

James Connolly

**The Manchester
Martyrs
(1915)**

From **Workers' Republic,** 20 November 1915.

This week we are celebrating another anniversary. But it is of a different order to the anniversary of which we spoke of in our last number. That anniversary was of one of Ireland's thinkers – a defiant rebel and preacher of rebellion but one whose rebellion never got further than the spoken or written word. A thinker and initiator amidst mindless slaves – a scorner and hater of orthodox formulae amidst men who could not think even of rebellion except according to formula, and who refused to rebel because some of the ingredients of their formula were lacking.

This week our Anniversary is not of thinkers, but of doers, of men who when a duty was to be done did not stop to think, but acted, and by their action violated every rule of prudence, sanity, and caution, and in violating them all obeyed the highest dictates of wisdom and achieved immortality.

THE MANCHESTER MARTYRS! Who were they? A few words will tell.

Two members of the Fenian organisation – Kelly and Deasy – were trapped in Manchester, and lay awaiting trial in an English prison. The Fenians in that city resolved to rescue them. This they did by stopping the prison van upon the road between Manchester and Salford, breaking open the van, shooting a policeman in the act, and carrying off their comrades under the very eyes of the English authorities,

Out of a number of men arrested for complicity in the deed, three were hanged. These three were ALLEN, LARKIN and O'BRIEN – the three Manchester Martyrs whose memory we honour today. Why do we honour them?

We honour them because of their heroic souls. Let us remember that by every test by which parties in Ireland to-day measure political wisdom, or personal prudence, the act of these men ought to be condemned. They were in a hostile city, surrounded by a hostile population; they were playing into the hands of the Government by bringing all the Fenians out in broad daylight to be spotted and remembered; they were discouraging the Irish people by giving them another failure to record; they had no hopes of foreign help even if their brothers in Ireland took the field spurred by their action; at the most their action would only be an Irish riot in an English city; and finally, they were imperilling the whole organisation for the sake of two men. These were all the sound sensible arguments of the prudent, practical politicians and theoretical revolutionists. But “how beggarly appear words before a defiant deed!”

The Fenians of Manchester rose superior to all the whines about prudence, caution and restraint, and saw only two of their countrymen struck at for loyalty to freedom, and seeing this, struck back at the enemy with blows that are still resounding through the heart of the world. The echo of those blows has for a generation been as a baptismal dedication to the soul and life of thousands of Irish men and women, consecrating them to the service of freedom.

Had Kelly and Deasy been struck at in our time, we would not have startled the world by the vehemence of our blow in return; we would not have sent out the call for a muster of our hosts to peril all in their rescue. No, we would simply have instructed our typist to look up the office files and see if they had paid up their

subscription in the *Cumann Cosanta*, and were entitled to their insurance benefit.

Thus we have progressed in the path of civilised methods, far, far away from the undisciplined hatred and reckless fighting of the '67 men. MORYAH!

ALLEN, LARKIN and O'BRIEN died that the right of their small nationality to independence might be attested by their blood – died that some day an Irish Republic might live. The song of their martyrdom was written by a man who had laboured hard to prevent the fruition of their hopes; the prayer of their last moments has become the hackneyed catch word of every political Judas seeking to betray their cause. Everything associated with them has been stolen or corrupted, except the imperishable example of their 'defiant deed.' Of that neither men, devils, nor doubters can deprive us.

Oh, the British Empire is great and strong and powerful compared with Ireland. 'Tis true that compared with Germany the Empire is a doddering old miser confronted with a lusty youth, a miser whose only hope is to purchase the limbs and bodies of others to protect her stolen properties. 'Tis true that the Empire cannot stand up alone to any European power, that she must have allies or perish. 'Tis true that even with allies her military and financial system is cracking at every point, sweating blood in fear at every pore. But still all the stolen property that England possesses our Irish forefathers have helped to steal, and we are helping to defend.

Was it wise then, or commendable, for the men of '67 to rebel against the Empire that their and our fathers have helped to build or steal? There are thousands of answers to that question, but let the European battlefields of today provide the one all-sufficient answer.

All these mountains of Irish dead, all these corpses mangled beyond recognition, all these arms, legs, eyes, ears, fingers, toes, hands, all these shivering putrefying bodies and portions of bodies – once warm living and tender parts of Irish men and youths – all these horrors buried in Flanders or the Gallipoli Peninsula, are all items in the price Ireland pays for being part of the

British Empire. All these widows whose husbands were torn from their sides and forced to go to war, their prayers and tears for the ones who will return no more, are another part of the price of Empire. All those fatherless orphans, who for the last time have heard the cheery laugh of an affectionate father, and who must for years suffer all the bitter hardships of a childhood poorly provided for against want and hunger – all those and their misery are part of the price Ireland pays for Empire. All those shattered, maimed and diseased wrecks of humanity who for years will crowd our poorhouses and asylums, or crawl along our roads and streets affronting our health by their wounds, and our comfort by their appeals for charity – all, all are part of the price Ireland pays for the glory of being an integral part of the British Empire.

And for what do we pay this price? Answer, ye practical ones! Ye men of sense, of prudence, of moderation, of business capacity!

Ireland is rotten with slums, a legacy of Empire. The debt of this war will prevent us from getting money to replace them with sound clean, healthy homes. Every big gun fired in the Dardanelles fired away at every shot the cost of building a home for a working class family. Ireland has the most inefficient educational system, and the poorest schools in Europe. Empire compels us to pay pounds for blowing out the brains of others for every farthing it allows us with which to train our own.

An Empire on which the sun never sets cannot guarantee its men and women as much comfort as is enjoyed by the every-day citizen of the smallest, least military nation in Europe. Nations that know not the power and possessions of Empire have happier, better educated, better housed, better equipped men and women than Ireland has ever known, or can ever know as an integral part of the British Empire.

The British Empire is a piratical enterprise in which the velour of slaves fights for the glory and profit of their masters. The Home Rule Party aspire to be trusted accomplices of that conspiracy, the Manchester Martyrs were its unyielding foes even to the dungeon and the scaffold. Therefore we honour the memory of the Manchester Martyrs. As future generations shall honour them.

James Connolly

The Dispute on the Docks

Is it War?

(1915)

Workers' Republic, 20 November 1915.

