

**James Connolly**

**War: What It  
Means To You**

**Irish Citizen Army  
(Belfast Division)**

**(1914)**

You are asked to stop and consider what this war will mean to the working class of this city and country.

It already means that increased prices will be demanded for all food and household necessities. In every bite of food you eat you will be compelled to pay for the war; and as you are already poor and have at the best of times a struggle to live the war will mean hunger and misery to thousands – less food on their tables, less clothes on their backs or beds, less coal for their fires, less boots and shoes on their children's feet and their own.

War will mean more unemployment and less wages. Already the mills of Belfast are put on short time, which means starvation wages, ware-rooms are closing down, and all foundries and engineering works which make machinery for the Continent, if they have not closed down already, are getting ready to do so.

Thus before a shot has been fired by the British army on land, before a battle has been fought at sea, ruin and misery are entering the homes of the working people. What will be your case? Many thousands of you will die of slow starvation, or perish of cold and long-drawn-out misery before the end of the war if you suffer so much before it is begun.

Some people tell you it will be over in a fortnight. They said the same about the Boer War, but it lasted three years. And the Boer War was a mere picnic compared to what this war will be.

Remember that Lord Kitchener tells all joining now that they must be prepared to serve three years. And he knows.

You women! Remember that it is the children you suckled at your breast, reared at your knees, whose little steps you watched and prayed over and were proud of, it is they who will be sent to fight the battles of the Empire – an Empire that despises you and them – an Empire under whose rule three million Irish people were thrown on the roadside to starve, four million driven like wild beasts out of their own country, an Empire under which in less than fifty years a million and a half of Irish men, women and children died of hunger in the midst of smiling harvests, and under which YOU have lived a lifetime of sweated misery and badly paid toil.

Women of Belfast. Will you send your husbands, fathers, sons or sweethearts to be slaughtered in defence of an Empire that stood quietly by and allowed the Orangemen to arm against you and against freedom for Ireland, but sent its soldiers to shoot down the unarmed people of Dublin when they attempted to arm in defence of Irish Nationality?

Remember, all you workers, that this war is utterly unjustifiable and unnecessary. Belgium would never have been in the slightest danger if France had not encouraged Russia to prepare to attack Germany. And France would never have given that encouragement to Russia had she not been urged to do so by the secret diplomacy of England. There would never have been war within two hundred and fifty miles of the Belgian frontier had not the French and English

governments secretly resolved to attack Germany in order to help Russia – the greatest and most brutal foe of human liberty in the world.

The gallant Belgians are being sacrificed that they may pull the chestnuts out of the fire for the unscrupulous capitalist government of England and the half-savage government of Russia. Should we allow ourselves to be sacrificed also? No! No!! No!!!

We have no foreign enemy except the treacherous government of England – a government that even whilst it is calling upon us to die for it, refuses to give a straight answer to our demand for Home Rule.

VOLUNTEERS! Has the iron of slavery so far entered your souls that you will sing the songs, carry the flags and fight the battles of the Power that even in its extremity refuses to allow your Nation to take its place amongst the Nations of the earth?

Britain guaranteed the independence of Belgium. Yes, as she guaranteed the independence of Egypt, and then swallowed it up and slaughtered and imprisoned its patriot sons and daughters. Britain guaranteed the independence of Belgium. Yes, as she guaranteed the independence of Persia, and then encouraged her Russian ally to invade it and drown its freedom in a sea of blood.

Britain guaranteed the independence of Belgium. But who will win and guarantee the independence of Ireland? Will the Volunteers? Will the anti-Irish aristocrats who are rushing in to become your officers allow you to take a stand for Irish Nationality? Remember the words of Wolfe Tone:

“When the aristocracy come forward the people fall backward; when the people come forward the aristocracy, fearful of being left behind, insinuate themselves into our ranks, and rise to be timid leaders, or treacherous auxiliaries.”

**WE WANT IRELAND, NOT FOR PEERS OR  
THE NOMINEES OF PEERS, BUT IRELAND  
FOR THE IRISH.**

**James Connolly**

**Independent Labour  
Party of Ireland  
Appeal to the Irish  
Working Class**

**(1914)**

Fellow-workers,

In the midst of the many appeals and manifestoes now being thrust upon your notice, we hope that you will find time to read this, the appeal of the only organised body of Socialists in Ireland who have at all times held to the principle that the true path to national redemption for this country led along the road of social progress; and that therefore they who worked for either cause could not but be of service to the other. As Socialists, we have ever taught that National Freedom could not be won by a population resigned to industrial slavery; and as believers in National Freedom we have ever taught that the real re-conquest of Ireland necessarily implied the redemption of the Irish worker from the slavery of the capitalist system.

This being our position, we desire now that Industrial Emancipation and National Freedom are alike in danger, to set before you our views of the present war, and your and our proper attitude towards it. We speak as workers to workers, and as lovers of our common country to all those who ought to love and cherish it.

Ask yourselves this question: What foreign enemies have the workers of Ireland; what country has ever done us any harm? With all the people of the world we have much in common; with none of them have we any just grounds for quarrel. All the workers of the world are like ourselves, beasts of burden to a propertied class, their lives ordered and ruled for them by the interests of that class, their countries stolen from them by the armed might of the hirelings of that class in the past, and kept from them by the superstitions of law and tradition fostered by that class in the present. Their sufferings are as our sufferings, their hopes are our hopes – we are all brethren one of another. To take up arms in anger to kill any of the poor driven workers of another nation at the order of our rulers is as clearly an act of murder, an act worthy of Cain, as any crime of violence ever committed.

Now if we forget for a moment the vital distinction between a people and their rulers, and imagine that each of the countries outside Ireland is solid and with but one interest to conserve, that when we speak of England, we mean all England; of Germany, all Germany; of France, all France; of Russia, all Russia; if we imagine this current capitalist cant to be true, not even then can we conceive of any reason why Irish workers should fly to arms for the Empire. Has Germany ever harmed Ireland? No! Has England ever harmed Ireland? Yes! The whole history of our connection has been a history of English war upon Ireland. Are we then to take up arms and proceed to murder a nation that never harmed us, and do it at the call of a nation that destroyed our national life, murdered our civilisation, devastated our country, slew with famine untold millions of our people, hanged or imprisoned the best and bravest of our race, and even now refuses to put in operation the poor caricature of Home Rule so long promised?

We refuse to believe it. No, fellow-workers! The Empire is founded upon the misery of the toiling masses; security is based upon the submission of the

dispossessed working-class. Its triumph will establish its industrial and political supremacy more firmly than ever. Its humiliation, on the contrary, will allow other peoples to take their rightful place among the nations of the world, and enable the working class to pursue their path to prosperity and freedom.

