



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

This thesis has been submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for a postgraduate degree (e.g. PhD, MPhil, DClinPsychol) at the University of Edinburgh. Please note the following terms and conditions of use:

- This work is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, which are retained by the thesis author, unless otherwise stated.
- A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study, without prior permission or charge.
- This thesis cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first obtaining permission in writing from the author.
- The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any format or medium without the formal permission of the author.
- When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author, title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given.

JAMES CONNOLLY

and

THE SCOTTISH LEFT

1890-1916

BERNARD CAMPBELL RANSOM

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Edinburgh

1975



C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page No.</u>
Acknowledgments	i.
Abstract	iii.
Abbreviations	v.
Preface	vii.
Chapter 1 - The North British Left	1.
" 2 - Social Democrats and Independent Labour	34.
" 3 - The Republican Critic	70.
" 4 - The "Unholy Scotch Current"	90.
" 5 - Marxism - De Leonism and Beyond	124.
" 6 - The "Forward" Correspondent <u>or</u> The Problem of Organisation	192.
" 7 - The Deluge, 1914-16	300.
Afterword	319.
Appendix I - <u>Rules & Constitution</u> I.L.P. Edinburgh	327.
Appendix II- James Connolly's contributions to <u>Forward</u>	331.
Bibliography	335.

A C K N O W L E D G M E N T S

I would like to express my grateful thanks to all those who assisted my research with the loan of unique or rare material, reminiscences of a personal nature, or with advice or information which proved crucial for the project. Mr. David Stuart of Edinburgh willingly disclosed the results of his personal research into Connolly's career to me, and I am grateful to Mr. John G. Ramsay of Leith and Col. Raymond Scott of Blairgowrie, Perthshire, for their generous efforts to provide material relative to the S.S.F. activists, the Rev. John Glasse and John Gilray. Tom Oswald, M.P. was most helpful in the matter of tracing records relative to the early I.L.P. in Edinburgh, and Col. D.A.D. Eykyn of the Royal Scots Museum, Edinburgh Castle, provided some useful background material concerning the Connolly brothers' army service. Mr. Ian MacDougall of the Scottish Labour History Society was most helpful in advising on the general availability of primary sources on the early socialist movement in Scotland, and I am indebted to Mr. Leslie Spoor for the loan of a comprehensive series of American S.L.P. pamphlets. Messrs. Wallace & Somerville, Solicitors, Edinburgh, readily gave access to certain records in their charge which I wished to consult. I am especially indebted to the courtesy and consideration of the Rt. Hon. Lord Wheatley and to Mrs. Margaret Wheatley who were both helpful in the matter of clarifying the details of the career of John Wheatley. Above all, I wish to record the kindness of Mr. Harry M^oShane who discussed at length with me every issue I wished to raise about the nature and history of socialism in Scotland: his enormous personal

knowledge of the Scottish working class movement proved to be a truly invaluable source.

Despite the assistance of these and other individuals, the main burden of my research queries fell upon the staff in several public institutions. My greatest debt in this regard is to Mr. Alf MacLochlainn of the National Library of Ireland, and to Dr. Thomas Rae of the National Library of Scotland. In addition, I should record my thanks to the staff of Register House, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Library, the Public Record Office, The Army Record Office, the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, and the British Library (Colindale). The staff of the public libraries in Edinburgh, Leith, Aberdeen, Dundee Falkirk and Kirkcaldy were also most courteous and helpful.

I am also indebted to a number of private bodies who rendered some valuable assistance. Among these should be mentioned the Edinburgh and Glasgow branches of the C.P.G.B., the "Scotsman" Publications Co. of Edinburgh and the Civic Press of Glasgow.

I am grateful to John M. Simpson of the Department of Scottish History, University of Edinburgh, for much constructive criticism and encouragement during the course of writing this thesis. To Owen Dudley Edwards, my supervisor in the Department of History, University of Edinburgh, I am profoundly grateful for his example in scholarship and in depth of historical understanding, for his generosity and the continued treasure of his friendship.

A B S T R A C T

James Connolly (1868-1916), Socialist leader, labour union organiser and Irish Republican general, pursued an active career of over thirty-five years duration in left-wing politics during the period of the Second International. During this time, he played an influential role in the Social Democratic and Labour movements in Ireland, Scotland and the United States.

This study examines his relationships with the activists and organisations of left-wing labour in Scotland in the period 1890-1916 and moreover, seeks to establish his significance as a "Marxian Syndicalist"; an activist working in a Marxist tradition distinct from both the state socialism of the Social Democratic International and the Marxism - Leninism of the Comintern. Connolly's formative years in the Social Democratic and labour movements of his native Edinburgh (1890-96) are examined in some detail, and an attempt is made to delineate some characteristics both of the mainstream of British Marxism and of the uniqueness of the situation in Edinburgh, which were important for his personal development. Subsequently, his importance in the secession of the Scottish 'impossibilist' faction from the all-British Marxist movement in 1902-3 is analysed. At this point, there is some emphasis on the theories of the American Marxist, Daniel De Leon, and of their importance both in Connolly's further theoretical development and of the Scottish Left generally.

The American contribution to Connolly's thought - and his mature response to it - is then followed up, some consideration being given to

his work in the American socialist movement in 1903-10. In the light of this experience, Connolly's further influence on Scottish left-wing labour in the period 1910-15 is traced; particular emphasis is laid on the Syndicalist elements in his thought and on the Scottish responses to it. Finally, there is some discussion of the relationship between the themes of Nationalism, Marxism and Syndicalism within the history of the Scottish Left in the period 1890-1920, and the concrete failure of Marxism within the Scottish working class movement is assessed against the background of the manifest advances of the non-theoretical parliamentary Labour Party.

ABBREVIATIONS USED IN THE TEXT

A.F.L.	American Federation of Labor
A.O.H.	Ancient Order of Hibernians
B.S.P.	British Socialist Party
C.G.T.	Confederation Generale de Travail
C.P.G.B.	Communist Party of Great Britain
C.W.C.	Clyde Workers Committee
D.O.R.A.	Defence of the Realm Act
I.L.P.	Independent Labour Party
I.L.P.(I)	Independent Labour Party of Ireland
I.N.L.	Irish National League
I.R.B.	Irish Republican Brotherhood
I.S.E.L.	Industrial Syndicalist Education League
I.S.R.P.	Irish Socialist Republican Party
I.T.G.W.U.	Irish Transport and General Workers Union
I.T.W.U.	Irish Textile Workers Union
I.W.G.B.	Industrial Workers of Great Britain
I.W.W.	Industrial Workers of the World
L.R.C.	Labour Representation Committee
N.U.D.L.	National Union of Dock Labourers
O.B.U.	"One Big Union"
S.D.F.	Social Democratic Federation
S.D.P.	Social Democratic Party
S.L.P.	Socialist Labour Party
S.L.R.L.	Scottish Land Restoration League
S.P.A.	Socialist Party of America

S.P.D.	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
S.P.I.	Socialist Party of Ireland
S.S.F.	Scottish Socialist Federation
S.T. & L.A.	Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance
S.W.P.C.	Scottish Workers Parliamentary Committee
S.W.R.C.	Scottish Workers Representation Committee
T.U.C.	Trades Union Congress
U.I.L.	United Irish League

P R E F A C E

James Connolly (1868-1916), Ireland's leading Marxist, pursued an active career for over thirty-five years during the IInd International period both as socialist propagandist and labour union organiser. He was born in Edinburgh in June 1868 and suffered execution in May 1916 for his prime role in the Irish insurrection of that year. His premature death brought to a close a life-time's work in the service of the Social Democratic and Labour movements in Ireland, Scotland and the U.S.A.

It is a fundamental premise of the present argument that the prime significance of his career lies in his theoretical and organisational contributions to the cause of Marxian Syndicalism. It is argued that the theoretically-based forms of Syndicalism/Industrial Unionism - particularly that American "Marxist-De Leonist" programmatic which became such a vital element in Connolly's own thought - should be recognised as an important theme in the Marxist tradition, distinct from both the state socialism of IInd International Social Democracy and from the Orthodox Marxism of the IIIrd International. Connolly's Syndicalism should thus be seen as the mature commitment of a Social Democrat for whom the contemporary orthodoxy of propagandist activity - cum - gradualist politics became a glaringly inadequate organisational mode. The Syndicalist "one big union" (OBU) movement, in which Connolly worked while in the U.S.A., sought to achieve a genuine working class solidarity through the enrolment of all grades of workers in a single

revolutionary union organisation. National OBU's, based upon the American parent body, the Industrial Workers of the World, appeared through-out the English-speaking world during the first decade of the 20th century, in Australasia, Canada, Great Britain and Ireland. The OBU movement was chiefly a response to the concrete failures of Social Democratic politics and of conventional "craft" unionism to offer any real defence (let alone amelioration) of working class conditions in the industrialised world during the "Great Depression" of the final decades of the 19th century. The movement was not a unified or homogenous one and included both Marxist and non-Marxist elements, together with pro- and anti-parliamentary wings. For Marxist "politicals" like Connolly, the OBU was regarded as the vehicle of revolutionary practice and the agency of working class industrial and political hegemony in that post-revolutionary "Co-operative Commonwealth" which would succeed the bourgeois state.¹ In marked contrast to French Syndicalism, which was unreservedly anti-political and structurally decentralised, the English-speaking OBU movement - despite great heterogeneity - did include a strong parliamentary tradition. It was thought necessary to supplement the OBU's weapon of the revolutionary mass strike by seizing legitimate control of the legislature and thereby neutralising the coercive power of the bourgeois state. It was this variety of Syndicalism which was exemplified in Connolly's later practice in his last three or four years of life, during which time he assumed an increasing share of the leadership of Ireland's OBU, the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union. The

1. James Connolly, Socialism Made Easy (Kerr, Chicago, 1909), pp. 42-8: The Reconquest of Ireland in Labour in Ireland (Maunsel & Co., Dublin, 1917), p.327-8.

OBU schematic properly implied a separation of the political and economic arms of the workers' movement, the former (according to Connolly's approach) being a subordinate function of the latter. Moreover, Connolly's revolutionary unionism relied heavily upon the collective militancy of the rank and file, a voluntaristic 'mass line' approach to revolutionary leadership. Clearly, these concepts of a divided apparat and of non-hierocratic leadership are decidedly at variance with the Leninist scheme of a unified, "scientific" direction of the mass movement by trained professional cadres, the organisational mode of the IIIrd International.

None of the previous historical appreciations of Connolly give adequate treatment of his syndicalist ideology, let alone attempt a truly critical account by placing it in the context of the Marxist tradition as a whole. The best analysis of his work is contained in two studies by Orthodox Marxists: C. Desmond Greaves, The Life & Times of James Connolly (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1961, 1972) and Manus O'Riordan, Connolly in America (Irish Communist Organisation, Belfast, 1971). However, the a priori Leninist assumptions which both of these critics bring to the subject lead them to an unhistorical condemnation of Connolly's syndicalism as a deviation from the standards of Marxist "science". From a more specifically Irish standpoint, Desmond Ryan's memoir achieves the confusion of identifying Connolly with the cause of Marxism - Leninism, while stressing the totality of his syndicalist commitment.² A recent sketch of Connolly's ideology by Owen Dudley Edwards, The Mind of an Activist - James Connolly, (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1971), although excellent on Connolly's attempt to accommodate

2. Desmond Ryan, James Connolly, (Talbot Press, Dublin, 1924), p.2, 5-6.

socialist thought to Catholicism and on Connolly's generation, is decidedly uninformative on the syndicalist issue. A more personal chronicle of Connolly's life is available in the study by his daughter, Nora Connolly O'Brien, Portrait of a Rebel Father (Rich & Cowan, London, 1935); and the most recent biography evinces a similar concern for 'Connolly the man', its interest centring in Connolly as an archetype of the 'outside agitator' and professional revolutionary. This work, Samuel Levenson's James Connolly, A Biography (Martin Brian & O'Keefe, London, 1973) is greatly indebted to Greaves and, despite extensive reference to the hitherto unavailable Connolly-O'Brien papers, remains as an unduly unsympathetic and unoriginal product. In more general works of labour and social history, Connolly has been regarded as of sufficient importance to merit passing mention in terms of the increased militance within the labour movement in the period immediately preceding the Great War. Such references indicate his stand as a militant 'syndicalist' or 'new unionist' without critical awareness of his position in the history of Marxism. The historians of the British trade union movement, Sidney and Beatrice Webb give a brief mention of Connolly in this sense,³ as does the historian of the modern Irish labour movement, W. P. Ryan, in his classic and unsurpassed study.⁴ George Dangerfield, in his analysis of the general social and political developments in Britain during the period, readily recognised Connolly's significance as a syndicalist labour militant, but erroneously identified his position with that

3. Sidney and Beatrice Webb, History of Trade Unionism (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1920), pp. 472-3, 655-9.