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The fight of the employees of the City of Dublin Steam Packet Company against the attempt of that company to reduce them below the level of their fellow-workers has produced some very interesting developments.

Late last week this office was honoured by a visit from a representative of the Irish Party in the person of a gentleman who most pompously announced himself as "Mr Esmonde, MP". No one in Liberty Hall seeming very much impressed by this title the young man proceeded to unload himself of a large and varied assortment of threats as to what the Government and the Irish Party were going to do to the Transport Union. As he expressed it, they would "wage war" upon us. Being told not too politely that he and the Government and the Irish Party could

take themselves to a climate warmer than the Dardanelles or Flanders, the young gentleman (who, although an officer in the British Army, has no desire to go to any of the places specified or hinted at), looked a little pained and displeased, and suggested arbitration under the Munitions Act. He was then informed that there was nothing to arbitrate about.

That every other company on the quays were paying at least as high, and some higher than the company involved, and it would have to pay the same.

Here followed another explosion of wrath, and some more threats, and eventually it was hinted to 'Mr Esmonde, MP' that his room was preferable to his company. To go – and he goed. He was a nice young man for an old maid's tea party, no doubt, but the most insufferable coxcomb that ever the wind blew into this office. There are queer things comes up with the tide, and certainly he was one of the quarest.

We can well imagine how those old Parliamentary hands, Joe Devlin and J.D. Nugent, winked at each other behind his back when they sent him off to an interview at Liberty Hall.

Following the interview we had telephone messages from the Lord Mayor of Dublin on the same subject. His Lordship got from this office the courteous answer any gentleman gets here to a message courteously put, and was a welcome change to the manners of our former interviewers. But, of course, although we were interested to learn that we were the subject of Conference at the Viceregal Lodge and at Dublin Castle we still could not see that there was anything to arbitrate.

We were informed too that the Admiralty proposed taking the boats and using them as transports.

Well, the Admiralty has a legal right to take any boats it wants, but we hold that to take a boat that is involved in a strike, and pay the owners of that boat for its use during that strike is equal to assisting the company against the men. It is paying Government money to keep the owners from losing by the suspension of

their business. It is like paying strike pay to the owners, and takes out of the hands of the men the only weapon they possess, viz. their power to inflict loss upon their late employer. Such an action by the British Government in a Dublin dispute could only be interpreted as an act of war upon Labour, and we would have no alternative but accept it in that light.

It would, we repeat, mean war.

We are going to win this fight. We are not going to allow Sir William Watson, William Martin Murphy, nor the British Government to single out any body of workers for attack and destruction. We know that the destruction of that body of workers would mean an instant attack all along the line upon organised Labour in Dublin, and to prevent that destruction and avert that attack we will fight with 'all the resources of civilization'.

James Connolly

The Returned Emigrants

(1915)

Workers' Republic, 13 November 1915.

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The pages of Irish literature are covered with references to the returned Irish Emigrants. Especially do our poets revel in describing the emotions of the Irish Emigrant returned to the home of his or her ancestors. But the past week has added to our knowledge another kind of returned emigrant. The daily papers tell us with glee that a large number of Irish emigrants, or would-be emigrants, have been refused permission to board Atlantic liners at Liverpool and Londonderry, and forcibly compelled to return to their homes in Ireland.

These emigrants we are further informed were all of military age, and were suspected of a desire to leave the country in order to avoid conscription. The **Daily Mail** gave on Monday a first class picture showing these poor Irish lads standing in line at the steamship company's office, surrounded by a jeering mob of Englishmen. It is significant that every face shown on the picture as belonging to the jeering mob is the face of a young man of military age. Why did they not show the example of enlisting, instead of loafing around the docks of Liverpool in the middle of the day?

We learn also that all the British Steamship Companies plying to the United States have issued notices declining to book passages thither to any men of military age.

This is good!

Surely the issue could be made no clearer. These young Irishmen have just brought in the harvest that is to feed England and her armies, and now, their work done, they seek to escape from the country, but are told that Irishmen can only escape from Ireland by fighting for England as well as feeding her.

In other words it is made plain to them (and to us all) that to the Imperial mind an Irishman's destiny is to serve England.

For that and for that alone did an All Wise Providence create us.

But every day there is still pouring out of Ireland the good food, in the shape of cereals and livestock, that is necessary for the maintenance of these emigrants that England sent back, that is necessary for them and for us all.

Some serious questions arise upon this.

We are told these emigrants are shirkers. Suppose they were. And then ask the question: What would happen if, as England has refused to let away the shirkers from Ireland, the Irish people were to refuse to let away the Irish food to feed the shirkers in England?

Or, why should Irish people allow their cattle and harvests to leave Ireland if the men who sowed and reaped the harvests, and tended the cattle, cannot go also? If the men are turned back shall we also turn back the cattle and foodstuffs?

The stokers of the *Saxonia* came out on strike rather than take Irish men from England. Should Dublin dockers go on strike rather than ship Irish cattle to England?

But the stokers in Liverpool had *their* nation behind them, with its armed forces if necessary.

Would the armed forces that recognise the Irish nation be behind the Irish docker should he take such action?

Would they?

Ah! That makes the difference!

James Connolly

Ireland – Disaffected Or Revolutionary

(1915)

From **Workers' Republic**, 13 November 1915.

“Youth of Ireland stand prepared,
Revolution's dread abyss
Burns beneath us all but bared ...”

So sang Clarence Mangan in the days of '48. But he sang in vain. The music of his verse charmed the cultured intellect of the leaders, but could not break through their refined distrust of the mob, nor inspire them with a confidence in its willingness to respond to the call. And the verse of Mangan never appealed to the emotions of the mob itself.

The revolutionary position was there, the people were ready, but the leaders were lacking in dash and recklessness. As another writer has it of another body of leaders similarly situated:

“Having all their lives sung of the glories of the Revolution, when it rose up before them they ran away appalled.”

These reflections are inspired by the fact that Ireland is at present in the midst of a number of anniversaries of the great days of its patriot dead. On all hands

celebrations are being or have been arranged, much oratory is on tap, many verses of more or less merit are pouring forth, and all sorts of men and women are drawing lessons and pointing morals for the edification of the Irish reading public.

It is felt that we are now in stirring times, and many people dare even to hope that we are in a revolutionary epoch. It is well then that we of the Irish working class should try and understand the position of the revolutionists of the past, that we may the better realise our position in the present.

