

# James Connolly

## Loubet – and Other Things

(1903)

---

**The Socialist,** August 1903.

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

The notes, which are © 1997 Pluto Press, have not been included.  
HTML Mark-up: [Einde O'Callaghan](#) for the **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

---

It is a matter of common occurrence in Ireland when a perfervid orator works himself and his hearers into a fever of enthusiasm to see some of the auditory spring to their feet and exclaim, "'Tis a great day for Ireland!" I fancy some such sentiment must have been in the mind of the unemotional Englishman on the day the French President, M Loubet, visited London. A great day for England! Aye, and, we are told, a portent of peace and goodwill amongst the nations, as well as a proof of the growth of democratic feeling amongst all classes in this country. Certainly, looked at from the standpoint of a superficial observer, such as the writers on London **Justice**, **Reynolds' Newspaper**, **Labour Leader**, as well as the other organs of the classes, it did seem to be a proof of the spread of democracy when we saw the head of a republican government feted and fawned upon by the representatives of the power which a little over a hundred years ago financed every tyrant in Europe to make war upon the republican principles then first espoused by his nation.

But trite as the truth is it is best to recall to our minds the fact it embodies – we are not living under the conditions of a hundred years ago, and our friends who wrote such glowing passages about the significance of the visit had better awaken to that fact and to the necessity of discussing political happenings in the terms of to-day and not of a past epoch. Since the era of the French Revolution the world has changed in many things, and not the least in the economic conditions which mould politics and diplomacy. When the governments of England and monarchical Europe made war upon France they made war upon a country in the grasp of a *revolutionary* capitalist class; the development of a hundred years has transformed that French capitalist class from being the rejuvenating agency of revolution and a menace to established order, into a bulwark of economic conservatism and an ally of the most brutal reaction. We have but to recall the history of the French Republic since the overthrow of the Third Empire to realise that fact. That history is but one long record of merciless repression of the working-class, and of increasing intrigue against and war upon labour. A republic which saved itself from the hands of the Parisian workers by the aid of the soldiers of the German Empire, and celebrated its baptismal rites with the blood of 30,000 butchered members of our class. A republic which, within the past two years, under the rule of this ‘messenger of peace’, M Loubet, has broken nearly a score of strikes by military force; which at Martinique and Chalons has slaughtered French workmen for taking part in strike processions; and at Marseilles ordered the sailors of its navy to act the scab upon the merchant sailors on strike. It only required the visit to Russia last year and to London this to emphasise the fact that the revolutionary tradition has departed from France, and that her rulers have finally merged themselves in the ruck of European exploiters.

The visit is however not without its uses. It serves once more to illustrate the insincerity and hypocrisy of the leaders of the London SDF. When we remember that that body has for the past few months been endeavouring to cover up the tracks of their treachery in voting for M Millerand, by denouncing his continued presence in the French Cabinet, and then see them shouting aloud to the people of England to welcome M Loubet, the French President, we cannot but believe

that the spectacle will compel the more honest of their following to inquire, Why all this denunciation of the servant, and such effusive praise of the master?

Our readers will know how to treat the sentimental slop of Belfort Bax in **Reynolds' Newspaper**, and the inanities of Hyndman and the **Justice** writers when they understand what really is the purport of the visit so much eulogised. To the thinking mind the purport of that visit is clear. It was to ratify the formation of a new secret alliance between Russia, France and England. This is at once apparent when we remember what has happened in international politics within the past few months. We had the visit of M Loubet to Russia, the visit of King Edward to Paris, the silence of both France and England over the question of the continued occupation of Manchuria by Russia in spite of all treaties to the contrary, the open threat to Germany by Mr Chamberlain when introducing his protectionist proposals, and the present visit of the President to King Edward. And now at the time of writing we have in all the press the statement that the Tsar intends visiting London, but has been advised by the diplomacy of this country to postpone his visit until the King first visits Russia, which visit would help to hide the real significance of his projected journey. This hastiness of the Tsar was, in fact, nearly 'giving the game away', as his more lowly brothers in crime would phrase it.

It is really amusing to see how such a blatant Russophobic as Mr Hyndman joins with the pack in halloaing in favour of this latest move of the Muscovite; how Mr Belfort Bax, who in his own felicitous phraseology, has wasted "gallons of good ink" in demonstrating the utter imbecility of the theories of the noble-minded political republicans of the 1848 period, now calls upon the democracy to worship at the shrine of the head of a bastard republicanism; how, in short, the truculent declamation of the "Class War" has given way to a shout of "Vive l'entente cordiale" between the national heads of capitalist society. The Tsar – whose Cossacks brutally murdered hundreds of working-class men, women and children in the factory towns of Russia last year; the President – whose soldiery are hurled at every strike, whose prefects, as at Carmaux, override the beneficent proposals of every Socialist city council; the King – whose class legislation has made trade-unionism a farce or a fraud, and whose police at that very moment in

Dublin were breaking the heads of a peaceful procession, yea, surely these are fit objects for the reverential admiration of the SDF. When we contemplate the antics of these men, our erstwhile 'leaders', the wonder is not that the Socialist movement in these countries has made so little headway, but that it has made any headway at all.

