanders, were willing to wait on taking any direct action.[45]

In theory, the IRB was organized in a rigid, centralized, and hierarchical structure to maintain its secretive and conspiratorial nature. However, due to varying local conditions, the structure, patterned after similar organizations on the

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[44] F.S.L. Lyons, "Fenianism, 1867-1916" in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 42.

[45] Ibid., 45; Michael Hurst, "Fenianism In The Context Of World History" in *Fenians And Fenianism*, Maurice Harmon, editor, (Dublin, 1968) 85.

continent that Stephens had some experiences with, was largely ignored, as were many of the precautions for secrecy.[46] The social composition of the IRB varied at different levels and at different times in its history. The rank and file of the early IRB in the cities came largely from lower levels of the working class; in the rural areas recruits were often members of the old agrarian protection societies. Thus, in the U.S as well as Ireland and Britain, the "backbone" of Fenianism was the laboring classes.[47] Although the movement was not necessarily class based, it made most of its converts from the lower classes, and was therefore suspicious of wealthier segments of society.[48] Members of the upper levels of the organization were more likely to come from the lower middle class, and--especially later in its history--from the middle class. This is particularly true with the rise and influence of the intellectual elements which were associated with cultural nationalism. However, more than the leadership, it was the rank and file--with its commitment to a specific and well-defined goal--that was responsible for the persistence of the movement.

The IRB's "social composition, combined with its secret organization, was the basis of the charge frequently made against the Fenians that they were communists."[49] Although there were definitely some progressive tendencies within the Fenian movement, most notably in the upper echelons of the

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[46] E.R.R. Green, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 17.

[47] P. Metscher, 1986, 133.

[48] T.W. Moody, "The Fenian Movement In Irish History" in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 106-7.

[49] Ibid.

organization, the Fenians were generally characterized by their single-mindedness regarding the goal of an independent Ireland. All other socio-political issues were peripheral, at best, and were even viewed by some as a distraction from the primary goal because of their potentially factitious nature. However, there were still some prominent indications of some progressive tendencies in the movement. The proclamation issued by the provisional government, which was set up briefly during the rising of 1867, "made clear that the restoration of the land to the working people of Ireland was a primary purpose of the rising along with the establishment of a republic based on universal suffrage and the complete separation of church and state."[50] Similarly, when James Stephens first returned to Ireland after his stay in Paris, he was accused of holding to "socialistic theories" by other Fenians.[51] But these examples of progressive tendencies within Fenianism are rare within the movement, and are not really representative of a specifically socialistic type of Irish nationalism.

It is not completely clear whether Connolly was forced into cooperation with the IRB in 1916 to prevent him from leading a premature rising of his own forces, or if he voluntarily allied himself with the IRB in order to strengthen the anti-British militants. But his sympathetic views of the earlier Fenians had

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[50] K. Nowlan, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 30.

[51] E.R.R. Green, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 16.
However, Stephens was not a socialist. His detractors were more likely referring to his attitudes towards revolutionary organizations than to his socio-political ideology. Stephens was considered by many to be very authoritarian in his control of the IRB. He was "considering the possibility of a life president for Ireland, which raised doubts about the depth of his republicanism."
Hereward Senior, "The Place Of Fenianism In The Irish Republican Tradition" in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 64.

already been well established by that time. In *Labour In Irish History*,Connolly stressed the Fenians' "militant class feeling and revolutionary nationalism" in the hopes of equating their pure nationalism with an emerging "class-feeling" or class consciousness.[52] As Connolly got closer to 1916, he used the examples of Fenian heroes to contrast with and inspire his own movement, and he praised the past Fenian generations even more:[53]

> They failed, but it was a failure more glorious than many a victory. But its glory consisted in the fact that against all odds, and in spite of the calculations of the trimmers and wiseacres there were proven to be in Ireland thousands of men and women who were prepared to affirm with their lives that Ireland was a nation with an independent destiny of its own. Neither terrified nor corrupted, the Fenians redeemed the honour of their nation, and we of the working class are proud to remember that those heroes were of our own class.

Connolly viewed Fenianism as a necessary component in socio-national development in Ireland. For Connolly, the Fenians represented a primitive form of nationalism and an early stage of class consciousness. In Connolly's time, the later IRB had maintained their nationalist premise, but had failed to evolve into a socialist movement, and therefore represented a retarded, or incomplete nationalism which could aid in national liberation, but could not be the basis for national liberation. Later Fenianism threatened Connolly's work in that it could keep individuals from developing into complete socialist-republicans. Thus, for Connolly, Fenianism did not establish the socialist-republican tradition in Ireland--that accolade went to Tone as far as Connolly was concerned. But Fenianism did carry on a significant, but still incomplete, part of that tradition, and was

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[52] *LIH*, 158-60.

[53] *WR*, 8-7-1915; see also *WR*, 7-31-1915 and 11-20-1915.

therefore worthy of some of his attention in his writing.

The secretive nature and revolutionary basis of the movement got the Fenians into trouble with the Catholic hierarchy. The IRB was founded in March of 1858, and by October of that year, priests were warning parishioners against it. In the face of concerted clerical opposition to their movement, it is interesting that a primarily Catholic organization such as the IRB was able not only to survive, but to grow. Although the organization as a whole was not anti-clerical (despite clerical opposition), the IRB was able to capitalize on the traditional challenge that the basis of its membership, the old agrarian societies, presented to the authority of the local parish priest. The Fenians simply extended that challenge on the national level to the hierarchy. Fenian reaction to official Church condemnation varied. Some Fenians did follow the direction of the Catholic Church by quitting Fenianism. Many others held their Irish nationalism more dearly than their Roman Catholicism, and basically ignored the issue as inconsequential. Finally, the devout Catholics who chose to stay in the organization tried to justify their decision. This last reaction is the most important because it foreshadowed Connolly's response to clerical condemnation of his views. Led by Charles Kickham, these Fenians challenged the authority of the Catholic clerics in political matters with the motto "no priests in politics".[54] Just as Connolly would do a few decades later, Kickham rejected anti-clericalism and maintained his sincere Catholicism, but demonstrated the tendency of the Irish Catholic hierarchy to actively oppose Irish nationalist organizations and their

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[54] Donal McCartney, "The Church And The Fenians" in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 17.

activities in the insurrections of the preceding century.

On the other hand, the Catholic hierarchy, led by Cardinal Cullen, claimed that the IRB was hurting the cause of Irish nationalism, and, insofar as the terrorist elements at the periphery of the movement were associated with Fenianism in the public mind, this was an accurate assessment. It is possible that, in the absence of any strong nationalist leadership in the period before Parnell, the Catholic hierarchy sensed a degree of competition with the Fenian movement to fill that void. Cullen hoped to get the Catholic Church more involved in nationalist politics, particularly in a movement similar to that of his hero, O'Connell. Cullen's willingness to equate Irish nationalism with the Catholic Church in achieving a "Catholic Ireland" was indicative of "how completely the desire of not offending Protestant sentiments had been abandoned."[55]

But this is not to suggest that Cullen and the Catholic hierarchy represented a monolithic force which opposed the Fenian brand of nationalism. Rome itself did not specifically prohibit Fenianism until 1870, and thus left some ambiguity for the Fenian propagandists to seize upon and exploit. In the Irish clergy there was more of a tendency within the younger and lower level clergy to sympathize with the movement. A prime example of the lack of unanimity within the ranks of the Catholic clerics was the case of Fr. Lavelle from the Archdiocese of Tuam (Connaught). Operating on the fringes of the Fenian movement, Lavelle made it difficult for the hierarchy to find the specifics for which to discipline him. He was outspoken in his condemnation of the hierarchy's position regarding the

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[55] D. Keenan, 1983, 152.

Fenians, and ignored injunctions by hearing the confessions and administering other sacraments to Fenians. In addition to attacking the system of landlordism, he publicly defied Cullen by performing the funeral of a well known nationalist hero for the Fenians. Most notably, he foreshadowed liberation theology by declaring a Christian duty to resist tyranny in his lecture on "The Catholic Doctrine of the Right of Revolution".[56] Lavelle's position is even more significant in view of the rift he highlighted in the Irish hierarchy. Although he was not a whole-hearted supporter of Lavelle, John MacHale, Archbishop of Tuam, was able to offer some protection for Lavelle from the attacks of other members of the Catholic Church, particularly Cullen. MacHale was one of two bishops--the other being Dr. Keane, Bishop of Cloyne--who declined to promulgate the Papal Bull that condemned Fenianism.[57] This willingness of MacHale to resist the bulk of the hierarchy on issues such as Lavelle's activities may have indicated some sympathy with moderate elements of the Fenians, or it may have been no more than an attempt to guard his traditional domain from the interference of a rival, in this case Cullen. Nevertheless, this case exposed a significant degree of ambiguity on the part of the Catholic Church regarding the issue of the "sin" of being a member of the IRB.[58]

The Fenians, for their part, stood their ground against the Catholic Church. Although there were some definite anti-clerical elements within the IRB, the

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[56] D. McCartney, in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 15.

[57] D. Keenan, 1983, 47.

[58] D. McCartney, in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 16.

organization as a whole was generally not an anti-clerical movement, at least for any significant period of time.[59] The "conflict" between the two organizations, if it can be called that, did in fact contribute to limiting the role of priests in politics, thus continuing the general post-O'Connell tendency to contain the influence of Catholic sectarianism in Irish nationalism. This distinction between "Catholic" and "Irish", according to Donal McCartney, is reflected in the degree to which there is any separation of Church and State in 20th century Ireland.[60] The growing role of the Catholic Church as a distinct nationalist force was a phenomenon that was concurrent with and yet distinct from the rise of Fenianism. But, as was suggested by the failure of Fenianism to take hold in Ulster, in the eyes of many Protestants the Fenians represented the continuing Catholicization of Irish nationalism, which had subsided to some degree with Young Ireland.

The tactics of the Fenian movement are rather apparent in the structure of the organization. As a secretive movement, the IRB was committed exclusively to physical force. Interpreting the failure of the Repeal Association as proof that Britain would never be moved to grant independence to Ireland without the pressure of violence, the Fenians believed that constitutional, reformist, and Home Rule efforts were not only in vain, but tended to have a demoralizing effect on the nationalist movement as a whole.[61] This reliance on physical force, however, does not indicate a dependence on terrorist tactics by the organization.

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[59] D. Keenan, 1983, 88; T.W. Moody, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 108.

[60] D. McCartney, in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 23.

[61] T.W. Moody, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 103.

Although there were obviously some elements within (or more often, at the edges of) the Fenian movement that employed terror to further their cause, terror and, more particularly, assassination were generally not a part of the tactics of the mainstream Fenian organization.[62] Instead there was more of a tendency towards conspiracy, propaganda, and continual scheming for the oft-planned but long awaited uprising.

Besides their obvious role in the Easter Rising in 1916, the Fenians left their mark on Ireland in several significant ways. Although throughout much of their existence they were overshadowed by other forms of Irish nationalism, particularly Parnell's brand of constitutionalism in the 1880s, the Fenians helped focus attention on important issues, and in that way hastened some reforms, such as the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland in 1869 and the Land Act of 1870. Gladstone admitted that the Fenians exposed "the vast importance of the Irish question" to the British, and thus served as somewhat of a catalyst for his conversion to Home Rule.[63] Despite their many failures, the Fenians kept alive the idea of revolutionary Irish nationalism at a time when constitutional methods were at their peak, and in doing so, not only linked 1798 and 1848 with 1916, but further alienated Ulster from the idea of Home Rule. Although much of their support was simply a reaction to socio-economic changes in Ireland at the time, the movement was essentially a political one, with the goal being singularly

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[62] H. Senior, in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 66.

[63] T.W. Moody, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 111.

nationalist rather than social or economic.[64] Their influence on the cultural nationalists helped to shape the goals and tactics of these organizations, and their attitudes towards extra-parliamentary methods inspired many of the figures who helped to create the modern Irish State. As members of an international movement, they reveal a significant trend among the victims of the Irish diaspora to focus on their homeland and to work for a revolutionary solution to their problems. Conversely, for the Irish in Ireland they initiated the idea of working within what Michael Hurst calls "an unofficial Irish empire" to rid Ireland of British control.[65]

Like the parliamentarians with whom they were often competing for support, the Fenians put great efforts into expanding their influence through associated organizations. The Fenians had the advantage of conspiratorial experience in orchestrating the democratic takeover of target organizations. Operating at a different level than the Home Rulers, the IRB realized great successes in promoting and infiltrating the nationalist cultural organizations of the late 19th and early 20th century. Their targets included the Gaelic Athletic Association, the Gaelic League, and Arthur Griffith's Sinn Fein movement. Most importantly, the IRB had infiltrated the leadership of the Irish Volunteers by 1914, before the split saw most of the 200,000 Volunteers heed Redmond's call to join the British forces in the First World War as the National Volunteers in the hopes of getting Home Rule at the end of the conflict. The 11,000 or so remaining Irish

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[64] T. Garvin, 1987, 5.

[65] M. Hurst, in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 89.

Volunteers kept that name under the leadership of Professor Eoin MacNeill, and the IRB quickly captured the key positions in that organization. Although it is not necessary to study the IRB penetration of each of these organizations, their involvement with the GAA and the Gaelic League offer prime examples of their influence.

As one of the early manifestations of the cultural nationalism of the Gaelic revival, the GAA was founded in 1884, according to the guiding force behind its establishment, Michael Cusack, to counter "the tyranny of imported and enforced customs and manners" imposed through "foreign and hostile laws and the pernicious influence of a hitherto dominant race".[66] The number of people attending the initial meeting of the GAA is unclear: probably from seven to thirteen were present. But three of these people were members of the IRB. Either the IRB was genuinely interested in promoting expressions of nationalism through Irish athletics, or--as the police believed--the GAA was set up as a front organization for the secretive Fenians.[67] Whether or not the GAA initially represented an intentional attempt by the IRB to create and dominate cultural expressions of Irish nationalism, within a very short period of time "the IRB was to take open control of the GAA" while the GAA was able to "sustain its nationalist athletic image during the crucial period of the establishment of its popularity."[68] Unlike other notable expressions of cultural nationalism that

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[66] W.F. Mandle, *The Gaelic Athletic Association And Irish Nationalist Politics 1884-1924*, (Dublin, 1987) 4.

[67] Ibid., 8-9.

[68] Ibid., 10.

followed, the GAA enjoyed great success at the very time when the parliamentary manifestation of Irish nationalism was still very popular. Well into the next century, the GAA was generally regarded as a prime recruiting pool for the IRB, if not an IRB dominated organization.

The other pillar of the Gaelic revival was the Gaelic League, founded by Douglas Hyde in 1893 for the purpose of promoting the Irish language as well as Irish customs, and conversely, for the "de-Anglicization of Ireland".[69] Although the League was not intended to be a part of a sectarian or political movement, its proliferation--despite its ultimate failure to replace the English language with Irish--epitomized and contributed to the resurgence of Irish nationalism at the time because "cultural sovereignty reinforced the Irish national consciousness and underpinned the demand towards national separation."[70] According to Peter Alter, during "a time when the political nationalism in Ireland lost appeal and importance" the Gaelic League attracted "the younger generation to the expression of cultural nationalism."[71] Tom Garvin sees the League as a "political party which denied that proposition", a conclusion which is supported by the fact that Hyde himself became a leading, but still respectable figure in Irish politics; although Hyde refused John Redmond's overtures to pull him into the Home Rule party for fear of making the Gaelic League an overtly political

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[69] P. Alter, 1971, 185.

[70] Ibid., 183. Alter claims that in 1891, only 14% of the population still spoke Irish, while only 0.8% of the population could not speak English; (pp. 183-4).

[71] Ibid., 183.

organization.[72] Despite the fact that the League represented the only notable failure in Europe to revitalize a declining language at the time, it left a lasting impression on the Irish education system, and more immediately, inspired the new generation of Irish nationalists such as Patrick Pearse with an enthusiastic attachment to the Irish language.

Garvin points out that the Gaelic League was one of the main forces behind the creation of a romanticized view of Irish history which was to have a profound influence on many of the IRB leaders involved in the 1916 Rising.[73] The Gaelic League was also significant in that it was the first organization to use the language issue as a tool in an attempt--which eventually failed on the language issue but not on the political issue--to reverse the Anglicization process in order to create "the qualifications for a national cultural development".[74] This basis for cultural nationalism would not only contribute to the great Irish literary/dramatic revival in the early 20th century, but was also essential in the formation of the conception of an "Irish Ireland", which was extremely influential throughout the panorama of emerging nationalist organizations. However, this idea of an "Irish Ireland" also had the effect of excluding the Ulster Protestant community from sharing in the glorification of medieval Gaelic culture, which formed the underlying and symbolic basis for this type of 20th century cultural nationalism.

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[72] T. Garvin, 1987, 91; P. Alter, 1971, 189.

[73] T. Garvin, 1987, 78, 154, 159, 161.

[74] P. Alter, 1971, 185.

Although they were both a part of an uneasy nationalist political front, which also included the Catholic Church, Land Leaguers, Home Rulers, and other cultural nationalist groups, the IRB attempted and essentially failed to infiltrate and control the League until several years into the 20th century. Conversely, the Gaelic League influenced the IRB's acceptance of a Gaelic Ireland as a nationalist goal. Although these cultural movements were ideologically closer to Fenianism than they were to the parliamentary tradition, they had the effect of making Irish nationalism, including the Fenian version of this phenomenon, an acceptable and even attractive channel for middle-class and Roman Catholic nationalist sentiments.

Regarding cultural nationalism, James Connolly was rather silent on the issue of nationalist athletic activities; but he did, however, comment on the language issue. Connolly had mixed feelings on cultural nationalism. He chastised this type of nationalism for its self-centeredness and its inherent tendency to automatically exclude the good points of other cultures. Furthermore, he asserted that "You cannot teach starving men Gaelic".[75] On the other hand, he noted that the revival was opposed by the forces of capitalism, and concluded that the activities of the cultural nationalists were beneficial, but that these groups should recognize capitalism as the force that was responsible for the destruction of Gaelic culture, and therefore recognize Irish socialism as a natural ally, if not a leader, in combatting this force. Connolly, like Daniel O'Connell before him, expected and supported "the establishment of a universal language to facilitate

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[75] *WR*, 10-1-1898.

communication between the peoples".[76] Yet he qualified this endorsement:[77]

> But I incline also to the belief that this desirable result would be attained sooner as the result of a free arrangement which would accept one language to be taught in all primary schools, in addition to the national language, than by the attempt to crush out the existing national vehicles of expression.

In his rationalism, Connolly fully expected the rise of a universal language, but he emphasized that it must be accepted by the nations, and not imposed through economic forces by competing imperial powers. Daniel O'Connell had previously recognized the apparently inexorable growth of the English language in Ireland. Although he did not make a crusade out of promoting the use of English as a universal language, due to his utilitarianism he refused to be a part of early efforts to promote the use of Irish. On the other hand, Connolly also expected the rise of a universal language, but apparently hoped to maintain the vitality of the national language. He was therefore very critical of O'Connell, holding him largely responsible for the decline of the Irish language. He claimed that it was O'Connell who "conveyed to the simple people the impression that Gaelic was something to be ashamed of–something fit only for ignorant people."[78] Thus,[79]

> those who drop Irish in favour of English are generally actuated by the meanest of motives, are lick-spittles desirous of aping the gentry, whereas the rank and file of the Gaelic movement are for the most part thoroughly democratic in sentiment and spirit.

The whole issue of the language movement offers some insight into Connolly's views of nationalism and internationalism. He supported internationalism,

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[76] *WR*, 12-2-1899.

[77] Ibid.

[78] *Harp*, 4-1908.

[79] *WR*, 3-1903.

attacking the divisions caused by petty differences and irrational values. But he felt that this world harmony could only be achieved willingly--whether regarding the issue of language or the broader idea of separate nationalisms working in an international system--rather than being imposed by a strong power. This conception of Irish cultural nationalism presented Connolly with one of the major dilemmas in his life: whether or not to cooperate with what he viewed as middle-class and thus inherently incomplete nationalists.

Michael Davitt And The Land League

Michael Davitt was one of Ireland's greatest nationalists and social agitators, and his remarkable career included some time in prison in Britain as well as a spell in Parliament. As the initiator of the Land League agitation, he represents a truer representative of the organization than its nominal leader, Charles Stewart Parnell. Furthermore, his public career overlapped that of Connolly in terms of time, tactics, and concerns. Perhaps for this reason, he is largely absent from Connolly's writings. However, despite Connolly's neglect of Davitt, he is still significant if only because his career and ideas still offer some striking parallels to and significant differences from Connolly.

Davitt was born to a peasant family during the Great Famine, and his life was greatly influenced by the Famine and the "Great Clearances" which followed in the wake of that disaster. The early period of his life, and especially his devoted Irish Catholic family, significantly impacted Davitt's thinking in his later career. The clearances during and after the Famine--when the landlords consolidated

their holdings by taking advantage of the government policy that essentially forced tenants to surrender their holdings in order to receive food--educated Davitt to the evils of landlordism. Furthermore, his biographer, Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, emphasized the role that the clergy played in directing the starving peasants to pay their rents rather than to work for their own survival.[80] During the clearances, Davitt's family was evicted and moved to Lancashire where, at the age of eleven, Davitt lost an arm in an accident at a textile mill. However, the incident gave him a chance at an education in a Wesleyan school where he started to develop his ideas in distinguishing between the oppressors and the oppressed in British society and in the imperial context.

Davitt joined the Fenian movement at the height of its popularity in the mid-1860s, when there were approximately 80,000 members of the movement in Britain alone. He participated in the '67 rising in Britain, and, frustrated by the failure, immersed himself in the movement as an effective organizer for the

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[80] Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, *Michael Davitt: Revolutionary Agitator And Labour Leader*, (Boston, 1909) 2. Sheehy-Skeffington was one of Connolly's contemporaries. He was an activist and writer who promoted socialism, feminism, and, despite Connolly's arguments, pacifism. Nevertheless, he and Connolly enjoyed a lasting friendship. During the Easter Rising, Sheehy-Skeffington was organizing citizen patrols to prevent looting when he was arrested, and later was murdered on the orders of an apparently deranged British officer. Waiting for his own execution, Connolly was planning on appointing Sheehy-Skeffington as his literary executor when he learned of Sheehy-Skeffington's death. Despite their disagreement over tactics, Sheehy-Skeffington was Connolly's first choice to carry on his work and propagate his ideas because of his principled commitment to the same goals.

The definitive account of Sheehy-Skeffington's life and career is:

Leah Levenson, *With Wooden Sword: A Portrait Of Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, Militant Pacifist*,(Boston and Dublin, 1983).

cause.[81] According to Sheehy-Skeffington, Davitt had an impact on the movement in his insistence on keeping the Fenian activities acceptable to the public, and yet still effective. This is suggested by his opposition to assassinations as a Fenian policy, while at the same time he was preparing the organization for the next opportunity to attack British power in Ireland. Davitt kept at these activities in Britain until he was sentenced to fifteen years penal servitude in 1870 for smuggling weapons. Largely due to public pressure, he was paroled in 1877 and returned to the Fenian cause, working to make the organization less secretive; while at the same time Davitt started to gather support for his "new departure" ideas for Irish nationalists.

The new departure concept was a unique and significant attempt in the history of Irish nationalism, and, more than any other issue, distinguished Davitt as a major figure in Irish history. While in prison, Davitt spent a considerable amount of time contemplating the relationship of the Fenian movement to other Irish nationalist traditions. He settled on the idea of creating a mass movement which would include a broad range of nationalistic forces by forming an alliance between the revolutionary tradition--represented by a more open Fenianism--and the constitutional tradition of the parliamentary Irish Home Rule Party. After his release, Davitt approached both John Devoy and Parnell with his ideas. John Devoy was a Fenian exile who led the Clan na Gael, an organization associated with Fenianism, in New York. Through that organization, Devoy worked to coordinate Irish and Irish-American forces and resources in support of Irish

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[81] R.F. Foster, 1988, 366.

nationalism. Davitt's lecture tour of the States offered the two men the opportunity to formulate a plan of action. Needing a well-known and respected figure to lead the movement, Davitt proposed that Parnell assume that position in addition to his parliamentary career. Parnell had become a leading Irish MP through his use of obstructionist tactics in the House of Commons, and had been a leader in the call for amnesty for Davitt and other Fenian prisoners. At first hesitant because of his fear that the movement "would embrace all kinds of elements and probably resort to illegality and violence, as all such popular combinations were only too prone to do", Parnell accepted the position and embarked on what would be a very productive, and yet often bitter relationship with Davitt.[82]

In 1879 Ireland was experiencing an agricultural depression and a poor harvest, which automatically invoked fears of another famine, and prompted agrarian unrest.[83] Davitt, touring the Irish countryside, found farmers and other groups willing to participate in any movement which would alleviate the pressures of rent.[84] Davitt was critical of the Fenians for their failure to address the misery of the peasantry in any practical manner, and worked to bring the land issue into the national question. Davitt understood that by harnessing the national issue to the immediately popular land issue (he himself equated landlordism with British rule in Ireland) he would be able to combine the movements into a unique

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[82] P. Metscher, 1986, 186.

