

James Connolly

Wood Quay Ward

To the Electors

(1900)

Workers' Republic, December 1901.

Republished in **James Connolly: Lost Writings**, (ed. Aindrias Ó Cathasaigh), [Pluto Press](#) 1997.

The notes, which are © 1997 Pluto Press, have not been included.

FELLOW WORKERS,

Having been asked by the United Labourers of Dublin Trade Union to stand as Labour Candidate for this Ward, and as the majority of the members of that body live in this Ward, and their request has since been endorsed by a large number of other electors I have consented to allow my name to go forward for your suffrages.

As a member of the Irish Socialist Republican Party I endorse the national and municipal programme and policy of that body; that is to say I believe that in Ireland, as in the remainder of the world to-day, there are but two classes,

THE MASTER CLASS AND THE WORKING CLASS,

and that the Master Class live upon the labour of the Working Class, and use all the powers of government, nationally and municipally, in their own interest and against those who labour.

It is therefore, I believe, the duty of the workers to organise as a distinct party to put an end to this oppression by electing men drawn from their own ranks, conscious of their own interests and determined to defend them, on all bodies having the power either to make or to administer laws; the power of such bodies to be used consistently towards putting an end to the capitalist system of society, and making the *Irish people really and fully the owners of Ireland*, which is what is meant by an

IRISH SOCIALIST REPUBLIC.

The United Irish Leaguers have supported the Socialist candidate at North East Lanark in Scotland, and are supporting the Socialist candidate at Dewsbury, England; in opposing Socialist candidates in Dublin they are only acting in the inconsistent and treacherous manner that has marked their history from the beginning.

If elected I will consider it my duty to act in the interest of the class to which I belong – the Working Class; the interest of the other classes are too well looked after already. The Corporation of Dublin is at present ruled exclusively in the interest of the middle class, and it is the rule of the middle class in the towns, as of the aristocracy in the country, which has made life so miserable for the Irish worker. The landed aristocracy are the oppressors in the rural districts, and in the towns the Middle Class take advantage of our necessities to drive down wages and force up rents that they may profit whilst the people starve. Labour, first, last and always shall therefore be my especial care.

As a Republican in politics I consider that all bodies in the elective power of the democracy should be used for the organising of the sentiment of the Irish people against all forms of foreign rule – from the monarch to the capitalist.

I am a member of the Dublin Trades' and Labour Council, and my candidature has received the hearty endorsement of the most trusted representatives of Labour in the city.

I append herewith the programme of reforms for which I shall agitate if returned.

Trusting to receive your hearty support at the polls on January next,

I remain, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Yours in the cause of Labour,

JAMES CONNOLLY.

James Connolly

Letter to the Secretary of the Edinburgh branch of the SDF

(1 November 1901)

First published in **Socialist Standard**, October 1973.
Transcribed by Adam Buick.

Memo from Irish Socialist Republican Party.
Central Branch.
To: Sec. Edin. S.D.F. [\[1\]](#)
1 November 1901.

Dear Comrade,

I am forwarding herewith a copy of the pamphlet part of this month's **Workers' Republic**. The full paper will be delivered in a few days. I must take this opportunity to congratulate you on the magnificent stand made by the Scotch and more especially the Edinburgh comrades against the present compromising policy of the leaders of the S.D.F. Things may seem to look dangerous for you at present, but time is on your side, and when the English branches really realise the issues at stake and understand your position, the triumph will be yours. I speak with the knowledge of who one having been all through England *knows* that the only hope of the gang in power is to keep the English comrades ignorant. The present issue of our paper is primarily intended to prevent that hope being realised, by giving the large number of English branches who now take our paper a more clear exposition of this question than **Justice** has allowed them to have.

I only wish our paper was bigger or that our plant was more suitable for rapid printing than it is at present, but we are poor and we are still short of the cash necessary to supply us with a quick printing machine, but such help as we have we will readily give to you.

I would only say in conclusion to beware of all dodges and devices to drive you out of the S.D.F. Help in the organisation, do not be brow-beaten, nor get disgusted; for the sake of those who are in remain in also, and sooner or later you will find your policy tacitly adopted by the whole body even if they do not admit their indebtedness to you.