We do not believe that this is a revolutionary epoch, no more than the days of Mitchel were revolutionary in Ireland, nor the days of Allen, Larkin and O'Brien. An epoch, to be truly revolutionary, must have a dominating number of men with the revolutionary spirit – ready to dare all, and take all risks for the sake of their ideals.

In 1848, as later, there were men who talked much of revolution, but when the spirit of the times called upon them to strike they all began to make excuses, to murmur about the danger of premature insurrection, of incomplete preparations, of the awful responsibility of giving the word for insurrection, etc., etc.

In 1848, as later, the real revolutionary sentiment was in the hearts of the people, but for the most part they who undertook to give it articulate expression were wanting in the essential ability to translate sentiment into action. They would have been good historians of a revolutionary movement, but were unable to take that leap in the dark which all men must take who plunge into insurrection. For, be it well understood, an insurrection is always doubtful, a thousand to one chance always exists in favour of the established order and against the insurgents.

Despite all seeming to the contrary we assert that Ireland is not a really revolutionary country. Ireland is a disaffected country which has long been accustomed to conduct constitutional agitations in revolutionary language, and

what is worse, to conduct revolutionary movements with a due regard to law and order.

Our constitutionalists have been ready to defy the law; our revolutionists shine only in legal quirks to evade the letter of the law. The constitutional agitation of the Land League was one prolonged riot of illegality; the revolutionary movement of our own day shrinks from an openly illegal act as nervously as a coy maiden shrinks from a desired lover.

It is this paradoxical state of affairs that makes Irish politics so puzzling to the outsider. He listens to the politician appealing to the people to cling to constitutional methods, and at the same time exulting in the agrarian reforms gained by trampling law and order under foot. He hears the revolutionists telling that England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity, and then, when her greatest difficulty comes, postponing action on the opportunity in order to see if the politician cannot yet succeed by legal agitation.

In his brilliant lecture on John Mitchel in the Antient Concert Rooms, on Thursday, November 4th, our friend Mr. P.H. Pearse treated his audience to a splendid review of the tendencies of opinions and movement of currents of thought, that applied so well to our own days that many of the audience forgot that it was an analysis of '48 to which they were listening or supposed to be listening. It is that very similarity which enables us to so clearly understand the nature of the forces that destroyed Mitchel.

The British Government would not wait until the plans of the revolutionists were ready. It has not held Ireland down for 700 years by any such foolish waiting. It struck in its own time, and its blow paralysed the people. The leaders of the people would not follow Mitchel's lead but held the people back by talk about "premature insurrection," and "the desire of the Government to provoke us to act before we are ready," and such like phrases repeated glibly, with the solemnity of owls and the foolishness of idiots, until the golden moment of hot wrath was passed, and the paraders and the strutters had lost the confidence and destroyed the hopes of the nation.

In vain for Clarence Mangan to call to such a people to prepare for revolution. Revolutionists who shrink from giving blow for blow until the great day has arrived, and they have every shoe-string in its place, and every man has got his gun, and the enemy has kindly consented to postpone action in order not to needlessly hurry the revolutionists nor disarrange their plans – such revolutionists only exist in two places – the comic opera stage, and the stage of Irish national politics. We prefer the comic opera brand. It at least serves its purpose.

John Mitchel was not defeated by the British Government. He was defeated by his own associates. There are no John Mitchels left in Ireland, but of such as those who held back the hands of the people who would have rescued him there are still a goodly brood – all of them as legally seditious, as peacefully revolutionary, and as fatal to the hopes of a nation as ever were their forerunners.

O, we latter-day Irish are great orators, and great singers, and great reciters, and great at cheering heroic sentiments about revolution. But we are not revolutionists. Not by a thousand miles! Soldiers of a regular army we can be, soldiers with a well-secured base from which our provisions can come up with clock-like regularity, soldiers with our relatives and dependents securely drawing separation allowances, soldiers with an ambulance service working automatically according to railway time table, soldiers with unlimited reserves of ammunition, arms, and uniforms. For that kind of war we are ready, aye, ready.

But no revolution in history ever had any of these things. None ever will have. Hence we strictly confine ourselves to killing John Bull with our mouths.

We have opened this week with a quotation from our own Irish poet – an impassioned, soul-felt appeal to the heart of a nation whose heart was greater than the spirit of its leaders. We shall close with the words of another poet, an American, a trumpet call to his people on the occasion of a crisis in his nation's history. It would be well if it were laid to heart in Ireland today:

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide.

James Connolly

**Recruiting the
Irish Citizen
Army**

(1915)

From **Workers' Republic**, November 6, 1915.

A large section has been formed for drill, and every day the men are instructed in military exercises. We are thus rapidly becoming the best drilled body of men in Ireland. For a time it was difficult to get our men trained, as dock work keeps men employed always in the evenings, but the employers are kindly helping us to get over that difficulty. Company after company locks out its men, and then we bring them up to Liberty Hall and take advantage of the opportunity to drill and train them. When each dispute is settled that squad of men goes back to work, and some other squad gets locked out, and we get a chance to train them.

Thus the whole quay is getting drilled, and the Irish Citizen Army has a larger reserve of drilled fighting men than any force in Dublin. It is a great game! And all these men are ready to fight – in Ireland. Perhaps that is not what the

employers are aiming at. Perhaps. But every musketry instructor can tell you that people often hit what they did not aim at. The great danger is that the dispute may be over before the men are thoroughly drilled. And when it is over the men will be back to work at the same rates of pay as their brothers have been conceded. And not a penny less.

James Connolly

Diplomacy

(1915)

From **Workers' Republic**, November 6, 1915.

What is diplomacy? It is the name for the business of conducting the relations between governments. Whatever has to do with the conduct of international relations is diplomatic, and the art of conducting the correspondence and of adjusting those relations is diplomacy.

Now, do you understand? The language in which all diplomats carry on the business throughout the world is French, just as the predominant language in which trade was conducted internationally until recently was English.

The nations, that is to say, robbed each other in English, and fooled each other in French.

The English have acquired somehow the reputation of being blunt, business-like people, with a frank, open nature, whereas the history of their dealings with other people show them to have been the shrewdest masters of the diplomatic game the world has ever seen.