4. W. P. Ryan, The Irish Labour Movement (Talbot Press, Dublin, 1919), pp. 162-9, 191-5.

of the French syndicalists.⁵ It was only with the appearance of George Lichtheim's survey history of the Socialist movement, that Connolly's position in the syndicalist current of the Marxian Socialist tradition was pointed out, albeit in virtual form only.⁶

The present study is an attempt to examine the influence of James Connolly on the development of the Socialist and Labour Left in Scotland and, conversely, to suggest some ways in which Scottish activists and conditions may have influenced his personal development. There are three distinct periodic "moments" in which the career of James Connolly and the history of the Scottish Left interacted. In an initial period 1890-96, Connolly became a leading activist in the socialist movement of his native Edinburgh, and developed formidable abilities both in the theoretical exposition of Marxist teaching and in the concrete tasks of party management and public speaking. Subsequently, in the years around the turn of the century, he appeared as a crucial outside influence, encouraging and assuming the leadership of a body of dissident Scottish sectarians who broke away from the mainstream of British socialism. Finally, in the years from 1910 till the outbreak of the Great War, Connolly actively participated in the debate then current in Scotland on organisational method. Through the medium of the Glasgow left-wing journal Forward, he argued the case for revolutionary industrial unionism.

Analogous to these successive periods of Connolly's impact in Scotland, it is possible to delineate successive phases in the actual

5. George Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England, (MacGibbon & Kee, London, 1966), p.190.

6. George Lichtheim, A Short History of Socialism (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1970), p.217.

history of the Socialist and Labour Left in Scotland. In the 1880's and 90's, the key concept is one of heterogeneity, both in terms of ideology and of organisational form. After the collapse of Chartism and the schemes of utopian socialism a generation previously, the Left might be seen to be in a phase of redefinition. At this time, quasi-socialist religious sentiment, Bourgeois-Radical political demands, together with a straightforward "labourist" ambition, co-existed with the new Marxist ideology. These variform notions were disseminated among a working class (then itself in process - via the "new unionism" of the unskilled - of strengthening its economic organisation) by such varied agencies as "labour churches", secularist societies for reading and discussion, federated associations of socialist adherents and would-be labour "parties" of an electoral nature. The most flourishing product of this period was the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.), a polyglot structure which drew support from a wide range of religious, Radical, socialist and trade union sources, and which quickly outgrew the diminutive (Marxist) Social Democratic Federation (S.D.F.) In a second phase around the turn of the century, developments centred in the Marxist movement with the explosion of the "opportunist" controversy and the consequent emergence of a purist theoretical and sectarian tendency as institutionalised in the new Socialist Labour Party (S.L.P.). This was the extreme point at which abstract Marxist theory fermented itself totally 'clear' from all association with the general labour movement and its lack of theoretical clarity. Finally, by the opening of the second decade of the 20th century, a militant and theoretically conscious

Syndicalism/Industrial Unionism had emerged, challenging both the state socialists of the S.D.F. and the I.L.P. "politicals" with an alternative organisational method, and bringing to the forefront issues of organisational practice. In each of these successive developments in Scotland; the definition of Marxist practice through opposition to a polyglot labour movement, and the subsequent attempt at its re-integration with that movement in the form of a Marxian Syndicalism, James Connolly played a prime role.

The North British Left

Towards the close of the 1880's, the organisation of the Socialist and Labour Left in Britain remained both variform and metropolitan in character.¹ Centred in London were various diminutive non-marxist "labour" bodies which advocated independent political action on the part of the working class: foremost among these may be mentioned the Labour Electoral Association, originally sponsored by the T.U.C. in 1886. Marxist strength had been divided since 1885 between two metropolitan propagandist bodies, the Social Democratic Federation - founded initially as an "advanced" democratic society in 1881, subsequently adopting a marxist programme in 1884 - and the Socialist League, founded by breakaway members of the Federation in 1885. In Scotland, socialist organisation had begun in 1884 with the formation in Edinburgh of the "Scottish Land & Labour League" as an S.D.F. affiliate, and in Glasgow of an S.D.F. branch proper. From the first, socialism in Scotland was structurally integrated within the all-British movement and, after 1885, assumed the forms of "North British" echelons of the S.D.F. and the Socialist League.

1. Henry Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party, 1880-1900 (Oxford U.P., 1966) p.60. Joseph Clayton, The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain 1884-1924 (Faber, London, 1926) p.30.

Organisationally, the Socialist League was rather stronger in Scotland than the S.D.F. In Edinburgh, and with the loss of only a few members, the Scottish Land & Labour League affiliated en bloc to the new body, while the Glasgow branch membership divided more or less equally.² Theoretically, the adherence of the main body of marxist opinion in Scotland to the Socialist League, indicated support for the anti-parliamentary line advocated by the celebrated artist, poet and designer, William Morris (1834-1896). Morris was at that time acting as S.D.F. treasurer, and it was he who headed the dissident majority of the organisation's executive which reconstituted itself as the Socialist League. Morris and his supporters held that the movement remained in a merely preparatory or propagandist phase in which political activity of an electoral nature would be premature and ruinous. Opposed to this view was the powerful figure of Henry Mayers Hyndman (1842-1921), the city businessman who had founded the Federation almost single-handedly in 1881 after reading Capital I in French translation. Hyndman was anxious for the S.D.F. to enter electoral contests and hoped thereby to see a growing number of socialist members returned to Parliament. In 1884 he decided to run two S.D.F. candidatures in metropolitan seats at the forthcoming (1885) general election, using money given for the purpose by the Conservative Party. H. H. Champion, an ex-army officer and member of the S.D.F. executive, had used his long-standing Conservative connections to arrange the finance. It was in protest against the "opportunism" of the Hyndman-Champion line that Morris and his faction had broken with the S.D.F.³

-
2. J. Bruce Glasier, William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement (Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1921), p.17. H. W. Lee and E. Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain (S.D.F., London, 1935), p. 144.
 3. Glasier, William Morris, p. 14-15. For a thorough assessment of the socialist career of H. M. Hyndman, see C. Tsuzuki, Hyndman and British Socialism (Oxford U.P., 1961).

Co-existent with this metropolitan-led and mainly anti-parliamentary brand of Marxism, there were in Scotland other left-wing elements which were decidedly sectionalist and parliamentary in orientation. These may be broadly considered under the two general movements for Land Reform and for Mines' Nationalisation. The pressure for state control of minerals and of mining royalties (and the corollary movement for actual Mines' Nationalisation) originated as sectional demands of the West of Scotland miners in the late 1880's. The leadership of these workers rested in a close group of three men; James Keir Hardie, President of the Ayrshire Miners, and two officials of the Lanarkshire county union, William Small of Blantyre and Robert Smillie of Larkhall.⁴ While all three men looked to parliamentary activity to press the case for nationalisation, and for palliative measures such as the legal eight hour working day, they disagreed over method: Hardie and Smillie favoured working through the Liberal Party; Small, a convinced socialist, advocated independent political organisation and pointed to the example of the land reformers in this regard. The crofting issue was then the most radical and progressive political cause in Scotland and, from the mid-80's, agrarian disorder in the Highlands was accompanied by independent political action, a distinct "Crofters' Party" emerging in Parliament from 1885.⁵ Land reform candidacies were sponsored in Scotland by two political bodies, the Highland Land League formed in 1882, and the more radical Scottish Land Restoration League, which based itself upon the "single tax"

4. E. Eldon Barry, Nationalisation in British Politics (Cape, London, 1965), p.113-115.

5. J. G. Kellas, "The Crofters' War", History Today, XII, 4, (April 1962), p.284. James Hunter, "The Politics of Highland Land Reform", Scottish Historical Review, LIII, 1, (155), April 1974, p.59-67.

theory of the American land reformer, Henry George. The S.L.R.L. was centred in Glasgow and made appeal to the radical sympathies of the region's industrial workers, many of whom were recently "proletarianised" from Irish and Highland backgrounds. It enjoyed the support of the Irish Land League leader and labour sympathiser, Michael Davitt with whom - in 1884 - Small corresponded on the subject of mining royalties. With Davitt's encouragement, Small arranged a conference in Hamilton that year on the question of the nationalisation of mining royalties, and delegates of both the Lanarkshire miners and the S.L.R.L. attended.⁶ Small continued to press for independent working class political organisation, and in November 1884, set up a local branch of the Scottish Land & Labour League as the basis of such for the Lanarkshire miners.⁷ Two events in 1887 weaned Keir Hardie away from his attachment to the Liberal caucus and towards an acceptance of Small's approach. In February, a miners' strike in Lanarkshire was broken by summary coercion without Liberal protest, while in June, an eight hour day measure for mine workers was lost in the Commons after the Lib/Lab members had refused to speak for it.⁸ Hardie's celebrated first ever labour candidacy in the Mid-Lanark by-election of April 1888 was followed by the inauguration of the parliamentary Scottish Labour Party that August. Its programme consisted mainly of Radical political demands and "progressive" labour legislation, while the frustration of a move to include the nationalisation of all productive capital amply demonstrated the refusal of the founding membership to commit itself to policies of thorough-going socialism.⁹ This refusal was itself a function of the diverse

6. Fred Reid, "Keir Hardie's Conversion to Socialism", in A. Briggs and J. Saville eds. Essays in Labour History (2) (Macmillan, London, 1971), p.35.

7. Ibid., p.36.

8. Ibid., p.40-45.

9. Emrys Hughes, ed., Keir Hardie's Speeches and Writings (Forward Publishing Co., Glasgow, n.d.), p.11.

sources from which the new venture drew support: these included men, like Hardie himself, from the miners' unions; socialists from Small's branch of the Scottish Land & Labour League; land reform activists from both the Highland Land League and the Scottish Land Restoration League; the metropolitan Labour Electoral Association (in which that inveterate "opportunist" H. H. Champion was now active) also signified its adherence.

