

# Ireland.

EDITOR'S NOTE.—The following article must be considered as our correspondent's viewpoint. His article is kindly written for us at our own request.

In the kaleidoscope of world politics the struggles of Russia and Ireland stand out pre-eminently as indicating the direction of future economic and political actions, one fighting for the overthrow of economic capitalist society, the other for the overthrow of political imperialism. In both countries conditions are to a certain degree analogous, inasmuch as both are as yet incompletely emerged as full fledged capitalist States, i.e., feudalism is rampant within the borders of each, and both are so misrepresented by their friends and enemies that the actual issues are in danger of becoming overclouded by transitory circumstances. A cursory glance, however, at the main contending factions in Ireland, their composition and aims, will enable the readers of the "Western Clarion" to form an accurate opinion as to the crux of the situation.

Statistics as to party strength are furnished on recent elections under P. R. system. The Unionist party, the party of the big business and land owning classes representing about 18 per cent. of the total electorate, stands uncompromisingly for the solidity of the empire. Its devotion to the imperial idea is equalled by its class consciousness. Loyal to both, it commands a certain respect by its willingness to go to any extreme, including bloodshed, in defence of what it judges to be its right.

The Home Rule party, founded by the petit bourgeoisie, and still the mouthpiece of its founders,—treated with contempt by British and Irish, has recently been reduced to almost insignificant proportions. Its strength, drawn from the farmers, absorbs about seven per cent. of the national vote.

Opposed to these are the two wings of the Nationalist movement, the Sinn Fein and the Labor Party. In the interests of clarity we shall examine each on its respective merits. The Sinn Fein party is the creation of Cumam Sinn Fein, an economic movement, started about twenty years ago by Arthur Griffiths and William Rooney, editors of the "United Irishman." The disgust at the actions of the Home Rule movement, its futility in securing any real economic relief for the prevailing conditions in Ireland was the primary cause of its inception. It laid down the principle that as long as Irishmen recognized the right of Britain to legislate for Ireland, then Britain, "ipso facto," possessed that right.

Appealing to the electorate at the general election of 1918 with a Republican platform, it secured 75 per cent. of the total poll, and forthwith established an Dail Eireann (Irish Assembly) at Dublin on January 21st, 1919. It has appealed for international recognition as the de facto government of Ireland; has reorganized the republican army; established co-operative banks; authorized a loan of \$30,000,000 divided equally in U. S. A., Australia, and Ireland (which latest advices report to be oversubscribed); passed laws for the nationalizing of vast estate, which the republican army is at present attempting to effect; set the machinery in motion for extensive draining of bogs, and it has established Courts of Justice throughout the country. It is an essentially "national" movement, inasmuch as its main or primary objective is the overthrow of imperialism in Ireland.

The Labor Party of Ireland having as its mouthpiece the Socialist Party is, on the other hand working not merely for a "national" revolution but also a social one; not merely for the overthrow of British imperialism, but also of that system of civilization that Britain represents in Ireland. In Connolly's "Labor in Irish History," we are told that up till 1849 "the basis of society in Ireland rested upon communal or tribal ownership of land . . . . Communal ownership would undoubtedly have given way to the privately owned system of capitalist landlordism if Ireland had remained an independent country, but coming as it did in obedience of an armed force without, instead of by the operation of

economic forces within, the change has been bitterly resented by the vast mass of the people, many of whom still mix with their dreams of liberty, longings for a return to the ancient system of land tenure now organically impossible."

The Socialist Party of Ireland, like that of Canada, is not affiliated with either the Second or Third International, though they are fully in sympathy with Moscow. It cannot be considered as purely Marxian, as economic conditions, exploited under the protection of armed troops, have caused it to take active part in industrial action. Internationally it might be regarded as a party of the Left, although the lack of class-consciousness among sections of the proletariat make this stand rather unpopular from the standpoint of numerical strength.

During the recent municipal elections it contested seats in every industrial centre, taking care not to split the republican vote, and its success is ascribed by "Le Socialiste" (Belgium) as one of the most convincing pieces of evidence re the growth of Socialism.

It has forced the farmers of Ireland to sell their bacon produce at prices stated by the trade union executive; it has succeeded through the trade unions, in having distributed big landed interests. It is perfecting its organization so that in the first election under the mandate of the Republic it will loom large as the mouthpiece of the proletariat, the only unsullied protagonist of Irish independence.