All this blundering on the part of the SDF leaders, to whom political blundering has become a second nature (we all remember how Hyndman blundered over the South African war and patted Chamberlain on the back, until the restiveness of the rank and file brought him to his senses), all this blundering will have a good effect if it is instrumental in causing Socialists to revise their theories on France and the French revolutionary tradition. Personally the writer believes that the influence which that tradition exerts upon the minds of Socialists is disastrous to our movement. The theatrical splendour and gorgeousness of that outburst has hypnotised the Socialist mind, and even when theoretically clear upon its economic character we find many of our writers and speakers still thinking and acting politically in terms of that past revolution. As a result we find imported into our movement, and in too many instances overlaying it, a whole host of theories of political action, tactics, and strategy which are foreign to our principles and destructive of our class spirit. This is not only the case in this country, it is so in the United States also, as well as in continental European countries. The sneaking fondness for any man who 'talks physical force', even when he does it to cloak semi-reactionary principles, the concession of 'honesty of purpose' to every man who mouths radical phraseology, the idea (the fruitful mother of treason) of building a Socialist Party upon the working 'people', instead of upon the working *class*, the vague but harmful belief that irreligion is necessarily linked with social revolution, and religious orthodoxy with capitalism, the tendency to rush off into all manner of speculations about the future, and the desire to exclude all who do not agree with the speculation upon the tendency resultant from the economic change, in short, all those wrong tendencies which spring from the habit of regarding revolution mainly from the standpoint of *destruction*, instead of from the standpoint of *building* and *construction*, are our baneful inheritance from the first French Revolution. It is because of that mental inheritance, those wrong tendencies, that we so often find

in the socialist movement men whose whole conception of duty is that of the iconoclast – the image-breaker – and who, having such a conception, naturally tend to regard as socialistic everything which wages war upon present institutions. Such was perforce the nature of the French Revolution, which, being capitalist and therefore individualist, found the ‘logical centre’ of the universe in each man’s brain, and worked outward to shape the world.

Such is not the nature of the impending Social Revolution which must seek the logical centre of society in the tool of industry, and is only concerned with those institutions or principles which are based upon its development. The capitalist French revolutionist had to fight to destroy the institution of his enemy; the social revolutionist has to fight in order to give the economic institutions of his enemy room to grow; the capitalist revolutionist of France dreaded the development of feudalism, the Socialist revolutionist hails with delight every fresh development of capitalism. This point of difference places our revolution at the very extremities of the poles of thought and tactics from that of the men of 1789 in France, yet the fact that these men killed a king and queen, ie, destroyed something, is often sufficient to blind men to-day to the utter inapplicability of their tactics to present day requirements.

We have to remember that the French Revolution was an uprising of the capitalist class, that their tactics may not be our tactics, and that their victory added another to the list of our enemies in power.

Then we will understand the visit of Loubet – and other things.

***JAMES CONNOLLY.***

[Top of the page](#)

**Appendix**

# Platform of the Socialist Labour Party

The Socialist Labour Party is a political organisation seeking to establish political and social freedom for all, and seeing in the conquest by the Socialist Working Class of all the governmental and administrative powers of the nation the means to the attainment of that end.

It affirms its belief that political and social freedom are not two separate and unrelated ideas, but are two sides of the one great principle, each being incomplete without the other.

The course of society politically has been from warring but democratic tribes within each nation to a united government under an absolutely undemocratic monarchy. Within this monarchy again developed revolts against its power, revolts at first seeking to limit its prerogatives only, then demanding the inclusion of certain classes in the governing power, then demanding the right of the subject to criticise and control the power of the monarch, and finally, in the most advanced countries this movement culminated in the total abolition of the monarchical institution, and the transformation of the subject into the citizen.

In industry a corresponding development has taken place. The independent producer, owning his own tools and knowing no master, has given way before the more effective productive powers of huge capital, concentrated in the hands of the great capitalist. The latter, recognising no rights in his workers, ruled as an absolute monarch in his factory. But within the realm of capital developed a revolt against the power of the capitalist. This revolt, taking the form of trade unionism, has pursued in the industrial field the same line of development as the movement for political freedom has pursued in the sphere of national government. It first contented itself with protests against excessive exactions, against all undue stretchings of the power of the capitalist; then its efforts broadened out to demands for restrictions upon the absolute character of such power, ie, by claiming for trade unions the right to make rules for the workers in the workshop; then it sought to still further curb the capitalist's power by

shortening the working day, and so limiting the period during which the labourer may be exploited. Finally, it seeks by Boards of Arbitration to establish an equivalent in the industrial world for that compromise in the political world by which, in constitutional countries, the monarch retains his position by granting a parliament to divide with him the duties of governing, and so hides while securing his power. And as in the political history of the race the logical development of progress was found in the abolition of the institution of monarchy, and not in its mere restriction, so in industrial history the culminating point to which all efforts must at last converge lies in the abolition of the capitalist class, and not in the mere restriction of its powers.

The Socialist Labour Party, recognising these two phases of human development, unites them in its programme, and seeks to give them a concrete embodiment by its demand for a Socialist Republic.

It recognises in all past history a preparation for this achievement, and in the industrial tendencies of to-day it hails the workings out of those laws of human progress which bring that object within our reach.

The concentration of capital in the form of trusts at the same time as it simplifies the operations of capital and increases the effectiveness of human labour, also simplifies the task we propose that society shall undertake, viz.: the dispossession of the capitalist class, and the administration of all land and instruments of industry as social property, of which all shall be co-heirs and owners.

As to-day the organised power of the State theoretically guarantees to every individual his political rights, so in the Socialist Republic the power and productive forces of organised society will stand between every individual and want, guaranteeing that right to life without which all other rights are but mockery. Short of the complete dispossession of the capitalist class which this implies there is no hope for the workers, but in the hands of men who recognise that fact all proposals which maintain against the claims of capital the rights of the community, when coupled with the assertion of the interests of labour as the superior interests of the community, may serve as a good agitational basis for

such preliminary skirmishing as will necessarily precede the final overthrow of the capitalist system.

