

**James Connolly &
William Walker**

**The Connolly/Walker
Controversy:
On Socialist Unity in Ireland
(1911)**

From **Forward,** May-July, 1911.
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Introductory Note

In the May 27th, 1911 edition of the socialist paper, **Forward**, James Connolly, as organiser for the Socialist Party of Ireland, made an appeal to the members of the Independent Labour Party (Belfast Area), for socialist unity in Ireland. His appeal evoked a reply from Belfast I.L.P. leader, William Walker, and a bitter controversy ensued until it was stopped by the editor. This pamphlet is an unabridged record of the controversy between Connolly and Walker which was published in **Forward** between May 27th and July 8th, 1911. 16.8.2003

James Connolly

Plea For Socialist Unity in Ireland

(1911)

From **Forward**, 27th May 1911.

All thoughtful men and women who observe the political situations of their countries must realise that Ireland is on the verge of one of the most momentous constitutional changes in her history. Some form of self-government seems practically certain of realisation, not because of the increased fervour of the national demand, nor yet because, as Tory bigots blatantly assert, of the position of Mr. Redmond, but from the fact that there is no economic class in Ireland today whose interests as a class are bound up with the Union. The Irish landlords who had indeed something to fear from a Home Rule Parliament elected largely by tenant farmers, as would have been the case in the past, have now made their bargain under the various Land Purchase Acts, and, being economically secured, are now politically indifferent. Only the force of religious bigotry remains as an asset to Unionism.

It may be assumed that the 12th of July parade in Belfast this year will be exceptionally large, as every effort will be made, and no money spared, to make an imposing turnout in the hopes of, at the last moment, averting Home Rule, but the parade will be as the last flicker of the dying fire which blazes up before totally expiring. A spell of bad trade in Belfast might have enabled Orange orators to stir up rioting among idle mobs, but the rush of good trade we are at present enjoying destroys any chance of such senseless exhibitions. The Orangemen of today may hate the Pope, but he hates still more to lose time by rioting, when he

might make money by working, and in this he shows the “good sense which pre-eminently distinguishes the city by the Lagan.”

Home Rule, then, is almost a certainty of the future.

What are Irish Socialists doing in these circumstances? Are they exhibiting any Statesmanlike grasp of the situation, or are they still peddling along on sterile street corner theorisings without making any effort to consolidate their forces to seize the greater opportunities that are almost at their doors?

Let me attempt to answer this question.

There are in Ireland today two forms of Socialist organisations – the Independent Labour Party and the Socialist Party of Ireland. The former is strongest in the North, the latter strongest in the South, although it also has an active Branch in Belfast. The question which naturally arises as to whether there is any fundamental difference in policy or tactics between those two parties can be best answered by stating the attitude of the Socialist Party of Ireland (S.P.I.) towards the Irish Branches of the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.). The S.P.I., then, is so convinced of the need of unity among Socialists in Ireland that it is ready at any time to have a joint convention with the I.L.P., and to give to the delegates of such convention the power to debate and agree upon all questions of tactics, policy, and name for a new organisation to embrace all sections of the movement in Ireland. It believes that these questions which divide Socialists are not serious enough to warrant separate organisations in the one country, but can well be debated within one organisation; it maintains that the points upon which we disagree are not nearly so serious as the points upon which we thoroughly agree, and that there are more serious points of divergence between the various sections of the I.L.P. (or of the S.P.I.) than there are between the I.L.P. and the S.P.I., as organisations. What, then, keeps the two organisations divided? Laying aside all questions of personality, personal ambitions, and personal jealousies as being accidental and inessential, it may be truthfully asserted that the one point of divergence is that the I.L.P. in Belfast believes that the Socialist movement in Ireland must per force remain a dues-paying, organic part of the British Socialist movement, or else forfeit its title to be considered a part of International

Socialism, whereas the Socialist Party of Ireland maintains that the relations between Socialism in Ireland and in Great Britain should be based upon comradeship and mutual assistance, and not upon dues paying, should be fraternal and not organic, and should operate by exchange of literature and speakers rather than by attempts to treat as one two peoples of whom one has for 700 years nurtured an unending martyrdom rather than admit the unity or surrender its national identity. The Socialist Party of Ireland considers itself the only International Party in Ireland, since its conception of Internationalism is that of a free federation of free peoples, whereas that of the Belfast branches of the I.L.P. seems scarcely distinguishable from Imperialism, the merging of subjugated peoples in the political system of their conquerors. For the propagation universally of our ideal of a true internationalism there is only required the spread of reason and enlightenment amongst the peoples of the earth, whereas the conception of Internationalism tacitly accepted by our Comrades of the I.L.P. in Belfast required for its spread the flash of the sword of militarism, and the roar of a British 80-ton gun. We cannot conceive why our Comrades should insist that we are not Internationalists, and that we cannot be, unless we treat the Socialists of Great Britain better than we treat the Socialists of the Continent, or of America, or Australia.

This is a unique conception of Internationalism, unique and peculiar to Belfast. There is no 'most favoured nation clause' in Socialist diplomacy, and we, as Socialists in Ireland, can not afford to establish such a precedent.

Observe how this peculiarly Belfast attitude affects the development of Socialism in Ireland.

As everyone acquainted with Ireland knows, Nationalist Ireland contains all the elements of social struggles and worrying political theories. The fight of the landlord against the tenant, and the capitalist against the labourer, and vice versa, has ever waged in Ireland as fiercely as elsewhere. In the Nationalist ranks the democrat and the aristocrat, the revolutionist and the opportunist, all fight their battles, and, though weaker than the others, the Socialist also holds his own and delivers his message.

But in all this warring the advanced sections of Nationalist Ireland have looked in vain for help to the 'sturdy Protestant democracy of the North.'

At last, however, there arises in Belfast the Independent Labour Party, and hope of assistance springs up in the breasts of the battlers in the South. At last reinforcements are coming, it is thought, Protestant and Catholic working men and women can now unite as they have not done for a century in a common warfare against our common enemy. But slowly the news penetrates to us that Belfast refuses to recognise Ireland; its Labour men are so busy cheering Labour victories in England that it can give no time, nor hope, nor even encouragement to the men and women who are pioneering in Ireland. Finally, Belfast runs a Labour candidate, who declares publicly that he will vote against Home Rule or National Freedom, and the conviction spreads throughout Ireland that the rise of the I.L.P. in Belfast means nothing for social democracy in Ireland, but is simply the sign of a family quarrel among the Unionists.

Finally, I.L.P. men, delegates to the Irish Trades' Congress, vote at that gathering against the establishment of a Labour Party in Ireland. And this crime against the rise of a native Labour movement is committed in the name of Internationalism!!!