Out of such humiliation would come the peaceful growth of industry in Europe, and out of the travail of such humiliation for Empire there might arise an Ireland nationally free; an Ireland able to develop a real civilisation based upon that broad democracy of common ownership which the Celtic civilisation of our forefathers foreshadowed.

We ask you then to let the Empire go its own way; let those who own it fight its battles. It is not yours, you are but its slaves, and surely there is nothing in creation meaner than slaves fighting for the source and basis of their enslavement.

Conserve your energies, guard the welfare of your own homes, study and work for the redemption of your class and nation. Watch and wait – in Ireland.  
For

“Time at last makes all things even  
And if we do but watch the hour,  
There never yet was human power  
That could evade, if unforgiven,  
The patient hate and vigil long  
Of those who treasure up a wrong.”

**James Connolly**

# Courtsmartial and Revolution

(1914)

From **Irish Work** 19 December 1914.

“The Earl of Halsbury said that in deference to the wishes of the Government he would not press his objections, but he thought the proposal of this Bill was the most unconstitutional thing that had ever happened.”

The foregoing sentence is from a report of a debate in the House of Lords on the *Defence of the Realm Consolidation Act*, on Friday, November 27th. This precious Act gives the military authorities power to arrest civilians and try them by Courtsmartial, sets aside all the ordinary safeguards of civil liberty, and empowers these Courtsmartial to inflict the death penalty or any lesser sentence. In other words, and plainer language, it establishes Martial Law as the law of the land, and places the lives and liberties of all in the power of a military unaccustomed to the restraints of civilised courts of justice, and ignorant of the laws of evidence.

A German, a French, an Italian or an Austrian Government would have openly and honourably sought to attain those ends by a declaration of Martial Law; the hypocritical and cowardly gang of assassins who control the Government of the British Empire seek to achieve the same objects by clandestinely and treacherously destroying civil liberties whilst professing a desire to safeguard and protect them. This is but a fitting culmination to all the anti-democratic and liberty-hating diplomacy which brought about this war, and

now seeks to destroy every agency which would help to unmask its injurious conspiracy against mankind, or tell the truth about the terrors that accompany it. As a result of this Act there is no longer liberty in Ireland – liberty of speech, liberty of association, liberty of the press, liberty of the subject are all gone. No longer may a man or woman demand to be tried by his or her peers in an open court-room, before the eyes and hearing of his or her fellows. At any time any man or woman may be arrested, day or night, and dragged off in secret, to be tried in secret, and condemned and assassinated in secret by the hired assassins of the British Empire.

Aye, there is no break in the continuity of the methods of British Imperial Rule in Ireland. Dublin Castle is always Dublin Castle, the same at all times, loathsome, lying, hypocritical, murderous.

Of course we have the word of this Government that no death sentences will be carried out until Parliament meets, and of course we all know what the word of the Government is worth. Belgium knows it now, knows that this Government pledged its honour to maintain Belgian neutrality, and then manoeuvred to leave Belgium irrevocably committed to sink or swim with one side in this struggle in which she was supposed to remain neutral. Ireland knows it, knows that the Liberal Government pledged its word to give Home Rule to all Ireland then pledged its word to Carson not to force Home Rule upon all Ireland, pledged its word to place a representative of Labour upon the Commission of Inquiry into the Dublin police outrages, then deliberately breaks its solemn word, and appointed no such representatives; pledged its word to appoint an independent Commission of Inquiry into the Bachelor's Walk massacre, and yet declared in Parliament beforehand that the said Commission would exonerate the uniformed murderers of peaceful citizens. Aye, Ireland knows the value of a Government promise, as our fathers knew it in the past!

But let 'messieurs, the assassins,' beware. There are in Ireland today many scores of thousands of earnest men neither committed to the British Empire nor to the cause of revolution. For the most part these are men who, wearied of the chaos of Irish politics, gave a grudging adhesion to the parliamentary attempt to secure some form of Home Rule as an organised legal expression of Irish

nationhood. Loyalty to the party entrusted with that task has kept these men silent and inactive even whilst that party was betraying their trust, and besmirching their ideals. Always the hope persisted that eventually Home Rule would come, and then these traitors would be punished by an outraged people. But if the British Government once more throws off the mask of constitutionalism and launches its weapons of repression against those who dare to differ from it, if once more it sets in motion its jails, its courtmartial, its scaffolds, then the last tie that binds those men to the official Home Rule gang will snap. On that day we will see once again all the best and brightest in Ireland definitely arraying itself on the side of revolution, fully realising that freedom and the British Empire cannot co-exist in this country.

The constitutional mask, the simulacrum of civil liberty still paralyses the activities and holds the hand of many a true Irish patriot, as the boasted freedom of contract of the wage-system still hides from many a worker the reality of his slavery. But once let the Government drop that mask, or abandon that presence of civil liberty, and then the result will see such a resurrection of Irish revolutionary spirit such as has not been seen for generations.

A resurrection! Aye, out of the grave of the first Irish man or woman murdered for protesting against Ireland's participation in this thrice-acursed war there will arise anew the spirit of Irish revolution.

“The graves of those murdered for freedom bear seed for freedom  
Which the winds carry afar and re-sow.”

Yes, my lords and gentlemen, our cards are all on the table! If you leave us at liberty we will kill your recruiting, save our poor boys from your slaughter-house, and blast your hopes of Empire. If you strike at, imprison, or kill us, out of our prisons or graves we will still evoke a spirit that will thwart you, and, mayhap, raise a force that will destroy you.

We defy you! Do your worst!

Whether this death sentence upon Irish prisoners of these new Courtsmartial will or will not be carried out will depend, not upon the plighted honour or solemn assurances of Cabinet Ministers already foresworn and discredited even in their own country, nor yet upon any action of the degenerate Irish Members of Parliament who sat still and helped to destroy the constitutional rights of which they prate so loudly; nor yet upon the British Labour Members who, like all apostates, are readiest to stab and destroy all those who remain true to that ideal of democratic freedom they have deserted and dishonoured. No, the question of life and death will depend solely upon the temper of the people of Ireland. If they remain dumb, nerveless, lacking in intrepidity, quivering too mutely in the leash laid upon them by the apostles of 'caution and restraint,' then the blow will fall in increasing severity and ferocity, arrest will follow arrest, blow will follow blow, and sentences will increase in savagery in exact proportion to the tameness of the Irish people, until at last the death penalty will once more strike down those who embody the rebellious people of the Irish race. Oh, it is all well planned. Their fathers in Hell could not have planned it better!

**Note:** The **Irish Worker** was censored in late 1914 for its anti-war editorials, so Connolly presented this essay in a two-page pamphlet under the cover name **Irish Work**.