[83] F.S.L. Lyons, in *The Fenian Movement*, 1968, 41.

[84] P. Metscher, 1986, 183.

formula to make substantial progress on both the national and the land issues.[85] Thus, starting in Mayo, Davitt organized the Irish National Land League to eradicate the institution of landlordism, and to alleviate the plight of the peasantry as much as possible until the first goal could be achieved. Focussing on a specific instance where a landowning Catholic priest was threatening evictions, the Land League organized the local population to resist the evictions and to apply social pressure on the offending party. Davitt certainly hit upon a very popular issue: accelerated by the post-Famine clearances, the consolidation of the ownership of land in Ireland had reached the point that by 1876, half of the land was owned by less than 800 landlords; and to exacerbate that disparity, only approximately one-half of the landlords lived on their estates.[86]

Following the initial successes of the land agitation, Davitt tried to improve on the structure of the movement in 1880 with the founding of the Ladies' Land League, and--capitalizing upon support within the Irish-American community--the American Land League. Despite the seemingly peripheral nature of such auxiliary organizations, the Ladies' Land League was to play a central role in the movement the next year when the Land League itself was suppressed. The League was outlawed, Parnell was sent off to Kilmainham Jail, and Davitt was also thrown back in prison. Relying on their belief that the British government would not arrest the women who headed the organization, the movement was able to continue to keep up the pressure of the agitation. With the increase in

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[85] F. Sheehy-Skeffington, 1909, 65.

[86] R.F. Foster, 1988, 375.

agitation that followed the arrests, a vigorous obstructionist drive in the House of Commons, and the British government experiencing severe troubles on the overseas imperial front, the Land League seemed to be on the verge of realizing great success. However, Parnell refused to call for a general rent-strike until after all of the local leaders were themselves in prison. Against the wishes of his sister, Anna Catherine Parnell, as well as of Davitt, Parnell agreed to call off the no-rent-strike and to work with the Liberals to pacify Ireland through reform measures in return for Gladstone's promise to release him from prison. For this, it has been said, Parnell's sister, the head of the Ladies' Land League, never forgave him.

This so-called "Kilmainham Treaty" accentuates the differences between the parliamentary tradition of Irish nationalism and the social and revolutionary traditions. Davitt had disagreed with Parnell on policies before, but felt particularly betrayed by this incident, and was to become one of Parnell's "strongest opponents."[87] Although they still cooperated on some issues in the next several years, when Parnell's career disintegrated because of the O'Shea affair, Davitt's bitter opposition to his former colleague "indicated a depth of resentment that only the betrayal of trust could evince."[88] While in prison, Davitt was elected to Parliament in 1882, and in the same year, tried to replace the outlawed Land League with the more extreme Irish National League, but he did not realize comparable success. Immediately after Parnell's release from prison,

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[87] W.F. Mandle, 1987, 81.

[88] Ibid., 13.

the infamous "Phoenix Park murders" were perpetrated by the "Untouchables", casting unfounded suspicion on Parnell and the Land League, and requiring Parnell to distance himself even further from any non-constitutional elements. But perhaps Davitt's biggest obstacle to reviving the movement was his own success at achieving results. At least in part due to Davitt's movement, Gladstone instituted limited reforms on the land issue that successfully aided in the pacification of the population.

The tactics employed by the Land League agitators were nothing new, but they did realize unprecedented degrees of effectiveness. The use of social pressure had been a part of the earlier agrarian movements, such as the Whiteboyism and Ribbonism, where social ostracism used against evicting landlords and incoming tenants was employed along with intimidation and violence to counter evictions and rent increases.[89] However, these groups relied more on secretive and violent tactics, and the use of social pressure was not a primary tool until the advent of the Land League. Building on the old agrarian techniques, the Land League agitation would encourage the community to completely ostracize any offending landowner, in addition to more violent intimidation methods which also frequently appeared. The oft-quoted case of Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott offers some insight into their tactics. A land agent who was targeted because he was threatening evictions, Boycott was isolated by the rest of the community, as Davitt recounted:[90]

The local blacksmith refused to shoe any of his horses; the herds who looked

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[89] See M. Beames, 1983.

[90] P. Metscher, 1986, 202.

after his cattle left him; the baker in the nearest town refused to serve Lough Mask House with bread; the postman most reluctantly delivered his letters, and, finally, all his domestic servants declared they could no longer stay "the people are ag'inst it".

Finally, Boycott had to bring in fifty Orange laborers from Ulster, guarded by 1000 members of the Royal Irish Constabulary, to harvest the crops. Obviously, the cost-effectiveness of such harvesting techniques prevented this from becoming an annual occurrence. (Boycott left Ireland permanently a few years later.) In many such situations, crowds would gather to protest against evictions, and discourage new tenants from settling on the land. The Land League tried to convict landlords in the court of public opinion by publishing lists of the names of those who were evicting tenants or using "rack-rents." This was, of course, in addition to violent rhetoric, threats, and the intimidation associated with the widespread agrarian outrages. Just as he opposed the use of assassinations and the dynamite terrorism by Fenians, Davitt discouraged the outrages and emphasized the boycott as much as he could--but not always successfully.

Davitt structured the League so that it could take advantage of its broad base of support as well as Parnell's appeal and influence. Davitt was often the driving force of the League's policies, and Parnell acted as the restraining force, a situation which did nothing to lessen the tension between the two. The prime example of this was Parnell's decision to abolish the Ladies' Land League, in spite of Davitt's argument that the Land League agitation had forced the government into a position where the Land League could dictate terms as long as the Ladies' Land League was able to continue to direct the agitation. Davitt's creations, such as the Ladies' Land League and the American auxiliary, suggest

an astute planner and an insightful mind that recognized the impact of a popular moral force movement on public opinion. The foundation of the Land League was solidly entrenched in the desire for land reform, but the structure itself was unsteady, "combining tight political organization with slovenly clerical administration and loose rhetoric."[91]

Although the Land League agitation was definitely the peak of Davitt's influence, he went on to promote his national and social ideas for another quarter century. He involved himself in the British labor movement, acting as a respected mediator in disputes, and launching the short-lived *Labour World* in 1890, which failed the next year, according to Sheehy-Skeffington, because it was ahead of its time.[92] He continued to serve in Parliament, although he did not view that position as the most advantageous from which to operate, and left in 1899 over the issue of the British war against the Boers, which caused him to pursue more active anti-imperial methods. Like many Irish nationalists, Davitt was sympathetic to the Boers, and he went to South Africa to investigate the situation. He also helped other Irishmen to join the Irish Brigade serving the Boer Republics, but was disappointed in the lack of active support for his views in the U.S., and felt that a prime opportunity to strike at the British Empire was lost. He continued to write and speak publicly until his death in Dublin in 1906, while James Connolly was in the United States.

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[91] R.F. Foster, 1988, 411.

[92] F. Sheehy-Skeffington, 1909, 181.

As a Fenian, Davitt represented a unique and open-minded approach to Fenian goals, but his ideas were largely rejected by the movement as a whole. The IRB was coming off of a failed attempt to lend support to the Home Rule cause in the mid 1870s, and most Parnellite sympathizers had split from the IRB by 1877. Thus the IRB was dominated by the physical force philosophy when Davitt proposed the new departure. Davitt hoped to bring the revolutionary Fenians into a general nationalist front with the parliamentarians and the Catholic Church, but the IRB opposed this compromise of their tactical principles. This is not to suggest that the IRB opposed Davitt's intention of helping the peasantry. But the Fenian movement, despite instances of paying lip service to the Irish peasantry, had traditionally failed to recognize the potential strength of this disaffected part of the population because of the Fenian insistence on being a political rather than a social movement. Conversely, Davitt's premise was the idea that "the energies of the peasant, which the Fenians had failed to exploit, were turned towards economic ends--something more comprehensible to the peasantry than the idea of an Irish republic."[93] Still, the Supreme Council of the IRB, of which Davitt was a member until 1880, believed that participation in a political front led by parliamentarians would demoralize and contaminate their "pure" nationalism. Nevertheless, Davitt kept many contacts with individual Fenians, and the Land League was supported by the participation of many Fenians, some of whom who were "entrenched in the

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[93] H. Senior, in *Fenians And Fenianism*, 1968, 66.

original executive of the Land League, four members at least being Fenians."[94] Somewhat ironically, when Parnell's fortunes declined with the O'Shea scandal, his rhetoric became more violent, and he and the Fenians started a mutual, if brief, relationship.

Davitt's religious attitudes were predictably tolerant. Raised as a Catholic, but in a tolerant atmosphere, his social and political goals were not clouded with religious bigotry. He sought to forge a common cause with Orangemen and to stem the rising tide of distinctiveness between Ulster and the rest of Ireland. But the potential for a true non-sectarian movement was probably decimated with the Phoenix Park murders. Not surprisingly, the Irish Catholic clergy was divided on the Land League. Many priests supported the movement, and they were an integral part of the new departure. However, there also existed condemnation by many in the hierarchy for the unrest, and the Vatican did show signs of displeasure with the movement as a whole.[95]

Davitt was distinguished from the other Fenians mostly by the depth and broad-mindedness of his thinking. On organizational\structural issues, Davitt's ideas were much more elastic than those of many of his fellow Fenians. Davitt wanted to open up the secretive IRB, and forge an alliance with other nationalists

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[94] R.F. Foster, 1988, 404-5.

[95] F. Sheehy-Skeffington, 1909, 144. Sheehy-Skeffington, himself quite an anti-cleric, believed that an anti-Parnell encyclical that attacked the Parnell tribute--a revenue system not unlike O'Connell's--was actually an attack on the nationalists in general. Sheehy-Skeffington maintained that the Vatican looked to the inclusion of Ireland in Great Britain as the channel for Roman Catholicism to influence the heart of the greatest empire in the world at that time. Any move to separate Ireland from Britain could damage Catholic power in the British Empire.

and other forces for change. Davitt's failure, or at least incomplete success, was that in tying his primary goal of Irish national independence--which he believed, as most Irish nationalists had for the past century, would bring justice to Ireland--to his more immediate goal of land reform, he unintentionally undercut his own program when the immediate cause realized startling progress, as Garvin points out:[96]

> The successful conclusion of the Land War weakened the revolutionary impulse seriously. Once the alliance of English Liberalism, Irish agrarianism, and Irish constitutional nationalism had destroyed landlordism, the 'agrarian motor', which revolutionary separatists had hoped to use to move their own rather difficult cause along, began slowly to run out of fuel.

Davitt's ideas on parliamentary politics indicate a strong preference for democratization and anti-imperialism. He tried to put the Irish Parliamentary Party at the vanguard of the movement to enlarge the franchise, and promoted participation and leverage at the local levels of the political process. He supported the vigorous obstructionist tactics in the House of Commons, and, like some of the Young Irelanders before him and the later abstentionist Sinn Feiners, advocated the threat of withdrawal of the Irish MPs from Westminster and the creation of an Irish Assembly if the Union was not repealed. His frustration with the resistance of the parliamentary system to change, combined with his identification with the apparently victimized Boers, led him to turn away from Parliament. His democratic principles were also applied to the economic sphere, where he positioned himself securely at the edge of British socialism. Despite his nationalist sentiments, Davitt held internationalist values which were usually

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[96] T. Garvin, 1987, 3-4.

expressed through his labor activities. Davitt was the author of several progressive proposals, and he tried to link the Irish cause with the concerns of the Orangemen, British workers, Boers, and other subject races in the Empire. Sheehy-Skeffington declared that Davitt's ideas led to the "first labour movement" in the British Isles (and eventually to the social reform programs of the British government in the early 20th century).[97] Like Connolly, he felt that any relationship between Britain and Ireland could only be maintained if it was mutually and voluntarily created.

However, it is in the area of the land question that Davitt left his most indelible mark, and his activities in this area offer the best insight into his socio-political philosophy. Davitt was greatly influenced by Henry George's views on the relationship of the private ownership of land to social problems, and the two figures maintained an active and stimulating relationship. Davitt held a strong belief in the ownership of Irish land by Ireland, which caused him to repudiate the land reforms instituted by the British government. Davitt was "the only real exponent of land nationalization" in Ireland at the time, and his conception of land nationalization "chimed in with notions of communal ownership under Brehon law", just as Connolly's ideas were largely based on this idealization of the past.[98] Davitt's contributions were based on the premise that equated landlordism with British rule in Ireland. He reached his conclusions regarding the relationship between these two forces independently of, but in much the same

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[97] F. Sheehy-Skeffington, 1909, 67.

[98] R.F. Foster, 1988, 415, 411.

manner that James Fintan Lalor had three decades earlier, and this symbolized one of "the true lines of evolution in Irish politics."[99] They both arrived at the conclusion that striking at landlordism would be striking at the heart of British power in Ireland, because, in the eyes of the peasantry at least, British influence was centered on and in the large-landowning class. Thus, Davitt had definite socialistic tendencies, most often evident in his rhetoric which foreshadowed Connolly:[100]

> The individualistic civilisation of the present system denies to the million the possibility of giving play to what is good in human nature, by putting its passions and selfishness into deadly activity in a cut-throat competition for wealth.

But Davitt did not consider himself to be a socialist:[101]

> ...I am not a Socialist myself; I am content to be an Irish Nationalist and Land Reformer; but there are many articles in the political creed of Socialism to which I willingly subscribe.

In fact, Davitt was repelled by some socialist ideas, and particularly by those of the Fabians, because he feared restrictions of individual liberty.

For his part, Connolly was an admirer of some of Davitt's ideas, if not necessarily the person himself. Connolly supported the idea of using the land issue as the basis for a nationalist movement:[102]

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[99] F. Sheehy-Skeffington, 1909, 66.

[100] Ibid., 145.

[101] Ibid., 237. Davitt went on to say: "...Socialists are not, so far as I can see, either drunkards, gamblers, or wife-beaters. If they were, they would vote Tory, and the churchmen would not denounce them. They are sober, earnest, intelligent citizens, who see clearly the evils of the existing system in their effects upon the industrial and civic lives of the wage-earning masses, and who have the courage to put forward proposed reforms which shall minimise, if they cannot eradicate, these evils in the existence of the labouring poor."

[102] *LIH*, 163.

When the revolutionary nationalists threw in their lot with the Irish Land League, and made the land struggle the basis of their warfare, they were not only placing themselves in touch once more with those inexhaustible quarries of material interests from which all the great Irish statesmen from St. Laurence O'Toole to Wolfe Tone drew the stones upon which they built their edifice of a militant patriotic Irish organisation, but they were also, consciously or unconsciously, placing themselves in accord with the principles which underline and inspire the modern movement of labour.

But Connolly's conception of a socialist republic did not have an agrarian basis. In fact, Connolly had very little experience with rural Ireland. Connolly's socialism focussed on the urban proletariat, and he tended to view agrarian-based nationalism in much the same way as he viewed cultural nationalism: as a benign force that held the danger of entrapping potential socialist-republicans in an incomplete vision of a free Ireland. Thus, he did harbor some suspicions for Davitt as a middle-class nationalist or even as a dupe of the middle class leaders, and, surprisingly, he portrayed Parnell as the abandoned protector of progressive Irish nationalism.[103] Still, in *Labour In Irish History*,Connolly mourned the aborted efforts of the Land League, the failure to "call into existence a spirit of enquiry into the right of property" and, in an apparent reference to the Kilmainham Treaty, the willingness of the leadership to[104]

lend their energies to an attempt to focus the whole interests of Ireland upon a parliamentary struggle as soon as ever a temporary set-back gave them an opportunity to counsel a change of tactics.

Later, however, Connolly was to credit Davitt with making "horrified and energetic protests" against the trend among the Irish voters to ignore Socialist and

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[103] For Davitt: *WR*, 9-2-1899 and *Harp*, 8-1908; for Parnell: *WR*, 10-8-1898.

[104] *LIH*, 164.

Labour candidates in the wake of "the Home Rule-Liberal alliance."[105] Still, despite the differences between the two approaches to Irish national and social issues, the continuities from Davitt to Connolly are substantial.

It was in this context that Connolly launched his career in Ireland. The half century immediately preceding Connolly's career was directly relevant for his ideas, as well as for the context of his actions. Despite his distaste for the cultural nationalism of Young Ireland, he was very impressed with the ideas of Lalor and, to a lesser extent, Mitchel on social organization and revolution. The cultural nationalism of Thomas Davis was to be personified in Connolly's partner in rebellion, Patrick Pearse. Davitt, arriving at the same conclusions as Lalor regarding the link between political and socio-economic issues in Ireland, foreshadowed Connolly's ideas on this subject, as Connolly focussed on the urban-industrial factor instead of the rural-agricultural issues as the key to true independence. The secrecy and physical force of the Fenians influenced Connolly, but their ability to operate a revolutionary movement in Ireland in spite of the attacks of the powerful Catholic Church was reflected in Connolly's own efforts at such an endeavor. The Catholic Church challenged the physical force tradition of the Fenians, and, with the Parliamentary Party as well as the many cultural nationalist groups (including those controlled by the IRB), offered a broad front of Irish nationalism. Connolly came into this milieu of competing

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[105] *LIH*, 164-5.

social and nationalist forces, first as a soldier, and then as a young socialist and laborer from Edinburgh.

Connolly's Life And Career: A Summary

Since there are already in existence a few accounts of Connolly's life, and furthermore, since his biography is not a central concern of this paper, there is no need for an exhaustive examination of his early years or of his career at this time.[106] However, this paper would be negligent if it were to exclude any outline of his life. What follows is by no means meant to be a complete account of such a complex character. But in order to complement the preceding sections in their attempt to trace Connolly's philosophical lineage in the three relevant areas, the following is simply a short sketch which provides some background, chronology, and immediate context for the next chapter's examination of his ideas on the integration of nationalism, socialism, and Christianity.

Contrary to the many reports which followed immediately after the 1916 uprising and his consequent execution, Connolly was not born in County Monaghan, but in an Irish slum in Edinburgh in the year after the Fenian uprising. His Irish Catholic family had emigrated there, and his father was a laborer for the city. By his eleventh year, Connolly was working at the *Evening*

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[106] See, for instance: Ruth Dudley Edwards, *James Connolly*, (Dublin, 1981), which is part of the "Gill's Irish Lives" series; C. Desmond Greaves, *The Life And Times Of James Connolly*, (London, 1986) is considered the definitive account of his life; Sean Cronin, *Young Connolly*, (Dublin, 1978) deals with his early career; and Nora Connolly O'Brien, *James Connolly: Portrait Of A Rebel Father*, (Dublin, 1935, 1975) is an account from the perspective of his eldest daughter.

News before being dismissed by a government inspector; he then went on to other jobs. At the age of fourteen he joined the military, and was stationed in Ireland. In 1889 he deserted, but was lucky enough to have had the government lose his records. He married and immediately joined other members of his family in the Scottish socialist movement, and within three years had become the secretary of the Scottish Socialist Federation.

The early 1890s saw Connolly begin his prolific writing career, and his less successful career as a political candidate. In 1896 he moved to Dublin as an organizer for the Dublin Socialist Club, and helped to establish the Irish Socialist Republican Party while supporting himself as a common laborer, as he would for many years. His arrest the following year for demonstrating against Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was one of several run-ins with the law for his political activities, and his writings and lectures were starting to attract attention within the socialist communities in Ireland and Britain. In the spring of 1898 he spent a few weeks in Kerry (one of his rare experiences in rural Ireland) as a journalist for New York's *Weekly People*, to cover a potential famine. That summer, with the financial help of some British socialists, including Kier Hardie, he launched the *Workers' Republic* in Dublin. The next year, Connolly organized the Irish anti-war movement protesting British aggression against the Boer Republics. He continued to write and publish articles, pamphlets, and poetry, to run unsuccessfully in municipal election in Dublin, to organize socialist and labor groups, and to lecture throughout the British Isles and North America until 1903.

Frustrated by the lack of progress in Ireland, both personally and politically, Connolly moved to New York. The next year his family, mourning the death of

his eldest daughter in an accident, joined him. Finding work in the insurance business, he studied other languages in the hopes of forging organizational links with workers of other nationalities; he mastered German, French, and Italian (Connolly also knew a little Irish, and possibly some Arabic). He joined the Socialist Labour Party, founded the Irish Socialist Federation, and was an early member of the Industrial Workers of the World, for which he undertook successful organizational endeavors in the New York area. He was involved as an official in a number of labor and socialist groups, wrote for a number of publications, and in 1907, finished his first major work, *Labour In Irish History.* The next year he started *The Harp* for the ISF, and lectured and published for the IWW until 1910 when he returned to Ireland at the invitation of Irish labor leader (and Dublin editor of *The Harp*) Jim Larkin.

Back in Ireland, Connolly immersed himself in organizational activities, and published his second great work, *Labour, Nationality And Religion.* With his American-bred syndicalism, he joined Larkin's "one big union", the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union, in 1911, the same year that he moved to Belfast. For the next two years he organized for the ITGWU and led sporadic strikes throughout the industrial communities in Ireland. In the political arena, he founded the Independent Labour Party of Ireland, agitated to include progressive components in the Home Rule Bill, and unsuccessfully contested the Belfast municipal elections. The famous Dublin Lockout of 1913 brought Connolly to the uppermost levels of the British labor pantheon. The Dublin capitalists, led by William Martin Murphy, attempted to break the ITGWU by forcing employees to take an anti-union oath. Although they failed to destroy the

ITGWU, the owners did inflict major damage on the cause of trade unionism in Ireland. Arrested at the early stages of the conflict, Connolly went on a hunger strike and won his own release. With Larkin's arrest, Connolly took control of the ITGWU and agitated for Larkin's freedom, as well as for British labor support. The end of the confrontation saw Connolly's deep frustration with British labor organizations, and his creation of the world's first "red guard", the Irish Citizen Army.

In early 1914, Connolly spent much of his time protesting the potential partition of Ireland. The controversy, with the consequent mass mobilization of the citizens, was pre-empted, however, by the start of the First World War. Connolly distinguished himself as one of the very few European socialists to stick to his principles in opposing what he viewed as a war for the capitalists fought by the working classes. Connolly led the anti-war movement again, and began acting on the age-old Irish nationalist premise that England's difficulty was Ireland's opportunity. With Larkin's departure to the U.S., Connolly became the leader of the ITGWU, and initiated contacts with the IRB in the hopes of organizing an anti-British rising before the war ended. The following year, Connolly studied, wrote, and lectured on guerrilla warfare. He also published his last major work, *The Reconquest Of Ireland*, in December, 1915.

After threatening to start a rising without the IRB, Connolly was "co-opted" into the Military Council of the IRB in early 1916, and accelerated plans for a rising.[107] Working with Pearse and other IRB members, Connolly arranged for

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[107] Accounts vary as to the actual circumstances surrounding this event, but "co-opted" is the term most frequently used to describe it. Most writers now see Connolly's disappearance for a few days in January of 1916 as a mutual

the mobilization of Citizen Army and Irish Volunteer forces for Easter Sunday, without the knowledge of Eoin MacNeill, the leader of the Volunteers. Despite the fact that MacNeill issued countermanding orders when he discovered the plot at the last minute, and knowing very well that they had no chance of practical success, on Sunday Connolly and the other militants met in Liberty Hall, headquarters of the ITGWU, and decided to proceed with the Rising on Easter Monday. The Proclamation of the Republic, printed up in Liberty Hall, was signed by Connolly, Pearse, Thomas Clarke, Sean MacDiarmada (MacDermott), Thomas MacDonagh, Eamonn Ceannt, and Joseph Plunkett, and was issued on Monday, 24 April. Connolly was named the Vice-President of the Provisional Government of the Republic, and the Commander of the Dublin forces. After several days of vicious fighting, in which Connolly was shot both in the arm and the leg, he ordered the surrender of the insurgents on 29 April to prevent further senseless devastation. Enduring terrible agony from his wounds, Connolly was finally tried on 9 May, defending himself only against accusations of mistreatment of prisoners.[108] Propped up in his bed, he was sentenced to death.

On 12 May, he was brought to Kilmainham jail, and, unable to stand because

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arrangement between Connolly and the IRB. However, many observers at the time, particularly those associated with Connolly's ICA and union activities, thought that his disappearance from Liberty Hall could only be a result of the IRB abducting him. They believed that he would not willingly leave his duties at Liberty Hall without making arrangements with his ICA and union associates. Perhaps this refusal to see Connolly's participation in the scheme, supported by his subsequent full-hearted cooperation with the IRB, was indicative of a group of socialists who did not want to admit Connolly's nationalistic tendencies. See, for example, Frank Robbins, *Under The Starry Plough*, (Dublin, 1977) 70-4.