At the same time as these sectional and parliamentary forces were thus achieving a more cohesive organisation of left-wing labour in the West of Scotland, tentative steps in Edinburgh toward a greater unity among socialists produced a unified "Scottish Socialist Federation". Now Edinburgh had been the leading centre of socialism in Scotland since the formation of the Scottish Land & Labour League in the city in 1884. However, by the close of 1888, many Edinburgh League members had become convinced that divisions among Scottish socialists which simply reflected adherence to competing metropolitan factions were dysfunctional to the local propagandist effort. On December 2nd, 1888, Edinburgh socialists convened a special conference '... to consider proposals for the organised and effective teaching of Socialism in Scotland'.¹⁰ Delegates were present from the local branches of the League and the S.D.F., together with members of the local Christian Socialist Society. The resolutions adopted affirmed the necessity for 'a more systematic method of propaganda' for Scotland and the metropolitan leadership of both the Socialist League and the S.D.F. were dismissed in the statement, 'London has shown itself to be unable to

10. Commonweal, 15 December 1888.

organise Scotland¹. It was further resolved that a Scottish propagandist organisation be formed, with a governing central committee and definite provision for regular finance, in the form of monthly collections and an annual capital tax remitted from the branches to the centre.¹¹

Although there was no immediate practical result of the conference decisions, the Edinburgh section of the League continued with its policy of rapprochement with the S.D.F., the two organisations 'working along' together for the indoor winter campaign of 1888-9.¹² Co-existence with the parliamentary Scottish Labour Party, with its lack of a principled commitment to socialism, was a more difficult, and even divisive, issue. After an 'animated discussion' among Edinburgh League members '... as to what should be our attitude to the rising labour party', on May 2nd 1889, it was decided that the individual should be free '... to work as he saw fit along with that party, but that the work of the League was education in Socialist principles'.¹³ This compromise decision, together with the resolutions of the December conference, showed clearly the profound influence within the League of the Morrisite anti-parliamentary position. Indeed the members at this time tended, in the words of one veteran activist, '... to look down on what they called "Parliamentarians" ...' and prided themselves on their abstract knowledge of Economic theory, to the exclusion of all concern for political skills.¹⁴ This standpoint necessarily limited the concept of socialist organisation to an

11. David Lowe in Forward, 23 January 1915.

12. Commonweal, 12 January 1889.

13. Commonweal, 11 May 1889.

14. John Gilray, MS. Reminiscences, p.5.

educational-propagandist mode, and denied the very possibility of a political task-oriented organisation. Well might the "parliamentarian" John L. Mahon, sometime national secretary of the Socialist League, complain in 1889 that '... there is no Socialist Party, but only a propaganda ...'.¹⁵ On October 1st, 1889, the Edinburgh branches of the League and the S.D.F. amalgamated to form a single propagandist body titled, rather grandiosely, the "Scottish Socialist Federation".¹⁶

John Bruce Glasier of the Socialist League's Glasgow branch inaugurated the new S.S.F.'s Winter season of indoor propaganda, on Sunday, October 6th: he spoke on "Radicalism, Irish Nationalism and Socialism".¹⁷ In addition to the Sunday evening public meeting, S.S.F. weekly routine consisted of a French class on Sunday afternoons, an economic study class on Tuesday evenings and a branch business meeting every Friday. At that time, these gatherings were all held at 35 George IV Bridge, the home of a local comrade, Donald McKenzie.¹⁸ For the indoor Sunday meetings in Winter, a hall had to be hired; this was usually the Moulders Hall on South Bridge. For the open air propaganda on Summer Sundays, afternoon and evening meetings were held in the East Meadows and Queen's Park: use of an alternative site in Parliament Square was irregular, since it was liable to result in arrests of speakers.¹⁹ Speakers were always at a premium for the struggling socialist propaganda, and in that respect, the new Federation could boast some of the most able and experienced talent in Scotland.

15. Commonweal, 20 April 1889.

16. Commonweal, 12 October 1889.

17. Ibid. John Bruce Glasier (1859-1920), an architectural draughtsman from Glasgow and ex S.L.R.L. activist, was Morris's leading disciple in Scotland. After the collapse of the Socialist League, Glasier joined the I.L.P. in which he remained a national leader until his death. Within the I.L.P. he consistently opposed all attempts to have that body fuse with the Marxist S.D.F.

18. Commonweal, 5 October 1889. Gilray, MS. Reminiscences, p.9.

19. John Gilray, MS. Reminiscences, p.6-7.

Foremost of these was Andreas Scheu, an expatriate furniture designer from Vienna and founder of the Land and Labour League in 1884. He had been a member of the National Council of the Socialist League at its inception in February 1885,²⁰ and was among the earliest expositors of Socialism in Edinburgh.²¹ Tall and commanding, Scheu brought all the dynamism of a volatile temperament to his work for the cause for which he had suffered exile.²² Leo Melliet, an Edinburgh University lecturer, had been a member of the Paris Commune, and brought to the local movement a breath of the sanguinary enthusiasm of the barricades.

'Squat in stature, with the typical suave and polite manner of the Frenchman, he would begin his speech ... much quieter than our friend Scheu, but by and by he was almost certain to work himself up to a very considerable heat and, fresh from the gory experiences of the Commune, he would emphatically insist ... that without the shedding of blood, there could be no salvation ...'²³

Another tireless activist was the Rev. Dr. John Glasse, Minister of the Old Greyfriars Kirk, and a personal friend of William Morris.²⁴ He received much opprobrium for his radical stand, especially from the local press, but remained to make a unique contribution to the local movement, notably as a pamphleteer and publicist. In the late 1880's he served the important function of tutor to the S.S.F. study groups. Younger speakers included John Gilray, a kirk elder from Dr. Glasse's congregation, John Haldane Smith, an original member of the League's local executive,²⁵ and John Leslie, from Edinburgh's

20. Commonweal, February 1885.

21. Glasier, William Morris, p.21. Laurence Thompson, The Enthusiasts (Gollancz, London, 1971), p.35.

22. John Gilray, MS. Reminiscences, p.3.

23. Ibid., p.12-13.

24. Glasier, William Morris, p.22-23.

25. Commonweal, February 1885.

sizeable immigrant Irish community. Leslie was, unlike most of the other leading figures in the S.S.F. at that time, solidly working class in origin, the son of an unskilled worker. Originally intended for the Roman Catholic priesthood, his 'latent rebel instincts' subverted his parents' wishes, and in the early 1880's he gravitated - via a sympathy with Fenian revolutionism - towards the Socialist movement. Chronic ill-health and persistent pain from a near fatal childhood injury gave an added acuity to the political commitment.²⁶ It was Leslie who, during the Spring of 1889, recruited James Connolly into the Socialist movement.²⁷ The young Connolly would find in Leslie a mentor whose work and example would be the most important seminal influence upon him during these early days in the Edinburgh movement.

Like Leslie, who was nine years his senior, James Connolly was born in Edinburgh's "little Ireland" - that predominantly Irish working-class slum district which fringed the eastern end of the city's Cowgate. He was born on June 5th, 1868 at 107 Cowgate, the third son of John Connolly, manure carter.²⁸ Now the itinerant Irish farm labourer, seeking work during the short Scottish harvest season, had been a familiar figure in central Scotland since the last quarter of the 18th Century, and it was those among them who had opted to exchange seasonal agricultural work for urban employment of a more regular nature who formed the nucleus of the Irish communities in the Scottish towns. It was only with the expansive building programmes - especially canal construction - which were undertaken in Scotland at the close of the

26. Lee & Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain, p.144.

27. Ibid., p.145.

28. Register of Births (St. Giles, Edinburgh) 1868, Roll No. 605. C. Desmond Greaves in The Life and Times of James Connolly. (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1972 edn.), p.20-23, was the first to bring to light the true facts of Connolly's birth.

Napoleonic wars, that a really significant immigration of mass Irish labour began. By mid-century the large concentrations of Irish poor in Scottish towns, especially in Glasgow and Edinburgh, were recognised to be urgent social problem. Reporting in 1847 on the situation of the 'low Irish' single-room dwellers of the Edinburgh slums, a local medical officer identified these unfortunates as the poorest class in the city; they were engaged in the most menial work available, general labouring, carting and scavenging, or even worse, were destitute paupers. 90% of the city's pauper population was, averred this observer, of Irish stock, and was '... the original and immediate cause of the deterioration of the lower classes'. Apparently, so great had been the influx of the Irish poor, that native Scots had been virtually 'excluded' from their chosen areas of settlement in the Cowgate and West Port.²⁹ In February 1850 the Scotsman newspaper observed that the Cowgate had become 'an Irish colony', while in the West Port and Grassmarket districts Irish immigrants predominated.³⁰ The great Irish potato famine of 1847-49 was responsible for a dramatic increase in the numbers of the Scotto- Irish communities. According to the census returns of 1841 and 1851 the Edinburgh Irish population had doubled in those ten years, and these figures excluded children who were born in situ to Irish parents; by 1851, the Irish born accounted for almost 6% of the city's total population.³¹ The famine emigrants who thus became permanent residents in Scotland were in general those who lacked the fare to escape further to the USA, who lacked established family connections in that country, or who preferred to await employment in the Scottish lowlands rather

29. Report of a certain Dr. Stark, quoted James E. Handley, The Irish in Modern Scotland (Cork U.P. 1947), p.37-8.

30. *Ibid.*, p.145.

31. *Ibid.*, p.44.

than face further privation in the emigrant ships. A high percentage of them were certainly the poorest members of a destitute peasantry who had escaped actual starvation by flight³². From Glasgow, the natural port of entry, many drifted East to Edinburgh, congregating in the established centres in the Grassmarket, West Port and Cowgate, and also infiltrating the native 'Scots' slums in the Canongate.³³ The consequent imposition of urban forms of employment upon rural workers involved in this post famine transfer of population is well illustrated in the case of Connolly's own father. A "manure carter" as we have seen at the time of James's birth (a job which involved the removal of all human and domestic effluent from tenement buildings which then lacked plumbing of even the most rudimentary nature), he had described himself as an "agricultural labourer" twelve years earlier at the time of his marriage.³⁴

A report of an Edinburgh Corporation sub-committee on the condition of the local poor published the year of James Connolly's birth, gave a fairly detailed impression of the social world into which he was born. While it showed that in absolute terms the labouring classes lived in what could only be described as 'dens', it also emerged that relative to the other slum areas investigated, the Cowgate was relatively worse in every observable respect. The investigation sampled the four worst slum areas of the city; the Canongate, Tron (High Street), St. Giles (which included the Cowgate) and the Grassmarket.³⁵ As regards the situation of heads of families, it appeared that generally throughout

32. Ibid., p.24.

33. Ibid., p.34.

34. Register of Marriages (St. Giles, Edinburgh) 1856, Roll No. 119, dated 21 October, 1856.

35. Dr. Alex Wood, Report on the Condition of the Poorer Classes of Edinburgh (Edmonston & Douglas, Edinburgh, 1868).

the four areas, 47% were in regular employment, 39% in casual employment, while 14% were idle: the corresponding figures for the Cowgate were given as 15%, 65% and 20%. The average wage received generally was 12/6d. per week, while in the Cowgate sample that received was 7/11d. Generally, those in bad health were 20% of total numbers; in the Cowgate, the figure was over 37%.³⁶ In the Cowgate, 62% of the children were idle, lacking both work and schooling; the next highest figure was 30%.³⁷ As regards the condition of the dwellings occupied, it was found that generally about 72% of them were single room units, the average room size being 14 feet by 11 feet. The average maximum number of people sleeping in a single room was seven. Of the general sample, only about 77% of these dwellings were capable of ventilation, only 21% had their own water supply, only 13% possessed a W.C. and a mere 9% had a lighted common stair access. For this order of accommodation an average weekly rent of 1/7d. was paid. For the inferior dwellings in the Cowgate, an average rental of 1/3d. per week was charged: here, there were no lighted common stairs, no inside toilets and no houses with their own water supply.³⁸ The heavy concentration of Irish in the Cowgate was aptly indicated by the fact that a full third of the total number of Roman Catholics in the general sample were resident there.³⁹ The St. Giles district, with a population density very comparable with both the Canongate and Grassmarket (233 persons per acre), had the lowest death rate of all four districts (2.9%). Tron, with a population density of 353 per acre had the highest death rate of all, 3.4%. No separate figures were given for the Cowgate, but it was emphasised

36. Ibid., p.6

37. Ibid., p. 7-8.

38. Ibid., p.9

39. Ibid., p.10.

that extreme local variations from mean were observed, some closes achieving a local death rate of 6%.⁴⁰ In all, about 13,000 families lived in such conditions in single-room dwellings; the sub-committee emphasised that,

'It must not be supposed that these 13,000 families embrace the vicious and abject poor only. Among their number are to be found nearly all of our common labouring-class, who are compelled, by the impossibility of obtaining houses of a better construction, or in a more healthy locality, to dwell in "dens" where cleanliness is impossible, decency is necessarily constantly outraged, and the laws of health are hourly violated, nay cannot by any possibility be observed'.⁴¹

It seems probable that James Connolly, like his elder brother, John, was obliged to enlist in the army at about the age of fourteen or fifteen, in order to avoid destitution. This was a common enough practice among working class youths who lacked the necessary skills for employment on a non-casual basis, and followed the performance of a characteristic series of "dead-end" menial jobs. Both brothers, it seems, served in the Royal Scots - the regiment which recruited from the Edinburgh district - and James probably spent the years of his service (1882-89) successively stationed in Ireland and in Edinburgh and Glasgow.⁴² Early in 1889, actuated by concern for his

40. Ibid., p.3,13.

41. Ibid., p.14.

42. No details of James' service have survived, but since John was given a Military funeral in Edinburgh in 1916, it is known that he served as 20308, Corporal J. Reid, in the Royal Scots [Burial Record of Merchiston Cemetery, Edinburgh, 1916; in the possession of Messrs. Wallace and Somerville, solicitors, Edinburgh]. Greaves, in The Life & Times of James Connolly, pp. 17, 20, 25-28, speculates that both brothers served in the King's Liverpool Regt. and on this basis adduces that James Connolly's period with the colours (assumed to be 1882-89) was spent at various stations in Ireland. Even if it may be assumed that he followed his brother into the Royal Scots, regimental movements for the period do not really help to locate him. Each regiment had at that time two regular battalions, a "home" and an overseas unit, the former constantly servicing the latter with replacements and reinforcements as the need arose. In support of Greaves' thesis, it may be said that the "home" unit of the Royal Scots did serve in Ireland for two years of the period at issue (1882-84); for the remainder of the period till 1889, it was stationed in Edinburgh and Glasgow [Information supplied by Col. D. A. D. Eykyn of the Royal Scots Museum, Edinburgh Castle].

disabled father - injured in a recent accident - and for his sick mother, James appears to have gone AWOL from his unit and joined John, then working in Dundee. He had arranged to meet in Perth his fiancée, Lillie Reynolds - a Protestant girl he had met in Dublin during the years of his army service - but lack of money and civilian clothes prevented his leaving Dundee.⁴³ Within a year, the couple had decided upon marriage and, in the meantime, the Connolly brothers had both returned to Edinburgh, having obtained work as carters for the Corporation Cleaning and Lighting Department (the same work which John Connolly senior had done).⁴⁴ It was while in Dundee that James - probably through his elder brother - had first met John Leslie and had joined the local branch of the Socialist League.⁴⁵ On settling in Edinburgh, both brothers naturally became involved in the activities of the new Scottish Socialist Federation.