**James Connolly**

**Tell the Truth**

**A Challenge to Mr Birrell**

(1914)

**Irish Worker,** 28 November 1914.

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Every day it is becoming more evident that the slaughter of men in this war exceeds anything known in human history. The vast numbers of men engaged and the deadly character of the weapons employed have combined to make of the scene of conflict one vast slaughterhouse. No longer is it the case of the comparatively small numbers of a professional army, but rather of the contending forces of the entire manhood of nations. Along the battle fronts of France and Belgium, as along the battle fronts of Austria and Poland, it is nations that are marching out to slaughter, and along those battle fronts each day sees the destruction of as many human lives as were lost in a month's warring on the old scale and in the old manner. France and Belgium, Poland and Austria are becoming vast graveyards in which are being buried the flower of the manhood of the warring nations, in which are also being buried the hopes and brightness of life for countless thousands of women, and millions of children left fatherless to face a heartless world. On the sea the same toll is being taken by this horrible war. In the full bloom of health and strength one moment, in the next hurled into eternity before being able to realise that even a blow is being struck; the manhood and courage, and love, and capacity of the sailors whelmed in oblivion at one fell stroke.

The hospitals of every city in the three kingdoms are crammed with the mangled, twisted, and maimed bodies of the wounded; more than half-a-million soldiers we are told by eminent authorities lie groaning in the hospitals of France, and lying under the sod of France and Belgium or under the heaving billows of

the oceans are many thousands whose names are still appearing in the lists of missing, and whose relatives still hopefully believe they are alive and safe as prisoners of war.

We are told that the truth must be kept back lest it give comfort to the enemy. If a town is taken by the Germans or the Boers the fact is concealed for weeks, and we only learn that it was in their hands when the war correspondents are able to tell us that it was re-taken by the Allies. It cannot be that the truth is withheld for fear the enemy should know; if the enemy takes a town, he surely knows that he has taken it. It is not he, but the peoples of these countries that are being deceived. Similarly, if a Dreadnought is sunk by the enemy, or a cruiser sent to the bottom, the news is withheld on the same alleged lying excuse.

We assert that the truth about the loss of human lives in this war is being kept back because it is too awful to be told, because the hopes of the human race are being slaughtered; because if the truth were known people would realise that no victory would compensate any of the warring nations for the loss of the flower of their male population; because the governing class believe that it is necessary that the peoples of the world shall never learn the fearful price mankind has to pay as a punishment for allowing such a criminal class with such murderous instincts to be a governing class. For this reason the Government has issued orders to the Press to keep back all news of disasters, forbade the Press to issue posters telling of British defeats, instructed the Press to avoid keeping track of the totals in the casualty lists, and in general insisted that nothing must be sent out that would be 'calculated to depress the public'. The punishment for refusing to obey these orders would be a suspension of telegraphic service.

We on our part have a duty to perform. A duty to our class and our country. That duty compels us to do what in us lies to avert the slaughter of any more of our people in the shambles of the Continent. Our duty to our people is greater than any supposed allegiance to the British Empire. The value to Ireland – aye, the value to humanity of any breadwinner of a working class Irish family is immeasurably superior to the value of all the crowned and coroneted murderers and exploiters that ever gibbered in glee over the number of corpses on a battlefield.

Let the truth be known! Count every corpse that the Empire requires us to pay for its victory; add up the total of the wrecked human lives of the wounded soldiers, let us know the sum of the tears that the women and children must shed in oceans that Britannia might rule the waves and browbeat the nations.

We challenge Mr Birrell to the issue. Let he and his fellow conspirators take us into court, not into a secret military tribunal, but before an open court of our fellow subjects. Let them tell the truth about what this war has cost day by day in human lives, and we will guarantee to prove that it is a crime against humanity, and that every person who in this crisis urges the nation to continue the conflict is a traitor to the highest interests of the human race, that every man or woman who does not raise his or her voice in protest, or who pretends that because we are in a murderous conflict we must continue murdering and being murdered – that every such person is a coward and dastard.

Let Mr Birrell test the matter in open tribunal, find out what are the “sentiments of the vast majority of Irishmen”, and then – bring on his gaolers.

**James Connolly**

# **Labour Mans the Breach**

**(1914)**

1997.

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

As we announced in our Stop Press issue last week the British Government through its military commandant in Dublin has gone one step further in the direction of the suppression of the liberties of the Irish people. Captain Monteith, of the Irish Volunteers, was summarily ordered to leave the Dublin Metropolitan District within twenty-four hours, and also to report to the military authorities wherever he took up his future residence. Mr Walsh, of Cork, and Messrs Hegarty, of the same city, have also had the same sample of British zeal for civilised government meted out to them. Numbers of Civil Servants in the Post Office, as well as in the Custom House, have been interviewed by their superiors and told plainly to cease their activities in the Irish Volunteers or take the consequences in dismissal from their position, and all over the country this inquisition into the political opinions of every educated man is manifesting itself as a part of the settled policy of the Government. A cowardly Press is calling out for the suppression of all newspapers and journals refusing to take their orders from the Government, employers are commenting adversely upon the refusal of workers to wear loyalist badges, and gradually a White Terror is spreading itself over the lives of the people.

One of the victims, Jack Hegarty, of Cork, writes to us protesting that he does not complain of the action of the Government in striking him down, scorns to whine. We quite well believe you, Jack! But we complain when any man or woman who stands for Freedom is struck down, and our complaint is not based so much upon a sense of injury to the man, as upon the fact that through him Freedom is struck at. To remain dumb in front of the assassin's blow is to encourage the assassin. We will not be dumb, we will not be silent, "we will speak though all earth's systems crack." And we do not hesitate to offer our lives or our personal liberties as the earnest of our speech.

For this reason and in this spirit the Irish Citizen Army, and the members of this Union gathered together on last Sunday in a drenching downpour of rain, and in face of the threat of military suppression, to voice our protest against the outrage upon Captain Monteith. He is not of our counsel, he is not of our Union, he is not of our Army, but as he was struck at by our enemy because he had the same high ideal of National Rights as we had, we sprang to offer our all for his aid. That was the true spirit of militant Irish Labour – the fearless spirit which teaches the working class to guard what rights it has whilst reaching out to win greater rights for the future.

There are certain elements in Ireland to-day, and notably in important offices in Dublin, which, under the guise of caution, are disguising a timorous shrinking from the ugly realities of their position and are attempting to masquerade as astute diplomatists in the endeavour to hide from their followers their own reluctance to advance. Whilst their fate and the fate of the potential liberties of their country hangs upon the swing of the balance, these leaders who will not lead idly speculate upon the possible plans of the enemy, hatch schemes it would take a generation to mature, and pray for the coming of opportunities that are already worn weary with standing unrecognised at their elbows.