[108] Statement to Court Martial, 9 May, 1916, reprinted in Piaras F. Mac Lochlainn, *Last Words*, (Dublin, 1971) 188-9.

of his injuries, which had become gangrenous, he was strapped to a chair. He had sent for a Catholic priest, Fr. Aloysius, to whom he restated his firm belief that he could, in good conscience, be both a Catholic and a socialist. According to Fr. Aloysius, in relating the event to Connolly's family:[109]

> He was very brave and cool...I asked him: "Will you pray for the men who are about to shoot you," and he answered: "I will say a prayer for all brave men who do their duty." ...And then they shot him.

James Connolly was the last prisoner executed, and was buried in a common grave with his comrades. He was survived by his wife, Lillie, and six children.

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[109] N. Connolly O'Brien, (1935) 1975, 327. In other accounts, Connolly's last words, as recorded by the attending surgeon, were: "Yes, Sir, I'll pray for all brave men who do their duty according to their lights." See, for instance: P. Mac Lochlainn, 1971, 193.

CHAPTER THREE

Connolly's Synthesis Of Socialism, Nationalism, And Religion

"StrugglingTowards The Light"

James Connolly was among the more prolific and innovative socialist thinkers/activists at the turn of the century. In shaping socialism to fit the situation in Ireland at the time, he had to harness the forces of nationalism to achieve the just ends that he saw in socialism; and he had to prove that socialism was compatible with Christianity. Rejecting doctrinaire Marxism as legalistic and overly inflexible, Connolly used Marxism as a guide to achieve what he saw as a truly free Irish nation, where justice could be enjoyed by all. The unique situation of Ireland at the time dictated that, as a socialist, Connolly would have to deal with Irish nationalism and Roman Catholicism. But to Connolly, these concepts were all inter-related. This brings up the question of whether Connolly saw himself first and foremost as an Irishman, a Catholic, or a Marxist. Since his death, socialists have tended to de-emphasize his Irish nationalism and Catholicism, while Catholics and nationalists have tried to deny his socialism. This quarrel was and is indicative of the general misunderstanding of Connolly's ideas, often caused by the selfish prejudices of socialists, Catholics, and Irish

nationalists who, in attempting to claim Connolly as their own, have ignored his writings on the inter-relationships of these three factors in Irish society. This chapter will explore the dynamic relationship of these three often incompatible elements in Connolly's writings in order to evaluate the prioritization of values in Connolly's theories.

Connolly recognized the vast prejudice against his ideas in Ireland at the time. At one point, Connolly wrote of the need for everyone who was "struggling towards the light out of the economic darkness of to-day" to be aware of the real issues involved in the relationship between Roman Catholicism and socialism.[1] At another time, Connolly justified his opposition to the First World War by claiming that the Irish worker had no quarrel with Germany, and welcomed "the German as a brother struggling towards the light."[2] Some accounts of his execution have him promising to "pray for all brave men who do their duty according to their lights", including the soldiers about to shoot him.[3] Perhaps the beauty of this phrase is its power and its ambiguity. It is representative of the poetic energy that is present in so much of Connolly's writing. As a union organizer and socialist agitator, Connolly was a master at imagery, public speaking, and motivation. As an intelligent and moral person who had seen the misery caused by greed, and who had channeled his outrage into poetry and songs, Connolly was blessed with the ability to convey his thoughts in an

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1 *Harp*, 9-1908.

2 *The Irish Worker*, 10-31-1914.

3 P.F. Mac Lochlainn, 1971, 193.

emotional, and at times almost lyrical, manner. But the phrase "struggling towards the light" leaves the reader–and perhaps the modern reader to a greater degree–wondering what "the light" is supposed to represent. In the context of Connolly's writing, "the light" could be individual and/or social enlightenment, social justice, God, or a high level of spiritual consciousness. For Connolly, these kinds of ideals stood somewhere in Ireland's (and humankind's) foreseeable future. The roles played by socialism, nationalism, and Christianity in hastening and guaranteeing this ideal future in Connolly's theories are the keys to understanding Connolly. Therefore, Connolly's socialism, nationalism, and Catholicism need to be examined. But it should be emphasized that all three ideas were inter-related in Connolly's mind. The synthesis of these three idea-systems was inherent in their individual and collective characters, as far as Connolly was concerned. What follows is an examination of Connolly's integration of these three separate, and often contradictory, philosophies. Thus, because there is some obvious overlap among all three philosophical concepts, each one is discussed below, as much as is possible, as it relates to the other two ideas.[4] First, Connolly's synthesis of socialism and nationalism is examined by studying his writings on the two subjects as separate entities and as they relate to each other. Following that is an examination of Connolly's integration of socialism and Christianity, particularly in its Catholic form. Noticeably absent from this analysis is any effort to evaluate an attempt on Connolly's part to unite

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[4] There is very little in Connolly's writings that relates his nationalism to Catholicism. This was probably because of his insistence on keeping the Irish socialist movement free from domination by any one religion.

Catholicism and Irish nationalism. This is simply because Connolly refused to make such a link. Although he recognized that Catholicism was the religion of most of the people of Ireland, this did not seem to present to him, as it did to many other Irish nationalists, with an avenue for the expression of nationalism. If anything, it only made the Catholic Church more susceptible to his attacks for its failure to improve the lot of the majority of the Irish. Connolly spent a considerable portion of his career in Belfast, and elsewhere, trying to cut across denominational lines in order to build working-class solidarity. His definition of Irishness did not leave room for religious bigotry.

Connolly, Socialism And Nationalism

When James Connolly was executed, it appeared that the cause of Irish nationalism had suffered a terrible loss. But just as devastating was the blow suffered by socialism, which lost a great thinker who was devoted to achieving justice for oppressed peoples. Connolly, one of the few European socialist theoreticians to actually come from the ranks of the working class, was extremely influential in his time; not only with other socialists, but also with other nationalists--particularly his compatriots in Ireland. His ideas were reflected in the writings of other nationalists, were debated by other socialists of his time, and are still embraced by a substantial element of the nationalist and socialist movements of the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland today. Connolly was a voracious reader and a prolific writer. While working as a casual laborer, union organizer, and publisher in Scotland, Ireland, and the United States, this self-

taught Marxist attracted attention with his articles, which were printed in many a local radical press, and his major works, which he published in book and pamphlet form. His most original ideas centered on the broad themes of socialism as it related to nationalism and Christianity. In evaluating his ideas on these topics it must be remembered that, with the exception of his idealized conception of an ancient Irish communal system, he had no concrete model of socialism to describe and analyze, so his work was basically abstract predictions on production and distribution systems, as well as moralistic theory. What is remarkable about his work is its relevance to the current situation in both parts of Ireland. His ideas have re-emerged, along with the troubles in Ireland, to be re-evaluated and embraced by many radicals.

Almost immediately after his death, Connolly was portrayed as an Irish nationalist, first and foremost, who also happened to espouse radical social ideas. Although this representation may well have indicated a miscalculation on Connolly's part, it is historically inaccurate. Connolly was primarily a socialist. His writings relate all other ideas, including nationalism and religion, as well as more specific issues such as Home Rule, partition, and World War One, to his socialism. The essence of Connolly's socialism was Marxist theory, with which he was well acquainted, and which he explicitly recognized as valid in its basic tenets, such as dialectic materialism, the Labor Theory of Value, class antagonisms, and the rejection of utopian socialism.[5] However, for Connolly,

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[5] Connolly's treatment of the Labor Theory of Value offers an excellent example of his sarcastic wit, which appears frequently in his writings. After demonstrating the validity of this theory, to his satisfaction, in *Labour, Nationality And Religion*, Connolly concluded: "Altars, beads, cassocks, shoes, buildings, ploughs, books--all articles upon the market, except a politician's conscience--have

Marxism was a guide, and not dogma. Marxism offered a means of analysis with an objective of progressive action. According to Connolly, a socialist did not have to accept every Marxist premise or conclusion, but had to agree on human justice as the goal of socialism. For example, Connolly was the first to embrace the Marxist idea of historical materialism in interpreting Irish history, but claimed "that there are many good Socialists who do not hold it, and that a belief in it is *not* essential to Socialism."[6]

In Ireland at that time, Connolly saw evidence to support his conclusion that capitalism, in replacing feudal social relationships, needed to balance production and consumption: With the newer, more efficient production techniques increasing output and competition, and the saturated exploitation of world markets proportionately diminishing consumption, capitalists had to further exploit the workers to maintain their profits. According to Connolly, this oppression would reach a breaking point when the workers would seize control of the state and the means of production.[7] Socialist control would translate into a three-point policy: (1) the means of production put under the control of bodies responsible to the community; (2) a democratic society to insure that the government acted in the interests of the community; (3) and national, rather than imperial or international representative bodies, to make the government most responsive to the people.[8]

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their exchange value determined...by their labor cost."(p. 24)

[6] *LNR*, 19; (Connolly's italics).

[7] *WR*, 7-1-1899.

[8] *L'Irlande Libre*, 1897.

For Connolly, socialism represented the purest form of democracy, but simply instituting a state monopoly was not socialism. Worker control of the means of production could not be separated from worker control of the state. Connolly is said to have vacillated between Marxism and syndicalism, between seeking control of the state and advancing the working class through trade unionism. For instance at one point, while active in American labor organizations, Connolly wrote:[9]

...the emancipation of the working-class will function more through the economic power than through the political state. The first act of the workers will be through their economic organisations seizing the organised industries; the last act the conquest of political power.

This line of thinking is most thoroughly developed in *Socialism Made Easy.* However, particularly after the disappointments of the 1913 Lockout, Connolly tended to stress political goals, as indicated by his increasing involvement in the ICA, and his eventual gamble for political power in 1916. In the context of the failure of 1913 and the sectarianization of the Ulster working class, Connolly changed his emphasis, prophetically warning of[10]

the tendency in the Labour movement to mistake mere concentration upon the industrial field for essentially revolutionary advance....The Greater Unionism is found in short to be forging greater fetters for the working class; to bear to the real revolutionary industrial unionism the same relation as the servile State would bear to the Co-operative Commonwealth of our dreams....they may also be on the road to foisting upon the working class a form of organization which will make our last state infinitely worse than our first.

Some see in this a progression in the maturation of his social philosophy. Although at different times in his career, Connolly could be seen pursuing purely

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[9] *Harp*, 4-1908.

[10] *Forward*, 5-23-1914.

political activities, while at other times he submerged himself in trade union matters, the differences are only a matter of emphasis in tactics. He never rejected one or the other routes to justice for the working class, and most variations in emphasis can be explained as the application of merely tactical questions to problems under changing circumstances. These tactics were meant to lead to a situation where the workers would finally have a right to what they produce, rather than having to surrender the majority of it to the parasitical capitalist class. Naturally, Connolly's ability to perceive and describe all social issues in a black-white contrast was applied to the social classes and human problems of his time. Connolly claimed that only the pure form of democracy manifested in socialism could eradicate the "destitution, and all the misery, crime, and immorality that flow from that unnecessary evil," which he saw in capitalism.[11]

In Connolly's view, capitalism was the epitome of injustice, a system which consolidated the control that had been exercised by the old feudal aristocracy.[12] In a speech during his 1903 campaign for the Wood Quay Ward in Dublin's municipal elections, Connolly attacked the immorality of capitalism, claiming that capitalists had stolen the land from the natives of Ireland, and then exploited them by demanding rent for its use, while never producing anything themselves.[13] Because of the nature of the system, not only did capitalism teach immoral and

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[11] Speech made during Belfast election, 1913.

[12] *L'Irlande Libre*, 1897.

[13] Speech made during Dublin election, 1903.

uncivilized attitudes which were comparable to cannibalism, but no real justice could ever exist within such a system.[14] Thus, he claimed:[15]

> Capitalism teaches the people the moral conceptions of cannibalism--the strong devouring the weak; its theory of the world of men and women is that of a glorified pig-trough where the biggest swine gets the most swill. The idea of human relations which would grow out of the working class of Ireland solidifying and concentrating their forces for their common benefit would make for human brotherhood and a conception of the universe worthy of a really civilised people.

Connolly attacked the middle-class concept of individual and civil rights as effectively meaningless to the worker who had no corresponding economic rights. Politics was a matter of the stomach, Connolly claimed, and freedom of speech and the press meant little to starving people. Freedom was not an end in and of itself, but only a means to justice in society. Connolly pointed out that one of his critics went so far as to admit that, in a capitalist system, "(one's) right to use these means (private property) is at the same time a right to exclude others from their use."[16] These negative rights--that is, freedom from outside intrusion without any requirements regarding the corresponding responsibilities to one's fellow beings--meant that, despite capitalist claims regarding natural rights, there was no such thing as a basic right to life in the capitalist system. As Connolly claimed: the worker "has no effective right to live in this world unless a capitalist can see his way to make a profit out of him."[17] To have any hope of freedom, the working class had to assert its rights by cultivating a class consciousness that

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[14] *Harp*, 1-1910.

[15] Ibid.

[16] *LNR*, 28. Connolly quoted Fr. Kane S.J. from his *Lenten Discourses* against socialism; (my parentheses).

[17] *LNR*, 28.

was to be "alert, disciplined, intelligent, (and) determined to be free."[18]

Connolly's methods of achieving such a class consciousness ranged from the practical to the extreme. This was evident in his relationship with middle-class nationalists. While on the one hand craving their support in his struggle for Irish freedom, Connolly also had an ideological obstacle to overcome before he could allow himself to deal with them: "(socialists have) learned from history that all bourgeois movements end in compromise, that the bourgeois revolutionists of to-day become the conservatives of to-morrow."[19] Connolly had to assert the superiority of his socialism (and his type of nationalism) over middle-class nationalism, at least in his own mind, so that he could coordinate activities with these groups in good conscience.

In fact, his relationship with one such nationalist, Patrick Pearse, tells much about how these two ideologies would influence each other, and therefore, how they were connected in Connolly's mind. Pearse's activities in the IRB and in cultural nationalist organizations represented progressive involvement in mainstream middle-class nationalism for Connolly. Connolly seemed to rule out any kind of affiliation on the grounds that it would be an unstable relationship, since, in Connolly's thinking, their respective groups would be bound to clash at a

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[18] *The Irish Worker*, 10-31-1914; (my parentheses).

[19] *L'Irlande Libre*, 1897; (my parentheses).

future date.[20] Connolly recognized that many southern Irish capitalists, whose markets were much more domestic-oriented than their northern counterparts, were interested in Irish independence so they could better protect their markets. But Connolly was able to see the advantages of allying himself with the progressive elements of middle-class nationalism.[21] In an article published in 1897, Connolly explained that, although these nationalists had essentially failed in their logic and their ability to observe past events, there was some value in their cultural movements, such as the promotion of the Gaelic language. The main concern was to try to get the nationalists to link their national aspirations with the fight against injustice.[22] Hence, Connolly allowed himself to be co-opted into the secretive and nationalistic Irish Republican Brotherhood and committed himself and his resources to the its goal of an Irish Republic, to the extent that it appeared to his fellow socialists that he had lost himself in nationalistic politics.

Pearse, on the other hand, started to embrace some of Connolly's socialist ideas into his writing. Together, the two took the concepts of "shock methods" and "blood sacrifice" and applied it to the nationalist attempt to shock the people of Ireland into a national consciousness with the Easter Uprising of 1916. Their relationship is indicative of Connolly's refusal to be constricted by doctrinaire

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[20] *Erin's Hope*, (Dublin, 1897) 23-4. As late as 16 April 1916, Connolly was telling his ICA, "In the event of victory, hold on to your rifles, as those with whom we are fighting may stop before our goal is reached. We are out for economic as well as political liberty. Hold on to your rifles!"
R.M. Fox, *The History Of The Irish Citizen Army*, (Dublin, 1944) 128.

[21] *L'Irlande Libre*, 1897.

[22] *Shan Van Vocht*, 1-1897.

Marxism, and his ability to find new, more practical paths to bring about the desired ends. At the same time, however, his extremism was evident:[23]

> No nation is worthy of independence until it is independent. No nation is fit to be free until it is free. No man can swim until he has entered the water and failed and been half drowned several times in the attempt to swim...Experience would strengthen us in power to attain security. Security would strengthen us in our progress towards greater freedom.

Although many people have learned how to swim without almost killing themselves, the logic of this statement, albeit burdened with hyperbole, was extended to Connolly's self-sacrifice in the Easter Uprising.

Tactically, Connolly had plans which were designed to speed the progress towards a just state. In founding his Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896, with the goal of bringing about the ideal of a socialist state which would be independent of the British Empire, Connolly promoted the use of accepted political methods to enact his ten-point program, which he viewed only as the means to a greater end:[24]

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

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[23] *WR*, 12-18-1915.

[24] Programme of the "Irish Socialist Republican Party," founded in Dublin, May 29, 1896. Manifesto published in Dublin, September, 1896.

popular ballot for that purpose alone.
9. Free education up to the highest university grades.
10. Universal suffrage.

This program was typical of Connolly's preference for non-violent action. Although he was not a pacifist, Connolly abhorred violence, and tried to promote peaceful political and trade union activities with his writings. This does not mean that he refused to use violence, but only that he denied the dominant Marxist view that revolutionary change had to be violent.[25] Connolly claimed that class violence usually arose when the ruling classes attacked the workers, or when the ruling classes refused to abide by decisions arrived at through the democratic process. Still, Connolly obviously saw a place for violence in certain instances when he thought it was necessary as the last resort, such as the Easter Uprising. As time went on he became more convinced that violence would have to be used:[26]

> To my mind an agitation to attain a political or economic end must rest upon an implied willingness and ability to use force. Without that it is mere wind and attitudinizing...We believe in constitutional action in normal times; we believe in revolutionary action in exceptional times. These are exceptional times.

This conviction became even more pronounced particularly with the situation in Ireland after the advent of World War One. As part of this evolving view of the use of violence, Connolly formed the Irish Citizen Army in 1913. This organization, which was Europe's first "red guard," was created to protect workers during the Dublin Lockout of 1913. At about the same time, Connolly began studying military science, and became an expert at strategy and guerrilla warfare,

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25 *WR*, 7-22-1899.

26 *Forward*, 3-14-1914.

subjects upon which he wrote several articles. His expertise and his Citizen Army were both key elements in the Easter Uprising.

It was during the Dublin Lockout of 1913 that Connolly, who previously had been known almost exclusively among labor organizations, first attracted more widespread attention. James Larkin, an Irish socialist who had been an organizer for the British trade unions in Ireland, was instrumental in bringing Connolly back from the United States, where Connolly had been involved in socialist and union activities from 1903 to 1910. Fed up with the unresponsiveness of the English socialist leaders, and alarmed at the rise of sectarianism in industrialized Ulster, Larkin formed the Irish Transport and General Workers Union with the intention of creating "one big union" of both Catholic and Protestant workers. He was largely successful in this despite the efforts of Ulster capitalists to use religion as a divide-and-conquer tactic on the workers. The Lockout started when Dublin capitalists, led by William Martin Murphy--a Home Rule MP and newspaper owner--tried to force employees to quit the ITGWU. When Larkin was imprisoned during the Lockout, Connolly took over control of the union. The violent confrontations and oppression of 1913 helped to change Connolly's views on violence, and confirmed Connolly's opinions about "the moral hideousness of a society propped by such means."[27]

The Boer War, the Lockout, and the start of the First World War were probably the major factors that helped shape Connolly's views on imperialism. Independently of Lenin's and Rosa Luxemburg's ideas on the subject, Connolly

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[27] Address to fellow workers on the occasion of the Coronation of King Edward VII, 1902.

was integrating his opinions on the imperialism of the great powers with his theories of socialism. As early as 1899, Connolly had used a Marxist analysis to condemn British imperialism in Southern Africa. He organized protests against British participation in the Boer War, which he saw as little more than shameless British greed.[28] By 1912 Connolly was associating the British Labour Party and English trade unions with imperialism. The British socialists and trade unions had insisted on the need for the purity of internationalism in socialist movements. This, in effect, supported British imperialism by undercutting local and national socialist movements in their struggle against foreign capital, according to Connolly. In response to the criticism by English and Ulster trade unionists of his writings, which called for a specifically Irish socialism, Connolly replied: "The internationalism of the future will be based upon the free federation of free peoples and cannot be realized through the subjugation of the smaller by the larger political unit."[29]

In the Irish context, this argument came to the fore-front most specifically in the Walker-Connolly controversy. Connolly spent a considerable amount of energy debating the nature and appropriate course of socialism in Ulster with William Walker, a Protestant labor leader. In Connolly's view, Walker was using reactionary tactics by insisting that Ulster socialism embrace the Independent Labour Party, rather than the Socialist Party of Ireland, and thus putting Ulster socialism in the position of playing into the hands of Edward Carson and British

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28 *WR*, 11-4-1899.

29 *Forward*, 6-10-1911.

imperialism.[30] Despite Connolly's best efforts to wed Ulster socialism and trade unionism to the movement in the rest of Ireland, and thus strengthen his own movement with support from the most industrialized part of Ireland, Walker succeeded in giving Ulster socialism and trade unionism a decidedly British orientation, under the guise of internationalism and the anti-Home Rule nature of Ulster.[31] Connolly condemned Walker's socialism, associated with the Independent Labour Party of Britain, as Fabian-type opportunism which was undercutting the true Irish revolutionary socialist movement, and used the opportunity of the controversy to propagate his own brand of socialism by exposing historical inaccuracies in the basis of Orangeism.[32] By showing examples of Catholic and Protestant suffering at the hands of the English as well as the Papacy, Connolly tried to present an historical basis for Catholic and Protestant laboring-class solidarity against class oppression orchestrated by English and Papal influences, thus denying the Orangemen the exclusive right to criticize the Pope, and calling into question the historical legitimacy of their claims to Britishness.[33] However, Connolly obviously failed to win the Orangemen over to Irish social-republicanism and thereby prevent the eventual partition of Ireland. The failure of his reasoning was his premise that, even in Ulster, "class interests are stronger in political warfare than religious bias".[34]

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30 *Forward*, 6-10-1911.

31 *Forward*, 5-27-1911.

32 *Harp*, 9-1909.

33 *Forward*, 7-12-1913, 9-9-1913.

34 *Harp*, 9-1909.

Connolly's hatred of imperialism, the basis of his Irish socialism, was applied to the First World War. While so many of the European socialist movements were voting war credits for their governments and marching off to the slaughter, Connolly insisted on looking at the unfolding crisis from a socialist perspective. In two articles published in late August, 1914, Connolly blasted his fellow socialists for their willingness to ignore their consciences and fight in an immoral war for misguided reasons. He urged people to examine their own domestic situations: "the socialist of another country is a fellow-patriot, as the capitalist in my own country is a natural enemy."[35] Thus, since World War One was not the workers' fight, Connolly refused to participate in the war: "(Do not) *slaughter our comrades abroad at the dictate of our enemies at home.*"[36] For Connolly, the war was the fault of the unrestricted greed of capitalism and imperialism, particularly in its British varieties.[37]

The conditions in working-class Ireland just after the turn of the century were appalling. According to a report of the Housing Commission, the death-rate in Dublin was the very worst in the British Isles.[38] As Connolly recognized, the uneven economic development in Ireland--the most highly developed industrial base was centered in Belfast--had a negative effect on the well-being of the working class. The lack of a well developed industrial base in the south meant that there was a large pool of casual labor--which often included Connolly--

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35 *Forward*, 8-15-1914.

36 *Forward*, 8-22-1914; (Connolly's italics, my parentheses).

37 *The Irish Worker*, 10-31-1914.

38 *The Re-Conquest of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1915) appendix II.

centered on the shipping industry of Dublin's docks.

Conditions such as these acted as a catalyst for people who saw the need for change. Connolly recognized that nationalist and socialist issues were very much related in Ireland. A constant theme in Connolly's writing acknowledged that to have any kind of viable movement regarding these issues, both nationalist and socialist concerns had to be addressed. Irish trade unions had been, at least before Larkin's successes, relatively insignificant offshoots of English trade unions. At a time when violent socialist and nationalist revolution seemed inopportune, the founding of distinctly Irish trade unions represented a revolutionary (but practical) step forward, since it underscored the separatist ambitions of many of the Irish people. Connolly was in the forefront of the nationalist and socialist movements: founding the Irish Socialist Republican Party in 1896; joining the Socialist Labour Party in 1903; forming the Textile Workers section of the ITGWU in 1911; and establishing the Independent Labour Party of Ireland in 1912.

In addition to these and many other activities, Connolly continued to write profusely. In 1910 his first major theoretical work was published. *Labour in Irish History* was the first Marxist analysis of Irish history. In it, Connolly attached a moral superiority to the social structure of ancient Ireland, portraying a communal system that epitomized primitive socialism. For years he had been depicting this image of the Celtic communal structure, the proto-socialism of which was "the social principle which underlay the Brehon Laws of our

ancestors."[39] Although many historians dispute the accuracy of these claims today, the imagery and ethnic pride evoked by this connection exerted a powerfully unifying force for many Irish people. According to Connolly's interpretation, this system was destroyed by the violent imposition of the capitalist system on Ireland by the English. Therefore, by establishing this line of reasoning, Connolly could argue that socialism was distinctly Irish, while capitalism was foreign to the Irish people.