I have a great admiration for Comrade Walker, of Belfast, and I regretted the manifesto issued against him by the Irish Socialists during his Leith contest, but I am glad that he was defeated in North Belfast. This victory would have killed the hopes of Socialism among Irish Nationalists the world over. Not only in Ireland, but all over the continent of America and Australia, wherever Irishmen live and work, a vote given by Comrade Walker in the House of Commons against Home Rule would have filled the Irish with such an unreasoning and inveterate hatred of the cause that they would be lost to it for a generation. But imagine what our situation would have been in the rest of Ireland if the only Irish Socialist M.P. had voted against Home Rule. The cause in Ireland would have been completely discredited and damned. Nor would his opposition to Home Rule have softened the wrath or averted the hatred of the loyalists. Amongst the loyalists the I.L.P. in Ireland are believed to be Home Rulers, but, as they refuse to organise on an Irish

basis, amongst the Home Rulers the I.L.P. are looked upon as Unionists-Labour Unionists, it is true, but still Unionists. And Unionism in Ireland means Toryism.

Now what is going to be done! Another Irish Trades' Congress is at hand, and already I see from the agenda that the same crime is being planned against the idea of a Labour Party in Ireland. The Trades' Council of Dublin have a motion in favour of the establishment of a Labour Party in Ireland; the Trades' Council of Belfast have a motion recommending, as the best means of securing Labour representation, that Trades Unions in Ireland be recommended to join the Labour Party (in England). The Dublin motion sets an example which every Trades' Council in Nationalist Ireland would follow: the Belfast motion would be limited in its following to Belfast. But then the Socialist movement would be saved the danger (?) of the rise of a political Labour movement in Ireland. So would Irish capitalism and clericalism.

Is it too late to appeal to our Belfast Comrades of the I.L.P. to come out of their impossibilist position? Why sacrifice all Ireland for the sake of a part of Belfast? The Socialist Party of Ireland asks them what harm can come from organising on the basis of Irish political life, in view of the fact that in a few years some form of legislative independence is sure to be established in Ireland. Are we to wait until that event occurs, and then rush around trying to do by means of meetings and oratory what should have been prepared for by long and patient organising and upbuilding? If the first elections in Ireland to a Home Rule Parliament finds the forces of Socialism unprepared to enter the field, there will be an awful responsibility at the door of some party, but not at the doors of the Socialist Party of Ireland.

We, I repeat, are willing and anxious to sit down in Convention with our I.L.P. Comrades in order to frame a programme and decide upon a policy and name for a Socialist organisation in Ireland, provided that it be conceded that such organisation be controlled in Ireland, recognise Ireland's right to self-government, and maintains equal friendly relations with Socialists of all nations, irrespective of the Government under which they live.

Is that too much to ask for?

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William Walker

**Rebel Ireland:
And Its Protestant
Leaders**

(1910)

Forward, 3rd June 1911.

SOCIALISM IN BELFAST

What is Socialism? Such must be the query each of your readers must have pondered over, when they perused Comrade Connolly's article in last week's issue. For if what he preaches therein be Socialism, then surely he has a monopoly of the brand he adumbrates.

He utilises the first two paragraphs to attack Belfast and all within its borders, and draws a lurid picture of what the "Orange orators" would do, etc., "if trade were bad." A picture that, however true of 20 years' ago, is totally false as applied to the present day. For I affirm that it has now become impossible in Belfast to have a religious riot, and this is due to the good work done by that much despised body, the I.L.P.

I hold no brief for Belfast, but past bigotry aside, we have moved fast towards Municipal Socialism, leaving not merely the other cities of Ireland far behind, but giving the lead to many cities in England and Scotland.

We collectively own and control our gas works, water works, harbour works, markets, tramways, electricity, museums, art galleries, etc., whilst we Municipally cater for bowlers, cricketers, footballers, lovers of band music (having organised a Police Band), and our works' department do an enormous amount of 'timed' and 'contract' work within the Municipality. With the above in operation, we, in Belfast, have no need to be ashamed of being compared in Municipal management with any city in the kingdom. What does Comrade Connolly say?

Now, as to the Socialist Party of Ireland (and, by the way, who are they, how many branches and members have they?) that superior international body to the I.L.P.?

They (the S.P.I.) "believe that the Socialist movement in Ireland and Great Britain should be based upon comradeship and mutual assistance, and not upon dues paying, should be fraternal and not organic, etc." Words, words, words! What do they mean in practice? Why that the S.P.I. want the Trades Unions in Ireland to cease to contribute dues to an amalgamated Union ... That the Co-operative movement should cease its financial connection; that the great Friendly Society branches in Ireland should divorce themselves (financially) from their brethren across the channel, and that, having done so, we should raise aloft the flag of Internationalism, and declare that we, and we alone, are the only true Socialists and Internationalists! Bunkum, friend Connolly; you are obsessed with an antipathy to Belfast and the black North, and under your obsession you advocate reactionary doctrines alien to any brand of Socialism I have ever heard of.

PROTESTANT LEADERS

Now, just to correct your history. You say that "Nationalist Ireland contains all the elements of social struggles and worrying political theories ... But in all the

warring the advanced sections of Nationalist Ireland have looked in vain for help to the sturdy Protestant Democracy of the North.” Did you understand what you wrote, and what a libel the above is upon many of the greatest leaders whose recorded deeds illumine the pages of Irish history?

The leader and founder of the ‘48’ revolt was a Presbyterian from Ulster, John Mitchell. It was in Ulster that the Irish volunteer movement had its birth, and its President (Colonel Irvine) and its Commander (Lord Charlemont) were of the ‘sturdy Protestant Democracy of the North.’ It was in Belfast their first grand review took place.

Twenty years before Michael Davitt started on that great career for the solution of the Irish Land Problem, Ulster had taken and given a lead to Ireland. A meeting was held in Dublin, on 6th August, 1850, presided over by an ‘Ulster Protestant,’ Jas. M’Knight, LL.D., to protest and organise a crusade against landlordism in Ireland, and in the great fight in the ‘50’s, both in Parliament and the country, for the three F.’s, the names of three ‘sturdy Protestant Democrats’ of the North are always found leading – William Sharman Crawford, M.P.; Rev. Mr. Rodgers, of Comber; and Daniel M’Curdy Greer, B.L., are names whose association with agrarian agitation, is so intimate as to call for no further comment.

It was a ‘sturdy Protestant Democrat of the North,’ who led the revolt of the Irish Party, and began that career of obstruction so effective to Ireland. And Joseph Gillies Biggar, the Belfast pork merchant, can well challenge ‘any section of Nationalist Ireland’ for work done for the country, whilst in the great fight on the Land Bill of Gladstone’s, Lord Russell’s name, a Belfast Catholic, is inseparably associated, and the famous Protestant, Theobald Wolfe Tone, found Belfast to be the most favourable place to found that wonderful organisation, ‘the Society of United Irishmen,’ an organisation that has to its credit at least wonderful doughty deeds. In fact, whilst not disparaging the other provinces of Ireland, one can truthfully say that Ulster has given her fair quota to the work so much believed in by Comrade Connolly, viz., Nationalism.