With them or without them the Irish working class goes forward to the conquest of the future. In this attack upon Germany it sees an attack upon the nation whose working class had advanced nearest to the capture of the citadels of capitalism; in this enthusiasm for Russia it sees exultation at the domination of a power rightly feared by every friend of freedom on the Continent of Europe; in this carnival of English jingoism in Ireland it sees the abandonment of all the high hopes and holy aspirations that sanctified Irish history and made the sacrifices of the past the foundation of noble achievements in the future; in this gospel of hatred preached by the capitalist press it sees the denial of human brotherhood.

Recognising in this awful hour the fearful forces arrayed against us, Labour in Ireland sees in this war a fiendish plan of the British capitalist class – the most astute ruling class in the world – to plant the Iron Heel upon the heart of peacefully progressing peoples, and so recognising stands ready to draw the

sword, to die if need be that Freedom might live. None have suffered more than the Irish workers, none will do and dare more. Truly can it be said of them that

The sufferings of the people have been but an initiation in the worship of liberty; their sorrows were blessed, they learned a truth with every tear.

**James Connolly**

# **Disturbed Dublin**

**(1914)**

From **Irish Worker**, 18 November 1914.

**Disturbed Dublin** is the title of a book just published in the interests of the Dublin employers, and with the name of Arnold Wright upon its title page as author. The purpose of this book is to present to the reading public as colourable a presentation as possible of the events from the employers' point of view of the great dispute of 1913-14. We are not saying so because this book is antagonistic to the cause of labour, but we say so because from the very first paragraph of the preface to the last sentence of the volume itself this bias against labour is so pronounced that the idea that it found its inspiration in the councils of the employers springs at once to the mind of the thoughtful reader. For instance, let us quote from the second sentence of the preface, where the author describes the result of the employers' conspiracy as:

“The ignominious defeat of the attempt to establish a peculiarly pernicious form of Syndicalism on Irish soil.”

This, one must admit, is a good start for an ‘impartial’ history, and the same spirit is in evidence all through the book. In this attempt to present a literary justification for the employers the author does not scruple to distort facts, and even to state deliberate untruths.

One such case will serve as a sample. In the early part of 1913 the Belfast Branch of the Irish Transport and General Workers’ Union secured an agreement with several shipping firms in that city bringing the wages of their labourers up to the level of the men employed by the same firms on the docks at Dublin. One of the firms so affected was the Clyde Shipping Company. After a short time the union officials found that the foreman in charge of the London boat of that firm in Belfast was apparently systematically giving preference to non-union men. Several ineffective attempts having been made to check this the Belfast officials at last called their men off, and refused to allow them to work with non-union men. This step was only taken in obedience to extreme pressure from the men themselves. The boat upon which this strike took place was the *Sanda*, and had only a part cargo for Belfast, the remainder being consigned to Dublin. When the boat left Belfast the union officials in that city wired to headquarters in Dublin to ‘hold up’ the boat. This was at first done, but after a few hours delay the boat was worked by the Dublin members, their officials having brought pressure to bear on the Belfast secretary to allow the cargo to be discharged in order to keep the contract they had made in Dublin with the Clyde company. Thus, as it afterwards transpired, the Dublin officials practically sacrificed their own members in Belfast, and worked a boat against which their own members were on strike, in order to keep their agreement with the Clyde Shipping Company, and in hopes that the matter would be settled by friendly discussion. It was settled by friendly discussion, but the spectacle of the Dublin members out of loyalty to an agreement working a boat struck by their fellow members in Belfast was so unexpected and bewildering that some two hundred members were lost to the union in the latter city as a consequence.

Now here is how this ‘impartial’ author tells the story. Page 108:

“Some men who were working on a vessel called the *Sandow*, belonging to the Clyde Shipping Company, without a moment’s notice ceased work. On inquiry by Mr. Young it was found that the grievance was that the men were not receiving such large wages as the company’s employees in Belfast. This, it was represented, was the more important matter, as there existed in the northern port a union which was inimical to Mr. Larkin, and which he regarded with a mutual feeling of aversion.”

Now observe all the misstatements in those three sentences. First: The wrong name of the vessel; showing a most slipshod inaccuracy of investigation.

Second: The statement that the Dublin men were receiving lower wages than the Belfast men, whereas the fact was that the Belfast men had only recently joined the union in an endeavour to raise their wages to the level of Dublin.

Third: The allegation that the union in the northern port which had established the wages alleged to be higher than those of Dublin was a union inimical to Mr. Larkin. In reality it was, and is, a branch of the union of which Mr. Larkin was and is General Secretary.

Thus in the small compass of nine printed lines we find one mistake and two deliberate lies. Observe that it is entirely unthinkable that this so-called investigator could of his own initiative have invented those lies. They must have been supplied to him by the employers, and, like the good investigator that he was, he never bothered himself to check their account by any such simple expedient as a trip to Liberty Hall, or a question put personally to any of the dockers involved in that dispute. The inference is that he did not do it, because he did not dare to do it. He was brought over here by the employers to do the employers’ work, and it must be said of him that he faithfully, if clumsily, tried to earn his money.

As we have said, the story of that incident is a sample of the treatment meted out to the labourer by the author in every chapter in the book. One feels like congratulating the real literary men of Dublin that the employers could not trust one of them to be sufficiently blind to facts as to present a case that would suit the

employers. A stranger, without any knowledge of Dublin people, without any insight into the terrible struggle life involves to a Dublin worker, without any appreciation of the finer elements of character which the Dublin toiler has preserved in spite of the hell of poverty and misery in which he or she was born and reared, without any grasp of the blended squalor and heroism, pride and abasement that environment has woven into the Dublin character, and absolutely blind and deaf to all knowledge of the countless cross-currents, interests and traditions that played their part in moulding and shaping that historic struggle – it is only such a fatuously ignorant stranger that the employers of Dublin could count upon to describe that struggle as they wanted it described.

The achievement of the employers is written of as if the book was dealing with the struggle of a puny David against a mighty Goliath, the employers being David and Jim Larkin the giant Goliath. No epic story of heroism that was ever written could surpass in admiring sentences the description of the employers' battle against the working men and women as this hack writer tells it.

Told by a labour writer, or even told by one of those literary men who, although not of the manual labour ranks stood so grandly by the workers during that titanic struggle, the story would indeed read like an epic, but it would be an epic of which the heroes and heroines were the humble men and women who went out in the street to suffer and starve rather than surrender their right to combine as they chose for the uplifting of their class. Some day that story will be written from that standpoint, meanwhile let us briefly cast up the elements out of which that story will be composed.