Connolly argued that since this invasion and the subsequent destruction of the ancient Celtic communal landholding system, the Irish middle classes--both Protestant and Catholic (and including the Irish hierarchy of the Catholic Church)--had continuously betrayed Ireland by conspiring with the ruling British monied interests.[40] Later revolutionaries, such as Wolfe Tone and John Mitchel, realizing the need for social as well as political change, tried to free Ireland by appealing "to that large and respectable class of the community, the men of no property".[41] The validity of equating Irish capitalists with English foreign interests, as far as Connolly was concerned, was only confirmed in the Lockout of 1913. Basically, Connolly's achievement with *Labour in Irish History* was that he was able to associate capitalism with England, individualism, and anti-Irish forces, while identifying socialism as being inherently Irish. The fact that his linking of socialism to the unique evolution of Irish history was at best a tenuous connection

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39 *WR*, 8-13-1898.

40 See also *Erin's Hope*, 1897, 9-11.

41 *WR*, 8-5-1899.

did not matter. With this work, Connolly effectively made socialism Irish for radicals in the Irish working class, and for many progressive nationalists as well.

The purpose, then, of socialism in Ireland was to free Ireland. But Connolly had to define what he meant by a "free nation":[42]

> A free nation is one which possesses absolute control over all its own internal resources and powers, and which has no restriction upon its intercourse with all other nations similarly circumstanced except the restrictions placed upon it by nature.

In such a situation, the nation-state could develop naturally--a prerequisite to social progress. But nation-based socialism represented only a preliminary stage in the struggle towards uniting the workers of the world: "The first duty of the working classes of the world is to settle accounts with the master-class of the world--that of their own country at the head of the list."[43] For Connolly, this did not necessarily validate his critics' charges that he was unpatriotic. "Labour...represents the highest form of patriotism, and that true patriotism will embody the broadest principles of Labour and Socialism."[44] Nor did this mean that his ideas were essentially anti-English. In replying to such charges by British socialists, he declared:[45]

> ...under a Socialist system every nation will be the supreme arbiter of its own destinies, and...will have its independence guaranteed and its freedom respected by the enlightened self-interest of the social democracy of the world. The statement that our ideals cannot be realized except by the path of violent revolution is not so much an argument against our propaganda as an indictment of the invincible ignorance and unconquerable national egoism of the British electorate, and as such concerns English Socialists more than Irish ones.

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[42] *WR*, 2-12-1916.

[43] *The Irish Worker*, 11-29-1913.

[44] *The Irish Worker*, 10-31-1914.

[45] *Labour Leader*, 1-1898.

Connolly looked at the English workers as fellow victims, (although they did have a role in the imperialism that was victimizing other countries,) and refused to advocate hatred for all Englishmen. Instead, he saw himself only as a supporter of justice in Ireland. For Connolly, socialism was the "indispensable condition" to achieving this justice.[46] Unlike his predecessors in Irish nationalist traditions, however, Connolly did not define Irishness based on religion, birth, or culture, but class:[47]

> We are out for Ireland for the Irish. But who are the Irish? Not the rack-renting, slum-owning landlord; not the sweating, profit-grinding capitalist; not the sleek and oily lawyer; not the prostitute pressman...Not these are the Irish upon whom the future depends. Not these, but the Irish working class, the only secure foundation upon which a free nation can be reared. The cause of labour is the cause of Ireland, the cause of Ireland is the cause of labour. They cannot be dissevered.

Nationalism and socialism were both necessary elements for Connolly's revolution. A simple replacement of the English ruling class by an Irish ruling class would be unsatisfactory for Connolly, because it did not matter to the peasants which government was evicting them.[48] In one of his most famous diatribes, which foreshadowed the arguments of Third World countries against neo-imperialism, Connolly claimed:[49]

> If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the socialist republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualist institutions she has planted in this

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[46] *L'Irlande Libre*, 1897.

[47] *WR*, 4-8-1916.

[48] *WR*, 6-10-1899.

[49] *Shan Van Vocht*, 1-1897.

country...England would still rule you to your ruin, even while your lips offered hypocritical homage at the shrine of that freedom whose cause you had betrayed. Nationalism without socialism...is only national recreancy. It would be tantamount to a public declaration that our oppressors had so far succeeded in inoculating us with their perverted conceptions of justice and morality that we had finally decided to accept those conceptions as our own, and no longer needed an alien army to force them on us.

These abstract declarations of an interdependence between Connolly's socialism and nationalism were best illustrated when he applied them to an issue he was facing during his time. The Home Rule question was divisive in the labor movement, as Ulster capitalists, who had much of their business tied up in markets throughout the British Empire, were willing and eager to exploit religious differences among their workers in order to maintain close political and economic ties with Britain. In the early part of the century, Connolly gave his grudging support to the middle-class idea of Home Rule, seeing a tactical advance in it. For Connolly, it was not yet a social issue, but more of a technically political one, and he hoped that Ireland could avoid some of the bloodshed of an additional, purely nationalist revolution. Just as Connolly hoped to use the ballot box to take Ireland past mere trade unionism and into the realm of socialism (where workers would do away with masters), he also hoped to eventually take Ireland past constitutional relationships with the British Crown into the realm of republicanism (where Ireland would be its own master). In both cases the system would have to be fundamentally altered, and not just reformed.[50] By 1916, Connolly had come to see the Home Rule Bill as an empty promise that was no longer worthy of even grudging support because it prohibited the right to redefine

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[50] *WR*, 8-27-1898.

property relationships.[51]

Connolly's integration of nationalism and socialism was not always popular with other socialists. Just as he was unable to understand their willingness to get involved in the First World War, most of them could not understand why he was willing to sacrifice his life in the apparently nationalistic Easter Uprising. In some respects he is comparable to other, more famous socialists--such as Lenin, Mao Zedong, and Ho Chi Minh--who were all known for their attempts to adapt Marxism to their respective national situations.[52] Connolly was one of the first Marxist thinkers, and certainly the greatest Irish Marxist, to shape Marxism into a specifically nationalist variety: Irish Marxism, in this case. That is the accomplishment for which he is best known, but it was his work on integrating religion with socialism that may prove to have the most potential.

Connolly, Socialism And Christianity

Connolly's Catholic faith was, like his socialism, based in ethical reasoning. Both Catholicism and socialism, in Connolly, were indicative of the centrality of moral issues in his philosophical basis. However, religion was a decidedly non-"scientific" side of his thinking, as opposed to his views on the "science" of socialism. But this does not mean that Connolly's arguments regarding religion

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[51] *WR*, 2-12-1916.

[52] Lenin was one of the few of Connolly's fellow Marxists to defend Connolly's participation in the Easter Uprising. He did this based on the principle of national self-determination.

did not employ the same sharp and passionate reasoning of his political discourse. Connolly's treatment of religious issues may not have employed the theologian's vocabulary--not a surprising revelation when one considers that he was writing primarily for a working-class audience; but his handling of the issues suggests a deep and theological understanding of the subject.

Although references to religion are scattered throughout Connolly's writings, his most comprehensive work on the subject is found in *Labour, Nationality and Religion*, which was published in 1910. The thesis of the work--that a person could be a socialist as well as a Catholic at the same time without any contradiction--is a principle that Connolly held dear to his death. The work was written simply as a rebuttal to a series of anti-socialist "Lenten Discourses" given by a Father Kane, S.J., in Dublin in 1910. Therefore, Connolly followed no distinct logic of his own in the work, but used Kane's line of reasoning as a framework for his response, and that structure offers an advantageous framework to study Connolly's defense of his integration of Catholicism and socialism at this point as well. Within this structure, Connolly not only refuted what he saw as one of the clergy's best (yet still ineffective) attempts at putting socialism under the ban of the Catholic Church, but he also succeeded in proving the compatibility of socialism with Christianity (and Irish nationalism).[53]

Connolly started out with a blistering attack of the Roman Catholic Church's role in Irish history. He listed instance after instance where the Church acted in the interests of the English/capitalist oppressors, to the detriment of the Irish

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[53] *LNR*, 7.

people. His list began with Rome's sanction of the initial Norman invasion of Ireland, and demonstrated the Church's seemingly perpetual stand against all Irish independence movements, thereby implicating the Church hierarchy in many of the outrages in Ireland's history. In such a critique, Connolly almost comes across as a bigoted Protestant or an atheist (although he had firmly defended the Church against the attacks of other socialists, such as Daniel de Leon, in the past, particularly on family issues); but he had a specific purpose for this. He was criticizing the actions of the Church not only from a socialist perspective, but from the viewpoint of one who was sincerely committed to the faith and who, out of affection for the Church, wanted to see the institution change its misguided policies of the past.[54] He simply refused to grant the Church or the clergy the freedom from criticism and scrutiny that they had traditionally enjoyed in Catholic Ireland, particularly when they used their position of respect to attack the people by attacking socialism.[55] He showed that the laity had the right and responsibility to ignore the Church's unjust directions, because history always showed that the reformers and revolutionaries were vindicated by events, and by the Church itself, which always seemed to support the ideas of the "radicals" a generation after their deaths: the Church had always proven to be reactionary and short-sighted.

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[54] In fact, Connolly's commitment to Catholicism led him to defend the Church in many socialist circles, to the point where, in a lecture to the ITUC at Liberty Hall in 1968, Owen Dudley Edwards called Connolly "one of the best and most enlightened apologists the Catholic Church has seen since the Industrial Revolution." This lecture was published as *The Mind Of An Activist--James Connolly*, (Dublin, 1971) 30.

[55] See, for example, *WR*, 7-1-1899, and *The Irish Worker* 2-28-1914.

In examining the Church in this manner, Connolly viewed it as an historical entity in Ireland, instead of an irreproachable successor to Christ. The analysis supported his Marxist conclusions: in many respects, the Catholic hierarchy had the same interests as Protestant and capitalist oppressors. Church opposition to Irish independence movements had little to do with religious principles and much to do with the protection of the status quo in which the hierarchy enjoyed a privileged position. From this study, Connolly decided that in the current struggle against injustice, the Church would still try to be on the side that it thought was most likely to dominate. Although the Church would hedge its bets and try to conveniently forget its anti-socialist stance when socialism prevailed, Connolly was genuinely concerned that, once again, the institution of the Church would be on the wrong side and that this time it would be too late to make up for its miscalculation.[56] Connolly did not want a socialist society where religion would either whither away, or be viewed as an enemy of progress, but he wanted to promote the elements of "true religion" in the Catholic Church:[57]

> ...when the organized Socialist Working Class tramples upon the Capitalist Class it will not be trampling upon a pillar of God's Church but upon a blasphemous defiler of the Sanctuary, it will be rescuing the Faith from the impious vermin who make it noisome to the really religious men and women.

Therefore, Connolly hoped to help the Church adapt and change, as it had in the past, but this time for the better. Still, the self-centeredness of the Church hierarchy led to Connolly's dim view of this part of the institution:[58]

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[56] *Harp*, 9-1908.

[57] *Harp*, 1-1909.

[58] *LNR*, 15.

In so far as true religion has triumphed in the hearts of men it has triumphed in spite of, not because of, the political activities of the priesthood. That political activity in the past, like the clerical opposition to socialism at present, was and is an attempt to serve God and mammon...today (the) robber class, conceived in sin and begotten in iniquity, asks the church to defend it, and from the Vatican downwards the clergy responds to the call.

Therefore, many of the moral strictures promulgated by the Church were morally bankrupt, since the Church itself was simply acting in its own self-interest by acting as a tool for the capitalist class. Connolly's studies of history always found the Church siding against the poor and oppressed in Irish history as a means of capitalist exploitation. These methods had personally touched Connolly and his family, as his daughter, Nora, recalled:[59]

He came to Mass with me and the priest began to attack him without naming him, about something, I forget now it is so long ago. It was something that he was concerned with, and everybody around us knew it was Connolly and you could feel the heads turning around and turning around, from each side, you know, and I put my hand and said, "come on, get up and don't stay listening to this" and he just put his hand and sat me down and he said, "you sit down, you sit down," he said. "Let him have his say, we want our say too."

Connolly also brought this situation up in his *Socialism Made Easy* when, in explaining why so many socialists leave the Church, he wrote of a typical socialist:[60]

Some Sunday he goes to Mass as usual, and he finds that at Gospel the priest launches out into a political speech and tells the congregation that the honest, self-sacrificing, industrious, clean men and women, whom he calls "comrades", are a wicked, impious, dissolute sect...he hears that his immortal soul will be lost if he fails to vote for capitalism....At such a juncture the Irish Catholic Socialist often rises up, goes out of the church and wipes its dust off his feet forever.

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[59] Quoted in O.D. Edwards, 1971, 55.

[60] *Socialism Made Easy*, (Chicago, 1908) 31.

Connolly felt that the reason that his election campaigns were unsuccessful was that, like many efforts at social progress, they were victimized by the popular prejudice fostered by opponents, such as Kane, in the interests of capital.

There were two reasons that Connolly felt that the anti-socialist stance of the Church was theologically misguided: it ignored the example provided by Christ; and, it disregarded the teachings of the early Church. In sporadic, but very effective references to Jesus, Connolly foreshadowed liberation theologians by claiming that Christ came to an economically oppressed people and, like socialism, was rejected by the wealthy segments of society. According to Connolly, like socialists, Christ wanted to serve men, not to rape and plunder, as the capitalist class did. Therefore, the Catholic clergy should try to emulate Christ rather than try to dominate the public:[61]

> It seems to be unavoidable, but it is entirely regrettable, that clergymen consecrated to the worship of God, and supposed to be patterned after a redeemer who was the embodiment of service and humility, should in their relation to the laity insist upon service and humility being rendered to them instead of by them...In all questions of social and political relations of man they require the common laity to bow the neck in a meekness, humility, and submission which the clergy scornfully reject.

To Kane's claims that inequality was not only a fact of nature, but also ordained by God, Connolly responded that, although things naturally could not be in a state of perfect equality, the injustice of Man's economic system should not be blamed on God. To Kane's expressed fears of mob rule, Connolly simply replied that the "mob," a more righteous class than the capitalists ruling elites, represented the people for whom Jesus died.

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61 *LNR*, 7-8.

Similarly, the early Church was closer to the true religion of Christ than the modern, middle-class controlled Church could ever hope to be. Connolly's text is inundated with the quotations of early Church leaders who seemed to hold a proto-socialist perspective, as in this quote from St. Ambrose:[62]

> Nature furnishes its wealth to all men in common. God beneficently has created all things that their enjoyment be common to all living beings, and that the earth become the common property of all...Only unjust usurpation has created the right of private property.

By demonstrating the positions of saints and popes of earlier times regarding this issue, Connolly destroyed Kane's claim that the Catholic Church had always supported a divine right to private property.

The thrust of Kane's argument was that socialism and Catholicism are incompatible. He constructed his basic argument around three fundamental issues, which Connolly proceeded to dismantle one by one: family, religious freedom, and the atheism of socialist doctrine. Kane espoused the misconceptions about the socialist treatment of family rights that were popular at the time. He claimed that, under socialism, the state will take priority over the family, unlike capitalism (which allowed the family to flourish, according to Kane). For Kane, socialism would force families to surrender their children to a bureaucratic state (which would be responsible for raising the children), and wives would be frequently discarded by lustful husbands who would no longer be restricted by the moral injunctions that Kane associated with capitalism. Connolly exposed Kane's sexist conception of the bourgeois family, giving people--and particularly working class women (who had superior morals because of their

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[62] Quoted from the title page of *Labour, Nationality and Religion.*

honorable class background, according to Connolly)--more credit for the ability to make rational decisions about entering into healthy relationships. (Connolly was quite a feminist.) In fact, Connolly pointed out, it was the capitalist countries, particularly the United States, where divorce rates and prostitution were soaring because of the degradation of women which was caused by attitudes which were engendered by the capitalist system. For Connolly, the family unit, with its lack of self-centered action and individualistic attitudes, represented the manifestation of Christian ideals in the basic moral social unit, which should be extended to society.

To Kane's charge that socialism would prohibit religious freedom, Connolly explained that religious oppression was most often evident in conservative forces, and liberal ideologies were most often involved with ideas that were hostile to religion. Although there were obviously some atheists in the socialist movement, it was only the "blatant and rude atheism of some of its irresponsible advocates" that had repelled many people from socialism, largely because this was emphasized by its anti-socialist opponents.[63] Connolly claimed that, in reality, there were more atheists among the leading capitalists and that the slanderous charges of atheism were only indicative of an entrenched, privileged class that was afraid to debate the real values of socialism. In Connolly's way of thinking, socialism was only interested in political and economic freedom, to which religion was not an obstacle, and therefore, religion was not of any interest to the socialist movement as a whole. Any charges to the contrary only revealed the desperation

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[63] *Harp*, 9-1908.

of the privileged classes which needed to engage in a smear campaign to prevent the workers from considering the true merits of socialism. Religious beliefs were a private and personal matter for Connolly's socialists, just as Marx's own atheism, Connolly contended, was a personal conclusion that was never intended to be forced upon the rest of the socialist movement.

Kane was most troubled with the Marxist doctrine of economic determinism. Connolly contended that, although he personally saw the validity of this doctrine, its acceptance was not essential to every socialist. Socialism was more concerned with the goal of a just human society, and interpretations of history were of a relatively peripheral importance. Still, Connolly went ahead and gave an able demonstration of the validity of this concept, using Christianity's view of the institution of slavery as an example. Basically, Connolly argued that Christianity had accepted (or at least tolerated) the morality of slavery as long as it had been an economically profitable institution. With the changing economic conditions brought about by the Industrial Revolution, society found that the exploitation of an oppressed pool of wage-labor was more cost-effective than the maintenance of slaves. Therefore, Christianity proclaimed the immorality of slavery, but simultaneously was able to justify the blatant and intentional impoverishment and exploitation of the working classes for the benefit of the propertied classes. Thus, Connolly concluded, economic conditions determine consciousness and morality, and institutions such as religion had acted to support that consciousness.

Regarding the question of the compatibility of Catholicism and socialism, Connolly was unequivocal. If, as Kane had claimed, socialism was simply the belief in the ownership of the means of production by the state, then other beliefs

were not logically precluded. Connolly pointed out that Kane himself had to admit that logically, there was no mutual exclusion of Catholicism and socialism, (even "militant socialism") and Connolly alluded to the growing group of Catholic socialists to support this position. At another point, Connolly was more explicit in his denial of any logical preclusion of socialism from Catholicism:[64]

> ...And if it is permissible according to Catholic doctrine that Democracy should be applied to the government of countries, it cannot be immoral for Catholics to advocate the democratic ownership of workshops, fields, mills, and factories. If this is conceded--and it cannot logically be refused--then my Socialism is consistent with my Catholicism...

In fact, according to Connolly, socialism was often more Christian than the Catholic Church.

Connolly was very careful to emphasize that politics and religion concerned two separate and distinct spheres of influence in human affairs. Just as it would be wrong for socialism to interfere with an individual's religious freedom, the Church had no rights in the secular sphere, and any attempt at encroachment by the Church, or any assertion of a right to do so, was simply to be regarded as a false doctrine. Any attempt to direct the laity in secular issues was to be ignored, according to Connolly. Socialism, on the other hand, was a matter for the stomach, not the soul. Connolly saw socialism as logical, scientific, and inevitable. It was based on the "facts" of historical materialism, did not share the revealed nature of scriptures, and had no claims to people's spirituality.

Still, Connolly was convinced that, although they were two distinct areas, any intelligent person who studied the facts would see, as Connolly did, that the

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[64] *Catholic Times*, 11-8-1912.

logical place for the true Christian was the socialist movement. It was likely that individual socialists, such as Connolly, could see in their religion a justification for their socialist activities and their individual socialist philosophies. Owen Dudley Edwards claimed that "Connolly perceived, as few men by his time had done, an essential inter-dependence of Catholicism and Socialism."[65] But generally, revealed religion could not offer a factual basis for scientific socialism as a whole. Socialism welcomed, but did not need, religiously motivated activists, according to Connolly. So, in addition to his belief that socialist organizations should not interfere with an individual's religious freedom, Connolly felt that any attempt to sectarianize socialism, as had been the case in Ulster, was also wrong because it alienated workers of other religions who could aid and benefit from the socialist movement. But Connolly did not blame the sectarianization of the labor movement, a factor most prevalent in Ulster, squarely on Protestant capitalists. In addition to Connolly's challenge to William Walker, the Protestant labor leader in Ulster, Connolly also condemned the sectarian tactics of the Catholic political boss of Belfast, "Wee Joe" Devlin, a Home Rule MP. A "conscienceless politician" (as far as Connolly was concerned), Devlin drew Connolly's wrath particularly for his active support for British recruiting efforts during the First World War, but also for contributing to the sectarianization of the Ulster working class with denominational-based political tactics.[66]

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[65] O.D. Edwards, 1971, 29.

[66] *WR*, 8-28-1915.

But out of concern for the purity of the Catholic Church, an institution which he claimed was liable to criticism in secular affairs, Connolly had to challenge its misguided policy regarding socialism: "It is about time in their own interests that the clergy began to study what socialism really is."[67] Criticism of socialism was only indicative of a lack of understanding of socialist theory and goals. Morally, the Church should stop acting in the interests of the exploitative ruling classes. If the Church was going to take a stand on social issues, it should act against the injustices in society, not simply by reforming an inherently unjust system, but by helping to abolish it.

Although Connolly personally saw a logical connection between these two distinct spheres, in restricting religion to private, individual values, he seemed to de-emphasize the existence of any motivation to social justice inherent in Christianity, and he did not explicitly characterized the relationship between the two. However, at several significant points, Connolly did point to a positive, rather than a neutral relationship between Catholicism and socialism. In one of several verbal spats with Jesuit priests, for example, he concluded his defense of a previous criticism of the role of the Catholic Church in the oppression of the Irish throughout their history with the declaration: "As individual Catholics we claim it as our right, nay, as our duty, to refuse allegiance to any power or social system whose authority to rule over us we believe to be grounded upon injustice."[68] At

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[67] *Harp*, 10-1908.

[68] *Catholic Times*, 11-8-1912. It should be noted that Connolly was explicitly referring to "individual" believers, and thus reaffirming his beliefs that the Church, as an institution, was prone to take the wrong side, and that the laity should resist inappropriate directives from the hierarchy.

another point, in *The Re-Conquest Of Ireland* (Dublin, 1915), Connolly claimed that "the earnest teacher of Christian morality sees that in that co-operative commonwealth alone will true morality be possible".[69] His views on progressive action by Catholics put him well ahead of his contemporaries, particularly in the clergy, and his synthesis has long been unappreciated in Ireland.[70] In his views he was similar to other Christians, such as those in the evangelical movement of the 19th century and the Liberation Theology of the 20th, who claimed that there is a moral necessity, because of the teachings of Christ, for Christians to be involved in public, progressive action with the goal of social justice.

In claiming that a Catholic can also be a militant socialist, Connolly did not say whether or not a Catholic must be a militant socialist, applying the Catholic Church's theory of a Just War to the antagonisms arising from the social injustices of economic oppression. Finally, Connolly never explicitly found a place for Christianity in Marxist theory. If it is just a part of the superstructure--that is, it has grown out the economic conditions that change society's institutions and consciousness--then it is de-valued. If it is part of the substructure--exerting an influence on society's consciousness--and has only been perverted by economic conditions, then it could offer a separate means of achieving a just society to Marxists. But although Connolly argued that socialism and religion were two separate spheres in life, both his socialism and his religious beliefs shared a moral basis.

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[69] *The Re-Conquest Of Ireland*, 332.

[70] O.D. Edwards, 1971, 32.

Connolly's treatment of religion is significant because he helped to establish the groundwork for later Christian socialists who saw more of a direct connection between Christianity and socialist thinking. He advocated a position that, although it had to be related to nationalism in the case of Ireland, viewed socialism as the most accurate manifestation of Christian beliefs regarding the search for human justice. Connolly recognized that both Christianity and socialism had similar ends in many respects, and he denied any divine mandate for an economic system which bred inequality.

Connolly hoped to use his socialism to pull Irish nationalists and the Catholic Church away from their acceptance of, and support for, the social status quo. With the former group, he envisioned an alliance of convenience. The nationalists' goal of ending British political domination in Ireland coincided to some degree with Connolly's goal of ending British economic imperialist control of Ireland, and Connolly hoped that cooperation in the direction of a national revolution would lead to a social revolution, in which elements of the nationalist forces might participate. With the later group, Connolly hoped to convince the Church to end its unfair attacks on Ireland, and to consider the moral principles mutually held by Christians and socialists, in the hopes of forging an alliance based on these principles.