Perhaps the cardinal concern of the S.S.F. membership in the years 1889-90 was definition of its attitude to the emergent "new unionism"; the attempts at self-organisation by the unskilled workforce. Closely related to this immediate tactical issue was the utopian anarcho-syndicalism advocated by William Morris during these final days of the Socialist League. Local carters made attempts to organise themselves into branches of the Scottish Horsemen's Union early in 1889; first those employed in the industrial and commercial centre of Leith,⁴⁶ and subsequently those in the Edinburgh Corporation Cleansing Department.⁴⁷

43. James Connolly to Lillie Reynolds, Dundee, 7 April 1889.

44. James Connolly to Lillie Reynolds, Edinburgh, 6 April 1890.

45. Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.28-31.
Lee and Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain, p.145.

46. Commonweal, 2 March 1889.

47. Commonweal, 13 April 1889.

However, it seems that both of these branches succumbed during the depression in the nineties. The "new unionism" in Leith proceeded apace. In May 1889 dockers began to organise in a branch of the National Union of Dock Labourers;⁴⁸ by August membership reached the thousand mark.⁴⁹ In the first week of June, local seamen and fireman struck for a pay increase, and for two weeks the trade of Leith was 'paralysed'.⁵⁰ These workers had been organised since February, in a branch of the National Amalgamated Sailors and Firemen's Union, and had attained a membership of 2,000 by 1891.⁵¹ Also, in June 1889, local gasworkers 'met in public and resolved to form themselves into a trade union'.⁵²

Against the background of these rapid developments, it is scarcely surprising that Edinburgh socialists held animated discussions '... on the blessings and otherwise of trades unionism, and the wisdom of directing our energies more in the way of unionism'. As in the case of relations with the labour party, the comrades were divided: in terms of activity directed particularly towards the new unions '... the "soon" comrades feared that thereby the central idea might be lost sight of and stoutly championed pure and unadulterated socialism'.⁵³ Nevertheless, the S.S.F. did at this time take active steps to associate itself with the ongoing labour struggle. On May 4th 1890, it sponsored the only "Labour Day" demonstration to be held in Scotland.⁵⁴ This was

48. Leith Pilot Annual (1890), p. 25,43.

49. Ibid, p.44.

50. Ibid., p.43.

51. Leith Pilot Annual (1891), p.21.

52. Leith Pilot Annual (1890), p.43.

53. Commonweal, 21 December 1889.

54. Commonweal, 24 May 1890.

held to be a 'remarkable success', speakers from the Federation occupying the same platform as Keir Hardie himself, and supporting his resolution for the eight hour working day.⁵⁵ Two weeks later, the S.S.F. called a 'large meeting' in the Meadows to support the striking employees of the Scottish Leader newspaper; a resolution was carried to support these workers by organising a boycott of the paper.⁵⁶ At this time, the S.S.F. also acquired a meeting hall of its own, at 50 South Bridge; indicatively enough, it was styled the "Labour Hall".⁵⁷

Meanwhile, the nature of 'pure and unadulterated Socialism' was adumbrated by William Morris in a series of articles in the Commonweal. He began with an attack upon opportunism which took the form of a hostile review of the recently published Fabian Essays in Socialism.⁵⁸ Parliamentary tacts in general, and the Fabian 'permeation' policy⁵⁹ in particular, he decried as 'fantastic and unreal', Sidney Webb being singled out for special criticism as 'the leader of this somewhat disastrous move'. The point cannot have been lost on the comrades of the S.S.F. who had begun a special study class to analyse the Essays.⁶⁰ Morris next turned his attention to the question of labour organisation. In an article entitled "Labour Day" he developed the two notions of escalating pauperisation under mature forms of Capitalism and of the Proletariat as the universal class within

55. Commonweal, 10 May 1890. J. Bruce Glasier, from the Socialist League's Glasgow branch also spoke at this meeting.

56. Commonweal, 24 May 1890.

57. Commonweal, 14 June 1890.

58. Commonweal, 25 January 1890.

59. The Fabian Society's tactic of infiltrating the Radical wing of the Liberal Party and 'permeating' it with socialist ideas. The marxists of both the Socialist League and the S.D.F. were vehemently opposed to it.

60. Commonweal, 19 April 1890.

revolutionary society.⁶¹ He proceeded to advocate the idea of a political universal strike as one 'instrument for the winning of freedom': the present elaborate degree of labour organisation, he said, would render the ruling class helpless against such a weapon. The implications of this universal strike schema for the League's attitude to everyday 'labour disputes' was clarified in a letter from Leonard Hall on "Strikes", printed in the same issue of Commonweal. Here, the view of such disputes as "the preliminary skirmishes of the revolution" was described as 'bogus', and the 'solemn truth' presented that '... the mere act of "striking" is ... in the majority of instances ... fuel for reaction'.

Just two weeks after the Edinburgh S.S.F.'s successful May Day demonstration, with its Eight Hours resolution, Morris was stressing the secondary value of such statutory 'ameliorations' to those gains workers would make in a general strike. He dismissively declared that such instances of governmental intervention in industry were mere 'state socialism ... with which we communists do not agree'.⁶² The next month, Commonweal printed an instalment from Morris's prose romance News from Nowhere, in which the efficacy of the general strike in the revolutionary crisis was stressed: in face of this tactic, governmental power was shown to be helpless, lacking definitive targets at which to aim, and consequently violence and bloodshed were much

61. Commonweal, 3 May 1890. These two ideas are drawn from Parts I and II, respectively, of the Communist Manifesto; this would doubtless be recognised by the Commonweal readership.

62. "The Eight Hours and the Demonstration" in Commonweal, 17 May 1890. However, despite Morris' personal dislike of 'statutory ameliorations', all could discover Marx's own enthusiasm for them in Capital (1), at the conclusion of the section on "The Working Day". (Moscow, 1961 edn.) p. 299-302.

reduced.⁶³ In the same issue, Morris urged upon workers to '... turn their attention from the parliament of their masters to their own organisation', and to have recourse to '... the great weapon which your own wretched position of unrewarded toil puts into your hands ... the general strike'. Within a few months, J. Bruce Glasier was advocating the "universal strike" at Edinburgh S.S.F. meetings,⁶⁴ and even the enthusiasm of local activists for the eight hour day became overlaid with a Morrisite pessimism about the possibilities within union activity. At a meeting in Leith in November 1890, on the Eight Hours issue, the S.S.F. speaker, Frederick Hamilton, referred to '... all the efforts of Trade Unionists ... [tending] ... to court defeat and disaster for their Unions ...'. In his view, any possibilities for working class advancement contained in union organisation would always be negated by the potentialities of the unemployed as scab labour.⁶⁵ In January and February of 1891 there occurred the most widespread stoppage of work to date on Scottish railways, the Caledonian, North British and Glasgow and South Western systems all being affected. The "Manifesto to Scotch Railway Workers" issued during this dispute with the imprimatur of the Propaganda Committee, S.S.F. is further indicative of the progress of Morrisite utopian syndicalist ideas within the local movement. Trade Unionism - both of the old and new varieties - was dismissed as being powerless to prevent depression of wages and excessive working hours. To match the class unity of the employers a '... UNION among ALL workers ...' was advocated. 'One general strike would be sufficient ... [and] ... bring the holders of capital ... to their

63. Commonweal, 7 June 1890.

64. Commonweal, 8 November 1890.

65. Leith Burghs Pilot, 22 November 1890.

senses, and to their knees at the same time'.⁶⁶

Morris had summed up his position in a final article entitled "Where are we now?".⁶⁷ Noting that Socialism in Britain now had many fellow-travellers, he complained that,

'... the whole set opinion amongst those more or less touched by Socialism ... is towards the New Trades Unionism and palliation'.

All this was, he implied, useless. He continued,

'The parliamentary side of things seems in abeyance at present ... but of course it will come up again, and in time it will achieve the legal eight hours day - with next to no results'.

Demanding a total concentration on propaganda, he declaimed,

'Our business is the making of Socialists ... Until we have that mass of opinion, action for a general change ... is impossible ... preaching and teaching is not out of date ... but rather ... the only rational means of action'.

This was Morris's last contribution to the organ of the Socialist League: during the course of November 1890, he and his supporters were obliged to withdraw from the organisation, leaving it entirely in the hands of the Anarchist elements.

The theoretical impasse represented by Morris's position, with its rejection of politics, palliation (labour legislation) and union organisation alike, in favour of a mythological attachment to the notion of a universal strike, must have been manifest, if only in terms of the organisational ruin of the Socialist League.⁶⁸ As we have seen, the

66. Commonweal, March 1891.

67. Commonweal, 15 November 1890.

68. After its capture by Anarchists at the close of 1890, the League finally foundered in the Walsall Bomb trial of Jan-April 1892. On the nature of Morris's theoretical approach: J.W. Hulse argues in his Revolutionists in London (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1970) pp. 77-110 that Morris's socialism owed as much to the theories of Russian Nihilism and Communist Anarchism, as to those of Marx. Morris's marxist reputation is defended ably by E. P. Thompson in William Morris - Romantic to Revolutionary (Lawrence & Wishart, London, 1955), pp. 790ff and pp. 886-899.

S.S.F. accepted the Morrisite view of the inability of trade union organisation even to achieve a simple palliative measure such as the eight hour day. In this regard, they could not but be impressed by the concrete failures of the new unions in the face of the onsetting trade depression: these were unable to resist large-scale lay-offs and wage reductions and, in the case of some organisations, unable to survive. The eight hour day remained of vital concern to the S.S.F., perhaps indicating an awareness of the value placed upon it by Marx in his section on "The Working Day" in Capital I. The question was how to achieve it. The S.S.F. could, and did agitate for it in terms of the international May-Day demonstration - at that time held in Britain on the first Sunday in May, and on the continent on the actual first of the month. In this connection, the S.S.F. received some dusty answers to their invitations to participate from the skilled trades represented on the Edinburgh Trades Council: in April of 1891, '... a communication from the city Socialistic body, urging the Council to hold a demonstration on 3rd May, in favour of an eight hour day, was read and received with laughter ...'⁶⁹ A steady week-by-week propaganda, with highlights on May-Day appeared inappropriately limpid in this situation, a consideration which would eventually lead the S.S.F. to close rapport with that 'rising labour party' it had held aloof from in 1889, and more, to active involvement itself, in local politics.