It must tell how four hundred Dublin employers covenanted together, and pledged each other by solemn vows, and by still more binding financial pledges, that there would be no more resumption of work in Dublin until the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union was wiped off the map. How they agreed upon a document to be forced upon all workers that they would neither join nor help that union. How they had all the press of every shade of politics and religion upon their side. How they obtained beforehand the promise of swift and relentless use of Government forces, of batons, bullets, and jails to destroy the resistance of the workers. How that promise was faithfully kept by the

Government. How they were able to override the law, and to fill the prisons with old and young, men and women, boys and girls, who attempted to exercise the picketing rights guaranteed to them by British law. How they instituted a reign of terror in which the lives of every worker was at the mercy of every callous brute in the uniform of a policeman or the vocation of a scab. How starvation was sent into the homes of thousands of the poor, until their lives were shortened by the sufferings enforced. How one bright young girl was shot, two honest workers batoned to death, and one other destroyed in his bright manhood by the hirelings of the Government. How the domestic privacy of the poor was violated, their poor household treasures ruthlessly smashed and the most sacred feelings of womanhood outraged by hordes of drunken policemen. And how through all this long-drawn-out agony every agency of every organised political, journalistic, social or religious kind in Ireland, not directly controlled by labour, joined in one great unanimous chorus in vilification of the sufferers, and in praise of their oppressors.

When that story is written by a man or woman with an honest heart, and with a sympathetic insight into the travail of the poor, it will be a record of which Ireland may well be proud. It will tell of how the old women and young girls, long crushed and enslaved, dared to risk all, even life itself, in the struggle to make life more tolerable, more free of the grinding tyranny of the soulless Dublin employers. It will tell of how, like an inspiration, there came to those Irish women and girls the thought that no free nation could be reared which tolerated the enslavement of its daughters to the worst forms of wage-slavery, and how in the glow of that inspiration they arose from their seats in the workshop or factory, and went out to suffer and struggle along with their men. It will tell of how the general labourers, the men upon whose crushed lives is built the fair fabric of civilisation, from whose squalid tenements the sweet-smelling flowers of capitalist culture derive their aroma, by whose horny hands and mangled bodies are bought the ease and safety of a class that hates and despises them, by whose ignorance their masters purchase their knowledge – it will tell how these labourers dared to straighten their bent backs, and looking in the faces of their rulers and employers dared to express the will to be free. And it will tell how that spectacle of the slave of the underworld looking his masters in the face without

terror, and fearlessly proclaiming the kinship and unity of all with each and each with all, how that spectacle caught the imagination of all unselfish souls so that the artisan took his place also in the place of conflict and danger, and the men and women of genius, the artistic and the literati, hastened to honour and serve those humble workers whom all had hitherto despised and scorned.

And that story will tell how, despite the wealth and the power of the masters, despite jails and batons, despite starvation and death, victory was within sight for the Dublin workers, and only eluded their grasp because of the failure of a part of their allies to remain keyed up to the battle pitch. Because others outside their ranks were not able to realise the grandeur of the opportunity, the sublimity of the issues at stake.

The battle was a drawn battle. The employers, despite their Napoleonic plan of campaign, and their more than Napoleonic ruthlessness and unscrupulous use of foul means were unable to carry on their business without men and women who remained loyal to their union. The workers were unable to force the employers to a formal recognition of the union, and to give preference to organised labour. From the effects of this drawn battle both sides are still bearing heavy scars. How deep those scars are none will ever reveal.

But the working class has lost none of its aggressiveness, none of its confidence, none of its hope in the ultimate triumph. No traitor amongst the ranks of that class has permanently gained, even materially, by his or her treachery. The flag of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union still flies proudly in the van of the Irish working class, and that working class still marches proudly and defiantly at the head of the gathering hosts who stand for a regenerated nation, resting upon a people industrially free.

Ah, yes, that story of the Dublin dispute of 1913-14 is meet subject for an epic poem with which some Irish genius of the future can win an immortality as great as did the humble fighters who in it fought the battle of labour.

# James Connolly

## Rally for Labour

(1914)

From **Irish Worker**, November 14, 1914.

Signs are not wanting in Ireland to-day that there are strenuous and exciting times before the forces of organised Labour. The fever and excitement of the war is practically over, the talk of certain victory and a short war has disappeared from the conversation of even the most optimistic of the employing class, and everywhere we see that the class that rules and robs us is making preparations to take whatever advantage the war may offer to increase its profits, and increase its power over our lives. Capitalist society is so built that the clash of interests is inevitable; here and there at all times, and all over for a short time, these clashing interests may be forgotten in a wave of patriotism or a frenzy of religious enthusiasm; but such unity never survives for long the constant attrition of the divergent interests of the various classes and individuals. Sooner or later the old war of self-interest resumes its domination, and the conflict inherent in capitalist society with all its ugliness and horror, assumes control and direction of the minds, passions and lives of men and women.

When this war broke out there was in England, and amongst those whose outlook on life is that of England, a fine simulation of the self-abnegation of patriotism. Employers in England told their employees that the firm would make up the wages of each man volunteering to the front, and workers left wives and

families to trust to the tender mercies of their masters and their government. They were all out against the 'common enemy,' and all distinctions, rivalries and clashing interests were laid aside. It was fine!

But it was too fine to last. Already the Government has shown its bias against trade unionism, and against the working class. The demand of the Parliamentary Labour Party for £1 per week for soldiers is treated with the contempt earned by its sponsors when they delivered the goods before they stipulated for a price, went recruiting for the army first, and only thought of demanding proper payment for recruits after thousands upon thousands had surrendered their liberty and became food for cannon. All through England and Ireland committees under various names are engaged in procuring the manufacture of goods for the army by voluntary labour, whilst the persons – mainly women and girls – normally employed at the manufacture of those goods are turned out on the streets to starve, or else compelled to seek a livelihood by begging these committees to supply them with work under conditions they would scorn if offered at other times by private employers.

A moratorium suspending payment of large sums has been granted to and is freely availed of by the rich, whilst eviction notices are descending as thick as snowflakes upon the helpless poor, and wives and widows of England's soldiery every day throng the police courts begging for permission to keep together a little longer the household gathered by the loving labours of the 'heroes at the front.' Relief of Distress Committees in their work seem to unite in regarding every applicant as a degraded criminal upon whom every insult can be heaped that class hatred can devise, until poor women resolve to die in their slums rather than have their wretchedness marked by the insulting questions and insinuations of the investigators. In Ireland the demand of organised labour for representation upon such committees is made subordinate to the whims and prejudices of every little mind from Lord Mayor Sherlock down to the toadies whose delight it is to eat dirt that has been trodden on by the feet of Lady Aberdeen.