For the Revolution
Your old comrade,
James Connolly,
Dublin.

Note

1. The Secretary of the Edinburgh branch of the Social Democratic Federation at the time was Alex Anderson, who did eventually leave the SDF, in 1904, as one of the founding members of the Socialist Party of Great Britain.

James Connolly

Home Rulers and Labour

A Remonstrance
Addressed to English Socialists

(1901)

Workers' Republic, October 1901.
Republished in **James Connolly: Lost Writings**, (ed. Aindrias Ó Cathasaigh), [Pluto Press](#) 1997.

The notes, which are © 1997 Pluto Press, have not been included.

A few months ago we called attention in the columns of the **Workers' Republic** to the extraordinary utterances of certain English Socialists concerning the Home Rule party and its attitude towards Labour and Socialism. We pointed out that this Home Rule party was essentially a capitalist party, inspired solely by a consideration for capitalist interests, and that the few 'Labour men' in that party

were of the type of the Woods, Burts and Pickards of the English Liberal party – were baits to lure the workers on to the official party hook. We also expressed the opinion that the action of English Socialists in giving such commendatory notices to the enemies of the Irish Socialists was nothing short of treason to the International Labour movement. This remonstrance of ours has been as entirely disregarded as if it had been but the fulmination of a Liberal conference. That section of the English Socialists to whom we refer are apparently as ready to sacrifice the interests of the Irish Socialists to suit their party convenience as their English masters have always been to sacrifice Ireland to suit their class interests. The phrase ‘International Solidarity of Labour’ which they mouth so glibly does not take in Ireland in its scope.

Have we no remedy? We have, and if the present remonstrance is as little heeded as the first we shall take that remedy into our own hands with results that we have no doubt will be somewhat disastrous to the election prospects of future ILP candidates in British constituencies where the Irish working class reside in any numbers. But first to explain the position. For some time past Mr Keir Hardie MP and his colleagues on the **Labour Leader** newspaper have been assiduously instilling into the minds of the British Socialists the belief that Mr John Redmond’s Home Rule party are burning with enthusiasm for labour and are favourably inclined towards Socialism. (We beg our readers in Ireland not to laugh at this; we are not exaggerating the case one whit.) Mr Keir Hardie has appeared on the platform with the Home Rule MPs at Irish gatherings, has given his most unqualified praise to them at gatherings of his own party – praise as staunch Labour men, please mark! – and in his paper, the aforesaid **Labour Leader**, he and another writer signing himself ‘Marxian’ have for the past few months left no stone unturned to imbue their readers with the belief that the Home Rule party are staunch democrats and socialistically inclined.

When Mr Keir Hardie was last in Parliament he on one occasion moved an amendment to an address to the throne – the amendment being in favour of finding work for the unemployed. The Home Rule members refused to support him. He moved an amendment to an address of congratulation on the birth of some royal baby, observing it should rather be a vote of condolence to the

families of the Welsh miners who had just then been lost in a colliery disaster in Wales; the Home Rule members voted against him and in favour of royalty. The men who are leaders of the Home Rule party now, were the leaders of the party then also. This session they have voted in favour of several Labour measures, and Mr Hardie and his friends seek to make great capital of this fact. But, paradoxical as it may seem to say so, their vote is not cast in favour of these measures, but against the Unionist government which opposed them. Had a Home Rule government been in power in England and opposed these Labour measures, the Home Rule Irish party would have supported the government against Labour as they did in the past.

The present leader (?) of the Home Rule party, Mr John Redmond, is the gentleman who made himself notorious in Ireland by denouncing (at Rathfarnham) the agricultural labourers for forming a trade union. He is the gentleman who, when the Irish Working Class first got the Municipal franchise granted them in 1898, stumped this country asking the workers to vote for landlords to represent them – in order, he said, to show the English people that we would not make a revolutionary use of our power.