Connolly's work in shaping socialism to the conditions and history of Ireland brought a distinctly national variety of socialism to the Irish workers. By portraying capitalism as a importation violently imposed on Ireland by foreign

oppressors, and socialism as an inherently Irish phenomenon, evident in earlier Celtic civilization, Connolly promoted an internationalistic ideology to a fiercely nationalistic country. In following in the steps of some Fenians, such as Charles Kickham, in denying the right of the clergy to dictate to the laity in political matters, he was a leader in the attempt to overcome the obstacle of the religious prejudice of the Catholic Church against socialism, so that Christianity and socialism could work together towards shared goals in Ireland, and elsewhere. His method of combining the different philosophies paralleled his approach to challenges in his political and labor activities. Since many of his ideas were based on his moral principles, he emphasized the points of agreement shared by the different concepts: the search for justice in both socialism and Christianity, or the hope held by Irish nationalists and Irish socialists of creating a better (more Irish, or communal-Irish) way of life for the Irish people, for example. Any disparities that arose from these integrations were, for Connolly, indicative of the tendency of bigoted sectarians, manipulative capitalists, and atheist-socialists to deviate, intentionally or inadvertently from the true central principles of their professed philosophies: religion, Irish nationalism, or socialism.

In evaluating Connolly's priorities, it is difficult to conclude if he was first a nationalist, a socialist, or a Catholic, because all of these things were very important to him. A good case could be made for each of the three at different periods of his life, when one seemed to be more of an end and the others merely the means. But in examining the event in which he intentionally sacrificed his life, the Easter Uprising of 1916, we can perhaps ascertain what was the supreme goal for Connolly. Connolly, along with Pearse, created a situation in which their

military defeat was guaranteed. According to F.X. Martin, the two men had concluded that the circumstances in Ireland required that their lives be sacrificed for the redemption of the nation, and used the Christian imagery of a messianic "blood-sacrifice" as justification for this idea.[71]

Connolly's participation in the Rising seemed to have essentially nationalistic tones to it to observers both then and now. But such a conclusion can only come from a short-sighted reading of his career. The "redemption" of Ireland would still be incomplete without a genuine social revolution, according to Connolly's theory, and Connolly went to his execution defending his belief that he could be a Catholic and a Marxist without contradiction. So therefore, this event was only meant to be a catalyst for a progressive chain reaction in which socialism, nationalism, and Christianity were all to play a role. All three were parts of an equation which, for Connolly, was larger than any one of its parts, and its goal was the advancement of justice.

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[71] F.X. Martin, "The Evolution Of A Myth--The Easter Rising, Dublin 1916" in *Nationalism*, Eugene Kamenka, editor, (Canberra, 1973).

CHAPTER FOUR

Connolly's Legacy

Considering the relative weakness of the Irish socialist movement in this century, Connolly's influence has been remarkably broad and deep, yet sporadic, and quite often a misrepresentation of his original ideas. Starting almost immediately after his execution, James Connolly's ideas and principles were plundered by various groups, factions, and individuals who were too often quite willing to twist his theories and refer selectively to his writings in order to receive his posthumous endorsement of their particular programs. This tendency has signified an incomplete understanding of the man and his ideas. (However, in all due fairness to the various parties that competed or are competing for his image, the meaning of his life, and particularly the motivations for his participation in the 1916 Rising, are still debated by scholars today.) Streets and buildings are named after James Connolly: the nationalist hero. Leftist organizations and movements have claimed the name of Connolly: the socialist thinker and activist. But it is undeniable that his country has never become what Connolly envisioned as an independent "workers' republic".

Connolly's ideas have come to modern generations through several channels; some obvious, some more obscure. His family carried on many of his labor

activities and published some of his writings as well as interpretations of his life and work. Two of his daughters published biographies of their father,[1] and his son, Roddy, was very active in the socialist and labor movements, and was in contact with Lenin and the Bolsheviks.[2] The ideas of Connolly's co-conspirators in the 1916 Rising suggest the impact of his thinking. Some politicians, poets, and (to a lesser extent) priests have embraced and glorified his image, while others have vilified him. In both cases many of his ideas have been misrepresented, watered down, sanitized, qualified, or simply ignored. Scholars have analyzed him, often trying to cram his broad contributions into one narrow category or another. Activists and revolutionaries have claimed his intellectual creations for guidance, while frequently degenerating into doctrinaire idolization, and relying on the stagnant, strict, and dogmatic extraction of quotations from his work, often out of context. But, at least until the late 1960s, his ideas--with the notable exception of his nationalism--had been largely forgotten outside of some sections of the labor movement, academics, and small radical groups.

In examining the influence of his syntheses, it is convenient and useful to study the various individuals he impressed and inspired, and the institutions and movements he shaped--or at least those that claim him as a shaping force. In order to examine the impact that Connolly's ideas had on his fellow Irishmen, the following sections outline and assess the claims to his image made by some of the key individuals and groups in 20th century Ireland, and look for his reflection in

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[1] N. Connolly O'Brien, (1935) 1975; Ina Heron Connolly, *James Connolly--A Biography*, in *Liberty*, eight installments, (Dublin, March-October, 1966).

[2] M. Milotte, 1984, 2.

the ideas and actions of others. Under this scrutiny, it becomes apparent that his ideas are claimed by many, including some substantial groups such as the Labour Party and the IRA/Sinn Fein, and some peripheral groups like the CPI and the IRSP, but clearly understood by few. His impact has often been ambiguous and peripheral in Irish society, while it often has been more relevant and central to the many groups (often themselves quite peripheral) that, accurately or not, claim him. Connolly's influence can be seen most clearly in the period, quite obviously, towards the end of his career; and to a lesser, but potentially more relevant extent, since the re-emergence of the violence in Northern Ireland in the late 1960s.

Early Influence

One of the earliest groups to be influenced by Connolly was the Irish intelligentsia. Starting particularly with the 1913 Lockout, Connolly's cause attracted much sympathy from the writers, poets, and playwrights involved in Dublin's spectacular literary renaissance, which was centered on the Abbey Theatre, and included a very strong Irish nationalist element. Although the Lockout, in the final analysis, was a blow to organized labor, it did serve to focus the attention of such figures as W.B. Yeats, George Bernard Shaw, and George Russell ("AE") on the plight of the workers. Furthermore, Connolly developed personal relationships with progressive nationalists such as Countess Constance Markievicz, Maud Gonne (MacBride), and the emerging writer, Patrick Pearse, around the time of the Lockout.

Russell used his own name and reputation to support his stand as one of the most outspoken supporters of the workers. In a speech in London during the Lockout, Russell described the miserable conditions of the Dublin slums–among the very worst in Europe at the time–and railed against the Home Rulers:[3]

> Many of these dens are so horrible, so unsanitary, so overrun with vermin, that doctors tell me that the only condition on which a man can purchase sleep is that he is drugged with drink....For ten weeks the miserable creatures who misrepresent them in Parliament kept silent. When they were up for the first time in their lives against anything real they scurried back like rats to their hole. These cacklers about self-government had no word to say on the politics of their own city...Democratic control of industry will replace the autocracy which exists to-day. We are working for the co-operative commonwealth to make it the Irish policy of the future, and I ask you to stand by the men who are beginning the struggle.

Russell had been very critical of the role of the employers, "an oligarchy of four hundred masters deciding openly on starving one hundred thousand people," because of their insistence on the continued exploitation of "the cheapest labour market in these islands, with a labour reserve always hungry and ready to accept any pittance."[4] Russell warned them:[5]

> The fate of you, the aristocracy of industry, will be as the fate of the aristocracy of the land if you do not show that you have some humanity still among you....and your class will be cut off from humanity as the surgeon cuts the cancer and alien growth from the body.

Finally, in a letter to the citizens in which he acknowledged the unpopularity of his own views, Russell defended Larkin and Connolly's movement, and

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[3] AE, "A Speech delivered in the Royal Albert Hall, London, November 1, 1913, to an audience of 12,000 persons" reprinted in *The Dublin Strike*, (Dublin, no date: probably 1913) 2-3.

[4] AE, "An Open Letter To The Employers" (10-6-1913), reprinted in *The Dublin Strike*, 5, 4.

[5] Ibid., 6.

desperately repeated his warning that the owners were forcing the workers away from any reasonable solution.[6]

At the beginning of the Lockout, Connolly was still relatively unknown outside of labor circles. However, his role in the resistance to the Lockout, as one of the two leaders "beginning the struggle", won him the admiration of such figures as Russell. Connolly and Russell developed a relationship of mutual respect and admiration for each other. Within a few years, Russell's poetry was to glorify Connolly as a leader of the Easter Uprising, and suggested AE's appreciation for Connolly's theories, in addition to their friendship:[7]

> The hope lives on age after age,
> Earth with its beauty might be won
> For labour as a heritage,
> For this has Ireland lost a son.
> This hope unto a flame to fan
> Men have put life by with a smile,
> Here's to you, Connolly, my man,
> Who cast the last torch on the pile.

Connolly, conversely, credited the "great genius" of Russell with educating urban workers to the benefits of co-operation as practiced by Irish peasants.[8]

Through his close friendship with Maud Gonne--an intellectual partner, sometime financial supporter, family friend, and Abbey Theatre actress--Connolly also encountered W.B. Yeats, although their relationship was not always as

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[6] AE, "An Appeal To Dublin Citizens" (11-13-1913) in *The Times*, reprinted in *The Dublin Strike.*

[7] AE (George Russell), "To the Memory of Some I Knew Who are Dead and Who Loved Ireland" in Owen Dudley Edwards and Fergus Pyle, editors, *1916, The Easter Rising*, (London, 1968) 220-1.

[8] *The Re-Conquest Of Ireland*, 330-1.

appreciative as Connolly's and Russell's. Connolly occasionally attended the Abbey Theatre, which was run by Yeats, and they periodically participated in activities with and for each other, but Connolly was also quite critical of the conceited Celtic nationalism which Yeats championed.[9] But in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, Yeats, along with George Bernard Shaw, led the opposition to the consequent repression. In his poetry, Yeats wondered if his works were responsible for inspiring the Easter Rising, and then, with a line from one of the Rising's participants, decided: "Because I helped to wind the clock/I come to hear it strike."[10] But despite their common Irish nationalism, Yeats was not very political, much less radical. Still, in perhaps his most famous verse on the subject, "Easter 1916", Yeats insightfully and prophetically hinted at the mutable nature of the martyrs' images:[11]

> I write it out in a verse–
> MacDonagh and MacBride
> And Connolly and Pearse
> Now and in time to be,
> Wherever green is worn,
> Are changed, changed utterly:
> A terrible beauty is born.

But, although Yeats may have helped to inspire the Rising, his influence does more to underscore the romanticism and theatrical flair of many of the participants: Pearse and his brother William, Joseph Plunkett, and Thomas

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[9] *Harp*, 3-1908.

[10] W.B. Yeats, "The O'Rahilly" in Roger McHugh, editor, *Dublin 1916*, (London, 1966) 333-4.

[11] W.B. Yeats, "Easter 1916" in R. McHugh, 1966, 335-7.

MacDonagh all had close ties to the Abbey Theatre.[12] Although Connolly had a relationship with Yeats that displayed the clash of socio-economic values, it also highlighted the openness and variety of Dublin's dynamic intellectual milieu at the time.[13] Connolly was quite interested in the theatre, as a poet, songwriter, and author of two plays (one of which is extant), and also for the propaganda value it held. One observer praised Connolly's "piercing analysis" of productions, and his "feeling for the theatre".[14] Furthermore, when he was not rubbing elbows with the likes of George Bernard Shaw, J.M. Barrie, and the political elite in Ireland at the theatre, Connolly was very much involved in the effort to persuade Yeats to make his National Theatre more functional for, and appealing to, the common people.[15]

Cultural nationalists such as Yeats were very aware of the revolutionary elements in Dublin, and often, enthusiastically or not, accepted them. Dublin's intellectual community was a thriving potpourri of conflicting and complementing ideas. For his part, Connolly was quite willing to work with these people, and

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[12] Maire Nic Shiubhlaigh (as told to Edward Kenny), *The Splendid Years*, (Dublin, 1955) 145-55. Eamonn Ceannt's family, to a lesser extent, also had ties to the theatre community. (p. 161)

[13] *Harp*, 3-1908.

[14] Gerard Fay, *The Abbey Theatre*, (Dublin, 1958) 75.

[15] Ibid., 65, 74. Fay mentions one particular night when "Mr. Wyndham, the Tory Secretary of State for Ireland, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, leader of the opposition, Lord Aberdeen, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, Mrs. Humphry Ward, Bernard Shaw, J.M. Barrie, and (although not noted by any of the gossip writers) James Connolly" enjoyed a production. (p. 74) However, on 26 March 1904, the date given by Fay for the performance, Connolly had already emigrated to the United States. This is a factor which, in addition to the fact that Connolly was not in the social circles on which the gossip writers reported, could explain their tactless oversight of his attendance.

employ them and their tools for the advancement of his own cause. Countess Constance Markievicz offers a good example of Connolly's influence with this crowd. Although she and her husband had been very involved in the social and professional life surrounding the Abbey, and she had been very active in the cultural nationalist movements, she became increasingly involved with Connolly's activities with the founding of the Irish Citizen Army. At the time of the Easter Rising she was a lieutenant in that organization, and was imprisoned and condemned to death for her participation in the insurrection. After having her sentence commuted because of her gender, she became active as one of the most outspoken socialists in Sinn Fein, and denounced the Anglo-Irish Treaty as a capitalist attempt to keep control of Ireland.

One other figure who needs to be mentioned in this context is Sean O'Casey, the famous playwright who was also an early member of the Irish Citizen Army, and who eventually took a more critical view of Connolly. It is hard to characterize O'Casey's political views, since his ideas evolved over time. At different points in his life, he was a revolutionary, a socialist, a pacifist, a non-socialist, a nationalist, and a communist. His views on Connolly were most noted for his attack on what he saw as Connolly's abandonment of socialist principles in the Easter Rising. Perhaps more significantly, O'Casey strongly disagreed with Connolly regarding the role of the ICA. O'Casey took the radical-elitist view that it should be more of a revolutionary vanguard engaged in guerrilla warfare and sabotage, as opposed to Connolly's conception of a more open and defensive military body. O'Casey opposed any cooperation between the ICA and the Irish Volunteers, bitterly attacked the Volunteers, and resigned from the ICA after

trying to force Markievicz from that organization for her dual memberships.

O'Casey's later career as a writer offered him the opportunity to publicize his dislike for Connolly. In his first literary endeavor, *The Story Of The Irish Citizen Army*, O'Casey pulled no punches in his portrayal of Connolly. Although the work starts out as primarily a vehicle for O'Casey's hero-worshipping of labor's "Leader" at the time, Jim Larkin, O'Casey turned his attention to Connolly to criticize him on several points. O'Casey started by unfairly claiming that Connolly had never displayed much interest in the ICA up to the time that Larkin left for the United States, and he portrayed him as one of the moderating forces in the organization because of his failure to involve himself in the verbal antagonisms between the ICA and the Irish Volunteers.[16] O'Casey was correct in his characterization of Connolly as the leading catalyst for a rapprochement between the ICA and the Volunteers, but he claimed that this was due to an "almost revolutionary change that was manifesting itself in Connolly's nature."[17] O'Casey wrote:[18]

The Labour movement seemed to be regarded by him as a decresent force, while the essence of his Nationalism began to assume the finest elements of his nature....Jim Connolly had stepped from the narrow byway of Irish Socialism to

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[16] P. O' Cathasaigh (Sean O'Casey), *The Story Of The Irish Citizen Army*, (Dublin, 1919, 1971) 51. Such an assertion by O'Casey regarding Connolly's supposed lack of interest in the ICA was unfair because, according to John W. Boyle, it ignores not only Connolly's essential role in the creation of that organization, but also his activities on other fronts at the time. These include his political forays into the Home Rule debate, attacks on the Irish Parliamentary Party, union activities, and his continued writing.

John W. Boyle, "Connolly, The Citizen Army And The Rising" in *The Making Of 1916*, edited by Kevin B. Nowlan, (Dublin, 1969) 57-8, 62.

[17] P. O' Cathasaigh, 1971, 52.

[18] Ibid.

the broad and crowded highway of Irish Nationalism....The high creed of Irish Nationalism became his daily rosary, while the higher creed of international humanity that had so long bubbled from his eloquent lips was silent for ever, and Irish Labour lost a Leader.

Because of Connolly's apparent retreat, O'Casey concluded that the ICA became no more than "the militant Left Wing of the Irish Volunteers", and thus it was Francis Sheehy-Skeffington, rather than Connolly, who carried the true ideas of pure socialism, and was therefore the first true martyr of Irish socialism.[19]

In one of his most famous of many plays, "The Plow And The Stars", O'Casey ignited a controversy and scandalized Dublin, in part because of prudish moralist opposition, but more significantly because he ridiculed the national heroes by portraying the leaders of the Rising as self-serving, ambitious, and cowardly buffoons. In 1926, during the play, Maud Gonne and Francis Sheehy-Skeffington's widow, Hannah, led protests outside the Abbey Theatre which required the intervention of the police. However, in his later years, O'Casey showed signs of appreciation for Connolly's work as he became more sympathetic towards world communist ideas.

In more recent times, writers have returned to Connolly as a model for the modern progressives. Leftist activist and writer Margaretta D'Arcy collaborated with her playwright husband John Arden on a series of six plays collectively called "The Non-Stop Connolly Show".[20] With this project, D'Arcy and Arden glorified Connolly by following in his footsteps in using the theatre for propaganda and

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[19] Ibid., 53, 63-4.

[20] First presented in a 24 hour performance in Liberty Hall, Dublin, at Easter, 1975. Published as: Margaretta D'Arcy, *The Non-Stop Connolly Show: A Dramatic Cycle Of Continuous Struggle In Six Parts*, (London, 1986).

educational purposes. They attempted to show Connolly's commitment to the struggle for justice through nationhood, and to help Connolly achieve his appropriate place among other European and American radical leaders of the time. Furthermore, by portraying the Easter Rising as a prerequisite to nationhood, they hoped to combat what they call "Conor Cruise O'Brien historical revisionism": the trend among scholars, led by Dr. O'Brien, which claims that Irish independence would have been achieved through parliamentary means, and therefore sees Easter 1916 as unnecessary.[21] A second notable contribution is the more recent *Saints And Scholars*, by Terry Eagleton.[22] In this fantasy, Connolly temporarily evades execution in order to express his ideas with other thinkers at the time. Both of these works suggest Connolly's continuing significance for the literary community, and particularly underline his value as subject material, albeit controversial, for writers from the period immediately following 1916 up to the present time.

Connolly And Pearse

Related to the intelligentsia in some ways, but clearly a distinct force, the IRB also felt Connolly's influence, particularly after the start of the First World War. Both Joseph Plunkett and Eamonn Ceannt respected and admired Connolly, and defended his intellectual integrity. But although the former cooperated with

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[21] Ibid., v.

[22] Terry Eagleton, *Saints And Scholars*, (London, 1987).

Connolly in planning the Rising, and respected his advice, and the latter even defended Connolly from Arthur Griffith's anti-Labour attacks, neither ever really embraced Connolly's socialist theories.

One of the main channels by which Connolly's influence reached this group, as well as later generations, was his impact on Patrick Pearse, the spiritual founder of the Irish Republic. Connolly's relationship with Pearse, although more limited than his previous dealings with Larkin, was generally more positive. It was through Pearse that Connolly made his most lasting impression on Irish nationalism. But Pearse was no flaming radical waiting for Connolly's spark. Pearse was a highly respected nationalist (primarily cultural in persuasion) as well as a writer and the founder and head of St. Enda's College. Pearse incorporated proto-fascist tendencies in his nationalism, particularly with his fascination with militarism and glorification of war. Pearse was also very interested in people of action, such as Larkin. According to Douglas Hyde (who did not look as favorably on organized labor as Pearse eventually did), Pearse noted:[23]

...he (Larkin) at least he (Pearse) said was *doing something*, he was making history....It was characteristic of Pearse that he never stopped to enquire if the *something* that Larkin was doing was good or bad. It was sufficient that he was *doing something*.

While one of Pearse's associates, Desmond Ryan, claimed:[24]

From the first Jim Larkin attracted him and in spite of much adverse criticism, he insisted on keeping the latter's son and name-sake at Sgoil Eanna. "Larkin is a man who does things," he used to say. "He has done more in six months than the

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[23] Quoted from Ruth Dudley Edwards, *Patrick Pearse: The Triumph Of Failure*, (London, 1977) 182; (Hyde's italics, my parentheses).

[24] Desmond Ryan, *The Man Called Pearse*, (Dublin, 1923) 112. "Sgoil Eanna" is the Irish spelling of Pearse's school.

politicians and ourselves with all our talk."

This attraction to men of action would later bring Connolly to Pearse's attention at the height of the Lockout in 1913, when Connolly stepped out from under Larkin's shadow.

Up to the time of the 1913 Lockout, Pearse was not interested in the social side of the national question which consumed him to such a great degree. But with the clash of the Lockout, Pearse, like many of his countrymen, was forced to consider the social issue. In a column in October he compared Dublin to Marie Antoinette's France, and taunted Dublin's middle classes:[25]

> I would like to put some of our well-fed citizens in the shoes of our hungry citizens, just for an experiment....I am quite certain that they will enjoy their poverty and their hunger...when their children cry for more food they will smile; when their landlord calls for the rent they will embrace him; when their house falls upon them they will thank God; when policemen smash in their skulls they will kiss the chastening baton....They...may come to see that there is something to be said for the hungry man's hazy idea that there is something wrong somewhere.

Pearse even went so far as to support the extremism of the Lockout: "If the workers must have strikes, I agree that their strikes should be thorough and terrible."[26] However, this vague and moralistic sense of social injustice was not yet well developed or directed, much less connected to the nationalist issue. Through his essentially professional relationship with Larkin, Pearse came to know the theoretician behind Larkin's movement, James Connolly. Although he and Connolly had previously been aware of some of each other's activities--Pearse in particular had been impressed by a speech Connolly had made supporting

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[25] P. Pearse, "From A Hermitage" (10-1913) in *The Collected Works Of Padraic H. Pearse*, 172-4; see also R.D. Edwards, 1977, 182-3.

[26] D. Ryan, 1923, 111.

women's rights–it was at this time that Pearse started to learn about Connolly's specific ideas on the socialist-nationalist synthesis.[27] He read *Labour In Irish History* several times, started to follow Connolly's ideas in *The Workers' Republic*, and developed a strong interest in Connolly's hero, James Fintan Lalor.

According to their mutual associate, Desmond Ryan, by early 1914 the two men had embarked on an intellectual relationship.[28] They discussed "the relative priorities of nationalism and socialism until they joined together in insurrection: it was Pearse who gave most ground in the battle".[29] As far as concerted activities at this early stage in their relationship, however, both men took some initiative with their respective organizations. As early as November of 1913, Pearse was making vague noises pertaining to a type of nationalist front, headed by his cultural nationalists, but which would embrace "Young Republican Parties, Labour Organisations, Socialist Groups, and what not" in promoting "the Irish Revolution."[30] As noted above, Connolly basically had kept himself out of the verbal feud between the ICA and the Volunteers. With the emigration of Larkin, and Connolly's assumption of the leadership of the ICA, he initiated a period of cooperation between the two bodies. Because of the drastically altered situation that came with the First World War, Connolly perceived a need for concerted action between the nationalist republicans and the socialists. He started to make

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[27] Ibid., 117.

[28] Ibid.

[29] R.D. Edwards, 1977, 184.

[30] P. Pearse, "The Coming Revolution" (11-1913) in *The Collected Works Of Padraic H. Pearse*, 94.

arrangements in the hopes of achieving such a force. Pearse, meanwhile was also pushing for such a meeting, or at least facilitating its arrangement.[31] Although Connolly's initial overtures were met with some suspicions by the traditionalists within the IRB leadership, his impatience for a Rising manifested itself within the Military Council of the IRB largely due to Pearse's intercessions. It was agreed that cooperation would be sought, and contact would be made with Germany through John Devoy and the Clan na Gael in New York. This was possibly done through Connolly's daughter, Nora.[32] Their relationship continued in this manner until the Rising, with Connolly being the impatient revolutionary, agitating for some form of military action against Britain while the war was still going, and Pearse supporting and promoting these ideas within the IRB and Volunteer circles. Connolly had accepted Pearse's emotional argument that Ireland could only be redeemed through the shedding of blood.[33]

With the Rising, Pearse was named President of the Republic, and Commander of the rebel forces. Connolly was Commander of the Dublin district, and by all accounts, took charge of the direction of the insurrection, with Pearse's approval. At the end of the week of insurrection, Pearse's admiration for Connolly stood out in his praise of the rebel forces:[34]

> They have redeemed Dublin from many shames, and made her name splendid among the names of Cities. If I were to mention names of individuals, my list would be a long one. I will name only that of Commandant General James

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[31] Letter from Pearse to Joseph Plunkett (8-24-1914) in Seamas O' Buachalla, editor, *The Letters Of P.H. Pearse*, (Gerrards Cross, 1980) 328.