And, may I further point out, that the Protestant faith has given more leaders to the Irish rebels than the Catholic faith. Grattan, Davies, Butt, Mitchell, Parnell,

Shaw, Biggar, etc., are all names to conjure with, and all, without exception, were Protestants!

As to Comrade Connolly's rejoicing over my defeat in North Belfast; well, that is his affair. But it does seem a peculiar kind of Socialism that aims at legislative independence before Socialism. I have, however, the satisfaction of knowing that the Nationalist Labour electors of North Belfast voted for me, whilst the Nationalists of all shades of thought will give me a hearing at any time and place, to expound my views, and with an enthusiasm unbounded have received from me the gospel of Socialism. May I remind Comrade Connolly of the famous dictum of that still more famous rebel, James Fintan Lalor, who declared that – *“The land question contains, and the legislative question does not contain, the materials from which victory is to be manufactured.”*

Whilst 'Nationalist Ireland' has mortgaged posterity to the tune of over 200,000,000 to compensate (?) Irish landlordism.

AN IRISH LABOUR PARTY

Now, just a final word. An Irish Labour Party is wanted. The I.L.P. are suspects: no due-contributing is to be allowed. Why? Count the enormous strides made in Belfast, under I.L.P. auspices, during the past 20 years, find a parallel, and would an Irish Labour Party help? Scotland itself affords the answer. She is a nation seeking academically, at least, legislative independence, and at the start of the L.R.C. movement Scotland formed a Scottish Labour Party. For years that Party appealed in vain to the workers, with the result that in 1909 the Scottish societies agreed to affiliate with the British Labour Party and their national organisation, whilst the delegates to the Portsmouth Conference (theoretically Home Rulers), unanimously adopted this policy.

Bailie Jack (Scottish Ironmoulders) declared that “what was wanted was the unity of our forces all over.” Just so, but Ireland has to be, must be, treated differently. Why? Because of the Conservative temperament of certain Irish

propagandists, and because of their insistence on viewing the class war as a national question instead of, as it is, a world-wide question.

In the report of the E.C. of the Labour Party to the Newport Conference, under the heading of *Internationalism*, we find these words: “We are specially proud of the influence of our Party on International politics ... The visit of the Labour Party to Germany last Whitsuntide was one of the happiest and most auspicious events in the whole of our history. The members were received officially at most of the towns they visited, and at the lunch given in the Reichstag building at Berlin, one of the speakers who welcomed them was Dr. Von Bethmann-Hollweg, who, since then, has become the Imperial Chancellor. We hope that an opportunity will soon present itself for our receiving some of our Continental Parliamentary friends in the same hospitable way.”

This is Internationalism, and it is the I.L.P. who has pioneered this, and with their policy and aims on the question, I, at least, subscribe to.

My place of birth was accidental, but my duty to my class is worldwide, hence MY INTERNATIONALISM!

James Connolly

**Ireland, Karl
Marx and
William**

(1910)

From **Forward**, 10th June 1911.

A few days ago, when conversing with an astute observer of things Socialistic in Ireland, I asked him, as he was neither of Belfast nor Dublin, what he thought of my appeal for Socialist Unity in Ireland. He replied, much to my astonishment, that I had mistaken the nature of the real objection certain dominating elements in Belfast felt towards such a course. *“You will find,”* he said, *“that their real objection is not based upon Internationalism, but is based upon Parochialism.”*

When reading Comrade Walker’s astounding article, I felt how true the above statement had been. Beginning with the absolutely false statement that I *“had utilised the first two paragraphs of my article to attack Belfast and all within its borders”* (for the refutation of which statement I refer the reader to the article itself). He next proceeded to overwhelm us with a mass of tawdry rhetoric, cheap and irrelevant schoolboy history, and badly digested political philosophy, all permeated with an artfully instilled appeal to religious prejudice and civic sectionalism carefully calculated to make Belfast wrap itself around in a garment of self-righteousness, and to look with scorn upon its supposed weaker Irish brethren. All this is, of course, in the approved Walker style. But it does not touch the fringe of the question at issue. That question, as readers of **Forward** will remember, I propounded as follows:

There are in Ireland two Socialist parties; there should only be one. The only real dividing issue, apart from personal elements, is the question of recognising Ireland as entitled to self-government. Any Irish Socialist who recognises Ireland’s right to self-government should logically embody his political activities in a form of organisation based upon the principle of Irish self-government. I proposed, therefore, that the two Socialist organisations in Ireland should each recognise that basis, and then sit down in convention to frame a programme and policy for such a party suited to the present and impending political situation of the country. Further, I pointed out that the trade unions movement in Ireland was considering the advisability of establishing a Labour Party, and that the same

elements which keep the Belfast I.L.P. from recognising officially the right of Ireland to self-government had acted and voted last year in the Irish Trades Congress against a proposition to establish a Labour Party in Ireland, and were about to do the same this year. This, I contended, and still contend, was and is a crime against the International Labour movement – a crime committed in the name of Internationalism – prostituting the name in the act of invoking it.

LORD CHARLEMONT: DEMOCRAT

Now, how does Comrade Walker meet this friendly appeal for Socialist Unity? First, he declares that I am obsessed with an *“antipathy to Belfast and the Black North,”* and proceeds to give a long defence of Protestants and glorification of Protestant rebels in Ireland. The first *“sturdy Protestant Democrat”* is Lord Charlemont, an aristocratic poltroon, who deserted, denounced, and betrayed the Irish Volunteers when they proposed to use their organisation to obtain a Democratic extension of the suffrage and religious toleration. That he should be cited by Comrade Walker as a Democrat proves that there is a kink somewhere, either in Walker’s conception of Democracy, or in his knowledge of Irish history.

But friend William blunders on from absurdity to absurdity. Remember that he is opposed to self-government to Ireland and then admire his colossal nerve in citing the glorious example of *“sturdy Protestant Democrats,”* who gave their whole lives in battling, suffering, and sacrifice for the cause of National Freedom, which Comrade Walker rejects. He cites Theobald Wolfe Tone. Wolfe Tone recognised that National Independence was an essential element of Democracy, and declared that *“to break this connection with England, the abiding cause of all our woes,”* was his object. He cited Fintan Lalor. Lalor declared that the Irish people should fight for *“full and absolute independence for this island, and for every man in it.”* Lalor was not a Protestant; but our Comrade also cites Lalor’s contemporary, Mitchell, whom he wrongly declares a Presbyterian. He was instead a Unitarian. Mitchell summed up his political ideal in these words:

“We want Ireland, not for the peers nor for the nominees of peers in College Green, but Ireland for the Irish people – an Irish Republic, one and indivisible.”

Comrade Walker also cites Joseph Gillies Biggar, a sturdy and uncompromising Home Ruler. In fact, practically all the “*sturdy Protestant Democrats*” he cites are men who would have treated with contempt Walker’s pitiful straddle in Irish politics. They are all men to whom he would have been opposed were he living in their time. He minds us of this section by quoting, among the names of Irish ‘*rebels*,’ Grattan, Butt, and Shaw, a quotation that must have brought a grin to the face of anyone who read it, and had even a rudimentary knowledge of Irish history.