The Irish working class answered him by forming independent Labour Electoral organisations, and sending landlords and middle class Home Rulers alike about their business. Mr Keir Hardie praised them in the **Labour Leader** for doing so; he now praises as the leader of the Irish democracy the very man whose insidious advice they rightfully scorned.

Mr Tim Harrington MP, and Lord Mayor of Dublin by the intrigues of the Home Rulers, is the gentleman who is notorious for having declared that sixteen shillings a week was enough wages for any working man. He is also the gentleman who ousted from the Mayoral chair another Home Ruler, Lord Mayor Pile, whom he declared to be a traitor, and then became treasurer of a committee organised to present this 'traitor' with a valuable testimonial for his services to the city.

One of the most highly placed men of the Executive of the United Irish League, the official Home Rule party, is Mr P. White, MP, who is well known to

be the most detested employer of scab labour in the tailoring trade of the city of Dublin.

During last municipal election in Dublin the Home Rule party ran as candidate for the North City Ward one Alderman McCabe who had earned the detestation of every trade unionist by voting in favour of giving painting contracts to non union firms. Three Home Rule members of parliament, Messrs Tim Harrington, Pat O'Brien the Home Rule Whip, and Peter White were specially detailed to support this friend of blackleg labour against McLoughlin his Socialist opponent, although the latter had the unanimous endorsement of the Dublin Trades and Labour Council.

But have not the Home Rulers declared in favour of Labour, has not Mr Redmond at Westport declared the fight against landlordism in Ireland to be a 'trade unionist fight'? The meaning of phrases can only be understood when you study the conditions out of which they arise. The Home Rule party in Ireland is today fighting for its very existence. The 'scenes' in Parliament are but the distant echo of the fight made by the Home Rulers to regain the support of the Irish Democracy. Despite all the puffing and booming of the press, despite the lavish expenditure of money on bands and faked up demonstrations, the United Irish League has not caught on in Ireland, and has not forty sound branches in all the country. The intelligent Irish Working Class despise the politicians. When after the first Local Government election in Ireland the professional politicians saw that the Irish workers had turned their backs upon them they took alarm, and in order to sidetrack the Labour movement in the next two elections they ran bogus labour candidates on their tickets in opposition to the independent candidates ran by genuine Labour organisations. This fact involved two sets of rallying cries. The Home Rule politician's election cry in such contests was, "Nationality and Labour should go together"; that of the genuine Labour candidates was voiced by the then President of the Dublin Trades Council, Mr Leahy, when he said in reply that "Labour should stand alone." We need not insist upon asking which side English Socialists should agree with. Imagine then our surprise and amusement when we found such utterances as that of Mr Redmond at Westport, and the Home Rule rallying cry we have quoted, both in their essence piteous appeals to

the Irish workers to return to the Home Rule fold to be shorn, reproduced in the **Labour Leader** and ILP speeches, as “magnificent utterances in favour of Labour”. When an English Liberal says “we are fighting the cause of Labour”, the ILP laughs him to scorn, and when an Irish Home Ruler says the same thing it is accepted as gospel truth. But not in Ireland, we know our men.

But we are told the Home Rulers are at least staunch democrats. So was Mr John Morley, yet Mr Keir Hardie made special efforts to defeat him at Newcastle because he was not sound enough on the Labour question. Staunch democrats! indeed, when they allowed an Irish National journal, the **United Irishman**, to be suppressed three times for its fight against the war, and refused to bring the matter up in the House of Commons, but made the world ring with denunciations when one of their own papers, the **Irish People**, was confiscated once.

We ask Mr Keir Hardie to consider these facts; we challenge any of his Home Rule friends to dispute either the statements or the inference drawn therefrom. We do not agree with Hardie’s general policy, would most decidedly not adopt it as our own, but we believe in his honesty of purpose. We ask nothing from the English democracy but we do not wish to cross one another’s path. We believe the Irish working class are strong enough and intelligent enough to fight their own battles and we would be the last to advise them to trust to outside help in the struggle that lies before them. We do not propose to criticise Hardie’s voting alliance with the Home Rulers, but a voting alliance need not be accompanied by indiscriminate praise of your temporary allies.

Finally if this is not heeded we shall have to take other methods of enforcing attention to our protest.