In Ireland, as their own State Papers frankly declare, they employed forgery, bribery, and murder as part of their daily weapons for the subjugation of the country; in India their own chief apologist, Lord Macaulay, records that Lord Clive, the founder of their Indian Empire, forged the name of an Indian patriot to serve the interests of the Empire, and Warren Hastings, when put on trial for extortion, blackmail, bribery, torture, wholesale plunder, invasion and conquest of neutral states, was proven guilty but let off scot free on the grounds that he had indulged in those crimes for the good of the Empire.

In Europe the same guileless John Bull has assiduously kept stirring the pot of international hatreds and jealousies, pitting nations against nations, and ever fanning the embers of war into consuming flames. Sometimes he supported subject nations against their tyrants, sometimes despots against their struggling subjects, sometimes preached the doctrine of national rights, sometimes (as at the Congress of Vienna, 1815) acted the part of the chief criminal in dividing and parcelling out ancient nations. Ready to fly to arms to defend the rights of neutrals, still more ready to trample roughshod over neutral rights when it served his purpose; ever appealing to God and the Bible, and always convinced that crimes committed by John Bull became virtues, and virtuous acts by his enemies became blasphemous mockeries of the Most High.

British Diplomacy is hypocrisy incarnate, but as every false prophet comes in odd moments to believe in the truth of his false doctrine, so John Bull finds Englishmen to honestly believe that which their rulers unctuously pretend. Hence we have the phenomenon of the same section of the English people which honestly denounced their Government's action in betraying Persia to the Russians, quite as honestly believing in the action of the same Government when it cries out against the invasion of Belgium.

Cynical onlookers might say that the rape and betrayal of Persia was regarded as a harmless joke because it was done by England's ally, but the invasion of Belgium was a monstrous crime because it was done by England's enemy.

Even if that were true it would not affect the case. Diplomacy has a code of honour of its own, has a standard by which it tests all things. That code has no necessary relation to the moral code, that standard has nothing to do with the righteousness of any cause.

The diplomat holds all acts honourable which bring him success, all things are righteous which serve his ends. If cheating is necessary, he will cheat; if lying is useful, he will lie; if bribery helps, he will bribe; if murder serves, he will order murder; if burglary, seduction, arson or forgery brings success nearer, all and each of these will be done.

And through it all the diplomat will remain the soul of honour - a perfect English gentleman.

You remember the Morocco case. England, France, and Spain were engaged in a sweet little plundering expedition to Morocco. Germany thought her interests were being overlooked, and sent a gunboat. There was nearly a war. Then England, France and Spain made a treaty, oh, a fine chivalrous, noble treaty! They agreed to maintain, respect and guarantee the independence of Morocco. And they showed that treaty to Germany, and Germany was satisfied.

But there were secret clauses of that treaty which they did not show to Germany. These secret clauses bound the signatories to the treaty to divide up and annex the country whose independence the public clauses of the treaty had pledged them to safeguard. They did not show these secret clauses to Germany. Oh, no! But Germany found out about them, and there would have been war but for the fact that the Germans, though great soldiers, are rotten diplomats.

Just imagine the situation. When your grocer sells you sand over the counter for sugar he is a swindler, and you send him to jail unless he escapes into the Corporation and becomes an Alderman.

But when the representatives of certain European countries sit down at the table with those of another, show them the text of a treaty, solemnly assuring them that it is a correct copy, whilst all the time they have in their pockets a totally different treaty with clauses entirely opposed to the copy shown, the swindling representatives are held in high honour by their governments because it is good diplomacy.

We had the same game here in Ireland. The Irish public have been shown a copy of a Home Rule Bill, and Sir Edward Carson has in his pocket a copy of an Amending Bill which will destroy the Home Rule Bill – said Amending Bill having been agreed upon by the same English statesmen who prepared the Bill it is to destroy.

That is diplomacy. And the act of those who pin their faith to the Home Rule Act and ignore the Amending Bill is – well, foolery.

We have said the Germans are rotten diplomats. It sounds strong, and in view of the espousal of their cause by so many nations in Europe it may seem foolish. But it is cold fact. The German victories, not excepting the adhesion of Turkey and Bulgaria, have been military victories, or due to their unquestioned military superiority on the field of battle.

Every dispassionate onlooker in Europe recognises certain facts. They see that no one of the Allies could stand up a day against Germany, if isolated from the others.

To put it in the language of a labour dispute: If Germany struck against Russia the strike would only last a day, and work would be resumed the next morning on German terms; if Germany struck against France the dispute might drag out till dinner time, but if the strike was only against Great Britain the fight

would be over by breakfast time, and the German workmen would be able to finish a three-quarter day after the row was over.

Now observe. The onlookers know that the alliance against Germany cannot last, but must break up as it is made up of so many discordant elements. It is unnatural, and whether it last a year, or three years, or ten years is immaterial, break up it will.

On the other hand, Germany is the one solid factor that must last, which cannot break up, which nature will hold together. Victorious or defeated, Germany will keep together; victorious or defeated, the Allies will break up – and probably quarrel amongst themselves.

Common sense then sends the neutral nations to Germany's side, and despite the magnificent lying of the daily press there they will remain. Or to put it in another way. The most magnificent military force in the war is the one that by nature will remain a constant undivided factor in the future, and on the other side is an impotent military force under different commands, with divided allegiances, and with divergent interests.

Who could hesitate? No, the victories of Germany are military victories, not diplomatic ones. If Germany had to depend on her diplomacy she would be defeated. She had one great chance to declare war with the public opinion of Europe on her side, and with the sympathies of Ireland so enlisted, that not all the lying press nor crawling parliamentarians could have turned this country against her.

That chance came when the Mail boats for America ceased to call at Queenstown. Certain patriotic Irishmen persuaded a German steamship company – The Hamburg-America line we believe – to announce that it was about to make Queenstown a port of call so that Ireland would still maintain her communication with America. Everything was ready, and all Ireland was excited over the prospect. But British diplomacy stepped in and intimated to the German government that it would consider it an unfriendly act if the company in question sent in its boats to Ireland.

The German Government gave orders for the arrangements to be cancelled, and Ireland was once more shut out from all regular foreign intercourse, and its people restricted to the necessity of going to England when they wanted to go somewhere else – of going east when they wanted to go west, north, or south.