THE HISTORY OF BLACK ULSTER

In passing, let me remark that the names cited by Comrade Walker but confirm my point. We do not care so much what a few men did, as what did the vast mass of their co-religionists do. The vast mass of the Protestants of Ulster, except during the period of 1798, were bitter enemies of the men he has named, and during the bitter struggle of the Land League, when the peasantry in the other provinces were engaged in a life and death struggle against landlordism, the sturdy Protestant Democracy of the North was electing landlords, and the nominees of landlords, to every Protestant constituency in Ulster. When Comrade Walker is doing propaganda work in Belfast he does not fail to remind his hearers of their remissness in such matters. Why, then, does he mount another horse in his letter to **Forward**?

All these men will live in history because they threw in their lot with the other provinces in a common struggle for political freedom. In the exact measure that we admire and applaud them must we condemn and deplore the sectional and parochial action of Comrade Walker.

But, he says in his peroration, “*My place of birth was accidental, but my duty to my class is world-wide.*” Fine, man! Grand!! On a platform, delivered in your best style, it would sound heroic; in cold print, it smells of clap-trap. If the place of your birth was accidental, was not the fact of your birth in the working class an accident also? You might have been born in Buckingham Palace a prince of the blood royal, or even a princess, for all you had to do with it. I do not care where

you were born – (we have had Jews, Russians, Germans, Lithuanians, Scotsmen, and Englishmen in the S.P.I.) – but I do care where you are earning your living, and I hold that every class-conscious worker should work for the freedom of the country in which he lives, if he desires to hasten the political power of his class in that country.

Our Comrade says, in his genial style, that these are “*reactionary doctrines alien to any brand of Socialism*” he ever heard of. He must be singularly ignorant of classical Socialist literature. Karl Marx was not much of a reactionist, and he knew a thing or two about Socialism. Let me then quote, for Comrade Walker, the opinion of Karl Marx on Socialism and Ireland.

KARL MARX ON SOCIALISM AND IRELAND

I quote from a letter sent to his friend, Kugelman, on 29th November, 1869, from Toulon, and re-printed in the **Neue Zeit** of 1902. Read:

“I have more and more arrived at the conviction – though this conviction has not entered the mind of the English working class – that we shall never be able to do in England anything decisive if we do not resolutely separate its policy in all that concerns Ireland from the policy of the dominant classes, so that not only will she be able to make common cause with the Irish, but will even be able to take the initiative in dissolving the Union founded in 1801, and replacing it by an independent Federative bond, and this aim should be followed not as a matter of sympathy with Ireland, but as a necessity based on the interest of the English proletariat ... Each of the movements in England remains paralysed by the struggle with the Irish who even in England form a considerable proportion of the working class ... And it is not only the social evolution established in England which is retarded by these relations with Ireland, but also its external policy, notably with Russia and the United States.”

Written in 1869, Comrade Walker, but reads like a statement of what is happening today.

At every International Socialist Congress a separate vote and recognition is given to such subject nations as Finland, Poland, and the various nationalities within the Russian Empire; at Stuttgart a reception and message of sympathy was given to a delegate from India, speaking not on behalf of the Indian workers, but primarily on behalf of Indian Nationalism; and at the Paris Congress of 1900, the delegates from the Irish Socialist Party were seated, and given the same votes as the delegates of independent nationalities, such as Germany or England. At Stuttgart, Comrade Bebel declared that one consequence of the growth of Socialism would be a renaissance of national culture and sympathies in countries now politically suppressed, and he welcomed such a renaissance on the ground that the civilisation of the future would be all the richer from the presence of so many distinctive forms of intellectual growth arising from different racial and national developments.

Such, in brief, is the real position of International Socialism towards subject nations. It is a concept based upon the belief that civilisation needs free nations just as the nations need free individual citizens, that the internationalism of the future will be based upon the free federation of free peoples, and cannot be realised through the subjugation of the smaller by the larger political unit. But Comrade Walker says these are words, and mean that the S.P.I. desires the Irish to divorce themselves from all Trade Unions, Friendly Societies, and Co-operative Societies across the water. Not necessarily. If we look at the two nations across the Atlantic, we can see that every Trade Union and Friendly Society which does business in the United States also does business in Canada and vice versa, yet the two nations are independent politically of each other. Why can England and Ireland not be as industrially intermingled, and yet politically separate?

WALKER AND THE KING

Our Comrade is sore over my attitude towards his election campaign in North Belfast. But he should have reminded the readers of **Forward** of his attitude in that campaign. He should have told them that he pledged himself to oppose Home Rule and religious equality. That he pledged himself to oppose any alteration in the Coronation Oath – that oath which the King of England recently

objected to take because of its stupid reactionary intolerance. The oath was too much even for a royal stomach, but Comrade Walker pledged himself to maintain it. He should have reminded his readers that in the 17th and 18th centuries the ferocious bigotry of the governing class placed upon the Statute Book of Ireland laws against Roman Catholics so atrocious that they are regarded by modern sentiment as the very incarnation of sectarian malevolence, and that he promised to maintain them in his answer to the following question:

“Will you resist every attack upon the legislative enactments provided by our forefathers as necessary safeguards against the political encroachments of the papacy?”

Answer by W. Walker – “Yes.”

We progress as we get away from the bigotry of our forefathers, but Comrade Walker was willing to make their bigotry our standard of legislation.

In a country overwhelmingly of our religious faith, he pledged himself to oppose the entry of members of that faith into certain political and legal offices; he pledged himself to *“make an effort to obtain a redistribution of Parliamentary seats for the purpose of diminishing the extravagant representation of Ireland by means of which the Roman Catholics and disloyal party has hindered the business of the House of Commons,”* and he declared that *“Protestantism means protesting against superstition; hence true Protestantism is synonymous with Labour,”* thus leaving it to be inferred that if a Catholic embraced the cause of Labour, he also embraced the Protestant religion.

Well, Comrade Walker may feel scandalised at my statement that I am glad of his defeat, but I refuse to endorse the idea that because a man styles himself *“Independent Labour”* or even *“Socialist,”* he has a right to be a renegade to every other principle of progress. When he has purged himself of such reactionary ideas, as other men have done since the same election, I will gladly support him in his contest for a Parliamentary seat in an Irish House of Commons.

Finally, the fact remains, and we may yet have to appeal to the tribunal of the International Labour movement on the question, that Comrade William Walker, a member of the Executive of the Labour Party is vehemently opposing the formation of a Labour Party in Ireland. We may have to ask the aforesaid tribunal whether Comrade Walker, in such action, has the support of his Executive, or is speaking with their mandate in thus doing the work of the enemy joining with the bigoted Orangeman, and the equally bigoted follower of Mr. Redmond to stifle the aspirations of the more militant section of the Irish Working Class for a party of its own, to fight its battles against the common enemy.