A consignment of flour is sent here from Canada, and the Government ostentatiously gives the work of discharging it to the lowest collection of blacklegs that has ever disgraced Dublin. A law is on the Statute Book empowering the

Corporation of Dublin to feed the children starving at school, and the Corporation mocks the law and the children by appointing on that committee the bitterest enemies of the measure, and a chairman who has made up his mind that it shall never be enforced, whilst the claim of the Dublin Trades Council to be represented is met with a flat refusal, as is also the claim of the Ladies' Committee which for years has fed the children of two of our Dublin schools.

War is ever the enemy of progress. It is only possible when humanity is stifled, when the common interests of the human race are denied. The first blast of the bugles of war is also the requiem note of human brotherhood. It is but a step, and a short step, from exulting in the sufferings of a foreign enemy to contemptuous indifference to the sights and sounds of suffering amongst our own poor in our own streets. The poor of the world would be well advised, upon the declaration of war in any country, as their first steps to peace, to hang the Foreign Minister and Cabinet whose secret diplomacy produced such a result. If each country hanged its own Foreign Minister and Cabinet before setting out to the front, wars would not last long; and if a jingo editor were hanged each week it lasted, the most jingo being the first to hang, not many angry passions would be stirred up to make the work of peaceful understanding difficult.

Wanting such a desirable result the workers must realise now that all the machinery of the State, and all the extra machinery now being set up to aid the State, are being deliberately utilised to accentuate the weakness of the individual worker, to intensify the dependence of his dear ones upon charitable and anti-labour organisations, to concentrate in the hands of the enemies of his class all the new agencies of government as well as the old, and in short, to weaken, discredit and destroy every power that the workers have hitherto built up as weapons for their peaceful social regeneration.

Our trade unions are attacked by every insidious weapon, our standard of life is menaced in a thousand evil ways, a corrupt press calls aloud for the suppression of every Irish journal that refuses to prostitute itself. The time is ripe for a forward move against all those gathering forces of evil, every man and woman who has reaped the advantages which organised Labour has won in the

past must now rally to the flag. All jealousies must be forgotten, all rivalries laid aside.

Labour is the only force that can save Labour. Rally then to save Labour from its encircling enemies, and know that in saving Labour you save the most effective force for the redemption of Ireland.

**James Connolly**

# **The Hope of Ireland**

**(1914)**

From **Irish Worker**, 31 October 1914.

The present crisis in Ireland is shattering many reputations and falsifying many predictions, but to the careful observer it is becoming daily apparent that it will leave intact at least one reputation, that of those who pinned their faith to the working-class as the anchor and foundation of any real nationalism that this country can show. Here and there the working class may waver, here and there local influences may exert sufficient pressure to weaken or corrupt the manhood of the workers, but speaking broadly it remains true that in that class lay the only hope of those who held fast to the faith that this Ireland of ours is a nation distinct and apart from all others, and capable of working out its own destiny and living its own life.

The working class has ever refused to be drawn into any mere anti-English feeling; it refuses to be drawn into it now. It has always refused to consider that hatred of England was equivalent to love of Ireland, or that true patriotism required an Irishman or woman to bear enmity to the toiling masses of the English population. It still holds that position.

The working class of Ireland, when grown conscious of its true dignity, does not consider that it owes to the British Empire any debt except that of hatred. But it also realises that the best services it can render to the British people is due to them, and that service will be and will take the form of as speedy as possible a destruction of the foul governmental system that has made the British people an instrument of the enslavement of millions of the human race, of the extirpation of whole tribes and nations, of the devastation of vast territories. Enslaved socially at home the British people have been taught that what little political liberty they do enjoy can only be bought at the price of the national destruction of every people rising into social or economic rivalry with the British master class. If it requires war to free the minds of the British working class from that debasing superstition then war we shall have, for the world cannot progress industrially whilst so important a nation in Europe is perverted mentally by a belief so hostile to fraternal progress; if it requires insurrection in Ireland and through all the British dominions to teach the English working class they cannot hope to prosper permanently by arresting the industrial development of others then insurrection must come, and barricades will spring up as readily in our streets as public meetings do today.

Those who hold that the British people must learn this lesson are not necessarily enemies of the British people, of the British democracy. Rather do they hold with John Mitchel they are the truest friends of the British people who are the greatest enemies of the British Government. The Irish working class see no abandonment of the principles of the Labour Movement in this fight against this war and all it implies; see no weakening of international solidarity in their fierce resolve to do no fighting except it be in their own country to secure the right to hold that country for its own sons and daughters. Rather do they joy in giving this proof that the principles of the Labour Movement represent the

highest form of patriotism, and that true patriotism will embody the broadest principles of Labour and Socialism.

The Labour Movement in Ireland stands for the ownership of all Ireland by all the Irish; it therefore fights against all things calculated to weaken the hold of the Irish upon Ireland, as it fights for all things calculated to strengthen the grasp of the Irish people upon Ireland and all things Irish. It has no war with Germany, it welcomes the German as a brother struggling towards the light. It believes that the blood guiltiness of this war lies chiefly at the door of that British Empire whose 'farflung battle line' is a far-flung shadow upon the face of civilized progress. And so believing, it counsels the Irish race to stand aloof from the battle, since it cannot intervene as a nation on the only side that honour and interest dictates.

Alone in Ireland the working class has no ties that bind it to the service of the Empire. Hunger and the fear of hunger have driven thousands of our class into the British army; but for whatever pay or pension such have drawn therefrom they have given service, and owe neither gratitude nor allegiance. For those still held to that accursed bargain as reservists, etc., we have no feelings except compassion; the British Shylock will hold them to the bond. Other classes serve England for the sake of dividends, profits, official positions and sinecures – a thousand strings drawing them to England for the one patriotic tie that binds them to Ireland. The Irish working class as a class can only hope to rise with Ireland.

Equally true is it that Ireland cannot rise to Freedom except upon the shoulders of a working class knowing its rights and daring to take them.

That class of that character we are creating in Ireland. Wherever then in Ireland flies the banner of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union there flies also to the heavens the flag of the Irish working class, alert, disciplined, intelligent, determined to be free.

**James Connolly**

# **The Ballot or the Barricades**

**(1914)**

From **Irish Worker**, October 24, 1914.

Towards the close of last week the British Government flew a kite in Ireland. Flying a kite when practiced by a Government means getting some person or paper to issue a statement that the Government contemplates taking certain action. If the announcement arouses no hostility of a serious nature the action is forthwith taken. If, on the contrary, the announcement is met with a storm of hostility the Government declares it did not authorise and does not contemplate any such action as was announced, and that it regrets that any such statement should have been made by unauthorised persons. Having flown its kite to learn how the wind blows, the Government then proceeds to do a little more spade work to prepare the ground better for taking the action it has just declared it does not intend to take.