The situation of the Connolly brothers was exemplary of the dilemma within the S.S.F. Unskilled members like themselves were working a nine or ten hour basic working day - with scant hope of resisting pressure from the employer to work additional hours when required,

69. Leith Burghs Pilot, 18 April 1891.

without additional payment. Above all, they remained conscious of the fact that union organisation was unable to offer any hope of improvement: indeed the union for their own trade, the Associated Carters' Society of Scotland was summarily liquidated about this time by the depression of trade.⁷⁰ It seemed too that the educational-propagandist mode of Socialist activity - in which they were increasingly active⁷¹ - offered just as little. Meanwhile, James Connolly had become a married man. On April 30th 1890, he and Lillie Reynolds were married in Perth, Connolly having obtained the necessary dispensation to marry a Protestant.⁷² He was at that time lodging in the West Port of Edinburgh, at No. 22, but the couple set up home at 75 St. Mary's Street, just off the Canongate: it was here that their first child, Mona, was born on April 11th 1891.⁷³ Connolly was now in his 23rd year, but in the two decades which had intervened between his setting up home in the Canongate and his own birth in the Cowgate, conditions in the Edinburgh slums had hardly changed. Single-room dwellings still predominated and the poor and the low-paid were still huddled into the small box-like apartments which honeycombed the once spacious chambers of the Edinburgh aristocracy.⁷⁴ Ever in a state of congenital neglect and ill-repair, and lacking the basic sanitary amenities, these dwellings were inhabited by a labouring poor, many of whom were unable to afford a decent stick of furniture or sometimes, even a bedstead.⁷⁵ These were not the haunts of the merely indigent,

70. Angela Tuckett, The Scottish Carter (George Allen and Unwin, London, 1967), p.38-9.

71. John Connolly appeared as a supporting speaker on the S.S.F. Meadows platform as early as October 1890, vide Commonweal, 1 November 1890.

72. Register of Marriages, (Perth District, County of Perth) 1890, Roll No. 70.

73. Register of Births, (Canongate District, Burgh of Edinburgh) 1891, Roll No. 452.

74. "T. B. M.", Slum Life in Edinburgh (James Thin, Edinburgh, 1891), p.11.

75. Ibid., p.12-13.

but men of Connolly's class, the labourers and low-grade artisans. They lived, uncertain of their continued employment beyond the next pay day, on the very fringe of destitution: small wages and growing families meant no cash reserves to set aside against the possibility of future unemployment, and a continual pinching to make ends meet. Liable to be thrown out of work at any time by a temporary slackness of trade, such men had no resources at such times between them and slow starvation, save a few domestic items or articles of clothing that might be pawnable. They lived

'... in continual oscillation between bare sufficiency and sheer starvation'. 76

The prevalence of such conditions of life and labour, together with the evident bankruptcy of both the trade union and the Socialist propagandist body as models for effective action towards a betterment of the workers's situation, led many members of the Edinburgh S.S.F. to take a sympathetic interest in political action. At the 1892 general election, S.S.F. members such as Frederick Hamilton and John Leslie played a leading part in the combined Federation-Trades Council attempt to return a labour candidate in Edinburgh's Central Division.⁷⁷ John Wilson, a shale-miners' agent from Broxburn was finally run, on a joint labour - Home Rule - Temperance platform.⁷⁸ At his adoption meeting on June 6th, it was resolved that

'... the time had come when labour should be directly represented in parliament, and that in no constituency was the need more urgent than in the Central Division'.⁷⁹

76. Ibid., p.19.

77. Edinburgh Evening News, 18 May 1892.

78. John Gilray, MS Reminiscences, p.16.

79. Edinburgh Evening News, 7 June 1892. Wilson's candidacy was sponsored by the short-lived "Scottish United Trades Council Labour Party" (1891-93), a venture led by the right-wing leader of the Stirlingshire miners, Chisholm Robertson. vide W. H. Marwick, A Short History of Labour in Scotland, (Chambers, Edinburgh/London, 1967), p.71.

It was the conduct of this pioneering contest which brought the Federation into close touch for the first time with the Scottish Labour Party, and prepared the way for that mainly West of Scotland body, to establish an Edinburgh branch.

The "Scottish Independent Labour Party" (sic) extended its organisation to the capital city in November 1892.⁸⁰ At the inaugural meeting, held in the Trades Hall, Edinburgh, James Connolly was called to take the chair and, '... after insisting upon the necessity for an I.L.P., called upon George Carson, Organiser, Glasgow, to address the meeting'. Carson spoke on the origins of the party in the West of Scotland, related how '... they in the West were at last becoming formidable, and ... urged those present to form themselves into a branch of the Party without delay'. John Leslie moved the motion to that effect; and the branch was officially established with a membership of 38, Leslie being elected secretary. The 12-man committee of management, elected a fortnight later, included at least two S.S.F. members, Frederick Hamilton and John Connolly:⁸¹ other Federation members, like John Gilray and Haldane Smith, appear to have joined the I.L.P. subsequently, but at that initial stage, the lead was taken by the proletarian members of the socialist body.

It should be emphasised, however, that this growing accommodation between the S.S.F. and the Edinburgh I.L.P. was a function both of the relative weakness of the newly established Edinburgh I.L.P. and of its manifest dependence on Federation manpower. Indeed, as originally

80. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 1892-94, 8 November 1892. The nomenclature was probably a reflection of the preparations and negotiations then underway to enlarge the Scottish Labour Party into a national "I.L.P." the following year.

81. Ibid., 26 November 1892.

constituted, the Edinburgh I.L.P. could not have continued in existence without the support it drew from the S.S.F. membership. This Edinburgh situation of marxist dominance within the political party of labour was a highly peculiar position: elsewhere it was suspected that the 'labour' interest was merely a function of Liberal Party intrigue and, for this reason, the general attitude of marxists to politicised labour remained hostile. Expression of this general hostility and suspicion was couched in terms which reflected the continuing heterogeneity of the Left, and which also highlighted the uniqueness of the situation in Edinburgh. Glasgow S.D.F. activists were vehement and unrestrained in their attacks upon non-marxist labour organisations. Worried about the approaching depression of trade, a comrade, James Smith, wrote to the S.D.F. organ in May 1892 to deplore current efforts '... to divert the labour movement into curious channels'. He castigated the Labour Church (a movement founded by radical Unitarian ministers and designed to give Christian expression to working class protest) and its political ally, the Scottish Labour Party. These he regarded as simple tools of Liberal Party managers and the tenor of current S.D.F./labour feeling in Glasgow was aptly illustrated by Smith's citation of the S.D.F. challenge to the labour party '... to point out a single item in [its election] programme which would benefit the workers'.⁸² In this, the Glasgow comrades were accurately reflecting the views of the S.D.F.'s metropolitan leadership; in the same month Keir Hardie was criticised editorially in Justice for his quaint ideological mixture of 'Liberalism, Henry Georgeism and Socialism'.⁸³ Writing in July 1892,⁸⁴

82. Justice, 7 May 1892.

83. Justice, 14 May 1892.

84. Justice, 9 July 1892.

the S.D.F. leader, H. M. Hyndman referred to the 'great deal of talk of late about the necessity for the formation of a Labour Party'. He thought that such a labour party might well be a chaotic and heterogeneous collection of adherents, with no real electoral chance against the well organised Liberal and Conservative party machines. He stressed that the question of principles was as vital as that of organisation, and opined that only a sound Social Democratic party was of any value to the British workers. Harry Quelch,⁸⁵ a member of the S.D.F. executive and editor of Justice, dismissed any suggestion '... that the S.D.F. should give up political work altogether in favour of a nebulous Independent Labour Party'. He welcomed 'the possibility of the S.D.F. becoming merged in a great People's Party ... [since it is] ... after all ... only an instrument for the propagation of Social-Democracy', but yet stressed that the attitude of the S.D.F. to the I.L.P. was one of mere 'benevolent neutrality'.⁸⁶

It is abundantly clear from Quelch's remarks about the possibility of the S.D.F.'s voluntary dissolution into a (Socialist) 'People's Party', that the S.D.F. leadership's concept of organisation remained as firmly within the educational-propagandist mould as that of William Morris. Like Morris, they regarded the current socialist agitation as being essentially in a preparatory phase which would lay the necessary propagandist base upon which a concrete 'People's Party' might be built. However, the difference in tone between the metropolitan S.D.F. and an ex-Morrisite body such as the S.S.F. was acute at this time. The marked difference in attitude to the I.L.P. between the Socialists of Edinburgh and Glasgow

85. Harry Quelch (1858-1913), a member of the S.D.F.'s original executive and close friend of Hyndman. An ex-porter and trade unionist, he was self taught in French and German. Editor of Justice, 1892-1908.

86. Justice, 6 August 1892.

has already been indicated. At the metropolitan level, the same difference of approach was evident. In November 1892, Andreas Schen, the veteran S.S.F. leader, addressed himself to the same issue upon which Quelch had pronounced official S.D.F. 'benevolent neutrality'; the problem of the relationship between socialist and non-socialist left-wing organisations and the consolidation of all socialist and labour bodies into a unified socialist party. Rejecting Quelch's partisan exclusivity and Hyndman's fears of chaos, he argued for the creation of a new organisation which would include the S.D.F., the Fabian Society, the new trade unions, the new labour party, together with what remained of the old Socialist League.⁸⁷ It is clear that, in his attempt to redefine his tactical position in the light of the collapse of the Socialist League and the theoretical dead weight of Morris' utopianism, he had turned to the German S.P.D. for exemplary guidance. Asserting that 'party organisation is the chief work ...' in the current situation, he argued that all possible means should be used to that end, including the despised tactic of "permeation". Party discipline and organisation would have to be 'a blending of centralism and federalism', and a 'well managed party exchequer' on S.P.D. lines was indispensable.⁸⁸ Although he was not explicit on the point, Scheu doubtless had in mind the unity congress of Gotha in 1875, when the S.P.D. was formed from a union between the marxist followers of Liebknecht and Bebel, and the non-marxist 'labourist' followers of Lassalle.

This manifest difference of approach between the Edinburgh S.S.F. and both the metropolitan and Scottish elements of the S.D.F., with regard to organisational policy, is of crucial importance both for an understanding of the development of the Scottish Left, and of the

87. Justice, 12 November 1892.

88. Justice, 19 November 1892.

intellectual climate in which James Connolly first absorbed the teachings of marxian socialism. It must be remembered that the S.D.F. was the parent body of the Socialist League, that organisation having separated itself from the main body in 1885 over the issue of electoral policy. League leaders held to a policy of pure propagandist activity, while, for the S.D.F. legitimate propaganda value might be made out of electoral contests with the major political parties. There was never any doctrinal dispute between the two; their theoretical backgrounds being congruent. The divergence between the S.S.F. and S.D.F. must be traced in the light of this shared ideological heritage.

When Karl Marx died in 1883, he had been actively involved in politics for forty years or so, but the workers' movement he wished to serve, he had denied a living tradition. This had resulted from Marx and Engels' liquidation of organisations which had either outlived their usefulness, or which had fallen under the influence of their opponents. Both the Communist League and the 1st International organisations had been wound up by means of transferring their executives to the USA. This situation of organisational discontinuity meant that the parties of the Second International - such as the British S.D.F. - were formed in vacuo, in response to Marx's 'mature' positivist theory, especially as outlined in Capital I. For the Social Democrats of the late nineteenth century, this economic determinism and teleology of social development became a "scientific" method which Marx himself had sketched out in his Preface to the first (German) edition of Capital in 1867: this was first made available in English in the Moore-Aveling translation of 1887. In his Preface Marx had written:-

'What we are concerned with primarily is, not the higher or lower degree of development of the social antagonisms which arise out of the natural laws of capitalist production, but these laws in themselves, the tendencies which work out with an iron necessity towards an inevitable goal'.

'When a society has discovered the natural laws which regulate its own movement (and the final purpose of my book is to reveal the economic law of motion of modern society) it can neither overleap the natural phases of evolution, nor shuffle them out of the world by decrees. But this much, at least, it can do: it can shorten and lessen the birth pangs'.

The importance of Engels in the development of Marxism as a systematic structure, after Marx's death, has been well established.⁸⁹ As editor and re-publisher of Marx's writings, Engels was a crucial mediator between Marx and the 'marxists' of the Second International period. He took pains to ensure the dissemination of a thoroughly "scientific" approach. In his preface to the English edition of the Communist Manifesto published in 1888, Engels summarised the 'fundamental proposition' of the work thus:-

'That in every historical epoch the prevailing method of economic production and exchange and the social organisation necessarily following from it, forms the basis upon which alone can be explained the political and intellectual history of that epoch'.