I, for one, do not believe that any one of the men whose genius have made the Socialist movement what it is, would hail the uprising of a Labour Party in Ireland, and the consolidation of our Socialist forces, with anything save joy and satisfaction.

William Walker

**Socialism and
Internationalism:
A Reply to Friend Connolly**

(1911)

Forward, 17th June 1911.

Comrade Connolly evidently recognises that his cause is lost, as from argument in his first article he descends to personal abuse in his second, and this is a sure symptom of defeat. But, however tempting his example, I have too much regard for Socialism to follow the path he has unfortunately chosen to tread.

Personal abuse is much too plentiful in our movement, and should not be tolerated; as if we cannot discuss principles without introducing personalities, it were time we had ceased to call ourselves Socialist. In his first article, Comrade Connolly set out to prove certain articles. (a) The need of an Irish Labour Party; (b) the failure of Protestant Democratic Ulster to help the Nationalist movement; and (c) the non-National character of the I.L.P. in Ireland.

From all of these Comrade Connolly keeps as far away as possible in his last article, preferring copious extracts from Karl Marx and a résumé of a Parliamentary experience of mine as matter to review, rather than the propositions he set out to father.

May I assure Comrade Connolly that much though I admire Karl Marx, he is not a deity to me, and I trust I will always preserve the right to exercise my own judgment, and not merely when I am in trouble, turn to Marx to have his ex-Cathedra opinions rammed down my throat: and as to my Parliamentary experience, which is evidently quoted with the object of making an appeal to sectarianism and opening a chapter long closed, may I say that I am willing to take the verdict of the Belfast Catholics themselves upon the question, as I know that they and I have long since reconciled the difference so magnified by our Socialist comrade.

Now, Friend Connolly, you don't answer my question. Who are the S.P.I., how many of you are there, what have you done, and what are you going to do that the I.L.P. cannot do? These are pertinent to the issue, and I would like an answer.

I have glorified Belfast! – have I? Well, I have only told the truth – which, by the way, friend Connolly doesn't dare to challenge; and though he may sneer at Belfast, still I am glad to think that I am going to welcome him as a citizen within

its borders. Democracy, my friend, has no geography, and when you query Lord Charlemont as a democrat, you query something I never wrote, as I was replying to your charge that "*the Protestant Democracy of the North had not contributed to the Irish movement.*" And I simply wrote that he was of the Protestant Democracy, a vast difference; which I trust you may now comprehend.

Into a pitfall of errors Comrade Connolly falls when he assumes that I was quoting "*the Protestant rebels,*" as approving of them. I wasn't, but I was pointing out that Catholic Ireland had many Protestant leaders in all the great revolutionary movements, and this evidently was information to friend Connolly. But to get to essentials. What do you want an Irish Labour Party for? Will Ireland more readily respond to it than to the British Labour Party? What is your experience? Have you proved that? No; everything that the people of Ireland want can be safeguarded much better under the protection of the United Democracies than if we were isolated. This truth has been reaffirmed at the recent Irish Trade Union Congress, when once again a Congress of Irish representative workmen pledged themselves over to the British Labour Party, recognising therein the elements of protection; but Comrade Connolly, who three weeks ago found me without Nationalism, finds me today full charged with parochialism, and this he declares is why I am not an Internationalist like unto him. Just so. That is just the reason. Whilst frothy talk about "*Nationalism forming the basis of Internationales*" has been plentiful with some people, some of us in Belfast have been doing something to improve conditions – in the Poor Law Board, in the City Council, and the Trade Union branch. Amongst the textile workers, the sweated and oppressed, the dockers and the carters, we have gone to help to lift them to a better condition of life. Of course this is Parochialism. Well, Friend Connolly, I am proud of my '*parochial*' reputation. It has meant something to the poor consumptive, to the workhouse child, and the Trade Union member; with this knowledge I am well content to be so labelled. But my '*parochialism*' is true nationality. I would give each locality (within certain well-defined limits) local autonomy, and thus develop a healthy rivalry in the supply of those amenities to our municipal life, which, alas, in the larger part of Ireland are in the hands of the private speculator. As to my Parliamentary defeat (?) My friend, I don't feel scandalised a little bit about your being glad. If I mistake not,

you were in the land of the Stars and Stripes when we in Belfast were essaying a tilt with the forces of reaction, and may I assure you from a very intimate knowledge of Belfast life, that had you been with us, and canvassing and speaking against me, it wouldn't have affected one vote beyond your own. Against clericalism I am (and I have said much more about the Protestant than the Catholic clergy); yet there is not a worker in either ranks who doesn't know that my activities are not self-interested. But that my opinions are honestly if wrongly (?) held, and that not once in all my public career did personal religion in the least influence me.

Now for the tit-bit of the article. Comrade Connolly "*is to ask the Labour Party whether in my action I have their support,*" and I assume he will make them expel me. Wonderful! This is the tolerant spirit which at its birth the S.P.I. discloses. Those with whom you agree on everything are blessed; otherwise, be ye accursed. My friend, remember the injunction of Ruskin, "*To tolerate everything but every other man's intolerance.*" Try first of all to do something for Ireland or a part thereof, in addition to talking, and whilst so doing you will learn a lesson which we of the plodding and non-ornamental party have been taught, viz., that the revival of Ireland and the prosperity of her people lie not in platitudes or vain-glorifying, but in doing that work which, bringing no personal remuneration or glory, yet lifts the veil of poverty and shame a little more from the face of the people.

Try to remember that your opponent may be as honest as yourself, and that in his own way may be working out Ireland's salvation – and that the best tribute (you unconsciously pay) ever rendered to my humble self lies in the last paragraph but one of your last article, in which you accuse me "of joining with the bigoted Orangemen and the equally bigoted followers of Mr. Redmond." I am proud that I have been with others an humble instrument to draw on to a common platform the bigoted sections of both armies. It is a matter for sincere congratulation. That this spirit may flourish like the green bay tree is the earnest wish of yours truly.

James Connolly

**Socialist
Symposium on
Internationalism,
and Some Other Things
(1910)**

From **Forward**, 1st July 1911.

This is a symposium of Socialist ideas upon Nationalism and Internationalism! It is made necessary because of the crude and ill-digested ideas upon the subject, which, in certain quarters, pass muster for Socialist thought – ideas which by reason of their crude and ill-digested character have done, and are doing, infinite harm to the Socialist cause.

In passing, however, let me remind the reader that in this controversy Comrade Walker and Comrade Connolly are but representatives of two opposite policies, that as persons they are of interest to nobody, and that, therefore, any criticism of the past or present policy of either cannot be construed as a personal attack. When a Socialist whose policy has been exposed in all its baneful consequences begins to cry out about 'personal abuse' the most charitable thing

we can do is to pass his whine over with the contempt it deserves, and stick to the subject in hand.