The kite flown last week was the announcement that the Militia Ballot Act was to be enforced in Ireland. As it evoked hostility the Government proceeded to officially repudiate it. The ground was not well prepared, the game was too shy.

But nevertheless the iniquitous proposal is only temporarily abandoned. In some form or another conscription is inevitable.

The only thing that can avert conscription is the speedy collapse of the German army – a thing as remote as the conversion of England's rulers to Christian principles. Already a responsible authority, Sir Thomas Barclay, has declared that England will, before the close of the war, have two million men with the colours, an army impossible without conscription. In addition to this we have the fact that the slaughter at the front is almost inconceivable. A great surgeon, Dr. Haden Guest, says, that at present the military sick and wounded in France number half a million. Thus the gaps in the firing line require the presence of a continually increasing army of support to fill them. Where and how are all those soldiers to be got, if not by and through some form of conscription?

The truth about the Germany army is that its position becomes more secure every day. At the beginning of the war the Allies joyfully declared that time was on their side, that every day gained was equal to the winning of a battle, that the Allies could afford to wait and the Germans could not. It is now beginning to penetrate the heads of the military experts of Fleet Street that the boot is on the other leg. The Russians were the great hope of England. Unless the Russians can achieve victory before the closing in of the terrible Russian winter that hope is gone. It will be impossible to maintain in the field the enormous masses of Russian troops, to provision them, to keep them supplied with munitions of war, to handle all the elaborate, cumbrous but necessary machinery of transport and commissariat, whilst the snow king has his grip upon Russian railroads and rivers. Add to this the terrible cost of the maintenance of such an army as Russia requires to face the Germans – the most uneducated nation in Europe to face the most educated, and we see at once that England cannot hope to see Russia win the war for her. She must produce the men herself. Russia is bankrupt. The Czar was only able to crush the Russian Revolution because of the loans from France and England. Now these countries need all their moneys for their own salvation.

Thus on the side of Germany there are fighting the influences of time and of money, of superior equipment, and of wise provision for the future.

Therefore the Militia Ballot Act or some form of conscription will come. Are we, like our rulers, to await the evil day, and then 'muddle through' with ineffective protests? Or are we to make provision beforehand for the fight that will be necessary?

We of the Irish Transport & General Workers' Union, we of the Citizen Army, have our answer ready. We will resist the Militia Ballot Act, or any form of conscription, and we begin now to prepare our resistance. Upon the Volunteers we urge similar resolves, similar preparations.

Understand what this means. It means a complete overhauling and remodelling of all the training and instruction hitherto given to those corps. It means that the corps shall be taught how to act and fight when acting against an enemy equipped with superior weapons, instead of all teaching being based upon the ideas of British military text books which always presume an equality of weapons, or even a superiority upon the British side. It means that much that has been taught will be worse than useless if acted upon, as such teaching presupposed that the corps receiving instructions were to form part of a regular army in the field, an army properly supported and reinforced by complete arms of the service. The resistance to the Militia Ballot Act must of necessity take the form of insurrectionary warfare, if the resisters are determined to fight in Ireland for Ireland instead of on the Continent for England. Such insurrectionary warfare would be conducted upon lines and under conditions for which text books made no provision.

In short, it means barricades in the streets, guerrilla warfare in the country.

To all who are prepared to face that ordeal rather than shed their blood for the tyrant and exploiter we appeal to join our Citizen Army. We propose to make that force the best equipped mentally in Ireland. We want no parade ground soldiers. We want young men prepared to die for Freedom in Ireland. If the Government proposes to force us to fight against our consciences and our desire we propose to challenge it upon its own ground; and if it wants us it must take us by force.

From this date greater decision and promptitude in action will be enforced in our army though even now it is an example to follow. All those who fell away because we had not rifles enough are requested to enrol at once and take a course in the preliminary training in the new course of instruction on the lines we have indicated.

The rifles will come all right. And there are other modern weapons of warfare.

The Citizen Army Offices at Liberty Hall, Aungier Street, Inchicore, Thomas Street, and elsewhere are open every night for enrolment. We want a new muster of men prepared to face the worst and to take the best if taken it can be.

**James Connolly**

# Ireland and the War

**The Position of the Nation**

**(1914)**

**Irish Worker,** 17 October 1914.

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On Monday evening in the Antient Concert Rooms a mass meeting was held under the auspices of the Irish Neutrality League. The demonstration was principally intended to act as a set off to Mr John Redmond's recent recruiting meeting in the Mansion House, and to define the position of Ireland in relation to the present European War. When the proceedings opened the building was filled to overflowing by an enthusiastic gathering. Mr James Connolly took the chair amidst applause, and was accompanied on the platform by Mr Arthur Griffith (Editor **Sinn Féin**), Mr William O'Brien (President Dublin Trades Council), Mr John T. Kelly, TC; Mr J.J. Scollan (AOH, IAA), Major John MacBride, Mr Seán Milroy, ex-Alderman Macken, and the Countess Markievicz.

Mr Connolly, in his opening address, explained that they were met together to launch a campaign which he thought would prove historic in the annals of this country. He had with him on the platform men drawn from all classes. There were labour men there, and men who by no stretch of the imagination could be called labour men. They had Home Rulers and Republicans, Socialists and Sinn Féiners (applause). They had members of the sane section of the Volunteers, members of the Citizen Army (applause), and representatives of Cumann na mBan, Inghinidhe na hÉireann, and the various Franchise Leagues in Ireland. All of these represented ideals that were strangely different and ideas of the future that were strangely hostile. They represented many diverse ideas that for the time being were relinquished, so that they could come together on a common platform. But having mentioned the things they disagreed on, he would now turn to the one thing upon which they all agreed, namely, that the interests of Ireland were more dear to them than the interests of the British Empire (loud applause). They wanted to emphasise the fact that the enemies of England were not necessarily the enemies of Ireland. It was their duty to gather together the forces in Ireland so that they might place their country in the position it ought to occupy – a position of neutrality (applause). Having acquired the force, it was their duty to arrive at a conception of this question, and that conception was not likely to be of concern for the British Empire. They were now gathered together to emphasise the fact that their duty was to Ireland and to Ireland only (cheers). In doing so they would, of course, be accused of all sorts of motives. Mr Redmond (groans) told them that it was their duty as Irishmen to support England in the present

crisis, because she had closed for ever the record of her past in this country, but he (Mr Connolly) held that they could never map out their plans for the future unless they were able to understand the past (applause). When he (the speaker) was told of the promises made by England he remembered the promises made by England in the past and the result of those promises – which were never kept – he would tell them they ought not to heed her promises now unless they had the power in their hands to see that they were kept (applause). If Mr Redmond, instead of pledging the support of the Irish people in the British House of Commons had told Mr Asquith that he proposed going home to Ireland to consult the voice of Ireland, then, had he made such a statement, the Irish nation would be born again (cheers). But that opportunity had been lost. The English people were now crying out about the woes of Belgium, but when Belgium was devastated with fire and sword there were no British there to help her. Even when Belgium was in the throes of agony England sent her expeditionary force to France. This, of course, was done for ‘strategic reasons’, but she knew that her army was safer beside the big French force than with the smaller army of Belgium. Germany was fighting for the commerce of the seas and for the means of building up a sane civilisation in Europe (cheers). This was no rigged meeting – they had no RIC force to protect it. Irishmen wanted to see their country emerge from the present crisis with her dignity preserved (loud applause). [...]