Engels continued:-

'This proposition which, in my opinion, is destined to do for history what Darwin's theory has done for Biology, we, both of us had been gradually approaching for some years before 1845 ... when I again met Marx at Brussels in Spring 1845, he had it ready worked out, and put it before me, in terms almost as clear as those in which I have stated it here'.

To anticipate a little, we might note at this point that Engels' scientific claims for the marxist positivist method found distinct echoes in James Connolly's most sustained work.⁹⁰ In this case,

89. G. Lichtheim, Marxism (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1964), p.234-5.

90. James Connolly in Labour in Irish History (New Books, Dublin, 1967), p.10, quotes Engels' summary of the Manifesto's 'fundamental proposition' verbatim, as the 'Socialist key to History, as set forth by Karl Marx'.

Connolly is exemplary of the Social Democratic absorption of marxist 'scientific method' via Engels. In addition to Capital and the Communist Manifesto, the credo of British Social Democrats owed much to Marx's Wage Labour and Capital. This was not the 1891 revised version edited by Engels, but an 1885 translation by J. L. Joynes.⁹¹ The importance of this work for the first generation of British marxists can hardly be over-estimated; it was the main source-book of marxist political economy.⁹² Here was a booklet whose directness and brevity made it comprehensible to the average working class S.D.F. member. These qualities also reinforced its determinist message: it portrayed with inescapable logic the model of capitalist development, with increasing productivity, division of labour, proletarian competition and immiseration, and the polarisation of society into the two violently antagonistic categories of Bourgeoisie and Proletariat. There is no hint of any possible improvement in the short term by trade union agitation for 'palliative' measures. The didactic nature of these three basic texts occasioned a rather dogmatic and sectarian cast of mind within the S.D.F., together with a suspicion of any development or initiative beyond what it regarded as the letter of Marxist teaching: this led to a 'too literal belief' in determinist economics.⁹³

In Scotland, this 'too literal belief' easily accommodated itself to the catechistic tone of the Calvinist consciousness. As early as 1884, William Morris had fallen foul of the Glasgow S.D.F. leader, William Nairn, with his encyclopaedic knowledge of marxist economics and inquisitorial zeal. Forced to admit his own lack of patience with the intricacies of political economy, Morris had remarked to Bruce

91. J.L. Joynes (d.1893), an Eton master whose arrest in Ireland with Henry George in 1882 (as dangerous agitators) caused widespread embarrassment and scandal. Joynes was forced to resign his Eton post when he insisted upon publishing his own account of the fiasco, Adventures of a Tourist in Ireland. A leading spirit in the S.D.F., writer of many socialist songs, and editor of the socialist monthly TODAY.

92. Henry Collins "The Marxism of the S.D.F." in A. Briggs and J. Saville, eds Essays in Labour History (2) (Macmillan, London, 1971), p.60.

93. *Ibid.*, pp. 51-3, 68.

Glasier:

'Our friend Nairn was putting me through the catechism a bit, after your Scottish Kirk-Session fashion, don't you think? ... He is in dead earnest ... I should say'.⁹⁴

Such earnestness was directed with equal vehemence at the head of an errant comrade such as Morris, or, as we have already noted, towards an unregenerate organisation such as the Scottish Labour Party. Well might John Gilray of the Edinburgh S.S.F. say that the splits within the left '... would do a credit to Presbyterianism in Scotland'.⁹⁵

Such catechistic narrowness had never been a feature of socialism in Edinburgh. In part, this was doubtless due to the cosmopolitan leadership of personalities like Scheu and Melliet; but also of importance was the loss to the S.D.F. in Glasgow, first to the Socialist League and subsequently to the Scottish Labour Party, of much valuable middle-class leadership talent. Suffering no such drain, the S.S.F. contrived to avoid such sectarianism, despite its preponderant presbyterian membership and identical didactic marxist ideology. Its statement of principles, issued at its formation in October 1889, demanded that its members '... acknowledge Truth, Justice and Morality as the basis of their behaviour among themselves and towards all their fellow men ...'.⁹⁶

This evidence of attachment to a system of normative values beyond an essentialist materialism provoked an immediate response. Objecting to the implication that morality was 'a definite thing, which like the word Truth conveys a definite idea to the mind', a League member wrote to Commonweal to assert that 'Morals and Morality are absolute fictions', and denied that socialists could ever accept the dictates of non-relativist moral ideals.⁹⁷ Haldane Smith and John Gilray defended the

94. Glasier, William Morris, p.33.

95. Album of John Gilray.

96. Commonweal, 12 October 1889.

97. Commonweal, 9 November 1889.

S.S.F. position in a later issue of the journal.⁹⁸ Smith dismissed the attack with the simple assertion that morality was contingent upon general principles and hence socialists would practise a morality unencumbered with the debased values dominant in capitalist society. It was left to Gilray, the kirk elder of Old Greyfriars, to display a spiritual receptivity which contrasted markedly with the 'Kirk-Session' catechistic zeal which characterised the Glasgow socialists. Pointing out the non-relativist origins of all rejection of moral conventionalism, he ventured to suggest that the critic had '... passed under review existing economical and social arrangements and in the light of a higher morality ... has condemned them'. Rejecting the simple Materialist approach, Gilray maintained, 'It is not sufficient to give an intellectual assent to the doctrines of socialism; one must not be just quite a stranger to its spirit'. Seeking a concrete analogy to immanent ethical values hostile to mere conventional morality, Gilray asked '... can any good thing come out of the Nazareth of competitive society?'. He hit upon 'Friendship, with its sense of responsibility' as such a potential source of real ethical guidance for Socialists. At this time, Gilray's favourite lecture topic, on which he spoke more than once in Edinburgh and Leith, was "Comradeship".⁹⁹

If the young Connolly was exposed to the comradeship of men like Gilray and Haldane Smith in his early days in the S.S.F. and I.L.P. organisations, his theoretical training seems, at least in part, to have been the responsibility of the Rev. Dr. Glasse, the tutor of the Edinburgh study classes established to give local members some

98. Commonweal, 23 November 1889.

99. Commonweal, 1 and 8 November 1890.

grounding in the marxist classics.¹⁰⁰ John Glasse was an important seminal influence on the young Connolly, not least in the receptivity of his intellectual orientation and his 'catholic' cast of mind. The earliest written statement of his ideas still extant, is an address delivered to a Church of Scotland congress on social problems convened in Glasgow in 1899: this was later published by the Edinburgh I.L.P. in 1900 as a propaganda booklet entitled The Relation of the Church to Socialism. On the origins of the booklet, Dr. Glasse wrote:

'The object of my paper was ... to persuade the ministers and members [of the Church of Scotland] that they were not worthy either of their privileges or position unless they resolved, in the spirit of the prophets and of Jesus, to work along with the socialists in breaking every yoke and letting the oppressed go free'.

His views on Marx, although positive and theoretically grounded, show his 'advanced Liberal' turn of mind at some points. They are also indicative of the general intellectual climate of the Left in this period, when organisational and theoretical heterogeneity went hand in hand: for Dr. Glasse, Marxism appeared as one of the many influences on the ideology of the Left, albeit one that must be accorded a special significance.

'Marx effectually removed from Socialism the reproach of artificiality. The idea of development there finds full recognition ... [although] it exaggerates the infirmity of the individual'.

He thought that, in general, Marx's theory was 'too fatalistic', but that it had had great influence in directing the socialist movement towards 'Sanity'.

100. Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.38 (following personal testimony of Edinburgh activists, now deceased, who were associates of Connolly). Dr. Glasse's private papers were unfortunately destroyed in 1970.

'... his book Capital I is the boundary line between Utopia and Science ... One may henceforth be academic, but never artificial'.

On the problem of sectarianism, he wrote, no doubt with the S.D.F. in mind, that,

'it has appeared in Socialism, but ... the Socialists will, like the Christians, refuse to identify themselves with self-satisfied and dogmatic cliques ... and [will] realise an institution that in catholicity can only be compared to the Romish church'.

The receptivity of mind and catholicity of approach to marxian socialism evinced by Connolly as a mature thinker has been well argued.¹⁰¹ Perhaps it might now be suggested that his formative years among the Edinburgh Socialists, and especially the tutelage of his Presbyterian mentor, contributed in no small measure to this mature approach.

101. By Owen Dudley Edwards in The Mind of an Activist - James Connolly (Gill & Macmillan, Dublin, 1971) pp. 14-17; 28-64 passim.

2.

Social Democrats and Independent Labour

When, in November 1892, James Connolly had chaired the inaugural meeting of the Edinburgh branch of the I.L.P., he was as yet only 24 years of age and a very junior member of the new organisation. However, his chairing of that meeting indicates that he was being prepared - probably under the guidance of John Leslie - for a more active future role in public speaking: moreover, although not a member of the I.L.P. management committee, it was in his home at 6 Lothian Street, that this group met regularly from February 1893.¹ Connolly was now a father of two, and it was at this new address, on November 14th 1892, that his second daughter, Nora Margaret, was born.² The move to Lothian Street in the Old Town of Edinburgh, represented for Connolly a definitive break from the worst stratum of local slums of the Cowgate/Canongate variety.

Membership of the I.L.P. must have presented a very different picture from the diminutive socialist society, the S.S.F. For the first time, Connolly was enrolled in a mass working class organisation of large and expanding scope. Four delegates from Edinburgh attended the party's annual conference in Glasgow on January 3rd 1893 and, on

1. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 16 February 1893.

2. Register of Births (St. Giles District, City of Edinburgh) 1892, Roll No. 949.

returning to Edinburgh, Leslie reported the general position of the organisation as being 'highly satisfactory', '... 23 branches of the party being now in existence in Scotland, each branch self-supporting'.³ In the same month the branch was invited to send delegates to the Bradford Conference, to be held on January 13th, which aimed at the formation of an all-British labour party. The Edinburgh branch instructed its delegate, R. B. Kerr, to '... resist any attempt to impose a rigid constitution upon the projected party'.⁴ Despite S.D.F. hostility,⁵ there was no ideological equivocation in Connolly's adherence to the new national I.L.P. Not only was it in line with the S.S.F. position as expounded by Schen in the previous November,⁶ but the new organisation had been given the imprimatur of Engels himself.⁷

At this time, John Connolly, six years James's senior, was already a leading local activist. He served as secretary to the S.S.F. and, in that capacity, remitted the first report of its activities to the S.D.F. paper.⁸ It is clear that the Edinburgh I.L.P. valued his capabilities as a public speaker, and he was earmarked to support R. B. Cunninghame Graham when, it was hoped, he would visit Edinburgh sometime in March, and open the I.L.P.'s first campaign in the city.⁹ As it happened, Graham was unable to meet the March date; meanwhile, both the I.L.P. and S.S.F. occupied themselves with preparations for the May Day

3. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 7 January 1893.

4. Ibid.; probably a concern to preserve branch autonomy at the local level.

5. Vide H.W. Lee, S.D.F. national secretary in Justice 21 January 1893. Commenting on its variform complexion, he anticipated its rapid disintegration.

6. See p.26 above.

7. Workman's Times 25 March 1893: quoted Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, p.123.

8. Justice 18 February 1893.

9. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 3 March 1893.

R.B. Cunninghame Graham (1852-1936), laird of Ardoch, socialist, Scottish nationalist, scholar and poet, served as a nominal Liberal M.P. (1886-92) but was de facto the first socialist in the Commons. Elected president of the Scottish Labour Party in 1888.

demonstration in favour of the eight hour day, called by the Edinburgh Trades Council for May 6th.¹⁰ It was the representation of the two socialist bodies on the Demonstration Committee which was responsible for the 'internationalist' character of the resolution to be proposed at the May Day gathering:

'That this meeting of the working classes of Edinburgh - in common with their brethren throughout the world - views with alarm the increasing congestion of the labour market of the world'.¹¹

The Edinburgh socialists were fortunate to secure the presence of a figure of national status, Katherine St. John Conway: she spoke from the joint I.L.P. - S.S.F. - Fabian Society platform, where 'Mr. John Leslie, labourer' was chairman, and 'Mr. James Connolly, unskilled labourer, seconded the resolution ...'.¹² Within the month, John Connolly was dismissed by the Inspector of Cleaning and Lighting '... for no other reason apparently than that he was prominently engaged in the recent 8-hour demonstration'.¹³ The city Cleansing Department was under some pressure at the time, each of its various grades of employees having petitioned for wage increases in March.¹⁴ It may be that the Inspector was becoming increasingly harassed by the presence of two socialist agitators on his staff, and selected the elder brother for exemplary dismissal. Despite intensive lobbying of councillors by I.L.P. committee members, the issue of a special I.L.P. circular on the "Connolly Case"¹⁵ and letters of protest to the

10. Ibid., 31 March 1893.

11. Ibid., 27 April 1893.

12. Leith Burghs Pilot, 13 May 1893.

13. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 25 May 1893.