Of such a character are the following proposals:—

## **The Class War**

1. The legal restriction of the hours of labour to eight per day or less, according to the development of labour-saving machinery.
2. The abolition of all child labour under seventeen years of age.
3. Graduated income-tax upon all income derived from capitalist property. Funds from same to be applied to
  - (a) Old age pensions for all.
  - (b) Free maintenance for all school children.

## **Public Ownership**

1. Right of all national and municipal employees to elect their immediate superiors and to be represented upon all public departments directing their industry.
2. Nationalisation and municipalisation of all industries upon above basis.

## **Political**

1. The abolition of all hereditary authority.
2. The degree of connection of any civilised people with our rule to be left to the vote of that people themselves, free from external pressure.
3. Extension of the franchise and full political rights to all adults, male and female; also to the military and naval forces.

But we must again warn the working class that all these measures are in themselves economically insufficient, and are but the temporary expedients of the passing moment. As the struggle between the workers and their exploiters develops all programmes will tend to become superfluous, and in the final issue the watchword of either side in the conflict will find expression in fidelity to a principle rather than in measures which are but details of administration.

Speed the Day

James Connolly

# The American SDP

Its Origin, its Press, and its Policies

(1903)

---

**The Socialist**, July 1903.  
Republished in **James Connolly: Lost Writings**, (ed. Aindrias Ó Cathasaigh), [Pluto Press](#) 1997.

The notes, which are © 1997 Pluto Press, have not been included.  
HTML Mark-up: [Einde O'Callaghan](#) for the **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

---

In my article in the June issue of the **Socialist** I sought to place before our readers a correct picture of the position of the Socialist Labour Party of America, by contrasting it with the London SDF, and in doing so to expose the misrepresentations of Mr Hyndman and 'comrade **Justice**'. One point in the **Justice** American letter, however, I missed. It was the statement that the SLP had lost its place on the ballot in several states through corrupt practices. Of

course no particulars were given, because none could be given as the statement was as destitute of any foundation in fact as the persons who made and retailed it were destitute of honour. Yet the persons who utter such slanders are they who whine about the “outrageous language” of the writers in the **Socialist**. We would ask those honest men who still remain in the SDF to require from the organ of the Twentieth Century Press the particulars, state, and date where the SLP lost its place through corrupt practices, and the name of the correspondent who makes the charge.

In this article I propose to give some details about the Social Democratic, or Socialist Party, the pet protege in American politics of the SDF. This party was established by Eugene V Debs, and at its foundation was not a political, but a colonising party. That is to say, that it did not propose to realise Socialism through the conquest of the public powers of government by the working class marching to the ballot box in their respective localities. Oh, no! The bright brains of the leaders conceived a more brilliant plan than that. This plan was that all the Socialists in the United States should leave their then homes and move simultaneously into one State to be fixed upon by the party, and so secure a majority in that State. Then that they should elect the legislature of that State, appoint Socialists to administer the public powers, and so inaugurate the Socialist Republic. Then the theory ran that all the other States in the Union would be lost in admiration of the Socialist institutions in full working order, and would signify their admiration by rushing into Socialism. This plan was undoubtedly simple – so were the people who thought it practicable.

But the Socialist Labour Party men began attending the meetings of this SDP and asking irreverent questions. They wanted to know why, if Debs was a Socialist, he supported Bryan the Democrat in 1896. Considering there were already many unemployed in each State, how the Socialists, who gave up their situations in order to colonise, were going to find employment in the new State while waiting for the majority. Seeing that the United States Government was a capitalist government, and had already sent the Federal troops into Illinois in order to put down a strike, what would it do when the Socialist governors or legislature of Mr Debs’ colony-state started in to socialise any capitalist property?

A few questions like these continually driven home and supplemented by vigorous criticism soon punctured the colony scheme, and eventually it was dropped by its promoters, thanks entirely to the light let in on the subject by the SLP men. But with the dropping of the colony scheme the SDP definitely entered politics as a Socialist (?) party. In 1898 its ranks received an accession of numbers from those who had either been expelled from the SLP for treachery, or had incontinently fled its councils to escape expulsion. These formed what was styled the kangaroo party, and the circumstances attending its formation are worth recording.

The **People**, the organ of the Socialist Labour Party, was at that time published in the office of a private printing corporation, which was known as the Volkszeitung Corporation, from the fact that it had been established to print and publish a Socialist paper in the German language – the **Volkszeitung**. This paper accepted capitalist advertisements, even the advertisements of capitalist politicians, and advocated all kinds of tax reform as Socialism. Eventually a motion was sent round the SLP sections, to be voted upon by the entire membership, in favour of placing the printing and publishing of the SLP organs and literature generally in the hands of the party itself. In passing, I may remark that in the SLP general votes are taken by individual membership and not by sections or branches. In the case of the vote under consideration, all those in favour of compromises, of conciliating the Debsites, and truckling for the support of pure and simple trade unionism, were in favour of leaving the paper in the control of the Volkszeitung Corporation. But as the vote came in gradually and was duly tabulated in the columns of the **People**, it was seen that the straight and uncompromising members were in the majority, and that the private ownership of the party press was doomed.

Affrighted at this, the unclean section of the party strove to avert disaster and keep the press in their hands by making a midnight raid on the premises of the National Executive, and by force to override the constitution of the party and set at naught its vote. They failed, but as a last measure formed another party and issued a rival paper, both party and paper usurping the titles of the original until compelled by law to abandon the fraudulent practice. Now they are called in New

York the Social Democratic Party, and their organ is called the **Worker**, owned of course not by the party, but by the aforementioned private corporation.