[32] N. Connolly O'Brien, 1975, 209-218.

[33] *WR*, 2-5-1916.

[34] Manifesto (4-28-1916) in S. O' Buachalla, 1980, 372.

Connolly, Commanding the Dublin division. He lies wounded, but is still the guiding brain of our resistance.

Connolly's impact on Pearse's thinking "was profound and marked", and is particularly apparent in several of Pearse's specific writings.[35] Pearse seems to have embraced Connolly's synthesis of social issues with the national question most distinctly in his later career. This is especially apparent in two works, "The Sovereign People"; and the 1916 Proclamation of the Republic. The first of these works concluded Pearse's last series of pamphlets, which started with "The Separatist Idea" and "The Spiritual Nation", and was published in the months right before the Rising. In "The Separatist Idea", published 1 February 1916, Pearse established the premise of his argument that Tone, Davis, Lalor, and Mitchel "have chiefly developed the conception of an Irish nation", which he and his collaborators sought to promote.[36] With "The Spiritual Nation", published almost two weeks later, Pearse examined Thomas Davis to show that "Davis was the first of modern Irishmen to make explicit the truth that a nationality is a spirituality."[37] This was also the idea on which Pearse based his career, and for which he is most remembered.

After laying this groundwork, Pearse launched in to what was probably his most progressive writing, "The Sovereign People", published 31 March 1916. Desmond Ryan claimed that this work was influenced by Connolly's *Labour In Irish History*,

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[35] D. Ryan, 1923, 108.

[36] P. Pearse, "The Separatist Idea" (2-1-1916) in *The Collected Works Of Padraic H. Pearse*, 263.

[37] P. Pearse, "The Spiritual Nation" (2-13-1916) in *The Collected Works Of Padraic H. Pearse*, 303.

and to a lesser degree, Connolly's more recent *The Re-Conquest Of Ireland* (published in December of 1915).[38] In "The Sovereign People", Pearse argued three points: that the governing and economic systems are to be decided upon by the nation; that the common people are the truest elements of the nation; and that James Fintan Lalor, whose ideas came to Pearse through Connolly (and, by extension, were Connolly's in many respects), correctly recognized that the land issue--and not O'Connellite/Home Rule repeal--was of the deepest concern to the common people.

Pearse commenced this argument with the claim that the nation must control all wealth, as well as the means of production.[39] He summarized his logic in this way:[40]

1. The end of freedom is human happiness.
2. The end of national freedom is individual freedom; therefore, individual happiness.
3. National freedom implies national sovereignty.
4. National sovereignty implies control of all the moral and material resources of the nation.

With this, Pearse accepted Connolly's idea of "the material basis of freedom". Thus, since "No class in the nation has rights superior to those of any other class", and the "right to the control of the material resources of a nation...resides in the whole people", it is the right of the nation to decide the place of the institution of private property.[41] Although Pearse did retreat from any outright disavowal of

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[38] D. Ryan, 1923, 122.

[39] P. Pearse, "The Sovereign People" (3-31-1916) in *The Collected Works Of Padraic H. Pearse*, 333.

[40] Ibid., 337.

[41] Ibid., 338, 339.

the institution of private property, he simultaneously accepted Connolly's version of a communal system in ancient Ireland.[42] This idealization of the past was even more attractive for the romantic Pearse than it was for its creator, the semi-romantic Connolly.

Hence, although Pearse distanced himself from outright socialism, he clearly allowed for such a choice by the nation, accepted a proto-socialist basis for his own version of nationhood, and, furthermore, attacked capitalism as being too arbitrary a system for running a nation. Pearse claimed that the "possession of capital" was comparable to the "possession of red heads, or having been born on a Tuesday" as a rational measure of leadership to run a nation, and predicted that the people would be no more likely to choose a government based on capital than they would based on hair color or day of birth.[43] Pearse went on to accept Connolly's emphasis of Tone's "numerous and respectable class, the men of no property" as the true repository of Irishness.[44] He concluded that his own brand of nationalism came from Tone, through Lalor--and therefore, implicitly through Connolly. In this endeavor, he quoted Lalor extensively, to show that Lalor[45]

held in substance that Separation from England would be valueless unless it put the people--the actual people and not merely certain rich men--of Ireland in effectual ownership and possession of the soil of Ireland...

This idea was only one step behind Connolly's assertion that[46]

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[42] Ibid., 340, 339.

[43] Ibid., 341-2.

[44] Ibid., 344-5.

[45] Ibid., 350.

[46] *Shan Van Vocht, 1-1897.*

If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the socialist republic your efforts would be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers...

It also highlights Pearse's romantic orientation towards rural Ireland, following Lalor, as opposed to Connolly's focus on the industrialized sections of Ireland. Thus, Lalor, Connolly, and Pearse adhered to the same principle regarding the inadequacy of mere political independence from Britain. With Pearse looking back to Lalor's work in a rural Ireland, and Connolly emphasizing the industrialized society of the future, their difference on this issue was partly one of geographic emphasis, but primarily one of social perspective. Pearse concluded:[47]

Tone is the intellectual ancestor of the whole modern movement of Irish nationalism...Davis is the immediate ancestor of the spiritual and imaginative part of that movement, embodied in our day in the Gaelic League; Lalor is the immediate ancestor of the specifically democratic part of that movement, embodied to-day in the more virile labour oganisations; Mitchel is the immediate ancestor of Fenianism, the noblest and most terrible manifestation of this unconquered nation....I who have been in and of each of these movements make here the necessary synthesis.

This was Pearse's last public statement before the Rising, and he prefaced his "examination of the Irish definition of freedom" conclusively: "For my part, I have no more to say."[48]

But he did say more, with the Proclamation of the Republic in April 1916. In this document, written almost entirely by Pearse, Connolly's influence is again apparent. It is perhaps the most significant example of Connolly's impact on Pearse because, although Pearse did not expect the Easter Republic to lead

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[47] P. Pearse, "The Sovereign People", 370-1.

[48] Ibid., 333.

directly to an independent Irish State, he certainly recognized the romantic value of his actions, the Proclamation being probably the most momentous. (Although the initial reading of the Proclamation from the steps of the General Post Office was said to be extremely anti-climactic because of the ambiguous reaction of the small crowd of on-lookers.) Pearse allowed for the extension of political rights to women, a cause championed by Sheehy-Skeffington and Connolly, but not, initially, by Pearse. Furthermore, Connolly's assertion, previously explained in 1914 in *The Irish Worker*, that it was "the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland,"[49] was directly borrowed by Pearse, who then elaborated:

> ...The republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government...

But despite their close intellectual relationship, there were still some notable differences between the ideas of Connolly and those of Pearse. Connolly appreciated Pearse as a representative of advanced Irish nationalism, but generally saw middle-class and parliamentary nationalism as inherently bound to Britain by its very nature as a creation of British capitalism, and therefore doomed to failure on the question of independence. Pearse, who was more accepting of other forms of nationalism than Connolly was, was afraid of some aspects of socialism, particularly the internationalism of socialist thought, which contrasted with his own strong sense of nationalism. Pearse idealized pre-capitalist and pre-urbanized Ireland, to the point where he can be described as

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[49] *The Irish Worker*, 10-31-1914.

reactionary.[50] Connolly, on the other hand, accepted industrialization, and hoped to use material progress in his future society. Pearse also rejected the pacifism associated with some elements of the socialist and labor organization, such as that of Sheehy-Skeffington. Connolly, although not a pacifist himself, did not glorify violence as Pearse did. For example, in December 1915, while referring to the mass destruction of the First World War, Pearse wrote:[51]

> The last sixteen months have been the most glorious in the history of Europe. Heroism has come back to the earth....It is good for the world that such things should be done. The old heart of the earth needed to be warmed with the red wine of the battlefield. Such august homage was never before offered to God as this, the homage of millions of lives given gladly for the love of country.

To this--and probably unaware of the identity of the author --Connolly responded:[52]

> No! We do not think that the old heart of the earth needs to be warmed with the red wine of millions of lives. We think anyone who does is a blithering idiot. We are sick of such teaching, and the world is sick of such teaching.

In fact, Connolly was careful to elaborate on the horrors of war before endorsing any violent action,[53] and even then any cause had to meet his standards, which were very comparable to the Just War doctrine of the Catholic Church. He outlined the situation in which he would use physical force as follows: (1) the insurgents must agree upon a goal; (2) the goal should center on the removal of non-representative usurpers of power (the "governing" and "possessing" class) from

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[50] D. Ryan, 1923, 118.

[51] P. Pearse, "Peace And The Gael" (12-1915) in *The Collected Works of Padraic H. Pearse*, 216.

[52] *WR*, 12-25-1915.

[53] *The Worker*, 1-30-1915.

power; (3) constitutional and peaceful methods must be exhausted; and, (4) the actions of the insurgents must represent the will of the majority.[54] Connolly endorsed the use of the ballot in ordinary times, but viewed the Ulster Crisis and the World War as an extraordinary situation which presented a unique opportunity and responsibility to his generation.[55] Connolly also did not accept Pearse's blood-sacrifice idea until almost immediately before the Easter Rising. As late as 16 April, Connolly was giving indications that he still expected the Rising to succeed, and it was only after the secretive meeting which followed Eoin MacNeill's countermanding orders that Connolly admitted to associates that he expected the rebels to be slaughtered.

Still, it is apparent that Connolly had a great impact on Pearse. Although Pearse never became a socialist, it must be remembered that their relationship lasted only two short (and very hectic) years. Most significantly, Connolly persuaded Pearse to accept "the material basis of freedom" which was so evident in Pearse's final writings. Their mutual acquaintance, Desmond Ryan, concluded that Pearse's social gospel was "startlingly similar to James Connolly's own", which

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[54] *WR*, 7-22-1899. Connolly wrote this outline to contrast his views of force, as a minor question of methods, with the physical force tradition of Irish nationalism, which relied on force as a guiding principle. His prerequisites resemble those of the Catholic Church, as expounded by Saint Augustine, except: Connolly did not require a legal government to declare war--but rather a moral government; Connolly did not mandate a reasonable chance of victory--as was evident in the Easter Rising; Connolly did not explicitly distinguish between soldiers and civilians; Connolly did not explicitly prohibit the humiliation of the vanquished; and Connolly did not claim that the means had to be in proportion to the ends. However, these exceptions are understandable in view of the fact that Connolly was dealing with a social/civil and national equation, rather than simply with an easily demarcated situation of nation against nation.

[55] *WR*, 7-22-1899, and 1-22-1916; *Forward*, 3-14-1914.

is more a reflection on the force of Connolly's argument than the weakness of Pearse's.[56]

The Labor Movement And Politics

Another participant in the Easter Rising, Michael Collins, represented a much more typical reaction to Connolly's synthesis of nationalism and socialism. Collins, who made his reputation by organizing and directing the Irish forces in the Anglo-Irish War, was one of the leaders of the Free State and its forces before being killed in the Irish Civil War. During the Rising, Collins was fascinated with Connolly:[57]

> Of Pearse and Connolly I admire the latter most. Connolly was a realist, Pearse the direct opposite. There was an air of earthy directness about Connolly. It impressed me. I would have followed him through hell had such action been necessary. But I honestly doubt very much if I would have followed Pearse--not without some thought anyway.

However, this admiration for Connolly's military and organizational abilities did not guarantee similar support for Connolly's political ideas. Collins was in the process of organizing some of his ideas just before his sudden death. These unfinished notes, published as *The Path To Freedom*, display the failure of Connolly's ideas to be understood and embraced by one of many leading nationalists. In these writings, largely an attack on the anti-Treaty (republican) forces in the Irish Civil War, Collins paid some lip service to the Irish labor

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[56] D. Ryan, 1923, 106-7.

[57] R.D. Edwards, 1977, 281-2.

movement, probably in an effort to separate any labor support from the republican forces. Collins claimed that the Irish nation should recognize no class distinctions, and he allowed for a limited role for labor:[58]

> Labour will be free to take its rightful place as an element in the life of the nation...the new government starts with the resolve that Irish labour shall be free to play the part which belongs to it in helping to shape our industrial and commercial future.

Collins even accepted Connolly's interpretation of Irish history. He idealized an old "democratic Gaelic social system", and concluded that, "economically we must be democratic, as in the past."[59] Furthermore, he claimed that it was The English economic interest in Ireland that led to the economic and cultural subversion of the English conquests.[60] But Collins explicitly supported private property rights and wanted capital to be used in a positive manner.[61] Thus, Collins is a prime example of Irish nationalism's tendency to admire Connolly, the nationalist hero, and ignore or invalidate Connolly's social message. This trend started almost immediately after Connolly's death and grew quickly thereafter.

Another participant in the Rising, Eamon de Valera, also went on to great fame in politics. But unlike Collins, de Valera had a long public career which gave him the opportunity (or necessity) to attempt to claim Connolly for his own political purposes. In addition to his repeated praises of Connolly, the nationalist hero, de Valera sought to use Connolly, the labor leader, to build his own party,

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[58] Michael Collins, *The Path To Freedom*, (Cork, 1968) 25, 26.

[59] Ibid., 49, 102.

[60] Ibid., 56, 95.

[61] Ibid., 27, 102.

Fianna Fail, after he split with the militant republicans in the mid-1920s. With the demise of the violent attempt to reject mere Free State status, de Valera opened the founding meeting of his renewed political efforts by quoting Connolly's famous passage on the importance of social justice for the Irish people:[62]

> Ireland, as distinct from her people, is nothing to me; and the man who is bubbling over with love and enthusiasm for "Ireland" and can yet pass unmoved through our streets and witness all the wrong and the suffering, the shame and the degradation brought upon the people of Ireland--aye, brought by Irishmen upon Irish men and women--without burning to end it, is, in my opinion, a fraud and a liar in his heart...

In perhaps his most blatant appeal to potential labor support, in 1932--the year he came to power in the Free State--de Valera invoked the memory of Connolly in a speech addressing the problem of unemployment:[63]

> We saw that the economy of this country had in the past been dictated not for the advantage of the people here, but for the advantage of people across the water....I am quite willing to admit that, during my whole time in struggling for the freedom of this country, I had only one object and that was to get free so as to be able to order our life for the benefit of our own people. I never regarded freedom as an end in itself, but if I were asked what statements of Irish policy was most in accord with my view as to what human beings should struggle for, I would stand side by side with James Connolly...and when I differed with the Labour Party after the Treaty it was because I thought that that party was making a mistake and that they did not see what James Connolly saw, and what he told me he saw, that to secure national freedom was the first step in order to get the workers of Ireland the living that they were entitled to in their own country.

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62 *WR*, 7-7-1900; quoted by de Valera in Dublin (5-16-1926) in: Maurice Moynihan, editor, *Speeches And Statements By Eamon De Valera, 1917-73*, (Dublin, 1980) 140. De Valera also referred to this passage in his commemoration of the Easter Rising on the 17th anniversary of the event, at the graveside of the leaders, and again on 7 February, 1949; (pp. 237, 525).

63 M. Moynihan, 1980, 203.

This statement was uttered by a man who led Ireland for approximately one-third of the 20th century without ever establishing anything that resembled Connolly's "workers' republic". The speech offers a good example of the way in which Connolly's ideas were twisted after his death to fit political needs. The Connolly with whom de Valera wanted to stand side by side was transformed from a theoretician who claimed that the "first duty of the working class of the world is to settle accounts with the master-class of the world", to a nationalist hero who would reform the government to ease the plight of the workers once they had freed their country.[64]

But an even more significant example of the failure of Connolly's ideas to take hold is with his own labor movement. During the executions which followed the Rising, while Larkin and labor groups in the U.S. were agitating against his execution, Irish labor was basically silent. Often during his lifetime, Connolly was viewed as too extreme and confrontational by many in the Irish labor movement. In addition to its desire not to irritate the powers that be, the ITUC and Labour Party, "mindful that its only industrial base was in Protestant Ulster, stood aloof from the synthesis which Connolly was forging between the ITGWU and nationalism."[65] By August of 1916, at the Irish Trade Union Congress in Sligo, the ITUC and Labour Party distanced itself from the Rising and from Connolly, and the ITGWU disowned the ICA. The ICA, which together with the Volunteers had been transformed into the early Irish Republican Army, quickly

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[64] *The Irish Worker*, 11-29-1913.

[65] E. Rumpf and A.C. Hepburn, *Nationalism And Socialism In Twentieth Century Ireland*, (Liverpool, 1977) 12-3.

declined without Connolly's leadership. (It was revived the following year, with limited success, but, significantly, was later absorbed by the anti-Treaty forces in the Irish Civil War.) The two men who rose to leadership of the labor movement, William O'Brien and Tom Johnson, kept Connolly's syndicalism, but downplayed any revolutionary socialism. This de-emphasis of Connolly's radicalism set the pattern for Connolly's usefulness to later labor politicians, and caused Ulick O'Connor to lament:[66]

> Connolly's socialism and his writing on the control of the forces of production should have been eagerly debated in a post-revolutionary society. But he was shanghied by an alleged socialist movement, many of whose most recent leaders have lost credence because having moved in on the party crying havoc to the privileged classes, they quickly acquired ministerial posts, collected their pensions and went back to their expensive residences secure from revolutions and cutbacks.

Although Connolly had made labor a significant factor in nationalist politics, as evidenced by the Proclamation of the Republic, this influence had declined within a few years of his death. Johnson and O'Brien oversaw a steady retreat of Irish labor from its previous political influence.[67] With the threat of conscription in 1918, these two men participated in the opposition to it, but not on the socialist basis that Connolly had so eloquently established and explicitly developed. Instead, labor looked at Connolly as a nationalist, and joined in the opposition to conscription that was based almost exclusively on Irish nationalist values. During the 1918 elections, the Labour Party, fearing it could harm the national cause

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[66] Ulick O'Connor, in Dermot Bolger, editor, *16 On 16: Irish Writers On The Easter Rising*, (Dublin, 1988) 21.

[67] For a specific organizational genealogy which traces all of the factionalism of the labor/socialist groups after Connolly's death, see: M. Milotte, 1984, especially chapters 2-4.

with class-based politics, withdrew all of its candidates in deference to Sinn Fein, and thereby made the election a clear-cut referendum on nationalist-republicanism versus Home Rule/partition (and Unionism in the north). Thus, they removed the socialist question from the national liberation cause, a link Connolly had attempted to solidify.

Apparently, labor's most shining success during this period was the first Dail's 1919 adoption of the Democratic Programme, written by Tom Johnson. The document's most radical language, including promises of worker control of industries and uncompensated nationalization, was deleted before it was passed. Still, the document carried some of Connolly's ideas:[68]

> We declare that the nation's sovereignty extends not only to all the men and women of the nation, but to all the material possessions of the nation; the nation's soil and all its resources; all the wealth and wealth-producing processes within the nation; and we affirm that all right to private property must be subordinated to the public right and welfare of the nation....we...declare the right of every citizen to an adequate share of the produce of the nation's labour.

Despite the deletion of the radical language, Johnson was very pleased with its acceptance. But even this limited success was hollow, as it never had a chance of real implementation. Kevin O'Higgins, the Free State Minister, summarized the attitude of most politicians when he dismissed the programme as "pure poetry".[69] Sean O'Faolain criticized the document because of its "purely pious and general nature that committed nobody to anything in particular...".[70] A year later, the Dail explicitly condemned labor strife as a sectional distraction from the national

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[68] Democratic Programme of the 1919 Dail Eireann.

[69] R.D. Edwards, 1977, 340.

[70] Henry Patterson, *The Politics Of Illusion*, (London, 1989) 16.

liberation struggle because "the present time when the Irish people are locked in a life and death struggle with their traditional enemy, is ill chosen for the stirring up of strife among our fellow countrymen."[71]

The labor movement was encountering a vague split in terms of a divergence of interests at this time. The rank and file were interested in an activist program which could take advantage of the Anglo-Irish War and the Irish Civil War, but "Connolly's heirs were more intent on maintaining the union machine and its bulging coffers".[72] Following the example of the Bolsheviks in Russia, Irish soviets were proclaimed in many areas between 1919 and 1922, with the great majority of them being set up in the end of this period. The most notable example, though, was the Limerick soviet of 1919, which was started as a challenge to the British. Although this was the type of worker-oriented political and social action which Connolly had advocated, his successors failed to offer any endorsement or support for these actions.

With the establishment of the Free State and the tension between pro-Treaty and anti-Treaty forces, the labor leadership was conciliatory to the non-republican government, while ignoring the militancy of lower-level labor. O'Brien and Johnson headed the first group to petition the Dail after it had accepted the Treaty. In doing this, they ignored Connolly's warnings of an incomplete revolution, and thereby gave implicit support and validation to the Free State government in order to obtain some inherently limited reforms. The partition of

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[71] Ibid., 14-5.

[72] M. Milotte, 1984, 26.

Ireland which came with the Treaty was also therefore implicitly accepted by labor leaders. When Larkin returned to Ireland in 1924, he tried to reassert leftist control over the ITUC, but his challenge was effectively opposed by the more conservative O'Brien.[73]

One notable follower of Connolly who went against this trend was William McMullen, an Ulster Protestant labor activist. Connolly had written much explicitly on the subject of partition. McMullen, who was sent to Parliament from a Catholic area of Belfast, was "a convinced advocate of Connolly's synthesis of the national and social questions", and thus indicates the trust Catholic workers had for a Protestant who opposed partition on a class basis.[74] But the leaders of the labor organizations substantially failed or refused to recognize, much less harness, the widespread radicalism among many of the workers.

During the 1930s, republicans--both of the nationalist and socialist varieties--claimed Connolly. The early 1930s saw a red scare inspired by the Catholic Church and the government in reaction to radical elements within the republican movement. During the Spanish Civil War, republicans and socialists were again divided on how to apply Connolly's socialist-republican philosophy. His memory inspired progressive republican volunteers, constituting the Connolly Battalion of the International Brigade, to fight Franco's forces. (Almost one-half of the hundred-plus contingent of Irish volunteers died in Spain.)

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[73] K. Kelley, 1982, 54.

[74] E. Rumpf and A.C. Hepburn, 1977, 198.

In 1912, Connolly founded the Independent Labour Party Of Ireland. Later that year, he pushed the ITUC to take a more active political role, and the groups were joined as the Irish Trade Union Congress and Labour Party, remaining together until 1930. After Connolly's death, this organization was rivaled by the Socialist Party of Ireland, which attracted many of its members until the early 1920s when the SPI, led by Roddy Connolly, became affiliated with the Comintern. At that time, the SPI became the Communist Party of Ireland, and expelled "reformist" labor unionists. This group has remained on the scene in Ireland as a tiny, yet steady force, but has been plagued by internal squabbles associated with the tensions in the international socialist camp, as well as over the issue of support for the IRA's violent activities.[75] Meanwhile, the Labour Party has remained as a significant force in Irish politics. By rejecting (or ignoring) Connolly's revolutionary radicalism it has operated much more in the mainstream of Irish politics than the CPI has. However, the modern Labour Party is more accurately rooted, ideologically speaking, in the 1918-1922 period, when it worked with Sinn Fein in the national liberation effort, than in Connolly's career.[76] Still, the Labour Party claims Connolly and Larkin as its founding fathers, despite the "cautious, reformist nature" that has pervaded much of its existence. According to Michael Gallagher, "Labour's identification of 1912 as its foundation date owes more to an emotional (and political) desire to claim Connolly and the early

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[75] Michael Gallagher, *Political Parties In The Republic Of Ireland*, (Manchester, 1985) 97.

[76] Ibid., 68-9.

Larkin than to historical accuracy."[77] As a driving force, the working class radicalism which "had eluded Irish Labour since the days of Larkin and Connolly" was not reclaimed by the Labour Party until the 1960s.[78] So intimidated was the Labour Party by the anti-socialist stance of the powerful Catholic Church in Ireland that it was not until after the death of Pope John XXIII that "its leaders felt safe to declare that the Labour Party was in favour of socialism and a workers' republic".[79] In the meantime, de Valera's Fianna Fail used Connolly's national image to attract working-class support, and to keep the anti-partition hopes alive. But the Labour Party was able to revive Connolly as a party hero when he was rejected by Fianna Fail in the mid-1960s. In a speech for the Golden Jubilee of the Easter Rising, Fianna Fail Taoiseach Sean Lemass distanced himself from Connolly:[80]

> During this commemoration year many people will ask what the leaders of 1916 would think of the Ireland of today... I think they would be astonished by the changes which have taken place in economic and social conditions, and in the outlook of our people in these matters, because these would represent developments beyond their expectations... Even many of the views of James Connolly, revolutionary though they were considered to be in his time, seem out of date in the circumstances of today.

Besides its significance for the Labour Party, which was then free to claim Connolly, this speech is significant for two reasons. Regardless of the accuracy of Lemass's assessment of modern Ireland, he recognized Connolly's radicalism, (although he declared it to be obsolete); and he admitted that the modern Irish

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[77] Ibid., 69; (Gallagher's parentheses).