14. Edinburgh Corporation Council Record (1892-93), p.295.

15. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 21 July 1893.

Corporation from Trades Councillors and John Connolly himself.¹⁶ The dismissal was not reversed, and by July, it was clear that John would have to seek work elsewhere.¹⁷

This personal setback suffered by his elder brother appears to have thrust James Connolly into a position of greater prominence in the local movement; he took over the secretaryship of the S.S.F. from John, and from July was remitting reports of its activities to Justice.¹⁸ These reports to the S.D.F. organ, begun by John Connolly in February,¹⁹ were a definite, if irregular, indication of a growing accommodation between the marxists of the S.S.F. and those of the S.D.F. By the time that James had become S.S.F. secretary in July, Glasgow comrades were openly suggesting a formal fusion. William Nairn, writing under his pseudonym "Sandy Macfarlane", said of the S.S.F.:-

'... our comrades of the S.S.F. ... are all Social Democrats, I understand ... I think the relationship between our Edinburgh comrades and S.D.F. men should be somewhat closer than a mere exchange of speakers can give'.²⁰

It is clear that the rapidly growing I.L.P., with its lack of 'scientific' principles was becoming a problem for the Edinburgh marxists. Those who remained outside it tended to rebuff any overtures they might receive from it: Leo Melliet, for instance, refused to speak from the platform shared with the I.L.P. at the May Day Demonstration.²¹ The marxists like Connolly, who maintained joint S.S.F.-I.L.P. membership, attempted two policy lines; to sustain the maximum possible level of formal joint activity between the two bodies, and to press for the maximum degree of party discipline and unitary control within the I.L.P.

16. Edinburgh Corporation Council Record, p.454.

17. Ibid., p.506.

18. Justice, 22 July 1893.

19. Justice, 18 February 1893.

20. Justice, 15 July 1893.

21. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 4 May 1893.

In his "First Half-Yearly Report" as I.L.P. branch secretary, John Leslie dwelt at some length on the issue of party discipline.²² Warning members against 'place hunters' and 'glib politicians', he suggested that the party might yet demand

'... a public declaration of adhesion to the aims and principles of the party'.

He hastened to add that this was

'... a far different thing from the adoption of what is known as the Manchester fourth clause; the time for which is yet somewhat distant ...'²³

Leslie stressed that

'... the management and control of the labour movement must never be allowed to pass from working class hands',

and warned that the very success of the I.L.P. will make it an attractive avenue for the opportunist. It should be noted, however, that his opposition to regulations such as the Manchester fourth clause was tactical rather than principled, an indicative difference between the marxist and the 'regular' I.L.P.'ers. The closely related theme of party structure came up at a committee meeting on May 19th.²⁴ The question of party organisation had been an open one since the decision taken in February to contest both the Central and Southern parliamentary divisions of Edinburgh at the next general election.²⁵ Clearly, some extension of the branch's organisation to serve the separate divisions within the city was imperative. At the May 19th committee meeting, Leslie moved,

'That it was not advisable to form autonomous branches ... just yet'

22. Ibid., 27 April 1893.

23. A reference to the defeated motion sponsored by the Manchester delegation at the Bradford Conference. This would have bound all party members to abstain in an election at which there was no socialist candidate standing.

24. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 19th May 1893.

25. Ibid., 16 February 1893.

in the divisions. His scheme of restructuring entailed divisional sections of a single branch, each organised by a party whip. A counter motion urging the formation of autonomous divisional parties was defeated by nine votes to two.

The main protagonist of the 'devolutionist' opposition to John Leslie was Alec Dickinson, a jobbing printer from Fountainbridge and a staunch member of Dr. Glasse's congregation. His significance in the local movement was such that he had been chosen alternate secretary to Leslie at the inaugural meeting of the Edinburgh I.L.P., and, although never a member of the S.D.F. was highly regarded by the austere Nairn of Glasgow.²⁶ Disabled from voting at the May 19th meeting by illness, Dickinson subsequently sent a letter to the committee urging a review of the new section policy.²⁷ The next month, support was given to Leslie's demand for an increased level of party discipline by John Gilray: speaking on "Labour Party Policy",

'... he counselled the party to be wary of having any dealings with other Political organisations, or members thereof'.²⁸

At the next committee meeting, Leslie's resolution on sectional organisation within the divisions was put into effect, a secretary and whip being appointed to each. The two most important appointments, the secretaryships of the Southern and Central divisions, went to Alec Dickinson and James Connolly respectively.²⁹ Leslie assured a sound financial base for the unitary structure by his proposal - approved

26. Justice, 19 August 1893.

27. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 25 May 1893.

28. Ibid., 24 June 1893.

29. Ibid., 29 June 1893.

by the committee on July 13th - that the individual sections should be disallowed from incurring an expenditure of more than five shillings '... without rendering an account to Central'.³⁰

Meanwhile, the formal co-operation between the I.L.P. and S.S.F. increased. Both bodies combined to arrange propaganda meetings on the weekend of 10th - 11th June for a proposed visit to Edinburgh by Enid Stacy and Henry Alexander. The I.L.P. was particularly concerned to use the occasion to bolster its organisation in the Southern division; a hall was hired for a special meeting on the Saturday, at which a resolution in favour of the I.L.P. was to be proposed.³¹ In the event Enid Stacy turned up alone, but delivered '... a most interesting and instructive lecture ...'. Unfortunately, there was a small attendance, and only two new enrolments in the party.³² She also addressed two open-air meetings for the S.S.F. '... speaking the most uncompromising socialism ...' and eliciting an enthusiastic response from the meadows audience.³³ In July, both bodies considered the matter of sending a delegate to the forthcoming Congress of the International, to be held that Summer in Zurich. Haldane Smith was elected joint S.S.F. - I.L.P. delegate, and given a free hand on all matters, except on the seating of Anarchist delegates which he was strenuously to oppose.³⁴ To some extent, this joint mandate did represent a victory for the views of the S.S.F. since, at this time, I.L.P. leaders were inclined to be much more tolerant of Anarchism than the Social Democrats, both at home and on

30. Ibid., 13 July 1893.

31. Ibid., 5 June 1893.

32. Ibid., 10 June 1893.

33. Justice, 24 June 1893. Enid Stacy, a graduate of London University and member of the Bristol I.L.P. was one of the foremost propagandists in the party. In the early days of the I.L.P. she travelled throughout Britain on propaganda work and was one of the party's most popular speakers.

34. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 20 July 1893.

the continent.³⁵ James Connolly, as secretary of the S.S.F., made clear that body's adherence to Social Democratic orthodoxy in the matter,³⁶ referring to Anarchists as '... men whose whole philosophy of life is but an exaggerated form of that Individualism we are in revolt against'. Connolly took the opportunity to ask for advice from the S.D.F. body about the best manner in which to train speakers: the S.S.F., he said, had established a class for instruction in public speaking since it found itself unable to meet its own needs in this regard. This deficiency was as much an indication of S.S.F. - I.L.P. interdependency as of the increased propagandist activity of the S.S.F. itself, since the I.L.P. depended heavily upon S.S.F. speakers. The S.S.F. had recently opened a new speaking station, manned each Sunday on Leith Links,³⁷ but the pressure on S.S.F. - I.L.P. joint members - especially speakers - caused by the reorganisation of the I.L.P. was very great. Connolly, for example - although as yet not a trained speaker - was shouldering an immense amount of administrative responsibility at this time: in addition to his work as S.S.F. secretary, he was acting as secretary to the I.L.P. Central divisional section, instituted on July 18th.³⁸

It might well be that John Leslie's approach to the organisational issue was coloured by anxiety about the potential debilitating effect on the S.S.F.'s propaganda effort, of I.L.P. demands on its manpower. Leslie spoke of the pressing need for '... a more equal division of work ...', in his Secretary's Report for the quarter ending July 31st.³⁹ Remarking that the sectional reorganisation '... has thrown the machinery of the branch somewhat out of gear ...' he yet averred that it '... is a work

35. C. Tsuzuki, H.M. Hyndman and British Socialism, p.121; and vide Bruce Glasier in Labour Leader, 16 April 1898.

36. Justice, 22 July 1893.

37. Justice, 12 August, 1893.

38. I.L.P. (Central Division, Edinburgh) Minute Book, 18 July 1893.

39. I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minutes, 31st July 1893.

that promises to bear good fruit ...' and clearly intimated his intention of resigning as a party official if those who favoured the formation of distinct divisional branches carried the party with them. He concluded with a strong appeal for discipline, saying:-

'... unity and discipline should be enforced, or at least insisted upon ... the decision of the majority of the party [must be] fully and frankly acquiesced in by the minority, once the decision, after full discussion, has been given'.

The clash between Leslie and Dickinson came to a head at the I.L.P. committee meeting of August 11th, when Leslie presented his draft scheme of organisation for the approval of the party's managers.⁴⁰ So urgent was the organisational issue felt to be that consideration of important matters, such as the formation of party branch in Leith and policy for the forthcoming local elections in November, had to be deferred. In closely fought divisions, in which the chair's casting vote was continually exercised, Dickinson succeeded in throwing out the unitary features of Leslie's proposed scheme. Under this new scheme, constituency branches were to be established, with full administrative and financial autonomy, yet subordinate in some respects to a proposed "Edinburgh District Council". Leslie's crucial proposal with regard to the powers of this body, that:-

'... in all matters connected with the organisation of the party; with its relations to other parties; with the impositions of tests on members, or the making of new rules ... the decision of [the D.C.] shall be final',

was deleted from the scheme of organisation, as was his statement in the preamble relative to the necessity of the I.L.P. having a 'uniform policy' within the Edinburgh constituencies. This unqualified victory for the Dickinson group and the autonomy policy led to Leslie's

40. Ibid., 11 August 1893.

immediate withdrawal from the party, and the unsigned minutes of the next branch meeting are written in James Connolly's hand.⁴¹ At this meeting there was 'a lengthy and heated discussion' on the scheme of reorganisation and Leslie's resignation, which resulted in a tangle of uncarried resolutions and amendments. Connolly appears to have played a successful peacemaking role in this situation: on his motion, the commitment to 'one uniform policy' within the Edinburgh divisions was 'passed without dissent' and re-inserted in the preamble to the scheme; again, on his motion - seconded by Dickinson himself - the membership agreed to ask Leslie to serve as secretary to the new District Council.

Leslie did not respond to this overture and, at the inaugural meeting of the District Council, James Connolly was elected its secretary, pro tem:⁴² Connolly now combined the secretaryships of the S.S.F., the I.L.P. District Council, and the I.L.P. Central Division branch. It was also at this time that he gave his first public lecture, on Saturday, September 1st in the Moulders Hall, for the Central branch. The attendance was poor and, after 'a brief address' and several questions, the meeting dispersed.⁴³ Connolly's prime contribution to the movement at this time was still an administrative one, and in this he was becoming pre-eminent. On September 6th he laid before the District Council, his draft 'Rules and Constitution' for the Edinburgh I.L.P.⁴⁴ This proposal document was debated and accepted with little in the way of amendment. Thorough to the point of pedantry, this draft displayed Connolly's enormous expertise in the field of party

41. Ibid., 18 August, 1893.

42. I.L.P. (Edinburgh District Council) Minutes, 2 September 1893.

43. I.L.P. (Central Division Edinburgh) Minute Book, 1 September 1893.

44. I.L.P. (Edinburgh District Council) Minutes, 6 September 1893.
For the full text of this draft, see Appendix I.

management and administration; the duties of officials, financial arrangements and organisational procedures were delineated with a near-juridical precision, and these proposals were argued with a competence and comprehensiveness remarkable for a member as yet only 25 years of age. Connolly's District Council was not the rejected central authority of Leslie's scheme, but a more subtly conceived 'watchdog' body designed to '... watch over and safeguard the interests of the entire party ...'. It was also charged with the duty '... to arrange for a uniform policy at elections, and in all public questions ...'. Its power was not the right of final mandate, as conceived by Leslie, but lay in the warranty given to its officers - particularly the treasurer and secretary - to gather information from the various branches, and to guide their activities by remitting to them resolutions from district level when required. In the case of new branches, district superintendence was to be exercised directly: the district treasurer would be personally responsible for the accounts of new branches until branch officials were elected, and retained 'a full statement of income and expenditure' even when the branch treasurer assumed office: the district secretary was empowered to 'attend all meetings for the organisation of new branches' and given license to 'help such branches to the best of his ability'. The secretary was also given general powers to convene extraordinary meetings when he considered it appropriate, and was also an ex-officio member of all party committees, being charged to '... watch over the interests of the party at all times'. As regards procedure of the District Council itself, the chair was given 'one deliberative veto and a casting vote', which signified more power and discretion than the chairman had previously disposed. Although in form, Connolly's structure bore little resemblance to Leslie's measures

for a definitive, unitary party authority, he had nevertheless provided a constitution which gave ample scope for an informal assertion of uniformity and discipline upon the autonomous branches. It is an impressive early example of his subtlety in party management.