**James Connolly**

# **How England Sacrificed Belgium**

**(1914)**

**Irish Worker,** 17 October 1914.  
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Transcription: Aindrias Ó Cathasaigh.

It has often been remarked in Irish Nationalist circles that according to the current cant of the Parliamentary Party the interests of Ireland can always be best served out of Ireland. Sometimes it is on 'the flure of the House' of Commons that Ireland must be fought for, sometimes it is on the platform in the United States, sometimes it is in election contests in England, and now it is on the battlefields of the Continent. It is always outside of Ireland that blows must be struck for Ireland, if we are to believe the official 'leaders of the Irish Race.'

It must surely be upon some such principle of action that England is fighting for the neutrality of Belgium. According to all the British jingo Press, and still more according to the organs of the Irish Home Rule Imperialists, or Imperialist Home Rulers, Great Britain has entered into this war solely because of her burning zeal for the neutrality of Belgium. Only because of the danger to Belgian neutrality was the mighty heart of England moved to action, and only because she saw this precious thing in danger did England at last reluctantly draw the sword and enter the lists against the Germans. And here in Ireland we are tearfully appealed to, to consider the awesome spectacle of the conversion of England to ways of justice and chivalry, and so considering to rush to her aid and side by side with her army battle for the neutrality of Belgium.

But when we look around us all that we see tends to arouse the suspicion that England has simply made a catspaw of Belgium, has deliberately tempted Belgium from her neutrality, and having committed that brave little kingdom to the fight has cold-bloodedly left her towns, cities and territories to be defended by her own unaided efforts. Whilst howling long and loudly against the violation of the neutrality of Belgium England never sent as much as a corporal's guard to help to prevent it. Whilst the Belgian soldiers were pouring out their life-blood in torrents in an effort to stem the forces of the invader, whilst the harvest in

Belgian fields was trodden under foot, Belgian industries destroyed and the population of Belgium driven from home and country, the armies of England were kept carefully out of Belgium, and that country left to stew in its own juice.

England and France cried out to the world that they were modern paladins of chivalry risking their all to save Belgium whilst all the time they were coolly devoting their every energy to the work of saving their own skins. All during the first month of Belgium's martyrdom England poured her Expeditionary Troops into France leaving Belgium to her fate. Belgium asked for troops to help defend her neutrality. England replied, "We are sorry, we would like to send you some troops, but you see we have a pressing engagement elsewhere. But we will write some nice newspaper articles about you, and even if you do suffer just think how useful your sufferings will be to us in the preparation of speeches against Germany." That is all the satisfaction Belgium has got or is likely to get the satisfaction of serving England as a tortured animal under the hands of the vivisectionist serves science.

Antwerp in its last agony brings this fact out very clearly. Even the most thoughtless cannot be but struck by the manner in which the editorials of the English newspapers assure their readers that the sufferings of Antwerp will be another argument against Germany. They dwell so much upon this aspect of the situation that it is clearly seen that in their eyes the sufferings of the Belgian people count for little – the manner in which their sufferings can be exploited to England's advantage counts for much.

The English press now admits that before the bombardment commenced the Belgian authorities wished to evacuate the city in order that it might be spared. But the English insisted that Antwerp must fight on although, as they now admit, they were well aware that the forts would be powerless to hold out long enough to be relieved, and that the resistance would mean the destruction of the city.

A Naval Brigade of raw, untrained units was sent into Antwerp to deceive the people with the hope of British assistance, and the Belgian people were driven on by England to the needless sacrifice of another city in order to provide another

'horrible example' for the unctuous hypocrites of the British press to shed tears of ink over.

Now that Antwerp has fallen all the professional liars of the capitalist press assure us that it is of no importance to the Germans. By such a statement they only further prove the truth of what I have just written. They illustrate the cold-blooded determination of England to sacrifice Belgium, all Belgium, to save the precious skins of the Allies. If Antwerp is of no importance to Germany, then all the greater is the crime of those who forced the Belgians to resist the bombardment when they desired to evacuate the city.

If Belgium had contented herself with protesting at the passage of German troops through her territory she would now have all her fortresses and cities in her own hands, her soldiers would all be alive and in a position to act with effect when the war had exhausted both sides, none of her civilian population would have lost their lives, homes or domestic treasures, or be scattered as exiles on the charity of strangers, her foreign trade would not be lost by the paralysis of her domestic industry, and her neutrality and independence would be effectually maintained.

If in the fluctuations of the war the soil of Belgium became the scene of conflict both sides would have in their own interests kept aloof from any considerable town or city in the possession of large bodies of fresh Belgian troops, and would have avoided anything calculated to make fresh enemies for their own side.

Under such circumstances any conflict that would have taken place in Belgium between the Germans and the Allies would have been fought out in the open country, or around small villages whose inhabitants could easily have been sheltered in the large towns, and all the horrors to which Belgium has been subjected would have been unknown.

For all those horrors she has to thank her stupid governing class, and the wily, heartless English diplomacy that sacrifices Belgium in a quarrel not her own.

Will Ireland allow her sons to be sacrificed by the same unscrupulous power that English capitalism may rise by garrotting the civilisation and commerce of Europe? No, a thousand times no!

Mr Redmond's Volunteers – the unpaid soldiers of England, scabbing on the British Army, doing for nothing what British soldiers require pay for doing – they may go though we doubt it, but no man to whom Ireland and Ireland's interests are dear will ever draw a sword or fire a shot in any quarrel of England's making until such time as such quarrel finds its venue in Ireland, is fought out on Ireland's own soil.

And when that day comes the swords will be drawn and the shots fired by Irishmen for Ireland, and for Freedom for all who work and live in Ireland.

***By JAMES CONNOLLY***