We shall ask the editors of the various Socialist papers of Great Britain to publish the above, and we shall take their attitude towards that request as an indication of the strength of that international Solidarity of which we hear so much and see so little.

Signed

Executive

Committee

Irish Socialist Republican Party,
138 Upper Abbey Street, Dublin

James Connolly

Irish Trade Union Congress

(June 1901)

The Workers' Republic, June 1901.

In trade unionism they have a platform broad enough, and an ideal lofty enough, for every Irishman ... One of the things most needed – after improved education and training – is capital ... There is always a great volume of Irish capital seeking investment outside Ireland ... But if, with improved educational facilities, the people of Ireland show themselves capable of making Irish investments remunerable, there is no doubt but plenty of capital will be forthcoming, all the more so as, owing to its enormous increase in these lands, there is a very great difficulty in finding investments at once sound and satisfactory. We, then, as organised workers, can say to those of our countrymen who, loving their country, desire to do her a service, and who control her capital: – “Let us join hands.” This is easily possible. Is it too much to hope for and expect such a union between the classes which represent Capital and Labour? I think – in fact I am assured – it is not, but if it is, let the workers of this country, used as they are to bearing heavy burdens, take the task of the industrial regeneration of Ireland upon their own

broad shoulders. Let the workers of Ireland come to her rescue by the establishment of people's banks.

Temperance orators, in their desire to awaken in the minds of their hearers a proper horror of the debasing effects of the liquor habit, are fond of searching the records of the police courts for cases in which crimes have been committed in the delirium of intoxication, and holding up the criminals in such cases as "horrible examples". In the near future the student of society who desires to find illustrations of the debasing effects of a policy of compromise upon the minds of working class leaders, or of the intoxicating effects upon the brain of a formerly sensible man produced by the appearance of a body of reporters ready to take down a verbatim copy of his speech for the newspapers of their capitalist jury-masters – such a student will instinctively turn to the reports of Irish Trade Union Congresses, and so turning find "horrible examples" in abundance.

The excerpt we print above from the speech of Mr Bowman, President of the Trade Union Congress at Sligo, is a case in point. We are only stating what every workman knows to be the fact when we say that the delegates to Trade Union Congresses are, as a rule, not the flower of the working class, but are rather the intriguers who, because they are willing to perform (for a cash consideration) the drudgery and routine work of trade unionism, are allowed by the too indulgent rank and file to work themselves into positions of notoriety and to pose as leaders. Yet as unintelligent and unimaginative as such delegates generally are, we question if there were a dozen present at Sligo who did not feel that the president's appeal to capitalists to come and exploit the Irish workers – for that, stripped of all its tawdry rhetoric, is what Mr Bowman's address meant – an appeal coupled with the assurance that Irish workers could make "Irish investments remunerative", i.e. could make good, fat profit for their master – was an appeal which was to the last degree insulting and humiliating to the working class of this country.

A Socialist in the position of Mr Bowman would have striven to infuse into the minds of his hearers a spirit of revolt against the system that holds them as its slaves, a system that tortures them with want in the midst of locked-up storehouses of plenty; a Socialist would have taught the workers to manfully take

their destiny, politically and socially, into their own hands; Mr Bowman taught them to whine for capitalists to come and exploit them. The wage received by 87 per cent of the wage workers of Ireland is less than £1 per week; Mr Bowman tells them to achieve the industrial regeneration of Ireland by establishing “people’s banks” out of their savings!!! Out of the savings of men who support a family on less than £1 per week?? This is what the capitalist **Evening Herald** termed a “splendid statement”.

We do not grudge Mr Bowman the praise of the capitalist newspapers; he has fairly earned it, fairly earned the praise of the journalistic champions of the master class. But there were some Socialists, we believe, amongst the delegates to that Congress and we mean to have an explanation of their silence on that occasion. Were they afraid that they also might be accused of personal enmity to the president if they dared to criticise him? If they were, it is not of such stuff revolutionists are made.

James Connolly

Justice And Millerand

(May 1901)

Justice and Millerand, Justice, 25 May 1901, p.6.