In the presidential election of 1900, this element sent a deputation to the National Convention of the Debsite party and succeeded in getting their nominee, Job Harriman, nominated as candidate for Vice-President of the United States. This was to bring unity between the two sections of those opposed to the SLP, but it did not succeed, for as soon as the Convention was over Debs sent a letter to his press vehemently denouncing what he termed the trickery and treacherous methods of the Harriman party. As a result, although the nomination held good for the election, the two candidates, who were supposed to be running in harness and harmony, never appeared on the same platform.

Some time ago a letter from that wonderful 'American Correspondent' appeared in **Justice** announcing the consummation of unity among the socialists of the United States, "except the De Leonite faction", of course. This unity was arrived at by means of a resolution at a convention in Indianapolis, if I remember aright, in which it was agreed that all sections should unite on the following basis:—

That each State should have full local autonomy in all matters, including policy and tactics.

That each State organisation should sail under whatever name it chose, or the laws of the State allowed.

That there should be no official organ of the party.

In other words, that everybody could join who chose, and could do what he pleased well pleased after joining. That each State should frame its own policy, even if that policy was in direct opposition to that of the party in the adjoining State, and that the party should have no official organ in case the members should get to know the muddled condition in which the party was. Thus was unity accomplished. What anarchist could desire more? The result of all this is made manifest in the present position of that united party. In some States it is named

the 'Social Democratic', in some the 'Socialist', in some the 'Public Ownership', in some the 'Union Labour' party. Its policies are as varied as its names. In the Eastern States where the example and record of the SLP is to be reckoned with, it gives a lip adhesion to the principle of the class struggle, and appeals to the working class. In the Middle West, where capital is not so highly developed and the petty middle class is still a force, it trades mainly in schemes of municipalisation for the benefit of the taxpayer. In the Western Agricultural States it declares that the hope of the Social Revolution is in the farming class, and in California it withdrew its candidates in favour of those of a Union Labour Party formed by the trade union, and supported Mayor Schmidt of San Francisco, a Republican trade-unionist and enemy of socialism.

Each faction of the party represented by those various policies has an organ in the press devoted to its interests, but always privately owned. The manner in which those various organs of the united party speak of their 'comrades' who belong to opposite factions makes the "abusive language" of De Leon seem complimentary by comparison.

The following are the names and locations of the principal representatives in the press of the faction indicated:— The **Worker**, New York, the **Socialist**, Seattle, Wash., the **Chicago Socialist**, the **Social Democratic Herald**, Milwaukee, the **Los Angeles Socialist**, California. The body which acted as a National Executive of this hybrid organisation was situated at St Louis, Mo., and its official designation was the 'Local Quorum'. Early in the present year its chief members made a furore by openly repudiating the principle that the wage worker and his interests should be the basis of the Socialist movement, and by insisting that the farmer was the real basis, and that our policy should be shaped accordingly. After a bitter and acrimonious discussion the members of Section St Louis met and suspended the chiefs of this local quorum for treason. Setting their suspension at defiance, the Local Quorum moved itself to Omaha, Nebraska, an agricultural State, and proceeded with their new propaganda. They were supported by the **Social Democratic Herald**, and denounced as traitors by the Seattle **Socialist**. The **Chicago Socialist** declared the seat of the Local Quorum as the party executive should neither be at St Louis nor at Omaha, but at Chicago,

and the **Los Angeles Socialist** darkly hinted that both were wrong, that Salvation lay not in Socialist consolidation, but in Socialist support of trade union nominees.

This unity of purpose and principle is still further exemplified by the fact that in the Eastern States they support the American Federation of Labour, the head of which is Mr Samuel Gompers, and in the West they cater for the support of the Western Federation of Miners, whose official organ, the **Miner**, correctly stigmatises Mr Gompers as a “traitor”, a “fraud”, and a “Judas”. Quite recently this latter organisation enacted a rule to the effect that none of its members could be allowed to accept nomination for office by any capitalist party. This seems to show that it is marching towards the light, and I have no doubt that when it realises that the SDP is busy all through the States in accepting those capitalist nominations the Western Federation of Miners will not allow its members to accept, then it will not hesitate to throw that bundle of inconsistencies overboard and cleave to the Socialist Labour Party with its clean record and uncompromising policy.

This brief sketch of the SDP of America will explain why **Justice** has such an enthusiastic love for that organisation, viz, it seeks its affinity.

Inconsistency and sacrifice of principle for the sake of votes mark both organisations, and “Be all things to all men” might be the watchword of either.

*JAMES CONNOLLY.*

**James Connolly**

**The Socialist Labour  
Party of America**

# and the London SDF

(1903)

---

**The Socialist,** June 1903.

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

The notes, which are © 1997 Pluto Press, have not been included.  
HTML Mark-up: [Einde O'Callaghan](#) for the **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

---

The prompt action of the SDF in dealing effectually with those malcontents who are bent upon following the lead of the German-Venezuelan Jew Loeb, or 'de Leon', to the pit of infamy and disgrace, is regarded with much satisfaction on this side.