All that unctuous self-glorification and holier-than-thou attitudinising about his work for the *“poor consumptive, the workhouse child, and the Trades Union member,”* *“the textile workers, the dockers, and the carters, the sweated and the oppressed,”* and *“that work which, bringing no personal remuneration or glory, yet lifts the veil of poverty and shame a little more from the face of the people,”* all that is valuable as a study in the psychology of Comrade Walker, and, as an indication that the Pharisaical spirit of the ‘unco guid’ and ‘rigidly righteous,’ still walks abroad amongst us, but as a real contribution to the questions in dispute, like the flowers that bloom in the spring, tra la, they have nothing to do with the case. Comrade Walker knows that upon the side opposed to him there are as hard and unselfish workers for our class as he ever knew how to be, even although they do not write to **Forward** to call attention to their unobtrusive (?) self-sacrifice, as he has done to his.

Nor yet is there any question of making or asking the Labour Party to ‘expel’ Comrade Walker, as he pretends to assume I desire. I do not care three cents whether they expel him or make him chairman. If the Labour Party wish to send their electoral ship to sea loaded with such a heavy freight as the reactionary opinions of Comrade Walker, that is their business, not mine. But it is my business to know if in the struggles of the militant Irish workers to found a political party of their class upon independent Labour lines they have to regard the Labour Party in England as a helpful elder brother or as a deadly rival. That is the question.

We, of the Socialist Party of Ireland, now, as in the past, hold it to be our duty to assist and foster every tendency of organised Labour in Ireland to found a Labour Party capable of fighting the capitalist parties of Ireland upon their own soil. Comrade Walker and his followers insist that every such tendency is to be fought to the death, that in its upward march the idea of a Labour Party in Ireland must fight its way against the combined hosts of Orangeism, Redmondism, and I.L.P.’ism. That the Labour Party of England is the enemy of every attempt to found a similar party in Ireland. I refuse to believe him. I hold

that his policy in Ireland is the very reverse of all that the I.L.P. stands for in Great Britain.

At the Irish Trade Union Congress, held in Galway, on Whit Tuesday, a motion to establish a Labour Party in Ireland was defeated by an amendment moved by Comrade Walker to the effect that the way to secure Independent Labour Representation was to affiliate with the Labour Party in England. If he had moved an amendment leaving it optional upon the Trade Unions to choose which Labour Party they should join no one could find fault, but no such option was left. His motto was: *“Either affiliate with England, or we will squelch you.”* His amendment was carried by 32 votes to 29. The unborn Labour Party of Ireland was strangled in the womb by the hands of I.L.P.ers. The 29 votes for the motion represented all the militant forces of the more progressive Trade Unions of Ireland, forces anxious for a battle on behalf of Labour against the political forces of Irish Capitalism; the 32 votes for Walker’s amendment represented the forces of reaction anxious at all costs to save the present political parties from the danger inherent in a proposal to give the political forces of Labour an Irish home and Irish basis of operations.

Had the motion been carried, next General Election would have seen some seats in Ireland fought by Labour against all comers. The motion was defeated by an unholy alliance, and reaction in Ireland breathes freely once more. By dishonesty – and I use the word deliberately – suppressing the latter half of my sentence, Comrade Walker says I pay him an unconscious tribute when I accuse him *“of joining with the bigoted Orangemen and the equally bigoted followers of Mr. Redmond,”* and he says *“I am proud that I have been with others an humble instrument to draw on a common platform the bigoted sections of both armies.”*

Now add the part of my sentence he has suppressed – *“To stifle the aspirations of the more militant section of the Irish working class to have a party of its own, to fight its battles against the common enemy.”* That, dear reader, is what Mr. Walker is proud of. What do you think?

I do not propose to discuss the municipal achievements of Belfast. They are small compared with those of Birmingham, and I have yet to hear of the

Birmingham I.L.P. claiming that the municipal enterprise of the Birmingham Conservative City Council makes the Birmingham I.L.P. infallible guides on questions of national policy, as Comrade Walker seems to claim that the enterprise of the Belfast Conservative City fathers endows with political wisdom the Belfast followers of William Walker. I do not *'dare to challenge'* his statements about municipal activities in Belfast, because they have nothing to do with the question, and were only brought in by friend William in the faint hope of diverting attention from the point at issue.

As every reader of **Forward** knows, I have denounced the civic rottenness of Nationalist Ireland in general, and Dublin in particular, in words infinitely more scathing than anything I have said about Belfast. As to Lord Charlemont, even the merest dabbler in Irish history knows that he was an aristocrat of the aristocrats, neither politically, socially, nor yet sympathetically *"of the Protestant Democracy,"* all my opponent's wriggling notwithstanding.

Then our Comrade Walker, slipping presumably by inadvertence, into the real questions, asks – *"What do you want an Irish Labour Party for? Will Ireland more readily respond to it than to the British Labour Party?"*

Well, we want an Irish Labour Party because the Irish Trade Unions have not, as a whole, affiliated with the British Labour Party. Has any Trades Council outside of Belfast affiliated with it in actual practice? Where is there a branch of the Labour Party, or a Labour Representation Committee affiliated with England, south of Belfast? The vast mass of the Trade Unionists of Ireland look upon the Labour Party as essentially British, and even when they are members of an amalgamated Union nationally affiliated to that Party, they in Ireland refuse to take steps to embody that theoretical affiliation in actual Irish Practice. We want an Irish Labour and Socialist movement because we believe, in the spirit of the founder of the Internationalism of the Socialist movement, Karl Marx, whose words in favour of Irish independence I quoted in a former letter, that no nation is good enough or wise enough to be able to rule another nation. We want an Irish Labour and Socialist movement because we believe in the words of the declaration of principles of the Irish Socialist Party of 1896:

“That the subjugation of one nation to another, as of Ireland to England, is a barrier to the free, political, and economic development of the subjected nations, and can only serve the interests of the exploiting classes of both nations.”

And we want such an Irish movement because it is in harmony with the spirit and philosophy of International Socialism.