[78] E. Rumpf and A.C. Hepburn, 1977, 157.

[79] Tim Pat Coogan, *The I.R.A.*, (London, 1970) 18.

[80] Speech by Sean Lemass (2-18-1966), quoted in O.D. Edwards, 1971, 5.

State does not fulfill Connolly's conception of a workers' republic. Whether Lemass was correct or not, his speech disowned Connolly, and thereby made Connolly's image available to more radical groups that were eager to present Connolly, the revolutionary socialist, to Ireland, just in time for the re-emergence of the troubles in Ulster.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Connolly's ideas were moved from the classroom to the streets. Up to this time, various scholars, along with small groups of leftist activists, kept Connolly's most radical social ideas alive. In particular, Desmond Ryan, who had been in the General Post Office with Connolly and Pearse, edited and published three volumes of Connolly's writings between 1948 and 1951. However, Connolly's ideas on partition, revolutionary warfare, and a national socialist republic attracted activists when the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland sparked off the recent, extended period of violence. The revival of his ideas has also led to a re-evaluation of his theories by modern radical scholars.

Connolly And The Irish Republican Army

The Irish Republican Army has used, and in many instances, continues to use (or misuse) Connolly's ideas to justify its violent attacks in Northern Ireland, as well as (to some extent) against manifestations of what it sees as neo-imperialism by British and American capitalism in the Irish Republic. For many members of the IRA, the revolution in Ireland has been incomplete, according to Connolly's way of thinking, because political independence is incomplete without economic

sovereignty and social revolution. Thus, the modern IRA claims Connolly's ideas as its guiding force for its social ideology.

The term "Irish Republican Army" was initially used by Pearse during the Rising in reference to the combined forces of the Irish Volunteers who had taken up arms (even the traditional pikes) under the leadership of the IRB Military Council, and Connolly's Irish Citizen Army.[81] The military failure of this force and the consequent repression guaranteed its demise after the Rising. The ICA re-emerged as a minor force the next year. In an Ireland that had been "thoroughly radicalized" by the example of the insurgents and the apparently brutal reaction of the British, the Irish Volunteer movement was popularized, and was recognized by the first Dail Eireann, run by Sinn Fein, as the Irish Republican Army in 1919 at the start of the Anglo-Irish War.[82] This set the precedent for the nearly constant relationship between the political Sinn Fein and the military IRA as the organizations of republicanism in Ireland.

One of the leading members of the movement at this time, Liam Mellows, who was a founding member of the Volunteers, was working for that organization from the United States, where he escaped to after the 1916 Rising. Although his short life was to end just a few years later when he was executed by the Free State in 1922, Mellows was significant in that he acted as the channel for giving the post-1916 republican movement its core of social ideology; and his philosophy was basically Connolly's. His execution by the pro-Treaty government guaranteed

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[81] During Easter Week, this force was also called the "Army of the Irish Republic".

[82] K. Kelley, 1982, 33.

his entrance into the pantheon of republican hero/martyrs, and gave weight to his writings. Although his social writings were sparse, consisting mostly of notes he drew up while imprisoned by the Free State, they were characterized by a heavy dose of Connollyism. In particular, Mellows was influenced by Connolly's *Labour In Irish History*, with its dual portrayal of capitalism as a foreign import and ancient Celtic society as the model of Irish socialism.[83] Thus, through Mellows, Connolly was to maintain a constant, although not always dominant, influence on the republican movement in the 20th century.

The Mellows legacy combined with the influence of Markievicz to maintain a leftist factor within the republican movement throughout the 1920s. Markievicz, as one of the few blatantly socialist members in Sinn Fein at the time, held some influential positions in the organization, but her views were not accepted by all elements within that organization. Competing with the socialist-republican tradition was the nationalist-republican tradition. The latter was more related to the nationalism of the IRB variety, which took a decidedly apolitical stance on future forms of government in Ireland, concentrating instead on complete political independence form Britain. However, both of these ideologies combined in leading the IRA to oppose the Treaty, and, consequently, the Free State forces in the Irish Civil War. Furthermore, republicans generally accepted elements of Connolly's ideas by basing the republican social philosophy on the acceptably vague outlines of their legendary predecessors: the 1916 Proclamation and the 1919 Democratic Programme. But as the 1920s progressed, even this watered-

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[83] J. Bowyer Bell, *The Secret Army: The IRA, 1916-1979*, (Cambridge, Mass., 1980) 52; H. Patterson, 1989, 20.

down version of social theory declined to some extent in terms of influence.

De Valera, former president of Sinn Fein, split with Sinn Fein/IRA in 1926 to take a purely political approach, thereby rejecting the continued militarism of the traditional republicans. Many other republicans followed this approach. The remaining IRA/Sinn Fein was re-energized by a new generation of social-republicans who, according to one of the new social-republican leaders, Michael Price, felt that the Labour Party had "betrayed the Connolly teaching and tradition in 1922", and therefore Price hoped to claim Connolly exclusively for the republican movement.[84] Connolly's image was venerated more in the republican camp than in the labor organizations, which were descendants of Connolly's original creations, but were far removed from his original ideas, and "which in an era of creeping conservativism apparently felt uneasy with the wild phrases of revolutionary socialism."[85]

Another of the new social-republican leaders, Peader O'Donnell, founded the Saor Eire group in 1931 to work towards Connolly's conception of a workers' republic through the IRA and Sinn Fein. When de Valera assumed power in the Free State government in 1932, he began to chisel away at the republican movement by offering positions and pensions to its veterans. O'Donnell was creating a distinctly social-republican alternative to de Valera, but his organization was strongly condemned by the Irish Catholic Church, which, along with the government, effectively checked the growth of Saor Eire and social-

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[84] H. Patterson, 1989, 60.

[85] J. Bowyer Bell, 1980, 69.

republicanism with the red scare of the early 1930s. By 1937, when de Valera proposed his Constitution, republicans offered an alternative that, although similar to de Valera's in many respects, tended to resemble Connolly's ideas to a greater degree. Dedicated to the Holy Trinity, the document went on to state:[86]

> All the national possessions of the Republic of Ireland, the nation's soil and all its resources, all the wealth and all the wealth-producing processes within the nation belong of right to all the citizens. Private property is sanctioned as a natural right, but shall be subordinate to the public right and welfare.

Leftist republicans did their best to defend themselves from the attacks of the Church by using Connolly's arguments in *Labour, Nationality And Religion* that socialism and Catholicism were, in fact, compatible, and that the clergy had no special power in political matters. But the overwhelming influence of the Church in Ireland isolated the radicals. Social-republicans who followed Connolly's ideas mourned the fact that "after his death his teaching was never the basis for Republican activities."[87] Afraid that the republican movement's nationalist-republican elements were leading the movement towards fascism, O'Donnell then founded the radical Republican Congress in the mid-1930s. This short-lived group attempted to compete with de Valera and Fianna Fail for the soul of the IRA. Although it helped to keep Connolly's type of social-republicanism alive, it failed to have any significant impact on the IRA.[88] With the demise of the Republican Congress, intellectuals and radical labor activists formed the Connolly

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[86] This proposed constitution was written by Mary MacSwiney; quoted in Sean Cronin, *The McGarrity Papers*, (Tralee, 1972) 149.

[87] George Gilmore, *The Irish Republican Congress*, (New York, 1935).

[88] K. Kelley, 1982, 59.

Association, which remained an isolated but constant voice. With sections in Britain and Ireland, including the Connolly Club of London (which included veterans of the Connolly Battalion from the Spanish Civil War) this organization worked to undermine the British presence in Northern Ireland by leading the call for civil rights into the 1960s.[89] The IRA, which had seen its campaign of violence against Britain in the late 1930s eclipsed by the Second World War, was aided in its "Border Campaign" of 1956-62 by the Connolly Association, which appealed to the British government against the internment of republicans.

At the beginning of the 1960s, the republican movement still admired Connolly as a nationalist militant, but the general feeling that the IRA should be apolitical kept the movement away from most of Connolly's socialism. However, "in reaction to the defeats of what came to be seen as an apolitical and purely militaristic republicanism" with the failure of the Border Campaign in 1962, Connolly's ideas were re-emerging as a prominent force within the IRA.[90] By the time of the 1962 Republican Army Convention, many members of the movement, including the young generation of republicans, had begun "to define the mystical Republic in everyday terms, to analyze the possible strategy and tactics for a real, multifaceted revolutionary movement, more akin to the ideas of Connolly than the poetry of Pearse."[91] Since it seemed to some that an influx of intellectuals such as Conor Cruise O'Brien into the Labour Party was failing to radicalize that

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[89] H. Patterson, 1989, 85.

[90] Ibid., 5.

[91] J. Bowyer Bell, 1980, 340.

organization along Connolly's militant lines, large sections in the IRA were seriously considering Connolly's ideas as a guiding ideology.[92] However, since, with the notable exception of Saor Eire, "socialism was not a prominent feature of the IRA until the 1960s, although it was nearly always present", the emergence of this rival to the traditional national-republicanism caused much dissension within the republican ranks, and eventually precipitated a major split in the IRA and Sinn Fein.[93]

The growing group of social-republicans in the IRA/Sinn Fein movement took a more political approach to republican goals. In 1967, at the Sinn Fein Ard Fheis (convention), the leadership set that organization on a course for achieving a parliamentary majority by 1972.[94] However, the more traditional physical force adherents, associated with national-republicanism, opposed the de-emphasis of their principle of violence for the overthrow of British control in Ireland. Thus, when the civil rights movement in Northern Ireland sparked the most recent phase of the civil violence, the IRA/Sinn Fein membership was essentially deadlocked over the physical force versus political force issue. The perceived lack of coherent activity by the republican forces in the new circumstances in Ulster, an unacceptable retreat according to the nationalist-republicans, led to the split with the "Official" IRA/Sinn Fein, and the creation of the "Provisional" version of those groups in 1969. Ostensibly, the split was over the priority given

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92 H. Patterson, 1989, 103.

93 Joanne Wright, *Terrorist Propaganda*, (New York, 1990) 65.

94 Ibid., 28.

to socialist, as opposed to purely nationalist, ideology. In the IRA, this disagreement was epitomized by the decision to seek political progress by recognizing Westminster, the Dail, and Stormont. With the Sinn Fein, the ideological differences were symbolized by the vote to end Sinn Fein's abstentionist policy, the tactic first used to create the 1919 Dail Eireann, and, consequently, used to oppose the "illegitimate" successors to the first Dail since the Free State was founded. But the political approach taken by the IRA/Sinn Fein leadership seemed inappropriate to the physical force national-republicans considering the opportunities arising in the north. Although Connolly's ideas were more defined, the Provisionals were more interested in Pearse's Gaelic Republic achieved by force than in Connolly's plans for an Irish Socialist Republic, particularly if it was achieved through political means.[95]

The Official Sinn Fein was made up of the more radical and younger republicans, who emphasized the socialist ideology that had been revived over the previous decade, and de-emphasized the traditional nationalism of republicanism. The Official Sinn Fein reconstituted its political efforts as the Workers' Party, and embraced the "stages" theory by attempting to promote the development of the working class and its unity in order that Connolly's vision could be achieved at a later date. Although it is organized in both the north and south, the Workers' Party has had only limited success in the political arena. Links with its counterpart, the OIRA, were unofficially maintained, although that organization no longer exists as a substantial presence, if at all. The Official Sinn Fein--as it is

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[95] K. Kelley, 1982, 132-3.

very rarely referred to anymore--still embraces Connolly, and has re-published some of his works.

In 1974, yet another group split off from this one, reconstituting itself as the Irish Republican Socialist Party (a variation on Connolly's Irish Socialist Republican Party, founded in 1896). This new group, opposing the Officials' unilateral cease-fire in the north and their emphasis of the socialist struggle, tried to put the republican and socialist struggles on equal footing: to "end imperialist rule in Ireland and establish a 32-County Democratic Socialist Republic with the working class in control of the means of production, distribution and exchange."[96] This group quickly formed its own military wing, the Irish National Liberation Army, and engaged in a bloody conflict of assassinations with the OIRA before its political demise.

The Officials believed that the continuation of civil strife in Northern Ireland was only dividing the working class along religious lines, and therefore playing into the hands of British imperialism's usual divide-and-rule tactics among the Ulster working class. The Provisionals' participation was symptomatic of a reactionary nationalism that was only counter-productive in the drive towards working class unity. However, the Provisionals also quickly claimed Connolly's ideology as a guiding force. They see Northern Ireland as an attempt by the British to keep an imperialist presence in Ireland.[97] Thus, they are one of a very few groups to take an active stance on the partition of Ireland.

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[96] M. Gallagher, 1985, 118.

[97] J. Wright, 1990, 52.

The PIRA claims to be the present manifestation of the true tradition of Irish republicanism, from Tone, Young Ireland, and the Gaelic League. Connolly fits into their version of this lineage as "a model for the use of force against English capitalists and against partition, which he saw as supportive of capitalism."[98] In addition to this precedence of physical force, the PIRA/Sinn Fein (since the mid to late-1970s, the term "Sinn Fein" usually refers to the Provisionals) came to include Connolly in its ideology through the continued reliance on the vague principles set forth in the 1916 Proclamation and the 1919 Democratic Programme. The Provisionals claim the "socialism of James Connolly, the idealism of Patrick Pearse, and the unrepentant Republicanism of Tom Clarke" as their ideological foundations.[99] By 1979, Provisional leader Gerry Adams was signifying the Provisionals' willingness to resurrect social-republicanism and the political initiative: "We must ensure that the cause of Labour becomes the cause of Ireland, a task neglected since Connolly's time."[100] Connolly's condemnation of an incomplete revolution was thus revived, mandating a social and political "re-conquest", since the British conquest had been on both social and political levels. Connolly's socialist analysis of British imperialism in Ireland has become a central tenet of Provisional ideology. Furthermore, in addition to his ideas, Connolly's martyrdom was used to give a moral and historical precedent to the republican hunger strikers in the early 1980s.[101] The Provisionals have based their

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[98] Ibid., 69.

[99] Ibid., 54.

[100] Eamonn McCann, *War And An Irish Town*, (London, 1980) 174.

[101] J. Wright, 1990, 209.

opposition to Ireland's participation in the European Community on Connolly's ideas, portraying it as a "European capitalist bloc".[102]

In response to condemnation of their activities by the Catholic Church, "the major influence on Irish social and political life", the Provisionals have claimed Connolly's synthesis of socialism and Catholicism as "a primary ideological influence."[103] Specifically, the PIRA uses Connolly's argument in *Labour, Nationality And Religion*, that the Church has always been on the wrong side of revolutionary movements throughout Irish history, to deflect attacks by the Church. However, in recent years, the Provisional Sinn Fein has reconsidered its push towards Connolly's socialist republic, and has suggested a broader movement working towards complete Irish self-determination, modeled on the African National Congress and the Freedom Charter.[104]

Despite this recent change, the PIRA still bases its existence on the use of physical force against the British involvement with Northern Ireland. However, Joanne Wright argues that their continued reliance on Connolly in this respect "is not historically consistent".[105] The PIRA uses Connolly's advocacy of physical force to justify the central principle in its own organization, the continuation of violent opposition in Ireland. In fact, Connolly was explicit in his denial of violence as a principle.[106] Instead, Connolly allowed for violence only as one of

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[102] Ibid, 53.

[103] Ibid., 61.

[104] H. Patterson, 1989, 189.

[105] J. Wright, 1990, 52.

[106] *WR*, 7-22-1899.

many possible methods, and even then set restrictions on situations where violence could be used. In the situation that the PIRA is in, the will of the majority of people of Ireland to oppose violence at this time is not respected by the PIRA, nor is a goal agreed upon by the republicans. Whether or not all legal and peaceful means have been exhausted is debatable.

Although "there is an historical tradition of socialism within the Republican movement from Tone onwards," Wright maintains that "the Provisionals are not a linear representation of it."[107] Still, it is undeniable that Connolly's social-republicanism has been, and still is an inspiration to many within the republican movement. Members of the IRA in Belfast trace their own republicanism to the time when Connolly lived and worked in that city.[108] His actions have been used (or misused) as a model for later republican activities, and his ideas are still claimed by significant elements within the national-republican and, even more so, the social-republican traditions. However, the traditional and continuing tension between social-republicanism and national-republicanism, as well as the disagreements over the physical force approach as opposed to the class-based political approach is symptomatic of an unresolved conflict over the ideas of Connolly and their relevance to modern-day republicanism.

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[107] J. Wright, 1990, 65.

[108] Patrick Bishop and Eamonn Mallie, *The Provisional IRA*, (London, 1987) 112-3.

In the current situation in the Irish Republic and Northern Ireland, Connolly's image and ideas are still a significant force. Connolly's ideological descendants--those who claim his heritage, either correctly or not--cover a wide area: from the Labour Party to the CPI, from middle-class Catholic nationalists to working-class Protestants, from the trade unionists to the violent revolutionaries, and from the scholars to the unemployed laborers. Regardless of the validity of their claims, these claims are significant in that they demonstrate the relevance of what Connolly represented with his syntheses. The fact that a man's ideas are still highly respected and still contested for by so many different groups several generations removed from the context of his original writings says something about the man and his ideas. In particular, the apparent importance of his ideas, as evidenced by the competition for his image, speaks to the continuing importance and applicability of the principles upon which those ideas were based up to a century ago, as well as to the static nature of many of the antagonistic forces in Ireland over the last century. The fact that so many different groups can still try to claim his ideas suggests either vague explanations by Connolly, or a substantial degree of misinterpretation by his descendants.

CONCLUSION

Summary

Despite his pronounced radical social-republicanism, Connolly represented a confluence of several distinct traditions of Irish nationalism. The genealogy of his social ideology, as he saw it, was from ancient "communal" Ireland, through Tone, Lalor, and, to a lesser extent, some elements of the Fenian movement (although the accuracy of the first two is debateable). To this list, although Connolly did not include him, could be added Michael Davitt, who took a different approach than Connolly's, but with similar conclusions regarding the connection of the social issue to the land issue. Connolly's views on Irish nationalism drew ideas from a wide variety of predecessors. Originating with radical elements of the Volunteers, Connolly's type of nationalism, based on the need for an inclusive Irish republic, was shaped by Tone and certain members of Young Ireland, and maintained by the Fenians through the era of parliamentary nationalism. However much he may have detested the idea, Connolly's nationalism was at least supplemented by the middle-class traditions of cultural and Home Rule nationalism. To some extent, Connolly also received his hopes for a broad, extra-parliamentary movement from the precedents of the Volunteers, O'Connell, and the Land League. O'Connell and the Land League, in particular, relied primarily

on moral force, as opposed to the physical force traditions within Irish nationalism. Although Connolly did not oppose physical force tactics in his own activities, he preferred to reach his goals through persuasion and the ballot box, and would only endorse violence under certain conditions.

To a great degree, Connolly's religious ideas were his own. But precedents can be seen in the non-sectarianism of the United Irish program, Young Ireland, and the Fenians. In a time of Home Rule crisis in Ulster, and rising fear and militarization throughout Ireland, Connolly's non-sectarianism was a refreshing but lonely plea in, of all places in Irish society, the labor/socialist movement. Despite vigorous attempts to win support among Ulster's Protestant workers, Connolly's efforts met the same fate as those of O'Connell and Davitt, who had also tried to make common cause with the Orangemen. While resisting the split of Irish labor along denominational and geographical lines, Connolly not only faced the fears of Catholic and Protestant workers in Ulster, but constant harassment and open attacks by his own co-religionists. In this battle, Connolly benefited from the attempts by the Fenians to separate the Catholic Church from political leverage. Connolly affirmed the Fenian claim that the Church had no special place in purely political matters.

In the area of tactics and organization, Connolly's activities were foreshadowed by almost all of the groups mentioned above. The extra-parliamentary military force of the Volunteers was reflected in the ICA and the IRB. The United Irish groups worked both openly and underground. Their overtures to revolutionary France were similar to Connolly's agitation within IRB circles to contact Germany. O'Connell's combination of a moral force movement with implied

(albeit empty) threats of violence mirrored Connolly's combination of appeals to reason and calls to action. Like O'Connell, Connolly believed that there could be no justice for Ireland as long as it was united to, and thus ruled by, Britain. Young Ireland offered a true precedent (more so than Tone) for social-republicanism, through Lalor. The Fenians, still an essential force in Connolly's day, represented pure, although limited, Irish nationalism that resisted the reformism of parliamentary nationalism, and drew its support from the lower orders of society. Davitt did what Connolly tried to do by combining a broad-based social movement with a potent political force. And Connolly's limited respect for cultural nationalism, as the modern resurgence of certain aspects of his idealized ancient Gaelic society, indicated an admiration for their ability to appeal to and mobilize vast numbers of people.

In varying degrees, Connolly drew upon all of these traditions evident throughout Irish history in formulating his ideas on the dynamic relationships between socialism, nationalism, and religion. He saw models and precedents for his ideas in Ireland's past, and tried to shape those concepts within the context of his own day in order to help create the society of the future. In doing this, he created a specifically Irish socialism, which he traced to Ireland's ancient past, and tried to combat the dominance of the "un-Irish" import from Britain: capitalism. Thus, the British imperialist conquest of Ireland, evident on social, political, and (as Connolly emphasized) economic levels, had to be reversed on all of these levels. So, using his socialism, Connolly tried to enlighten nationalists and churchmen as to the viability of socialism as an anti-imperialist and inherently Irish force.

However, almost immediately after his death, Connolly was glorified as a national hero on the level of Patrick Pearse, rather than as a socialist. This tendency has had a lasting impact on his popular image. Even among his own labor organizations, his revolutionary image was de-emphasized. The republican movement, although rarely dominated by social-republicanism (as opposed to national-republicanism), kept many of Connolly's ideas alive through the interest and advocacy of small, radical elements within both the republican organizations themselves, and associated writers, labor organizations, political groups, and activists. Over the last three decades, his socialist ideas have received more widespread attention, as indicated by the number of groups which now compete to claim his image as their own. However, this struggle for his legacy and the pressures of contemporary forces have led to distortion of his ideas in the effort to possess and explain him.

Assessment

As was noted at the beginning of this thesis, there has not been a concrete manifestation in Ireland of Connolly's ideas, which would have enabled observers to make an evaluation of his thinking based on the actualities of his "Workers' Republic" or "Co-operative Commonwealth". However, Connolly's ideas on the integration of socialism and nationalism, as well as socialism and Christianity, did not deal only with development of a socialist state in Ireland, but with the struggle against capitalist and imperialist exploitation. In this conflict, his syntheses were to play an essential role. Thus, his ideas can be assessed in the

context of this conflict in 20th century Ireland since his death.

Connolly's syntheses were in many ways a blending of what were, for him at least, parallel principles with tactical opportunities. His method of harmonizing ideas was similar to his tendency to cooperate with people who did not completely share his views. (They were not hard to find considering his radicalism, and the dynamic intellectual environment in Ireland at the time.) Connolly developed relationships with Pearse, despite Pearse's middle-class cultural nationalism and proto-fascist tendencies; with Sheehy-Skeffington, despite his pronounced pacifism; and with Arthur Griffith, despite the Sinn Fein leader's distaste for socialism. In all of these examples, Connolly de-emphasized some substantial ideological differences with these figures in order to pursue a greater goal, and in the process enjoyed mutually beneficial and intellectually stimulating relationships with such figures. (Although on balance, it seems that Connolly usually influenced others more than he was himself swayed.)

As with these three ideologies, which are often in conflict with each other when advanced by advocates who are less broad-minded than Connolly (but which he blended together), he found common ground in thought and action with people and ideas that he might otherwise have attacked. He then emphasized the points of agreement and acted upon them. He was tolerant and thoughtful, but he definitely wanted to promote progress towards solutions to human problems, and was therefore passionate, determined, insistent, and persuasive. He was able to blend his socialism with his Catholicism because they were both based on the principle of seeking social justice. He combined socialism and nationalism because, not only did he deny the incompatibility of the two ideologies, which

many others saw at the time, but he saw a tactical and logical connection between the two.

Although the primary basis for Connolly's socialism was his moralism, the central political expression of Connolly's socialism was anti-imperialism. The oppression and exploitation of one group of people by another, exercised on political, social, and economic levels in the case of British imperialism in Ireland, had to be stopped. This injustice could be resisted through Irish nationalism, and Connolly embraced that force as a catalyst, but not a complete answer, for solving Ireland's problems. Thus, he hoped to make anti-imperialism an essential part of socialist thought, and, as in the case of labor movements in both Ulster and Britain, as well as in his own social-republican organizations, he unequivocally and enthusiastically argued his position. Although he succeeded in basing 20th century Irish socialism on the anti-imperialist issue, he failed to persuade socialists outside of Ireland, and even many of those in Ulster, of the validity of anti-imperialist socialism in the Irish context. He laughed at himself for having more success in "interpreting Socialism to the Irish" than in "interpreting the Irish to the Socialists".[1] This anti-imperialist basis for socialist analysis and action makes his arguments relevant in Ireland and other parts of the world today. Connolly recognized that throwing the "British out of Ireland" was an overly simplistic solution because of the complexities of economic penetration and, to a lesser extent (according to Connolly), the pro-British sentiments of much of the Protestant community in Ulster. This warning could be learned by some of the

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[1] *Forward*, 5-3-1913.

present anti-British elements in the Irish republican movement.