The above extract from our amusing contemporary, **Justice**, may serve as an introduction to the following sketch of my impressions of the Socialist movement in the United States. But first I would like to point out how accurately that paragraph photographs the mental conditions and methods of the men in charge of that paper. Take the phrase applied to our comrade Daniel de Leon – 'the German-Venezuelan-Jew'. Here we see in a paper which a week or two previous had been, in dealing with the First of May, complimenting the international character of the Socialist movement, and vehemently asserting that our principles were superior to all conditions of race or nationality, in its evil-minded desire to injure a Socialist editor sneering at him as a 'German-Venezuelan-Jew'. In other words, directly appealing to racial antipathies and religious prejudices. But we who have been studying **Justice**, not as an inspired emanation from the brightest intellects of the age, but as a rare freak in the political world, are well aware that this is no new trick of its policy. We all remember how, when the late Boer war was being launched upon this country, **Justice**, instead of grasping at the opportunity to demonstrate the unscrupulous and bloodthirsty methods of

the capitalist *class*, strove to divert the wrath of the advanced workers from the capitalists to the *Jews*; how its readers were nauseated by denunciations of 'Jewish millionaires', 'Jewish plots', 'Jew-controlled newspapers', 'German Jews', 'Israelitish schemes', and all the stock phrases of the lowest anti-Semitic papers, until the paper became positively unreadable to any fair-minded man who recognised the truth, viz, that the war was the child of capitalist greed, and inspired by men with whom race or religion were matters of no moment.

Now, comrade de Leon is a Venezuelan, and the descendant of an old family, famous alike in the history of Spain and the New World, but if he were all that the **Justice** phrase has him, what of it? Suppose he were a German-Venezuelan-Jew, or a Cockney-Irish-Scotsman, or even, horror of horrors, an Anglo-Saxon, what is it to us or to Socialists generally? Mr Hyndman always claims to be 'only a common Englishman', although, as a matter of fact, he once stated to the writer that he was of Irish descent, and that one of his relatives was implicated in the insurrection of 1798, but as long as he claims England, no Irishman who knows him would seek to deprive England of the honour.

But Mr Hyndman assured us in the issue of **Justice** prepared for the last SDF Conference that de Leon killed his party. If this is so, and I would not dare to insinuate that Mr Hyndman was lying, then, from what I know of the SDF and of the American SLP, a dead party in the States must be a bigger political force than a live party in Great Britain.

First let us see what the SDF has not done, then look at what the SLP has done *and is still doing*.

The SDF is over twenty years in existence, yet it does not own or control a single newspaper or journal of any kind. At repeated Annual Conferences the delegates have been told by Mr Quelch that he would print in **Justice** any report of the Conference he pleased, and that they had no control over the matter. The Twentieth Century Press, as a matter of fact, was established upon shares sold all over the country at a time when Socialists, Anarchists, Fabians, Labourmen, Christian Socialists, and every kind of freak, were lumped together, and all of

them were, and perhaps still are, represented among the shareholders. But the SDF as a party has no control over the shareholders or their property.

The SDF professes to be a political party independent of all others, and the only real exponent of Socialist principles, yet since the ILP came into existence the SDF has never had the courage to engage in a parliamentary candidature without soliciting the help of the ILP, and playing for the votes of the Radicals.

The SDF declares Trade-Unionism to be played out, yet denounces any attack upon the labour leaders who declare Trade-Unionism to be all-powerful.

The SDF declares the Workers' Representation Committee to be worthless and a delusion since it will not pledge itself to a belief in the Class War, yet the SDF counsels its branches to refrain from criticising or opposing the candidates of this worthless and delusive committee.

Now what is the position of the SLP of the United States?

The Socialist Labour Party of the United States conducts a daily paper in the English language, a weekly paper, and a monthly paper in the same language. It also conducts a weekly paper in the German language, one in the Swedish language, and one in Yiddish. All these papers are owned and controlled entirely by the party membership. They are also set up and printed in a printing establishment which is the property of the party. In the offices of the **Weekly People**, New York, there are five linotype machines continually at work, an equal number of compositors setting from the case, and a Hoe printing machine capable of printing and folding 30,000 copies per hour.

There is also a paper in the Italian language affiliated to and supporting the party, but not owned by the membership.

At last election this party polled 53,000 votes in the United States. Every one of these votes were cast for its programme and policy, despite the fact that another (so-called) Socialist party was in the field against it. The 'Social Democrat', or 'Socialist', as this other party is called, is exactly analogous to the ILP of Great Britain. To exactly appreciate the value of the vote of the Socialist

Labour Party as a criterion of its strength, you have to imagine what the vote of the SDF would be if it could muster up courage sufficient to run a candidate in an election in which the ILP had also a man in the field.

The SLP declares pure and simple trade-unionism to be played out, and acting on that belief, it attacks and exposes the treacheries and sophistries of the trade-union leaders.

The SLP declares itself to be the only genuine Socialist Party in the United States, and acting on that belief, it opposes every other party, and fights them at every election.

The SLP seeks to make Socialism a guiding principle in the daily life of the workers by organising trade-unions on Socialist lines, and by refusing membership to anyone who identifies himself with its antagonists by accepting office in a pure and simple trade-union.

In short, the SLP does everything the SDF has not heart enough to do; it therefore shows its belief in its own principles, and wins the respect of its enemies even whilst they hate it. On the other hand, the SDF recoils from the logical application of the principles it professes to believe in, and whilst continually criticising the ILP, as continually seeks to embrace it in unity, although as continually repelled with contempt. There was revolutionary activity and fight once in the SDF, but their leaders, Hyndman, Quelch, Burrows, etc, have led it indeed as a lightning conductor leads lightning – into the earth to dissipate its energy. Therefore the party which has been killed is stronger than the party which no one thinks worth killing.