If Germany had not been a bungling fool at diplomacy it would have fought on that question – fought on the right to assist the people of Ireland, to trade with the people of Ireland to carry goods to and from the people of Ireland. But the peace-loving German Emperor shrank from the quarrel, not realising that from that moment every agency in the British Government was alert to seize every opportunity to precipitate a quarrel upon some point not so dangerously appealing to Irish sympathies for German arms as a quarrel over Queenstown would have been.

The pretext for this war is a real humiliation for German diplomacy, as real as the war itself is a triumph for German arms. German arms will win this war, but we would not be surprised to see British diplomacy pluck the fruits of victory from the dust of military defeat. Ireland and Ireland alone could prevent that, but Ireland has the brand of the slave on her brow-numbing fear of the tyrant in her soul. “The British Ambassadors at Paris,” said Andrew Jackson after the war of 1812, “threw dust in the eyes of our United States envoys, but they could not throw dust in the eyes of my Texas riflemen at New Orleans.”

Can Ireland burst through the wiles of British diplomacy in like manner?
Who shall answer?

James Connolly

A War For Civilization

(1915)

From **Workers' Republic**, 30 October 1915.

We are hearing and reading a lot just now about a war for civilization. In some vague, ill-defined manner we are led to believe that the great empires of Europe have suddenly been seized with a chivalrous desire to right the wrongs of mankind, and have sallied forth to war, giving their noblest blood and greatest measures to the task of furthering the cause of civilization.

It seems unreal, but it may be possible. Great emotions sometimes master the most cold and calculating individuals, pushing them on to do that which in their colder moments they would have sneered at. In like manner great emotions sometimes master whole communities of men and women, and nations have gone mad, as in the Crusades, over matters that did not enter into any scheme of selfish calculation.

But in such cases the great emotions manifested themselves in at least an appropriate manner. Their actions under the influence of great emotions had a relation to the cause or the ideal for which they were ostensibly warring.

In the case of the war for civilization, however, we look in vain for any action which in itself bears the mark of civilization. As we count civilization it means the ascendancy of industry and the arts of industry over the reign of violence and pillage. Civilization means the conquest by ordered law and peaceful discussion

of the forces of evil, it means the exaltation of those whose strength is only in the righteousness of their cause over those whose power is gained by a ruthless seizing of domination founded on force.

Civilization necessarily connotes the gradual supplanting of the reign of chance and muddling by the forces of order and careful provision for the future; it means the levelling up of classes, and the initiation of the people into a knowledge and enjoyment of all that tends to soften the natural hardships of life and to make that life refined and beautiful.

But the war for civilization has done none of those things – aspires to do none of these things. It is primarily a war upon a nation whose chief crime is that it refuses to accept a position of dependence, but insists instead upon organizing its forces so that its people can co-operate with nature in making their lives independent of chance, and independent of the goodwill of others.

The war for civilization is a war upon a nation which insists upon organizing its intellect so as to produce the highest and best in science, in art, in music, in industry; and insists moreover upon so co-ordinating and linking up all these that the final result shall be a perfectly educated nation of men and women.

In the past civilization has been a heritage enjoyed by a few upon a basis of the brutalization of the vast multitude; that nation aims at a civilization of the whole resting upon the whole, and only made possible by the educated co-operation of an educated whole.

The war for civilization is waged by a nation like Russia, which has the greatest proportion of illiterates of any European power, and which strives sedulously to prevent education where it is possible, and to poison it where prohibition is impossible.

The war for civilization is waged by a nation like Britain which holds in thrall a sixth of the human race, and holds as a cardinal doctrine of its faith that none of its subject races may, under penalty of imprisonment and death, dream of ruling their own territories. A nation which believes that all races are subject to

purchase, and which brands as perfidy the act of any nation which, like Bulgaria, chooses to carry its wares and its arms to any other than a British market.

This war for civilization in the name of neutrality and small nationalities invades Persia and Greece, and in the name of the interests of commerce seizes the cargo of neutral ships, and flaunts its defiance of neutral flags.

In the name of freedom from militarism it establishes military rule in Ireland, battling for progress it abolishes trial by jury, and waging war for enlightened rule it tramples the freedom of the press under the heel of a military despot.

Is it any wonder then that that particular war for civilization arouses no enthusiasm in the ranks of the toiling masses of the Irish nation?

But there is another war for civilization in which these masses are interested. That war is being waged by the forces of organized labour.

Civilization cannot be built upon slaves; civilization cannot be secured if the producers are sinking into misery; civilization is lost if they whose labour makes it possible share so little of its fruits that its fall can leave them no worse than its security.

The workers are at the bottom of civilized society. That civilization may endure they ought to push upward from their poverty and misery until they emerge into the full sunlight of freedom. When the fruits of civilization, created by all, are enjoyed in common by all, then civilization is secure. Not till then.

Since this European war started the workers as a whole have been sinking. It is not merely that they have lost in comfort – have lost a certain standard of food and clothing by reason of the increase of prices – but they have lost in a great measure, in Britain at least, all those hard won rights of combination and freedom of action, the possession of which was the foundation upon which they hoped to build the greater freedom of the future.

From being citizens with rights the workers were being driven and betrayed into the position of slaves with duties. Some of them may have been well-paid slaves, but slavery is not measured by the amount of oats in the feeding trough to which the slave is tied. It is measured by his loss of control of the conditions under which he labours.

We here in Ireland, particularly those who follow the example of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union, have been battling to preserve those rights which others have surrendered; we have fought to keep up our standards of life, to force up our wages, to better our conditions.

To that extent we have been truly engaged in a war for civilization. Every victory we have gained has gone to increase the security of life amongst our class, has gone to put bread on the tables, coals in the fires, clothes on the backs of those to whom food and warmth and clothing are things of ever pressing moment.

Some of our class have fought in Flanders and the Dardanelles; the greatest achievement of them all combined will weigh but a feather in the balance for good compared with the achievements of those who stayed at home and fought to secure the rights of the working class against invasion.

The carnival of murder on the continent will be remembered as a nightmare in the future, will not have the slightest effect in deciding for good the fate of our homes, our wages, our hours, our conditions. But the victories of labour in Ireland will be as footholds, secure and firm, in the upward climb of our class to the fulness and enjoyment of all that labour creates, and organized society can provide.

Truly, labour alone in these days is fighting the real war for civilization.