Dear Comrade,

I am glad to see that our friends of the staff of **Justice** are at last beginning to realise the terrible mistake made when, out of a mistaken tenderness for the feelings of M. Jaurès and party, they refrained from voting their condemnation of the position of Millerand in the French bourgeois Cabinet. In **Justice** of May 11 I find it stated that “the presence of Millerand in the French Cabinet is an injury to Socialism all over the world,” and further on that it is “an international scandal.” These are grave statements, particularly grave when we remember that the S.D.F. as part of the British delegation voted against a resolution – the Guesde-Ferri resolution – which, if it had been carried, might have prevented the scandal complained of.

The great difficulty in the way now, the difficulty with which the International Socialist Council will find itself powerless to deal, arises out of the circumstance that the Kautsky resolution declared the acceptance and retention of such a position as that of Millerand to be merely a matter of *tactics* and not of *principles*. As the Kautsky resolution was carried even were the Socialist press of the world to condemn Millerand, and were such condemnation to be endorsed by every council, national and international, he (Millerand) could still logically claim to be considered a good Socialist, differing only in tactics from the Socialists of the world, who agreed with him in principle. I would like to know how you are going to get out of the difficulty in which you have placed yourself, except by repudiating the Kautsky resolution and accepting the definite and uncompromising resolution proposed against it, viz., that the revolutionary proletariat should, through its delegates, accept no governmental position which it cannot conquer by its own strength at the ballot box. I may be wrong, but I am of opinion that the position taken up at Paris was opposed to the whole traditions and policy of the S.D.F. In arriving at a clear conception of the results flowing from that position it is well to remember the Russian atrocities spoken of by JUSTICE, and, what seems to me more important, that over a dozen strikes in France have been broken by military force since Millerand entered the Cabinet. What good Millerand may have done is claimed for the credit of the bourgeoisie Republican Cabinet; what evil the Cabinet has done reflects back upon the reputation of the Socialist Party. Heads they win, tails we lose. – Yours

fraternally,
JAMES CONNOLLY,
Editor **Workers' Republic**, Dublin.

[A reference to the terms of the Kautsky resolution will show that it condemns the continuance of a Socialist in a Ministry under such circumstances as now obtain in Millerand's case. The entry of a Socialist into a Government is certainly a question of tactics and not of principle, but it is for the party and not the individual to decide on the tactics. While condemning the continuance of Millerand in the Ministry, therefore, we still stand by the Kautsky resolution, as we can consistently do. – *Ed.*]

James Connolly

Class Government and Class War

(May 1901)

The Workers' Republic, May 1901.

Socialists are always accused of trying to create ill feeling, to bring about a class struggle, to “set class against class”. Of course, the real fact is, we only point out what already exists, analysing the political and industrial institutions under which we live and critically noting the forces which produce them in any given phase. The necessary result of our analysis is to discover that the very basis of Society today is a struggle between two classes, the Landlord and Capitalist who own all the means of production, and the propertyless class who are only allowed to use and operate these means of life when it suits the convenience or interest of members of the other class to allow them.

The average worker has no clear, reasoned out knowledge of this, but he has a more or less dim perception of the fact borne in upon his slow intellect through the channel of his daily experience of the struggle for life. His masters who are interested in keeping him in that plentiful lack of knowledge are always careful to raise the cry “Capital and labour are brothers” and don’t “set class against class”. Armed thus, mentally, with the illogical rot preached to him by his fleecers the “man in the street” regards the Socialist as, well – perhaps right enough, but rather “extreme”. We Socialist workers who know the tricks by which our fellows are deceived and kept in subjection are filled with disgust, mingled with pity.