***JAMES CONNOLLY.***

# **James Connolly**

# Unpatriotic?

(1903)

---

**Workers' Republic,** May 1903.

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

The notes, which are © 1997 Pluto Press, have not been included.  
HTML Mark-up: [Einde O'Callaghan](#) for the **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

---

In every country of the earth in which Socialism has taken root its advocates meet with the objection that their doctrines are 'unpatriotic', that Socialism is a foreign idea. Whether it be in Ireland, Germany, France, America, England, Russia, Italy or any other country we find the enemies of Socialism harping upon this one theme, the unpatriotic character of the Socialist movement. It is fitting, therefore, that we should examine and analyse this theory in order that we may find out upon what it is founded, how it is that in countries so widely separated the Socialist movement meets with an almost identical objection – in conservative Ireland as in cosmopolitan America.

We need not go far in our analysis. It is an axiom accepted by all Socialists that the ruling class industrially will always be the ruling class politically, and will also dominate in all other walks of life and fields of thought.

That until the epoch of revolution arrives the interests of the class who hold the dominant machinery of production will colour and mould the entire thought and institutions of society at large; making whatever serves such interests appear as 'patriotic', 'native' and thoroughly 'Irish' or 'American' or whatever the nationality of the possessing class may be. And in like manner stamping as 'foreign', 'unpatriotic', 'un-Irish' or 'un-American' everything that savours of danger to that possessing class. In other words the possessing class always and

everywhere arrogates to itself an exclusive right to be considered **the Nation**, and basing itself upon that right to insist that the laws of the land should be in its hands to frame and administer in its own interests, which, it pleasantly informs us, are the highest interests of the nation.

This is a characteristic of the propertied classes everywhere, even where they are not a ruling class. The Land League agitation in Ireland, and in a lesser degree the present Land agitation, exemplified this trait. The Land League agitation centred round the fight of the tenant farmers for better terms for their holdings. It was primarily a contest betwixt tenant and landlord.

The agricultural labourer had no concern in it, indeed he invariably got better terms from the landlord than the tenant farmer; the urban population had no interests directly at stake, town workers were not considered in Land Bills; all the mercantile, industrial and professional classes knew they would be left outside the scope of the settlement between landlord and tenant should one be arrived at, yet, the tenant farmers being organised politically and industrially, and above all being class-conscious, that is to say conscious of the identity of their class interests, succeeded in impressing the character of their movement upon the whole life of Ireland.

Every farmer's grievance became an Irish national grievance, every farmer refusing to pay rent was idealised as a patriot battling, not for his own purse, but for his country, every farmer evicted was acclaimed as a martyr for his country; if a man took an evicted farm he was not merely a landgrabber or scab on his class, he was a traitor to 'Ireland', and every person who spoke to him, or helped to feed, clothe or shelter him was also an enemy to Ireland, a traitor to his native land, a Judas or a Diarmuid Mac Murchadha. Thus the tenant farmers dominated the thought of the country and made the fight of their own class for its rights identical with the idea of Irish patriotism.

Now we are not pointing this fact out in order to denounce it. On the contrary we consider the farmers acted wisely in their own interests. But we do point it out in order to emphasise our contention that any particular act or political doctrine is patriotic or unpatriotic in the exact proportion in which it

serves the interests of the class who for the time being hold political power. The Farmers of Ireland denounced as unpatriotic everything that failed to serve their class interests, – including even the labourer's demand for a cottage; let the Working Class of Ireland follow their lead and test the sincerity of every man's patriotism by his devotion to the interests of Labour. In the eyes of the farmer no wagging of green flags could make a landgrabber a patriot: let the Workers apply the same test and brand as enemies to Ireland all who believe in the subjection of Labour to Capital – brand as traitors to this country all who live by skinning Irish Labour.

For the working class of the world the lesson is also plain. In every country Socialism is foreign, is unpatriotic, and will continue so until the Working Class embracing it as their salvation make Socialism the dominant political force.

Then the interests of the Working Class will be in the ascendant and every man's patriotism will be gauged by his services and devotion to these interests, thus Socialism will be patriotic and native everywhere, and the advocates of Capitalistic property will be the unpatriotic ones.

By their aggressiveness and intolerance the possessing classes erect the principles of their capitalist supremacy into the dignity of national safeguards; according as the Working Class infuses into its political organisation the same aggressiveness and intolerance will it command the success it deserves, and make the Socialist the only good and loyal citizen.

**James Connolly**

**A Rebel Song**

**(1903)**

Come workers sing a rebel song,  
A song of love and hate,  
Of love unto the lowly  
And of hatred to the great.  
The great who trod our fathers down,  
Who steal our children's bread,  
Whose hands of greed are stretched to rob  
The living and the dead.

*chorus:*

*Then sing our rebel song as we  
proudly sweep along  
To end the age-old tyranny  
that makes for human tears.  
Our march is nearer done, with  
each setting of the sun.  
And the tyrants' might is passing  
with the passing of the years.*

We sing no more of wailing  
And no songs of sighs or tears;  
High are our hopes and stout our hearts  
And banished all our fears.  
Our flag is raised above us  
So that all the world may see,  
'Tis Labour's faith and Labour's arm  
Alone can Labour free.

*chorus*

Out of the depths of misery  
We march with hearts aflame;  
With wrath against the rulers false  
Who wreck our manhood's name.  
The serf who licks the tyrant's rod  
May bend forgiving knee;  
The slave who breaks his slavery's chain  
A wrathful man must be.