James Connolly

For the Citizen Army

(1915)

From **Workers' Republic,** October 30, 1915.

The Irish Citizen Army was founded during the great Dublin Lock-Out of 1913-14, for the purpose of protecting the working class, and of preserving its right of public meeting and free association. The streets of Dublin had been covered by the bodies of helpless men, women, boys and girls brutally batoned by the uniformed bullies of the British Government.

Three men had been killed, and one young Irish girl murdered by a scab, and nothing was done to bring the assassins to justice. So since justice did not exist for us, since the law instead of protecting the rights of the workers was an open enemy, and since the armed forces of the Crown were unreservedly at the disposal of the enemies of labour, it was resolved to create our own army to secure our rights, to protect our members, and to be a guarantee of our own free progress.

The Irish Citizen Army was the first publicly organised armed citizen force south of the Boyne. Its constitution pledged and still pledges its members to work for an Irish Republic, and for the emancipation of labour. It has ever been foremost in all national work, and whilst never neglecting its own special function has always been at the disposal of the forces of Irish nationality for the ends common to all.

Its influence and presence has kept the peace at all labour meetings since its foundation, and the knowledge of its existence and of the spirit of its members

has contributed to prevent the employers and the government from proceeding to extremes against the fighting unions. It has in a true and real sense added many shillings per week to the pay of the union members, since it and it alone has prevented the Government doing in Dublin what it has done in Barry, namely, send soldiers in to do dockers' work during a strike. Nationally it has done much more.

When the great betrayal was perpetrated on Ireland, and John Redmond and his followers, aided by all the capitalist press of the country, joined in a conspiracy to rush the young men of Ireland into the ranks of the British Army, the first stirring blow struck against that betrayal was the historic meeting in Stephen's Green on the night of Redmond's Mansion House fiasco.

Who took the field that night in spite of the massed battalions of the British Army, waiting the word in every barrack square in Dublin? It was the Irish Citizen Army sprang into the gap, and by its fearless presence gave new heart and hope to the dismayed and betrayed people of Ireland.

When the first deportation order was issued to the first victim, Captain Robert Monteith, who leaped to arms and invited the people of Dublin to hurl their defiance in the teeth of the Government? Who rallied to the meeting despite torrents of rain, and in face of the open demonstration of armed force by the Dublin garrison? Again it was the Irish Citizen Army.

Who on every occasion on which the enemy has struck his blow at those who stood for freedom has ever hastened to the side of the victims declaring their cause to be its own? THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY!

Who, when the protest meeting was held in the Phoenix Park under directions of the Volunteer Committee, were the only armed body to attend and declare their adhesion to the cause of their imprisoned brothers in arms? THE IRISH CITIZEN ARMY!

An armed organisation of the Irish working class is a phenomenon in Ireland. Hitherto the workers of Ireland have fought as parts of the armies led by

their masters, never as members of an army officered, trained, and inspired by men of their own class. Now, with arms in their hands, they propose to steer their own course, to carve their own future.

Neither Home Rule, nor the lack of Home Rule, will make them lay down their arms.

However it may be for others, for us of the Citizen Army there is but one ideal – an Ireland ruled, and owned, by Irish men and women, sovereign and independent from the centre to the sea, and flying its own flag outward over all the oceans.

We cannot be swerved from our course by honeyed words, lulled into carelessness by freedom to parade and strut in uniforms, nor betrayed by high-sounding phrases.

The Irish Citizen Army will only co-operate in a forward movement. The moment that forward movement ceases it reserves to itself the right to step out of the alignment, and advance by itself if needs be, in an effort to plant the banner of freedom one reach further towards its goal.

James Connolly

The Immorality of Dublin

(1915)

We are hearing a good deal lately about the increasing immorality of Dublin. A lady member of the Irish aristocracy has aired her views upon the matter, town councillors have passed their verdict, and all the capitalist newspapers have joined in the shriek, and all the world has been duly informed of the terrible degradation of Dublin.

Is it not time we had some straight talk upon this matter? We are not likely to have such straight talk from any of the orthodox sources which to-day we see turning up the whites of their eyes as they prate of this great evil.

We want them to tell us what is the cause of this immorality, and what remedy they suggest. We will not be told the true cause, and we will hear of no remedy except a police remedy, which is just no remedy at all.

Whatever immorality there is in Dublin arises in the first place from the horrible poverty in which the people live, and the awful dens in which such a large number of people are housed. For the horrible poverty the class which makes the outcry about immorality is principally responsible. If we could analyse the sources from which Lady Fingal and all the other brood of unctuous praters derive their incomes we would find that almost all of them are in one way or another interested in maintaining present conditions in Dublin, either as owners of land upon which our slums are built, owners of house property, or shareholders in banks which have lent money to those who do own house or ground rent rights in our city. They are all in the relation to Dublin immorality of cause and effect.

We have said it before, we say it again – we will continue saying it till Dublin sweeps these hell holes away, that the girl or woman who maintains her purity amidst the awful filth, crowding and darkness of our slums has gone through a

greater trial than martyrdom at the stake, and deserves a greater veneration than many who suffered in that manner.

Martyrdom at the stake was the brief suffering of a few moments – a paroxysm of exquisite agony with all the world looking on, an agony tempered with the joy of defying your enemy to the last. But the long-drawn-out agony of an ill-lighted, pestilential, fever-haunted, over-crowded slum, where the very air is laden with filthy talk, where the drunken quarrels of one family drown the domestic endearments of its neighbour, where the daily talk of one foul-mouthed slut can teach obscenity to the children of a score of parents, where privacy is impossible, where vice in lazy ease mocks daily at virtue in bedraggled poverty – to come out morally unscathed out of such a fire is to earn the respect and admiration of all who know and think.

One cause of the immorality of Dublin is its awful poverty. Take any large city of a similar size, where the wages of the men are poor, and where there is little work for the women and girls, and where such work as exists is most shamefully underpaid, and we will find the Devil reaping a similar harvest.

Abolish the Slums, the poverty of the men, and the sweating of the women and girls, and you will be making war upon vice in Dublin.

One other cause is *the Garrison*. Every military centre in a large city is a stink-pot of immorality.