We have always proclaimed that, while the worker is not class-conscious – that is, knowing and understanding his class subjection and its cause, and therefore knowing and understanding his class interest in overthrowing the institutions which keep him so – it is not so with the landlord and capitalist. They, as a rule, are thoroughly class-conscious and in all their measures never lose sight of the cardinal principle of the class struggle. While the average worker makes a great show of having nothing much to do with politics, the other class have calculated to a nicety its exact value not merely to their whole class, but even to each of their sections. All government is therefore class government; and that the middle-class and aristocratic swindlers who hold the reins of political power know it is amply proved by the following extracts from speeches. Thus Lord Rosebery [\[1\]](#), addressing the Wolverhampton Chamber of Commerce:–

“He was one of those who held chambers of commerce in the highest respect. In the first place they focussed the opinion of a great and governing class – a class

which had governed Great Britain in the past, and which he was not prepared to say did not govern it in the present.”

But the Socialist is so extreme. He sets class against class.

Mr McNeill moved a resolution in the House of Commons condemning the holding of company directorships by members of the government and Mr C. Bannerman supported him. Thus spoke Mr Balfour in reply:

“I do not profess to know in what the right honourable gentleman has his money invested, but, if he has it invested in anything in this country, there is scarcely a piece of legislation passed through this house that does not affect his interests either directly or indirectly.” [\[2\]](#)

But the Socialist is so extreme. He talks of capitalist government.

Notes

[1.](#) Former Liberal prime minister of Britain.

[2.](#) A.J. Balfour was Britain’s Tory prime minister at this time; Henry Campbell-Bannerman led the Liberal opposition before succeeding Balfour.

James Connolly

Socialist Electioneering

(February 1901)

From **The Workers' Republic,** February 1901.

Since the appearance of our last issue the Dublin branch of the Irish Socialist Republican Party has been engaged in its third municipal campaign. It is therefore fitting that we should place before our readers a brief resume of the results of that election, as well as of the principal lessons to be drawn therefrom.

On this occasion we were fortunate in having as our candidate a comrade who held a high position in his trade union, and was also on the executive of the Dublin Trades' and Labour Council, as well as being a true and tried Socialist. Thus our comrade McLoughlin received the endorsement of his fellow-tradesmen and trade unionists – undoubtedly the first time in Ireland on which either a trade union or a Trades' Council publicly identified themselves with the electoral campaign of a Socialist party. This fact was both an element of strength and a source of distraction. It was an element of strength, because it disarmed the prejudices of the trade unionists among the electors, and made them more susceptible to the teachings of Socialism; it was a source of distraction, because it temporarily admitted to our counsels many who, not seeing farther than the success or failure of the moment, were ever pressing upon the party and its candidate the supposed necessity of temporising with the middle class in order to snatch an electoral success. Needless to say such advice was promptly rejected. The following remarks of Mr Connolly, when acting as chairman of the great meeting in the Trades' Hall, defined exactly the position of the party and its candidate towards such proposals:–

It has been said that the uncompromising working class position taken up by Mr McLoughlin, in conformity with his Socialist principles, will alienate many middle class voters, and so endanger his chances. But those who use this argument do not understand Mr McLoughlin's position. He does not wish to crawl into the Corporation (applause); he does not wish to creep in there; he does

not wish to smuggle himself in there under false pretences. He wishes to go in standing erect on his own feet as a man should; compromising no principle, yielding no point of his programme; proud, conscientious and upright as a representative of the working class should be, and if he cannot enter the Corporation in that manner he is content to remain outside.

This language was new to the Dublin Trade Unionists; the enthusiasm with which it was received, and the endorsement it received at the polls, was proof enough of its soundness. Be it remembered that the Socialist candidate was opposing the nominee of the "great Nationalist organisation" the United Irish League; that the said nominee was supported at his public meeting by three members of Parliament, viz., Tim Harrington, Pat O'Brien and P. White; that one of them stood all day canvassing voters at the polling booth; that the Labour Electoral Association supported the middle class candidate; that our enemies had hired corps of paid canvassers and agents, whereas the Socialist candidate had none but unpaid volunteer canvassers; that our enemies had the funds of the capitalist class in the Ward to aid their candidature, and the Socialist nothing but the coppers of poorly paid workers; that all the prejudices of religion were played upon against us; when all this is remembered, who can say that the poll of the Socialist Republican – defeating the Loyalist, and coming within 97 votes of ousting the Home Ruler – is not a result to be proud of and full of promise for the future?