*chorus*

Our army marches onward  
With its face towards the dawn,  
In trust secure in that one thing  
The slave may lean upon.  
The might within the arm of him  
Who knowing freedom's worth,  
Strikes hard to banish tyranny  
From off the face of earth.

*chorus*

**James Connolly**

**The New Danger**

**(1903)**

---

**Workers' Republic,** April 1903.  
Republished in **James Connolly: Lost Writings**, (ed. Aindrias Ó Cathasaigh), [Pluto Press](#) 1997.

The notes, which are © 1997 Pluto Press, have not been included.  
HTML Mark-up: [Einde O'Callaghan](#) for the **Marxists' Internet Archive**.

---

The politics of France are so complicated that to the general public the task of comprehending them would require a closer study than most are able to give. Thus the fact that a leading French Socialist, M Jaurès, has been elected to the position of a Vice-President of the French Chamber was recorded in all our Irish papers as a great victory for the Socialist party, and has been accepted as such by the general reader. But few are aware of the true significance of the situation, viz, that his election is but a move of the French capitalist class to disorganise the Socialist forces by corrupting their leaders. M Jaurès is one of the middle class element which, joining the Socialist party in search of a 'career', were, by virtue of their superior education, enabled to make of themselves leaders of the working class movement.

Now, that working class movement having grown so formidable as to convince every one that the day of its triumph is within measurable distance, the capitalist government seeks for the weakest part of the Socialist armour that it might destroy the dreaded force, and so seeking it finds that this weakest part lies in the vanity and ambition of the middle class leaders. First M Millerand accepted the bait, now M Jaurès.

In other words the capitalist governments of the world are now adopting and improving upon the policy of corrupting or 'nobbling' the leaders which has enabled the English governing class to disorganise every serious attack upon their privileged position. Here in Ireland we have seen our Home Rule leaders most successfully pursuing the same game. In Dublin we have Mr Nannetti taken into the ranks of the Parliamentary party in order to confuse the working class who were beginning to distrust the Home Rulers; in Tipperary we had Kendal O'Brien, and in Cork county Mr Sheehan, both of the Land and Labour Association, the former a professed Socialist, and the latter being a vehement critic of the enemies

of the labourer, now pliant followers of the men who antagonised their Association from its inception. In England we see the capitalist Liberals running a 'safe' Labour man for a Tory seat, Woolwich; in the United States we see men like Mayor Schmidt of San Francisco ran by a capitalist party as a Labour Mayor, and boomed as such by the capitalist press throughout the country, even whilst his police were breaking up meetings of the Socialist Trade and Labour Alliance in his own city, and in the eastern states capitalist political parties placing upon their electoral ticket members of a nominally Socialist party.

The universality of this capitalist dodge calls for an equally universal move against it. Up to the present we regret to say there is not much evidence that the Socialist parties of the world are clear upon the course of action to be followed in fighting this insidious scheme. If we except the Socialist Labour Party of the United States, and the Parti Ouvrier of France, there is no Socialist party which does not betray signs of wobbling upon the matter. In Germany the Social Democratic Party has admitted into its ranks in the Reichstag the High Priest of the men who accept such 'gifts from the Greeks', Bernstein; and in many other Continental countries the party is in a state of internal war over the matter. In England no one as yet has been asked into the Cabinet from the Socialist ranks, but there are scores fighting to get in a position to be asked, and hungering to accept.

The Social Democratic Federation has been drugged in this matter in the most shameful fashion. At the Paris Congress their representatives were induced to vote for Millerand – the first of the intellectuals to sell out – chiefly by the representations of Quelch and Hyndman, and against the advice and indignant remonstrance of the pioneers and veteran fighters of the Socialist movement in France. Now that all Quelch and Hyndman, & Co, said in favour of the compromise has been utterly falsified, and the most bitter denunciations of Millerand most amply justified, Hyndman joins in the cry against him, but even in doing so he shows no sign of shame for having voted to condone the treachery he now condemns.

This carefully stimulated indignation only excites amazement. In an article in **Justice**, March 21, after recapitulating all the acts of treachery of which

Millerand has been guilty since Hyndman voted against his condemnation the latter says: "But now comes the most serious part of the whole affair. Millerand has just republished his speeches, with an introduction." And this is "the most serious part of the whole affair", in Hyndman's estimation. But to do our London comrade justice he does not propose to leave us without a remedy. What is his remedy? Consider! the Socialist movement is convulsed by this capitalist move, and by the presence in the Socialist ranks of weaklings and ambitious middle class elements ready to be corrupted, and in this moment of international danger the man who is the trusted leader of the Socialist movement in one of the most important countries in Europe, England, proposes as a means, nay, as the *only* means of settling it all that *he* should debate the matter with Millerand at a public meeting. This, he says, is the "only way to bring the matter to an issue".

As a piece of opera-bouffe that would be excellent; as a piece of serious politics it is beneath contempt.

As an exponent of Socialist economics Hyndman has no more ardent admirer than the writer of this article, but we contend that as a political guide his whole career has been one long series of blunders; a fact that explains, as nothing else can explain, the wobbling state of the movement in England. The key note of his character has been to preach revolution and to practise compromise, and to do neither thoroughly.

But why should we criticise an English Socialist? Because what injures the Socialist movement in one country injures it also in others, and because this country is unfortunately tied to England and therefore is influenced by her politics more than by any other. And the weakness of the real revolutionary movement in England is a constant danger to the hopes of freedom in Ireland.