Especially since the war broke out, and since every agency in the press and on the platform began praising the military, vice has been running rampant in Ireland. To be a soldier is to be forgiven every crime. Drunkenness, bigamy, assault, theft, perjury, seduction, wife desertion, abandonment of helpless children, are daily forgiven in our courts if only the accused is a soldier. Soldiers charged with rape are discharged even when confronted with evidence which would get any civilian penal servitude. The attitude of the official, loyal, Jingo classes to the soldier is shown in the fact that these people who are protesting against the evil life of Dublin all know that the present saturnalia of vice centres round the soldier, but they dare not say so lest it should discourage recruiting.

They want militarism without its results. They cannot have it. An evil tree must bring forth evil fruits.

Let us test this by a simple example, as the writer has tested it.

There is a law which instructs the police to arrest at once any woman or girl seen accosting a man in the street, importuning him to go with her. No other evidence is required than the statement of the policeman that he saw her accost several men. But if the reader will take his stand any night at the corner of O'Connell Street and Bachelor's Walk, of College Green or Dame Street, of Grafton Street, High Street and Christ Church Place, the Quays, Rathmines Road or Portobello Bridge, or a dozen other places where people congregate, he will see soldiers continually accosting and importuning girls and women, and policemen smilingly looking on. We have seen two soldiers under the influence of liquor accost at least a dozen girls, pester them with their presence, and force their company upon them until the victims were compelled to walk out in the middle of the street in order to get past. If the girls themselves or any of their male relatives had slapped the faces of these brutes as they deserved they would have been at once arrested for doing so, but the big lout of a policeman looked on at their bestiality and grinned his approval.

Tommy Atkins must have his pleasures, even although Irish girls are ruined.

Hundreds of Irish mothers in Dublin will yet curse the army whose soldiers ruined their daughters, and curse the government whose courts and police set a premium upon the military uniform as a cloak for and safeguard against the punishment of male immorality.

If you would make Dublin clean in its moral standards

REMOVE THE GARRISON.

But the authorities won't. They must have the garrison to menace our lives and liberties; what matter then if our womankind do suffer. What are the womankind of slaves good for, anyway?

Then for God's sake quit your canting talk about the immorality of Dublin.
My lords and ladies, you and your rule are the tree that bears that fruit.

James Connolly

Notes on the Front

(1915)

Workers' Republic, 23 October 1915.

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“Where the treasure is there the heart is also.” So said an old proverb, and its truth was never more apparent than it has been since the present war began. Since that witches’ cauldron was stirred up we have seen the most extraordinary somersaults thrown by men and nations, and the most careful study of conditions cannot reveal any other reason for the somersaulting than the overmastering love of treasures.

Consider the case of France. France is the mother of European democracy, the apostle of the right of rebellion, the century-long sword of the revolution of peoples. England, which struts before the world as the home of the Mother of Parliaments, has in reality been chiefly engaged in evolving a system of government in which there should be the greatest semblance of freedom, and the least practical control by the democracy of the essentials of freedom. Witness the

absolute power vested in the Cabinet, despite the fact that the Cabinet is quite outside the Constitution, and unknown to British Law.

America has since its own foundation as a nation, the United States, been ever opposed to all revolutionary movements elsewhere; and fettered the free development of its own citizens by means of a Supreme Court to which all laws are amenable. The decision of an overwhelming majority of the electors of the United States upon any particular question can be upset and rendered null and void by five members of the Supreme Court.

But France, the example of France, the free spirit of France, the human outlook of France, the glorious tradition of France – all combined to make France the beau ideal among the nations of all lovers of liberty.

Ever since the Revolution this has been the lot of France – to inspire and enthuse rebels everywhere, and everywhere to lend keenness to the blades of whosoever struck out for Freedom.

But since the great defeat of 1870 – a great defeat brought upon France by the rule of an unscrupulous despot and murderer, Napoleon III, brought upon France by that despot waging a criminal and foolish dynastic war upon a matter in which his subjects had no earthly interest, viz. the succession to the throne of Spain – since then France has been gradually turning her back upon her glorious past, and uniting with forces that stood for all those things in warring against which her revolutionary children had made her name immortal.

France has been the incarnation of Freedom, Russia has been the embodiment of brutal and soulless despotism. They were as far as the poles asunder. But there came a time when Russia borrowed money in France, when French bankers coaxed thrifty French peasants to empty their stockings of the hoards of sorely accumulated coins, and lend them to the Czar's government at good rates of interest. And the peasants yielded to the lure – the thrifty republicans lent gold to the spendthrift despot.

If you lend money to a man you do not like to hear of him losing his job the next week; if you lend money to a business house you do not like to hear of it putting up its shutter and going into bankruptcy. No, until you get your money back you want that man to stop at his job, that house to keep its doors open, and its business flourishing.

England has flourished because she owed money everywhere, her national debt was the biggest in the world, and every one who had bought a share in that debt, or lent England money was anxious that the British Empire should not go down lest their money should go down along with her.

The Russian despot borrowed money from the French Republicans, and gradually the fear lest they should lose their money so worked upon the minds of the republicans that they dreaded the advent of a republic in Russia, and lent more money to keep the despot on his throne, and aid him in crushing in blood the aspirations of those who wanted in Russia the same Republican Freedom as the French enjoyed in France.

It was a situation to make the Devil grin. The great Russian Revolution of 1905 was only crushed by means of the monies lent to the Czar by the French Republicans; it was the children of revolutionary France that enabled the blood-soaked despot to overthrow the Duma, and fill his jails to overflowing with the bravest, best and most enlightened of his subjects.

Out of that horrible situation has grown the participation of France in this War. The money-lenders of France force their nation into war that they might not lose the money they lent to the Czar to enable him to destroy the Russian Revolution. Gallant France, liberty-loving France, revolutionary France, with its free spirit, its human outlook, its glorious tradition does not make this war, although it suffers and fights in it. The France that makes this war is the France of the capitalists, the money-lenders' France whose one great enthusiasm and ideal is that their dividends upon Russian loans be paid though millions perish, and the child of Freedom be strangled in its cradle.

“Where the treasure is there the heart is also.” Over the Atlantic we are beholding the first stages in the similar process of corrupting the hearts of a people. America has taken up a Billion Dollar Loan to the Allies. Henceforth America is no passive onlooker at the struggles of Europe. Her heart will ever follow her treasures, and the splendid neutrality of the past will be followed by an excited and selfish interest in the fortunes of European wars.