However, his use of nationalism, which he treated as a means to a just society in Ireland, has been inordinately stressed by many. This emphasis of "the nationalist" Connolly brings into question the advisability of his willingness to use nationalism to the extent that Irish nationalism (a tactical consideration), instead of his ethically-based socialism, became the cause with which he is most identified, particularly in light of the Easter Rising.

In the middle to late 1920s, in a pamphlet for Chicago's "Little Red Library" series of radical literature, G. Schuller wrote:[2]

> Irish bourgeois nationalists and British Socialists sought and seek still in vain for an explanation of Connolly's leadership of the Easter rising. Much as these latter sympathized with Connolly as a labor leader and Socialist they could not understand how he could take part in such an act and thus we see the strangest endeavors to explain, or rather to excuse Connolly's attitude during the Red Easter of 1916.

Socialists have always been puzzled by Connolly's decision to sacrifice his life in the Easter Rising. Although this puzzlement suggests a failure to understand Connolly's synthesis of socialism and Irish nationalism, there is some validity to their concerns regarding the degree to which Connolly allowed himself to be viewed as a nationalist. O'Casey was initially right in his prediction that "Jim Connolly's earlier ideals will be covered by an ever-rising tide of militant Nationalism" in post-1916 Ireland.[3] Perhaps through a miscalculation on Connolly's part, his radical social-republicanism was quickly ignored soon after his

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[2] G. Schuller, *"Jim" Connolly And Irish Freedom*, (Chicago, no date; probably 1925 or 1926) 23.

[3] P. O' Cathasaigh (S. O'Casey), 1971, vi.

death. Connolly's socialism was overshadowed by nationalist-republicanism in the republican movement until it was rediscovered in the 1960s.

However, O'Casey's criticism is based on the interpretation that Connolly changed from a socialist/labor activist to essentially an Irish nationalist around the time of the start of the First World War. In fact, Connolly did not discover Irish nationalism in 1914, but simply revived it as a focus of his activities after a long period in the U.S. and of involvement in labor activities. The situation in Ireland had changed, and Connolly was willing to change with it. Labor had been defeated, or at least set back with the 1913 Lockout; Ulster was militarizing along sectarian lines, and the rest of Ireland was starting to do likewise; Larkin had left Connolly in charge of the ITGWU; and the Home Rule debate was bringing calls for partition and the possibility of pre-empting the republican efforts. Connolly also saw the First World War as offering an opportunity to harness nationalism to the socialist cause. Therefore, only a socialist strictly tied to doctrinaire applications of dogma would fail or refuse to attempt to take advantage of the new opportunities in the changing political climate, and only a narrow interpretation, such as O'Casey's, could ignore the evidence of Connolly's continued self-identification as a socialist, rather than as primarily an Irish nationalist.[4] His "transformation" was not a political conversion, but a change in

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[4] To charges that Connolly discarded his socialism and converted to Irish nationalism after the beginning of the First World War, see, for example: *WR*, 5-29-1915, 1-22-1916, and *The Irish Worker*, 11-14-1914. Although it is obvious that Connolly did emphasize nationalism more after the beginning of the War, the evidence that shows that he continued to identify himself primarily as a socialist is undeniable. For a recent attempt to portray Connolly as a nationalist in his last two years, see: Austen Morgan, *James Connolly: A Political Biography*, (Manchester, 1988).

emphasis. Connolly never rejected the principles that were so apparent for most of his career, but simply adapted his tactics to new circumstances.

It could also be argued that Connolly's nationalist activities and participation in the Easter Rising suggest that he held to the theory that he was participating in the creation of a politically independent bourgeois state. Modern socialist revolutionaries who claim Connolly's precedence can easily claim that Connolly's participation in the Easter Rising served to establish a native bourgeois state (which would be and was still economically dependent upon imperial Britain), as a necessary prelude to a future socialist (and thus true nationalist) revolution in Ireland, which falls to their generation. However, there is little in his writings that supports this "stages" approach. In fact, the evidence seems to support the idea that Connolly was seeking a social revolution at the time. Just a few days before the Rising he warned his ICA to be ready to continue the fight when their allies became satisfied with mere political independence.[5] Connolly had planned to lead a social revolution in Ireland, which he hoped would spread across Europe, even as he admitted that the Easter Rising itself would be crushed.

Obviously Connolly was a nationalist. But he never related his nationalism to his guiding principle of social justice as he explicitly did with his socialism and, to a lesser degree, his Catholicism. Instead, he treated nationalism as a tactical approach to the establishment of socialism in Ireland. Thus, as a guiding principle, nationalism does not receive the moral value that socialism does in his writings. But Connolly obviously had to deal with Irish nationalism, and did so

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[5] R.M. Fox, 1944, 128.

willingly. He wisely employed the framework of the all pervasive nationalism in Ireland as both the structure upon which to present his socialism, and as a motivating force for social change in Ireland. Still, this nationalism was not philosophically based, as was his socialism and Christianity, but was based on strategy and, to some extent, tradition. As Eagleton has his imagined Connolly saying: "Nationalism...is like class. You have to have it in order to be rid of it. It's not an end in itself."[6] So just as working-class solidarity is not a final goal for Marxists, but a tool to achieve the goal of a classless society, Connolly's nationalism was only a conscious decision to help establish a logical prelude to his vision for the future: "The internationalism of the future will be based upon the free federation of free peoples and cannot be realized through the subjugation of the smaller by the larger political unit."[7]

Still, it must be remembered that, just as Marx was a mentor and not a manacle for Connolly, it would be wrong to idolize Connolly, and make his ideas into strict doctrines of political action and prophetic assertions. His ideas did contain some significant flaws. Although Connolly set up a feasible conceptual synthesis of these three factors on a theoretical level, he essentially failed, in terms of actualities, to build a lasting manifestation of his syntheses, or to promote his integration of nationalism and socialism, or socialism and Catholicism in Ireland to the extent that his contributions in these areas disappeared almost immediately after his career. He failed to respect the

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6 T. Eagleton, 1987, 131.

7 *Forward*, 6-10-1911.

strength of the traditionalism in Irish peasantry, the adherence to denominationalism (as opposed to class identifications) among the Protestant community, and the anti-socialist leverage of the powerful Catholic Church in a politically free Ireland. In underestimating the influence of these three elements, he showed both the orientation and weaknesses of his thinking. His ideas tended too much towards the urban-industrial sectors of Irish society, largely ignoring the countryside and the growing influence of the small farmers. In neglecting the land issue and the peasantry, he overlooked the fact that rural Ireland consistently offered the only even semi-successful basis for revolutionary movements. Connolly failed to recognize or harness this, as Davitt and post-1918 Sinn Fein successfully did. Furthermore, Connolly recognized that the weak Irish working class could be united and motivated with nationalistic sentiments, but did not expect the widespread support that it gave to non-socialist Irish nationalist groups such as the Volunteers. He tried to convince the Irish that socialism, unlike capitalism, was distinctly and inherently Irish, but this idea has largely failed to win acceptance, much less any motivational value in recent years. Part of the reason his linking of the nationalist issue with socialism was ignored was that, almost immediately, he was portrayed as a radical nationalist, and therefore, his socialism, particularly as it was linked to nationalism, was largely disregarded.

He underestimated the depth and longevity of Protestant nationalism in Ulster's working class, as well as the established influence of the Ulster Protestant institutions. Connolly also failed to adequately assess the conservative strength of the Catholic Church in Ireland. He underestimated the inflexibility of the Church on the social issue, expecting the Church to see the error of its ways. If

Connolly's career was measured only by the failure of the labor movement in the early 1920s to challenge the Church's anti-socialist influence (and the labor movement seemed to be in constant retreat from this onslaught through the 1930s), then it seems that Connolly failed to propagate his social and religious views even to his immediate followers. It was the prejudice and close-mindedness of the Church, in particular, that prevented his ideas on the integration of these three subjects from realizing wide-spread acceptance.

The inordinate amount of attention given to his socialist-nationalist synthesis is a reflection of the situation in Ireland in this century, but his Catholic-socialist synthesis is perhaps potentially more explosive with the decline of the nation-state in Europe, the decline in traditional Leninist forms of socialism, and the rise of liberation theology, which has great implications for Ireland since some of Ireland's socio-political characteristics resemble the Third World in some ways. There is no apparent direct link between Connolly and liberation theology, but Connolly was significant as one of the people to build the groundwork for the later acceptance of socialist ideas by progressive elements within the Catholic Church, and, to some extent, he tried to forge a positive--rather than just neutral--relationship between the Church and progressive movements for social justice. These recent groups have emulated Connolly's ideas in many ways. Connolly's use of Marxism, for example, as a guiding (but not binding) idea for analysis and action, is very similar to the use of Marxist interpretations by liberation theologians. According to one theologian, who quotes Gustavo Guitierrez, the

father of modern-day liberation theology:[8]

Marxism is employed "to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of the world and the action of man in history." Class struggle is a daily reality toward which Christians cannot be neutral: one is either the oppressed or the oppressors. The Marxist view of history spotlights the public arena of conflict: "the division of humanity into oppressors and oppressed, into owners of the means of production and those dispossessed of the fruits of their work, into antagonistic social classes."...Socialism is championed as the vehicle for Latin American liberation...."Only a radical break from the status quo, access to power of the exploited class and a social revolution that would break this dependence would allow for the change to a new society, a socialist society--or at least allow such a change to be possible."

This could have great implications for such a situation as the one in Northern Ireland, which resembles other repressive societies in terms of structures and ideologies.[9] Liberation theology represents a new departure which exercises the revolutionary potential of Christianity, and has caught both radical and reactionary forces off-guard. Such a theology views Christ as a revolutionary figure, much more akin to a Che Guevara than to a more traditional religious figure. (An Irish variant of the Bob Jones University brand of religious-political views is Ian Paisley). Jose Miguez Bonino has described the reaction of various groups to a Christian initiative in integrating Christianity and revolutionary socialism in Latin America:[10]

Conservative governments, classes, and ideologists see it with surprise and dismay, as they realize the danger of losing the support of a longtime ally in the struggle to maintain the status quo. Revolutionaries greet it also with surprise and joy,

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[8] Jose Miguez Bonino, *Doing Theology In A Revolutionary Situation*, (Philadelphia, 1975) xii; (William H. Lazareth's introduction).

[9] For a view of liberation theology in another state colonized by Calvinist settlers in the 17th century, and whose descendants have lived with a "siege mentality", see: Charles Villa-Vicencio, *Trapped In Apartheid: A Socio-Theological History Of The English-Speaking Churches*, (Cape Town, 1988).

[10] Bonino, 1975, 42.

welcoming their participation, without being able to understand this phenomenon which runs counter to all their theories about the role of religions and religious people! And some begin to suspect that there may be a deeper and hidden connection between the Christian faith and revolutionary change.

Connolly also recognized a "deeper connection" between his Catholicism and his socialism. Despite constant attacks by the Church on his attempts to establish the compatibility of the two conceptual systems, Connolly was able to make their mutual foundations a subject of his writings. Like Connolly, the new theology denounces the corruption and perversion of Christian institutions in the service of exploitation:[11]

...it rereads the history of Christian piety, action, and thought through the means of analysis adopted in order to unmask and expose the ideological misuse of Christianity as a tool of oppression: "The alliance between Christianity and the dominant classes explains to a large extent the historical forms assumed by the Christian conscience."

Despite his many attacks on the Catholic Church, it should be remembered that he was also a great defender of the Church within socialist circles. Connolly only wanted to get the Church to cease its attacks on socialism in order that it may have a place in the socialist society that Connolly believed was quickly approaching. Although religious questions are not really a true central issue in the current problems in Ireland, they did play an important role in Connolly's thinking. As a manifestation of his "hunger and thirst for righteousness" that paralleled and complemented his socialism, Connolly tried to use his Christianity in a positive manner, as opposed to the destructive uses of religion that are apparent throughout so much of Irish history. Thus, in this context, the "lights" that Connolly referred to--"I'll pray for all brave men who do their duty according

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[11] Ibid., xxvi.

to their lights."--just before his execution, could very easily have been inner convictions or central principles. In Connolly's case, his "lights", which were expressed through socialism, Catholicism, and to a lesser extent, nationalism, involved justice: for the Irish people, and the Boers, and the laboring classes of the world.

Connolly is now claimed in Ireland by the Workers' Party (Official Sinn Fein), the Irish Communist Organization, the Cork Workers' Club (which has re-published some of his work), the Labour Party, the PIRA/Sinn Fein, the CPI, and other groups. No one party can realistically claim Connolly exclusively for itself. He was too active, and his focus changed too much and too often for his ideas to be compressed into the narrow agendas of today's groups. Furthermore, he himself could not build an effective party apparatus which had any longevity. Although his ideas on integrating socialism, Catholicism, and nationalism have substantially failed to build measurable results in the real world of Irish society and politics, aspects of his thinking are still relevant and significant to the extent that he is a figure worthy of more than the footnotes of Irish and socialist historiography. Instead, his ideas offered and, in many respects, continue to offer a viable alternative to, and interpretation of, the state of affairs in Ireland.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

CONNOLLY'S ARTICLES COLLECTED FOR THIS THESIS

(includes addresses, statements, letters, resolutions, programmes and manifestoes)

DATE TITLE/KEY WORDS (* = incomplete article or unknown title)

Connolly's Articles

Catholic Times, (London).

8 Nov	1912	Rome and Irish Catholics
22 Nov	1912	The Controversy With Father MacErlean, S.J.

Daily Herald, (George Lansbury, editor).

6 Dec	1913	A Titanic Struggle

Forward, (Glasgow; paper of the Independent Labour Party).

11 March	1911	Sweatshops Behind the Orange Flag
18 March	1911	J. Redmond MP: His Strengths and Weaknesses
27 May	1911	A Plea For Socialist Unity In Ireland
10 June	1911	Ireland, Karl Marx and William Walker
1 July	1911	*Britain and the Irish working class
3 May	1913	British Labour and Irish Politicians
3 May	1913	Catholicism, Protestantism and Politics
10 May	1913	Many-Headed Opposition
7 June	1913	North-East Ulster
7 June	1913	The Awakening Of Ulster's Democracy
14 June	1913	The Larne Strike (I)
28 June	1913	The Larne Strike (II)
12 July	1913	July the 12th
26 July	1913	The Humours of Politics
26 July	1913	The Irish Nationalist Press
26 July	1913	*agricultural laborers and socialist organizations
2 Aug	1913	North-East Ulster
16 Aug	1913	Socialism in Ireland
23 Aug	1913	North-East Ulster

23 Aug 1913 Belfast and Dublin To-day
30 Aug 1913 Press Poisoners In Ireland
9 Sept 1913 A Forgotten Chapter of Irish History
4 Oct 1913 Glorious Dublin!
1 Nov 1913 The Children, the ITGWU and the Archbishop
2 Feb 1914 A Lesson from Dublin
9 Feb 1914 The Isolation of Dublin
14 March 1914 *physical force
14 March 1914 *rejection of strike by British labour
21 March 1914 The First Hint Of Partition
21 March 1914 Industrial Unity and Political Division in Ireland
28 March 1914 The War In Ulster
11 April 1914 The Exclusion Of Ulster
18 April 1914 The Solidarity of labour
2 May 1914 *resentment towards British labour
9 May 1914 Changes
23 May 1914 The Problems of Trade Union Organization
30 May 1914 The Liberals and Ulster
20 June 1914 Yellow Unions In Ireland
4 July 1914 Labour In The New Irish Parliament
1 Aug 1914 The Latest Massacre in Dublin
15 Aug 1914 A Continental Revolution
22 Aug 1914 A Martyr for Conscience Sake
5 Sept 1914 The Real Situation in Ireland

The Harp, (New York; monthly paper of the Irish Socialist Federation; James Connolly, editor; Jim Larkin, Dublin editor starting in January 1910).

Jan 1908 The Coming Revolt In India (I)
Feb 1908 The Coming Revolt In India (II)
March 1908 Socialism in Ireland
April 1908 The Language Movement
April 1908 Sinn Fein and Socialism
May 1908 *Church hierarchy and oppression
June 1908 *priests and socialism
July 1908 Political Action (editorial)
Aug 1908 Michael Davitt: A Text for a Revolutionary Lecture (editorial)
Sept 1908 The Irish Masses in History
Sept 1908 "Roman Catholicism and Socialism"
Oct 1908 *socialism and the clergy
Dec 1908 Facets of American Liberty
Jan 1909 *immoral uses of religion to support capitalism
Sept 1909 Learning Their Lesson
Nov 1909 Capitalism and the Irish Small Farmers
Nov 1909 *socialism, nationalism, and famine
Jan 1910 A New Labour Policy
April 1910 Labour and Politics in Ireland

International Socialist Review.

Oct	1909	Ballots, bullets, or – ?
Feb	1910	Industrialism and Trade Unionism
March	1915	Revolutionary Unionism and War

The Irish Nation, (Dublin; W.P. Ryan, editor).

23 Jan	1909	Sinn Fein, Socialism And The Nation
23 Jan	1909	Socialists And The Nation

Irish Work, (Dublin; James Connolly, editor; only one issue, succeeded *The Irish Worker* when that paper was suppressed on 4 December 1914).

19 Dec	1914	Courtsmartial and Revolution

The Irish Worker, (Dublin; started by Jim Larkin, June 1911; James Connolly, editor 24 October to 5 December 1914).

6 July	1912	*hope in the younger clergy
30 Aug	1913	The Dublin Lockout: On the Eve
25 Oct	1913	*physical force
8 Nov	1913	Importation and Deportation
29 Nov	1913	*Britain and the Lockout
13 Dec	1913	Arms and the Man
20 Dec	1913	A Fiery Cross or Christmas Bells
14 Jan	1914	The Humours of Politics
28 Feb	1914	The Lenten Pastorals: A Challenge
14 March	1914	Labour and the Proposed Partition of Ireland
4 April	1914	Ireland and Ulster: An Appeal to the Working Class
8 Aug	1914	Our Duty in This Crisis
8 Aug	1914	The Carsonite Position
22 Aug	1914	On German Militarism
22 Aug	1914	America and Europe
29 Aug	1914	The War Upon the German Nation
12 Sept	1914	The Friends of Small Nationalities
19 Sept	1914	Ruling by Fooling: "Home Rule on the Statute Book"
26 Sept	1914	Some Perverted Battle Lines
3 Oct	1914	Redmond Cannot Deliver the Goods
3 Oct	1914	A Matter Of Coercion
10 Oct	1914	Forward Policy for Volunteers
24 Oct	1914	The Ballot or the Barricades
31 Oct	1914	The Hope of Ireland
14 Nov	1914	Rally for Labour
18 Nov	1914	"Disturbed Dublin"

L' Irlande Libre, (Paris; Maud Gonne, editor).
1897 Socialism and Irish Nationalism

Labour Chronicle, (Edinburgh; monthly).
1 Dec 1894 Party Politicians--Noble, Ignoble and Local

The New Age, (London; A.R. Orage, editor).
30 April 1914 Old Wine in New Bottles

Rossa Souvenir, (Dublin; for funeral of Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa).
July 1915 Why the Citizen Army Honours Rossa

Shan Van Vocht, (Belfast; Alice Milligan, editor; republican monthly).
Jan 1897 Socialism and Nationalism
Aug 1897 Patriotism and Labour

The Socialist, (Glasgow).
June 1904 *the perversion of socialism

The Worker, (Dublin; James Connolly, editor; followed the suppression of *Irish Work*, suppressed February 1915).
30 Jan 1915 Can Warfare Be Civilised?

(The) Workers' Republic, (Dublin; James Connolly, editor).
15 Oct 1889 *Chamberlain and Imperialism
13 Aug 1898 The Fighting Race
13 Aug 1898 The Men We Honour
13 Aug 1898 *Wolfe Tone
20 Aug 1898 The Roots of Modern War
27 Aug 1898 Labour Representation
27 Aug 1898 Peasant Proprietorship and Socialism
3 Sept 1898 British and Russian Imperialism
10 Sept 1898 British and Russian Imperialism
24 Sept 1898 The Irish Land Question
1 Oct 1898 The Language Movement
8 Oct 1898 Parnellism and Labour
10 June 1899 Let Us Free Ireland
1 July 1899 Father Finley S.J. and Socialism
22 July 1899 Physical Force in Irish Politics
5 Aug 1899 *Wolfe Tone
19 Aug 1899 The South African War (1899-1902)

26 Aug	1899	Law and Order
2 Sept	1899	Land League
16 Sept	1899	A Labour Lord Mayor
4 Nov	1899	Socialism and Imperialism
18 Nov	1899	The South African War (1899-1902)
2 Dec	1899	*language
12 May	1900	*socialism and nationalism
23 June	1900	*Wolfe Tone, Home Rule
30 June	1900	The South African War (1899-1902)
7 July	1900	The Coming Generation
7 July	1900	Irish Freedom
15 July	1900	Ireland Sober Is Ireland Free?
28 July	1900	*patriotism and labour
March	1903	*language
May	1903	Labour Representation

The Workers' Republic, (Dublin; James Connolly, editor; followed suppression of *The Worker* in February 1915).

29 May	1915	The Dublin Lockout and Its Sequel
29 May	1915	Moscow Insurrection of 1905
29 May	1915	*editorial on the morality of workers
5 June	1915	Our Disappearing Liberties
5 June	1915	A Labour Day Speech In Dublin
5 June	1915	Insurrection in the Tyrol
12 June	1915	College Green: a Labour Candidate
12 June	1915	Revolution in Belgium
19 June	1915	After the Battle
19 June	1915	Liberty and Labour
19 June	1915	Defense of the Alamo
25 June	1915	War at Home
3 July	1915	The Right to Strike
3 July	1915	Revolution in Paris
12 July	1915	Lexington
17 July	1915	Coercion in England
17 July	1915	June 1848
24 July	1915	Street Fighting–Summary
24 July	1915	Strikes and Revolution
31 July	1915	The Man and the Cause
7 Aug	1915	Ireland's Travail and Ireland's Resurrection
28 Aug	1915	Wee Joe Devlin
4 Sept	1915	The Party Versus The People
18 Sept	1915	God Help the Poor Irish
2 Oct	1915	James Keir Hardie
9 Oct	1915	In Praise of the Empire
30 Oct	1915	A War for Civilization
30 Oct	1915	For the Citizen Army
6 Nov	1915	Diplomacy

6 Nov	1915	Recruiting for the Irish Citizen Army
13 Nov	1915	Ireland–Disaffected or Revolutionary?
20 Nov	1915	The Manchester Martyrs
27 Nov	1915	Conscription
4 Dec	1915	"Trust Your Leaders!"
4 Dec	1915	Dublin Trade and Dublin Strikes
11 Dec	1915	*rebellion or constitutionalism
18 Dec	1915	Economic Conscription
25 Dec	1915	Two Fateful Christmas Weeks
8 Jan	1916	The Volunteers of '82
15 Jan	1916	Economic Conscription
19 Jan	1916	The Programme of Labour
22 Jan	1916	What Is Our Programme?
5 Feb	1916	*Irish soldiers for Britain
12 Feb	1916	What Is a Free Nation?
12 Feb	1916	Cannon Fodder for British Imperialism
26 Feb	1916	The Slums and the Trenches
11 March	1916	The Days of March
11 March	1916	The Slackers
18 March	1916	The German or the British Empire?
18 March	1916	The National Festival
25 March	1916	The Slackers
25 March	1916	*imperialism
1 April	1916	The Call to Arms
8 April	1916	The Irish Flag

Addresses, Statements, Programmes, Manifestoes, Letters, and Resolutions

	1896	Programme of the Irish Socialist Republican Party (Dublin)
	1897	Address to Workers on Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee
	1902	Address to Workers on Coronation of King Edward VII
Jan	1903	Wood Quay Ward, Election Address (Dublin)
Jan	1908	Declaration of Principles of the Irish Socialist Federation (N.Y.)
30 Jan	1908	Letter to J Carstairs Matheson
1910 or	1911	Aims and Methods of the Socialist Party of Ireland (Dublin)
	1911	Address to Workers on Visit of King George V
	1912	Resolution: "Belfast Labour Meeting and Home Rule Bill"
	1913	Address: "To The Linen Slaves Of Belfast"
Jan	1913	Belfast Municipal Election Address
April	1914	Address to Workers on the Independent Labour Party of Ireland
April	1914	Address to Workers: "Ireland Upon The Dissecting Table" (ILPI)
	1914	Statement to Belfast ICA: "War: What It Means To You"
9 May	1916	Last Statement (to court-martial)

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