But the question arises: What significance does the Irish question bear to world politics? The answer is provided by the imperialists themselves when they declare Ireland to be the key of the Empire. Ireland, the first conquered—now practically unanimous in its demand for secession, is bringing before the world in clear relief the old, old question of nationalism vs. imperialism. Its victory means the liberation in India of the toiling millions of slaves of the East; the relief from imperial aggression of the white slaves of the Empire. To the workers of Ireland it means more. Once free from foreign yoke they will be able to concentrate upon the slave owners in their midst.

Tribal ownership of land is, as we know, impossible with us today, but the principles of our Gaelic civilization stand clear and rugged against the system of social robbery of the capitalistic era. As the Irish septs were counted Irish or English according as they accepted or rejected the native or foreign social order, so the Irish toilers will base their fight for freedom upon their progress towards the mastery of those factories and farms upon which a people's bread and liberties depend. In so doing, they appeal for the support of all of us, the victims of the same system. Are we not big enough to give them our sympathy in their hour of need? Mankind will yet be masters of this earth. Together, the workers of Ireland and the world can go forth hand and hand, one indissoluble unit and claim for all men political and economic freedom.

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## Manitoba Provincial Election, 1920

### SOCIALIST PARTY OF CANADA MANIFESTO, No. 2.

To the Working Men and Women of Winnipeg: We, who address you, as candidates for election to the Provincial Legislature, have neither honeyed words to offer, nor specious promises to make.

As students of historical development, we contend that present day society readily divides into two classes, the workers and the shirkers—those who produce but do not possess, and those who possess but do not produce. Compared with this fundamental division, all other classifications must be relegated to very secondary positions.

We contend furthermore that the present master class retains control of the means of life (mills, mines, transportation, etc.) through its control of the political machinery; that between those who live by working for wages (the working class) and those who live by paying wages (the master class) an antagonism of interest exists, making itself manifest in modern society (and more plainly so with each passing day) as a Class Struggle.

Every Class Struggle is a political struggle. The highest expression of the Class Struggle is the consciousness and concerted effort of the working class to wrest the machinery of government from the hands of the master class and use that machinery as a weapon for effecting economic freedom.

While we, whose names appear at the foot of this manifesto, are at present in durance vile, we ask that this fact be not counted in our favor. Nevertheless, we consider it incumbent upon us to deal with the process used by our opponents to place us at our present abode. Those who have taken notice of the trend of affairs in Canada, generally, and in Winnipeg, particularly, do not stand much in need of any elucidation on this point. But for the uninited, and as a means of placing ourselves on record, we ask your indulgence for a brief time in order that our position be made clear.

In the recent State Trials in Winnipeg the opponents of the working class sought to gain their ends by various means. So ill-begotten was their nefarious scheme that, finally, in order to bolster their case, they made fully eighty per cent. of their evidence out of the literature and propaganda generally of The Socialist Party of Canada. This propaganda has been persistently given out under the party's auspices since its inception in 1905.

Seventy-two years after the "Communist Manifesto" we realize that the workers have nothing to lose but their chains; that reforms and palliatives even when considered of value, are only transitory and not of lasting benefit, for so long as capital reigns supreme so long will the workers receive mere subsistence. That is the position accepted by the Socialist Party of Canada for many years, and from that position we refuse to recede.

However, the Socialist Party of Canada, contesting both Provincial and Federal Elections during its history, according to circumstances, financial, etc., has never before entered the election lists under conditions similar to those which now obtain. A most vital and pressing question is now interjected: **Shall the Socialist Party of Canada Subsist or—Subside?** That is a question which those who support the position and propaganda of the Socialist Party must face, and face squarely.

The judicial dictum which has placed our part, its literature and spokesmen in jeopardy, was delivered here in the City of Winnipeg, and the effete and obnoxious indictment against a carefully hand-picked few was written, and made possible by Manitoba's present Attorney-General, Hon Thomas Johnson.

The gauntlet thus thrown down, cannot, and must not be ignored by us. The utmost possible freedom for our educational work in History, Economics, Sociology, etc., must be maintained. And that (whether we like it or not) is an issue not of our raising, but an issue, nevertheless, which, if left untouched and unsettled, will hamper at all times and places the work of the Socialist Party in this country.

R. B. RUSSELL  
W. A. PRITCHARD  
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## Labor Defence Fund

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