The fathers of the American Revolution laid down the axiom that the United States should make no ‘entangling alliances’. The last great message of George Washington to his countrymen embodied that advice, and for over a century it has guided American statesmen.

Following that advice America remained the hope and the refuge of all European rebels against tyranny, and the shining example to the world of a nation seeking only a peaceful intercourse with others.

The greatest and most insidious enemy of that policy of America has ever been the statesmen of the British Empire. Without ceasing they have ever striven to lure the United States into an alliance with Great Britain – an Anglo-Saxon Alliance as they phrased it, coolly ignoring the fact that the Anglo-Saxon strain in American blood is but a poor stream in a mighty ocean of many powerful currents.

But the real American spirit has ever been too strong for this attempt to succeed, and America has grown strong in peace, and mighty through the strength of her own industry and resources.

But the rulers of the British Empire have many strings to their bow, and in the attempt to snare a nation are the most sleepless hunters the world has ever known.

Where the politician could not succeed, where the most wily diplomat was worsted, the financier has succeeded. An appeal to the cupidity of American capitalists has resulted in these gentry betraying their nation’s best interests, as capitalists will ever sell for gold any human or holy cause.

America lends money to enable the Allies to pay for war, as America made munitions to enable the Allies to make war.

Consider the hellish irony of it all! The All Lies buy munitions of war from America, and propose to pay for them with monies borrowed from America.

It is like as if you bought a suit of clothes and proposed to pay for them with money borrowed from the tailor who made them. Did you ever try it?

The result is that all the powerful financial interests in America – the Steel Trust, the Armament makers, the Bankers, the manufacturers of Army requirements, all will henceforth be pledged to keep America on the side of the Governments of France, England, or Russia in every war *or domestic revolution* in which these latter may be engaged.

And that means that all the small investors with whose money those great sharks are gambling will slowly, almost imperceptibly, but surely and inevitably have all their sympathies drawn from the side of freedom towards that side which makes for the security of the Governments to whom their money has been lent.

“Where the treasure is there the heart is also.” America is no longer free of entangling alliances: America is committed to the worst kind of an alliance, that alliance of sordid interests in whose grasp French Republicanism has surrendered its soul, to whose loathsome embraces American capitalism has committed the civilisation of the American Continent.

And yet, and yet – the forces of evil will not forever prevail.

James Connolly

To Hell with Contracts

(1915)

Workers' **Republic,** 16 October 1915.
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Dublin is face to face with another Labour War – a war forced upon us as needlessly and as calculatingly as ever was conflict. The docks is the scene of battle, and the ranks on both sides are marshalled for the fray.

As usual it begins with an act of perfidy on the part of the employers. Our readers are aware that since the great increase of prices following the declaration of war the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union has consistently stood by its original position that the Irish Working Class could not afford to lose any standard of comfort it had gained, and that therefore every increase of prices should be met by a demand for an increase of wages.

The capitalist class as a whole have reaped harvests of gold since the war started. Every single article has gone up in price. Even the ordinary agricultural products of our own country have increased, in many cases more than doubled their prices in the shops. More and more the women find it impossible to keep the table supplied, or to buy clothes for themselves and their children. A very large part of the increase is due to the excessive rates charged by shipowners, as well as to the grievous taxation laid upon us by the Budget. In view of all the foregoing circumstances the Union asked for an increase last February of One Shilling per day on the docks, and got it upon the Casual Boats, and on the

Constant Boats obtained an increase of 8*d.* per day. Upon the introduction of the War Budget and the instant upward leap in prices the Union again made a similar demand, realising that large as it looked upon paper it was yet not large enough to overtake the increasing price of provisions and other necessaries of life.

Negotiations were opened between the Union and the Shipping Companies, the time fixed for expiration of the notice being October 1.

The first meeting took place between the representatives of the Shipping Companies running Cross Channel steamers other than the daily boats. These Casual Boats as they are called agreed to pay Seven Shillings per day as the established wage, and the Union agreed that the question of Overtime should be adjourned till the ensuing week.

The next Conference was between the representatives of the Scotch Boats, Burns and Laird Lines, and the Union Officials. As in the previous settlement in March it was understood that whatever terms these Companies agreed upon would be accepted by their fellows in the trade. The employers after much haggling and discussion offered an increase of 2/-, which the Union declined to accept. Then the Conference broke up, with the understanding that the terms would be submitted to a meeting of the men on Sunday, October 10.

Before this date arrived things began to move, the Conspiracy of the Employers began to develop. A letter came signed conjointly by the representatives of the Burns and Laird Companies definitely stating that if the 2/- offer was not accepted on Sunday it would be withdrawn, and the matter *placed in the hands of the Board of Trade.* [\[1\]](#)

Then the Casual companies wrote in *breaking their agreement with the Union*, declining to pay more than they agreed to pay in March, and refusing to discuss the matter of overtime. These are the gentry who howl loudest about breach of contract, and yet are first to go back upon their solemnly pledged word whenever they imagine they can profit by doing so.

In face of this sudden treacherous conspiracy against them the men instantly closed up their ranks, and on Sunday at a General meeting of all concerned resolved to withdraw their labour rather than allow the treason of the employers to bear fruit. Again on Monday this was re-affirmed, and as a necessary preliminary to successful fighting full power was placed in our hands to fight or settle as we thought wise, to call out or leave in just as the circumstances in our opinion dictated.

As the matters stand at time of writing the Scotch boats are withdrawn, the men working casual boats are notified to refuse to commence work until assured that the company concerned will pay the rate of wages agreed upon by them at the Conference of Friday, October 1st, and in view of possible eventualities all the men on strike are undergoing a daily course of military drill.

The Transport Union knows how to fight, and has a rank and file that any union might be proud to have. The War Clouds are hovering over Dublin, but we are not shrinking. Let the battle come; on whatever field it may be waged it will be met by men with stout hearts and fearless.

We have known all along that the war upon the German nation masked a conspiracy against the rights hard won by the democracy at home. We were not fooled by the war cries; we shall not shrink from meeting and defeating the conspiracy. [\[2\]](#)

Notes

[1.](#) In other words, referred to binding government arbitration.

[2.](#) On 23 October, the casual lines agreed to pay the increases as negotiated, and all other lines (except the City of Dublin) conceded an increase of 3s.