Permit me to quote to you some International testimony. I take, first, the testimony of that brilliant Socialist orator and publicist, Gabriel Deville, the veteran pioneer of Socialist Internationalism. The quotation is from a speech delivered in Paris, in November, 1893, and regarded as such a valuable statement of the Socialist position that it has been printed and published in book form in both France and America. Read:

“Just as the idea of revolution is identified with the ideas of murder and destruction, in the same way the Internationalism of the workers is identified with anti-patriotism. There is in the latter case as in the former, a fundamental error, and it remains for me to show that theoretically and practically the identification of the Internationalism of Labour with anti-patriotism is unjustifiable. And to begin with, he who says Internationalism says Internationalism, and does not say anti-nationalism; consequently, you see at once that no one ought – either to approve or condemn it – to use the word, Internationalism, to express what it does not mean and what other words do mean. Instead of allowing ourselves to be led astray by our various fantastic notions, let us here, as elsewhere, examine the facts, and see what conclusions they impose upon us. Socialism flows from the facts, it follows them and does not precede them ... Now the facts shew us two things: on the one hand, the existence of countries (fatherlands); on the other, the existence, in every social stratum, of an international solidarity. It is with countries as with classes; some deny the existence of the former, others of the latter. Now, in reason, it is no more possible to deny the existence of the country (fatherland) than the existence of classes in that country. It is all right to look forward to the day when national patriotism shall be swallowed up in world-wide brotherhood, but while waiting for the facts to turn where classes shall vanish in human solidarity, but while waiting for the facts to turn this noble ideal into a reality, we must – in both cases – adapt

ourselves to the facts as they actually are at present. To wish to suppress them (classes and nationalities) does not suppress them, to protest against their existence does not at all prevent them from existing, and so long as countries and classes exist it will be necessary for us, not to deny their existence in declarations, but to adapt our tactics to the facts which are the consequences of their existence. Just as the feeling of national solidarity is added to the feeling of family solidarity, without destroying the latter, in the same way the relatively new sentiment of international solidarity is added to the former, which is still retained. A new sentiment springing from a new situation does not annihilate the older sentiments and emotions as long as the conditions that gave them birth continue to exist, and families and nations are still in existence.

“To safeguard the little independence left to them as labourers, the workers have been led by the state of affairs, by actual conditions, as were the business men before them, to be Internationalists; but they are patriots, and must be patriots only, whenever their country is menaced by danger from abroad. I hope you now see that the Internationalism of the workers and the Socialists cannot, by any possibility lead to anti-patriotism.”

So far, Deville. Now hear the eloquent Jaurès, the peerless orator of the International movement. He is speaking at Limoges, in 1905, about the separation of Norway from Sweden. Bear in mind that this is no mere question of a Home Rule Parliament, but of actual separation. Norway had a Home Rule Parliament, but was not satisfied, and declared for absolute independence. Jaurès says:

“Norway, conquered nearly a century ago by Sweden, and seeking ever since, at intervals, but with increasing vigour to recover its autonomy, has at last proclaimed its national independence. It has broken the link which for nearly a hundred years has bound it to Sweden. And there have been in Sweden certain of the Conservative governing class proud and obstinate, who, for a time, have dreamt of resorting to war to compel Norway to submit in spite of herself to the Swedish Union. If this war of the Swedish bourgeoisie had broken out, in spite of the Norwegian Socialists, in spite of the Swedish Socialists, it is very clear that the Norwegian Socialists who, beforehand, had by their votes, by their suffrages,

affirmed the independence of Norway, would have defended it even by force against the assaults of the Swedish oligarchy ... But at the same time that the Socialists of Norway would have been right in defending their national independence, it would have been the right and duty of the Swedish Socialists to oppose, even by the proclamation of a general strike, any attempt at violence, at conquest, and annexation, made by the Swedish bourgeoisie.”

Thus Jaurès affirms, in the name of International Socialism, that the Socialists of a subject nation were and are not only in the right in voting for the national independence of their country, but in defending it with their lives if need be. And what he says has at all times been acted upon by Socialist thinkers before and since.

Keir Hardie was battling for Irish Home Rule when the Liberal Government was filling Irish jails with unconvicted Irish men and women. Bruce Glasier was a member of the Irish Land League in Glasgow at the same stormy time. H.M. Hyndman sat upon the National Executive of Great Britain of the Irish Land League; Edward Aveling, brilliant expositor of Socialist science, was the first man outside Ireland to formally join the Irish Socialist Republican Party; his wife, Eleanor Marx Aveling, daughter of Karl Marx, in her **History of the Working Class Movement in England**, says sympathetically of our national struggle:

“It is certain that the hope of ‘Ireland a Nation’ lies not in her middle-class O’Connells, but in her generous, devoted, heroic working men and women!”

And within a month of its formation in 1896, she wrote to the Dublin organisation offering us whatever help it was in her power to give. Comrade Leatham, now editing the **Huddersfield Worker**, in his pamphlet, **What is the good of Empire?**, has some pertinent things to say of the desire for national independence, that sufficiently in dictates where he stands on such a question. The whole Socialist Press of the world cheered on the Cubans in their rebellion against Spain, and the Filipinos in their insurrection against the United States; in fact, in all the world there is not to be found such an extraordinarily perverted conception of Socialism as that fathered by Comrade William Walker. It is, I repeat, a brand of mere parochialism, which seeks to hide its true essence

by flaunting the International banner, but when examined in the light of its acts, we find that the banner under which it seeks to rally us is not the sacred banner of true Internationalism, but is instead the shamefaced flag of a bastard Imperialism!

“The working-class International,” says Jaurès, “which is the free combination of all the national organisations of the universal proletariat, each using in the common struggle the means of action given to it by the nationalist constitution and the national traditions, this working class cannot solve the international problem by the suppression or by the isolation of any nation.”

So says Jaures, so says the Socialist world, so, as a humble member of the great international family of Socialists, says the Socialist Party of Ireland.

Who are we, what are our members?

We will answer that to any authorised official of the I.L.P. who writes to ask such information, with a view to the proposed joint convention.

Let us cast off all sectionalism, all parochialism, and sit down as brothers and sisters together in an earnest effort to find a common basis of agreement for actions on a national scale against the capitalist enemy within our shores.

Given the formation of a United Socialist Party in Ireland, and, guided and helped by such a Party, a Labour Party on Irish soil, controlled from within Ireland, thus the necessary and inevitable incidents of the electoral struggles of such a Party against the Irish political capitalist parties will teach Socialism and Internationalism to the Irish workers better than a million speeches.

William Walker

A Socialist (sic) Symposium and An Evasion (1910)

Forward, 8th July 1911.

May I apologise to Comrade Connolly for having, in my last week's note, charged him with personal abuse. I withdraw my charge – as it appears from last week's issue that it is a temperamental weakness of friend Connolly's, for which Nature alone is to be blamed.

In addition, my memory has played me false on history. I had always understood that 'Biddy Moriarty,' Dan O'Connell's famous termagant, had only given birth to twins, viz., Arthur Trew (of Belfast) and Paster Boal (of Glasgow) – whereas it now appears that it was triplets, and that the third child was James Connolly, sometime of Edinburgh, sometime of Dublin, then of New York, again of Dublin, now of Belfast, and several other places, all of which had the unblushing temerity to refuse the Gospel of the new Messiah, and to demand some earnest as to the qualifications of the man who, refusing to WORK either in Scotland, Ireland, or America, in any existing organisation, demands as the price of his allegiance to Socialistic propaganda that the organisation must be his, and either GENERAL Secretary or NATIONAL Organiser must be his title.

Aut Caesar, aut Nullis! But, alas, Caesar's army is a drummer boy, with a very big drum, and a fifer, with a very discordant tone.