As a matter of fact we would have criticised more often and more unreservedly than we have done the position of our SDF comrades were it not for the fact that they are English, and we had always an uncomfortable feeling that did we criticise them it would please the chauvinist Irishman, and we had no desire to flatter his narrow prejudices at the expense of Socialists, no matter how



Our defeat of last year, brought about as it was by a campaign of slander and bribery, and a wholesale and systematic debauching of the more degraded portion of the electorate, did not in the slightest degree affect the truth of the principles for which we contested. These principles still remain the only principles by which the working class can ever attain its freedom.

When the workers come into the world we find that we are outcasts in the world. The land on which we must live is the property of a class who are the descendants of men who stole the land from our forefathers, and we who are workers, are, whether in town or country, compelled to pay for permission to live on the earth; the houses, shops, factories, etc., which were built by the labour of our fathers at wages that simply kept them alive are now owned by a class which never contributed an ounce of sweat to their erecting, but whose members will continue to draw rent and profit from them while the system lasts. As a result of this the worker in order to live must sell himself into the service of a master – he must sell to that master the liberty to coin into profit the physical and mental energies.

A shopkeeper in order to live must sell his goods for what he can get, but a worker in order to live must sell a part of his life, nine, ten, or twelve hours per day as the case may be. The shopkeeper, if he is lucky, may get the value of his goods, but the worker cannot get under the capitalist system the value of his labour; he must accept whatever wage those who are unemployed are willing to accept at his job. This is what I call wage-slavery, because under it the worker is a slave who sells himself for a wage with which to buy his rations, which is the only difference between this system and negro slavery where the master bought the rations and fed the slave himself. There is only one remedy for this slavery of the working class, and that remedy is the socialist republic, a system of society in which the land and all houses, railways, factories, canals, workshops, and everything necessary for work shall be owned and operated as common property, much as the land of Ireland was owned by the clans of Ireland before England introduced the capitalist system amongst us at the point of the sword. There is only one way to attain that end, and that way is for the working class to establish a political party of its own; a political party which shall set itself to elect to all

public bodies in Ireland working men resolved to use all the power of those bodies for the workers and against their oppressors, whether those oppressors be English, Scotch or sham Irish patriots. In claiming this we will only be following the example of our masters. Every political party is the party of a class. The Unionists represent the interests of the landlords and the big capitalists generally; the United Irish League is the party of the middle class, the agriculturists, the house jobbers, slum landlords, and drink sellers. If an Irish landlord evicts a tenant farmer he is denounced by the Home Rule press as an enemy to Ireland, but an Irish employer can lock out and attempt to starve thousands of true Irishmen, as was done in the building trade in 1896, in the tailoring trade in 1900, and in the engineers of Inchicore in 1902; and not a member of parliament would take up the fight for the workers, or bother himself about them. Nay, the capitalists who thus try to crush their workers are highly honoured by the official parliamentary party, and some, like Mr. P. White, are members of the United Irish League Executive. If a man takes a farm from which a tenant has been evicted, he is tightly called a traitor, but who ever heard or read of the capitalist Home Rule press of this country saying a hard word about the scabs who go in on a strike or lockout, even when those scabs were imported, as was the case during the tailors' lock-out, the saddlers' strike, or the engineers' lock-out? If the men who were imprisoned for threatening black-legs during the engineers' lock-out had been engaged in a dispute over farms, we would have been told that they were "patriots suffering for their country." But as they were only workmen fighting for their class interests, we were told by the Home Rule newspapers that they were "misguided individuals."

What is wanted then is for the workers to organise for political action on socialist lines. And let us take lesson by the municipal election of last year. Let us remember how the drink-sellers of the Wood Quay Ward combined with the slum owner and the house jobber; let us remember how Alderman Davin, Councillor McCall, and all their fellow publicans issued free drinks to whoever would accept, until on the day before election and election day, the scenes of bestiality and drunkenness around their shops were such as brought the blush of shame to every decent man and woman who saw them. Let us remember the threats and the bribery, how Mr. Byrne of Wood Quay told the surrounding tenants, that if

“Mr. Connolly was elected their rents would be raised;” let us remember how the spirit of religion was prostituted to the service of the drinkseller to drive the labourer back into his degradation; how the workers were told that socialism and freethinking were the same thing, although the freethinking government of France was just after shooting down socialist workmen at Martinique for taking part in a strike procession; let us remember how the paid canvassers of the capitalist candidate – hired slanderers – gave a different account of Mr. Connolly to every section of the electors. How they said to the Catholics that he was an Orangeman, to the Protestants that he was a Fenian, to the Jews that he was an anti-Semite, to others that he was a Jew, to the labourers that he was a journalist on the make, and to the tradesmen and professional classes that he was an ignorant labourer; that he was born in Belfast, Derry, England, Scotland and Italy, according to the person the canvasser was talking to. Remember that all this carnival of corruption and dishonesty was resorted to, simply in order to prevent labour from electing a representative who could neither be bought, terrified nor seduced, and you will understand how important your masters conceive to be their hold on the public bodies in this country. You will also understand that there can never be either clean, healthy, or honest politics in the City of Dublin, until the power of the drinksellers is absolutely broken – they are positively the meanest and most degraded section that ever attempted to rule a city.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, you understand my position. This is socialist republicanism, the politics of labour, of freedom from all tyrants, foreign and native. If you are a worker your interests should compel you to vote for me, if you are a decent citizen, whether worker or master, you should vote for me; if you are an enemy of freedom, a tyrant, or the tool of a tyrant, you will vote against me.

Believing that in this fight I am fighting the fight of my class, I invite every self-respecting worker to join our committee and help the cause.

Yours in the name of labour,  
JAMES CONNOLLY.