'The Socialist Party of Ireland!' When friend Connolly previously resided in Ireland HIS organisation was *'The Irish Socialist Republican Party.'* Why has the *'Republican'* been dropped? Has friend Connolly also joined the worshippers of Monarchy, or has the change in title been dictated by the fact that he hopes to scoop some of the Royalists into his organisation? Whatever be the reason, the change is indicative of the basis upon which the new creed is founded.

I understand that the Socialist Party of Ireland object to the capitalistic system on the ground that the capitalist reaps where he has not sown. How does friend Connolly square his preaching with his practice? For 18 years the I.L.P. have preached the Gospel of Socialism in various parts of Ulster with gratifying success. They have faced the batons of the police; the deacon poles of the Orangemen; the assaults of the hooligan; the execration of the rabble; and have surmounted all difficulties: and now, when the seed sown is yielding forth its fruit, along comes our drawing-room warrior, with an order to clear the way for he and his to reap where they never had the courage nor capacity to sow. Pretty bumptious, when you think of it: and exactly on a parallel with Landlordism and Capitalism!

Again friend Connolly, whose chief weapon in an apparently attenuated armoury, is vituperation, has a weakness for quotation.

Andrew Carnegie, you have a few sins to answer for, and one amongst them is the fact that your 'free' libraries entice people to borrow books and amply quote therefrom, even though they neither understand the theory nor are possessed of the capacity to apply in practice the instruction and admonition thereof. Evidently originality is too big a strain to be endured, hence quotations look well and read better than original matter, besides doing nobody any harm.

Belfast's municipal activities seem to be gall and wormwood to our Comrade. They excite his ire. They induce him to throw aside the last vestige of comradeship, and to descend to the level of the corner-boy in his rage against all and sundry, who have dared to spend their time in doing the collar work which ALONE makes for success, instead of leading an invisible army nowhere, but content if the general be visible to the people of the plain.

If and when friend Connolly came to Dublin from Edinburgh he had been content to be a soldier of the line, and not aspire to range himself with the Olympian deities; had got down to the problem of poverty and WORKED to solve it, Dublin today would tell a different tale, and its municipal activities would have extended into fields where private speculation reigns triumphant, but no glory would have been associated with the drudgery, hence avoidance of such menial tasks was the supreme virtue of our 'National Organiser.'

And, now, just a word on the main question which has so successfully been evaded by our Comrade. He denounces the I.L.P. in Ireland, and appeals to the I.L.P. of Scotland to give him engagements (and, by the way, it is curious that, vide Press notices, the main work of the National Organiser of the Socialist Party of Ireland is in Scotland – a conundrum to me). Surely, if because of national characteristics, Ireland has a right to an Irish Socialist Party, by the same parity of reasoning Scotland also should have its Scottish Socialist Party; and, to pursue the matter, a Highland and a Lowland Party, a Welsh Party, a Berwick-on-Tweed Party; and as York was once the seat of power, a Northern English Party and a Southern English Party? In fact, if Comrade Connolly understood the ramifications of 'Nationality' he would be chary about tilting a lance on the question, but as "fools step in where angels fear to tread," so we may excuse the temerity which, avoiding the issue of combat, rushes to the abuse of the individual to distract attention from his obvious difficulties.

The I.L.P. have enabled the Irish in Belfast to unite, James Connolly (Catholic) can – thanks to the spade work of the I.L.P. – come to Belfast and speak to audiences mainly Protestant, and be patiently heard, and it is curious that our Comrade never came to Belfast until he was confident that the I.L.P. had won a tolerant hearing for all classes; and if this can be accomplished in Belfast, what is to prevent the other parts of Ireland from using the same organisation to accomplish all those reforms which – whether we YELL for Socialism or WORK for it – are clamant for adoption.

Remember the capitalistic system will not (like the Walls of Jericho) fall down at the shouting of the people, but will only succumb to the pick and shovel, the assault and counter mine of an active army of assailants.

I am an Internationalist because the same grievances which afflict the German and the Englishman afflict me. I speak the same tongue as the Englishman: I study the same literature: I am oppressed by the same financial power: and, to me, only a combined and united attack, with out geographical consideration, can assure to Ireland an equal measure of social advancement as that which the larger and more advanced democracy of Great Britain are pressing for.

I am content to be a rank and filer! I am content to preach Socialism without reward! I am content to use in the Trade Union and the I.L.P. all the opportunities therein afforded, to consolidate the power of the workers. Don't please allow ambition to impede the march of our army; but, if you are a Socialist, help the fighters to secure an early victory, and in doing this you will give some proof, very much needed, of a belief in the doctrine you preach.

(Unless this correspondence can be raised to the discussion of principles, it had better cease. – *EDITOR*)

Biographical Notes

JAMES CONNOLLY (1868–1916), Born Edinburgh, Scotland of Irish parents – said to have first come to Ireland in his youth as a member of the British Army – married in 1889 – active in the socialist movement in Edinburgh in the early 1890's – came to Ireland in 1896 and founded the Irish Socialist Republican Party – lectured on socialism in Britain and U.S., 1902 – emigrated to U.S. in 1903 – member of Socialist Labour Party (U.S.) and the Industrial Workers of the World – founded the Irish Socialist Federation in New York, 1907 – returned to Ireland in 1910 as organiser for the Socialist Party of Ireland – Belfast organiser of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, 1910 – acting Gen. Sec. of I.T.G.W.U. and Commandant of the Irish Citizen Army, 1914 – Commandant

General of Dublin Division of the Army of the Republic, 1916 – executed following the 1916 Uprising.

AUTHOR **OF** –
Erin's Hope: The New Evangel
Socialism Made Easy
Labour, Nationality and Religion
Labour in Irish History
The Re-conquest of Ireland

EDITOR **OF** –
Rights of Ireland and the Faith of a Felon (LALOR)
'98 **Readings**
Workers' Republic
The Harp (U.S.A.)
The Irish Worker
The Workers' Republic

WILLIAM WALKER (1870–1918) Belfastman – began his trade union activity when an apprentice at Harland and Wolfe's shipyard – was a delegate to the inaugural conference of the Irish Trade Union Congress, 1894 – one time President of I.T.U.C. – sec. of Belfast Trades Council –full time official of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, 1901 – elected to the Belfast Corporation, 1904 – unsuccessfully contested parliamentary elections as I.L.P. candidate in Belfast, 1905 – during election campaign declared support for the retention of the British sovereigns accession declaration against transubstantiation and for the exclusion of Roman Catholics from high State positions – said he would place the interests of Protestantism before those of the I.L.P.: *“Protestantism means protesting against superstition, hence true Protestantism is synonymous with labour”* – unsuccessfully contested the

Scottish seat of Leith Burghs in 1910 – opposed Home Rule for Ireland – member of the executive of the British Labour Party – accepted government appointment as a representative of newly established National Insurance Commissioners in 1912 – died after a long illness in 1918.

AUTHOR

OF

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The Irish Question (1908)