Connolly was next charged with drafting the I.L.P.'s electoral programme for the November municipal elections. He drew up a schedule including: municipalisation of the liquor trade, taxation of unlet houses, erection of special low rent workmen's dwellings, abolition of the contract system in public utilities in favour of direct employment of labour by the corporation, municipalisation of the domestic fuel trade, a mandatory eight-hour day with pension rights for all municipal employees, institution of evening meetings of the Town Council, and 'unbending opposition to every effort to spend public monies in honouring royal or aristocratic idlers'. To this robust platform were added the planks of taxation of feu duties and corporation responsibility for the lighting of common stairs.⁴⁵ The party's sole candidate was Frederick Hamilton who stood for election in George Square Ward. Connolly called an extraordinary general meeting of the party to support his candidature, and accepted the secretaryship of the specially constituted election committee.⁴⁶ Despite the leading parts taken in this first foray of Independent Labour into local electioneering by joint S.S.F. - I.L.P. members like Hamilton and Connolly, the marxist leadership of the S.S.F. persisted in its attitude of a detached coolness towards the 'non-scientific' party. Even Dr. Glasse refused to appear on the I.L.P.'s platform.⁴⁷ Hamilton came bottom of the poll and, on November 18th,

45. Ibid., 11 September 1893.

46. I.L.P. (Central Division, Edinburgh) Minute Book, 5 October 1893.

47. Ibid., 12 October 1893. cf. p.37 note 21 above.

Connolly called another general meeting to review the electoral situation generally. On his recommendation, a central election fund was established, to be administered by the district council, '... their recent experience having proven the absolute necessity of having a fund at their command before entering upon another contest'.⁴⁸

While the Edinburgh I.L.P. had been fighting its first election campaign, it had also been the recipient of repeated invitations to send delegates to the so-called "Dundee Labour Congress", to be held on Saturday, October 7th.⁴⁹ This event was organised by H. H. Champion, sometime secretary of the Labour Electoral Association, and his associates J. L. Mahon, F. V. Connolly and A. K. Donald; also involved was the Stirlingshire miners' leader, Chisholm Robertson, recently expelled from the I.L.P. because of his association with Champion. Champion had been disowned successively by the leadership of the S.D.F. and I.L.P. because of his unscrupulous and "opportunist" attempts to establish a political machine to sponsor "labour" candidates for public office. His unscrupulousness consisted in being unconcerned about the propriety of how he financed his efforts, and he accepted money for political purposes from a variety of sources, including the major political parties. The Dundee Congress had been arranged to revive Robertson's old scheme for a "Scottish Trades Council Labour Party". Some Edinburgh I.L.P.'ers wished to support this venture,⁵⁰ despite a resolution by the district council, following national policy, to repudiate Champion and his associates.⁵¹ The episode is instructive in showing the activity of

48. I.L.P. (Edinburgh District Council) Minutes, 18 November 1893.

49. Ibid., 28 September 1893.

50. Ibid., 18 August 1893. Support was especially evident in the Edinburgh I.L.P.'s Eastern branch. See Chapter 1, note 79.

51. Ibid., 2 September 1893.

the right-wing in the Edinburgh I.L.P. Mainly centred in its Eastern branch, these members had forgone their own attempt to contest the Cannongate ward during the November elections, in favour of an accommodation with 'the proposed Trades Council (municipal) Labour Party'.⁵² James Connolly had denounced the 'mean and intriguing nature' of Champion's activities, and the Edinburgh District Council successively ignored or rebuffed overtures from Robertson and Mahon.⁵³ Some idea of the difficulties and frustrations men in Connolly's position must have faced at that time may be drawn from the acid comments of William Nairn on Champion's activities. From his standpoint in the S.D.F., Nairn was able to be both objective and self-righteous:

'... good men in the Independent Labour movement are influenced by Liberal and Tory spongers; literary, scientific and labour sharps'.

He suggested that S.D.F. - I.L.P. joint members should watch for intrigue and wire pulling.⁵⁴

The election campaign had considerably disrupted routine branch activities. Addressing the I.L.P. central branch in December, Connolly admitted that 'no ordinary propagandist or business meeting' had been held for some time, yet since members had been individually engaged in promoting Hamilton's candidature, he opined that '... it could not be said that we were in any way neglecting our duties as Labour Men and Socialists'.⁵⁵ The branch then discussed the agenda for the Scottish Labour Party Conference to be held in Glasgow on January 2nd, 1894: it was concluded that there was '... nothing in it so controversial to necessitate a detailed minute'. Three delegates were appointed to attend

52. Ibid., 28 September 1893.

53. Ibid., 28 September 1893, 27 November 1893.

54. Justice, 21 October 1893.

55. I.L.P. (Central Div. Edinburgh) Minute Book, 27 December 1893.

this event, James Connolly, William Pinkerton and Daniel Currie, and were instructed to '... maintain strict independence of the party to both Tory and Liberal organisations'.⁵⁶

At a public meeting held in the Temperance Hall, High Street, on February 13th, the party was embarrassed by the non-appearance of the promised lecturer, Leo Melliet. Connolly gamely stepped into the breach and, '... after a few general remarks on methods of propaganda, reminded the meeting of the proposed demonstration ... against the house letting system now in vogue'. It was agreed that the branch should participate in the meeting, Connolly and Swan being nominated to propose and second a resolution, 'in favour of the equal taxation of all property, occupied or unoccupied'.⁵⁷ Connolly was here seizing an opportunity to keep the I.L.P.'s municipal programme - or rather, a crucial plank thereof - in the public eye. In an addendum to the minute,⁵⁸ he noted that the I.L.P. motion in favour of the taxation of unlet property was 'enthusiastically and unanimously adopted by a crowded meeting'.

In mid-April, the I.L.P. decided on a campaign of open-air propaganda, and branches were circulated by the district council to provide names of those members willing and able to speak. At this point, John Leslie appears to have undertaken to do some speaking for the Central branch, and his name appears on its schedule of speakers, together with James Connolly and Frederick Hamilton. It is indicative that all three should also be members of the S.S.F.⁵⁹ Connolly moved '... that we at once start our open-air meetings', and pointed out '... the necessity of always holding them in the one place and at the same time'.

56. Ibid. Forward, 27 February 1915.

57. I.L.P. (Central Division, Edinburgh) Minute Book, 13 February 1894.

58. Ibid.

59. Ibid., 11 April 1894.

It was decided that they be held in the Meadows on Tuesday evenings and would be advertised twice a week in the local press.⁶⁰

James Connolly delivered the initial such address to 'a good and appreciative audience' on April 17th.⁶¹ The next week there were two public meetings, both addressed by Fred. Brocklehurst, a member of the I.L.P. National Council. He spoke on "Socialist Aims and Methods" on the 24th, and on "The Ethics of Socialism" the following day: both meetings were very well attended.⁶² At this time, Connolly was undoubtedly the pivot of the branch's activity. On April 26th, he was entrusted with the task of securing a parliamentary candidate for the central division, and it was also agreed that there should be a 'special mention' in the branch minutes of 'all who take a part in the speaking at open-air meetings'.⁶³ On May 1st, both Connolly and Hamilton spoke at the Meadows site,⁶⁴ and a week later, Connolly brought off a solo tour de force, speaking '... for more than an hour to a very attentive audience'.⁶⁵

Connolly had written to Keir Hardie - himself then an M.P. of two years' standing - for help in finding a suitable candidate for the central division; Hardie suggested consideration of Councillor Beever, the president of the Halifax Trades Council. Beever would be available to speak in Edinburgh on Monday, May 14th, and Hardie said that he would attend himself, if possible. Connolly was nominated to chair the meeting, and to draft a resolution in favour of the labour candidacy to be moved

60. Ibid.

61. Ibid., 17 April 1894.

62. Ibid., 24 April 1894.

63. Ibid., 26 April 1894.

64. Ibid., 1 May 1894.

65. Ibid., 8 May 1894.

at its close.⁶⁶ In the event, Hardie was unable to be present, but Beever, supported by Henry Alexander, a London member of the S.D.F., spoke in the rain to a well attended meeting in the Meadows, on "Some reasons for the existence of an I.L.P." Connolly's resolution was then passed pledging those present to vote for an I.L.P. candidate.⁶⁷ On May 15th,⁶⁸ Connolly was joined on the Meadows platform by William Small of Blantyre, a pioneer both of the Scottish Miners' Federation and of the Scottish Labour Party,⁶⁹ and, when the candidacy of Beever fell through, it was decided to ask Small to stand in his stead.⁷⁰ Small accepted the party's nomination, and Connolly became secretary of his election committee.⁷¹ Connolly wrote to Hardie, informing him that Small had been substituted for Beever because it was felt that a local candidate would be both cheaper to sponsor and could conduct a more efficient campaign. He reproved Hardie for advertising the Central Edinburgh candidacy in advance in the Labour Leader and explained that to present the Edinburgh workers with such a pre-arranged fiat would be too similar to the 'cliquism of the Liberal caucus'. He urged a more open and democratic conduct of the nomination procedure, maintaining that the I.L.P. should

'... act in conjunction with the Trades Council in promoting the return of a good Socialist and Independent Labour candidate, who must be the free choice of a large number of the electors who can be induced to sign a requisition asking him to stand before we even announce him as our adopted candidate'.⁷²

66. Ibid., 10 May 1894

67. Ibid., 14 May 1894.

68. Ibid., 15 May 1894.

69. Thompson, The Enthusiasts, p.52-3; and see pg-4 above.

70. I.L.P. (Central Division Edinburgh), Minute Book, 21 May 1894.

71. Ibid., 29 May 1894.

72. Connolly to Keir Hardie, Edinburgh, 28 May 1894.

It is clear that at this time, both Connolly and Hardie were hoping for public support for the Small candidacy from the Edinburgh branch of the Irish National League. Connolly was particularly hopeful in this regard,⁷³ and wished Hardie to make the necessary arrangements with John Redmond, leader of the Irish parliamentary party. When Redmond rejected the overture, Connolly wrote again to Hardie with some advice on how to deal with the Irish nationalist movement. He hoped that if Hardie himself could initiate a socialist campaign in Dublin, anti-monarchical in tone, and directed against the 'fleecings of both landlord and capitalist' this would force the Irish Home Rulers further to the Left, and '... knock the bottom out of the Irish opposition to our movement'.⁷⁴

Connolly spoke regularly at the Meadows station throughout May and June, and his confidence and resilience grew rapidly. On one occasion in mid June, when one speaker was unable to deliver his address '... owing to continued interruption from a Liberal in the crowd ...', Connolly proved a match for the heckler. He, in turn was '... subjected to the same interruption, but after a few exchanges between our comrade and the Liberal, the latter became quiet ...'.⁷⁵ In July, the I.L.P. open-air meetings were moved to a new site, the corner of Carnegie Street, Connolly still bearing the main burden of the speaking. He was then at the height of his prestige within the organisation, and was elected president of the branch.⁷⁶ But, in the first week of August;

'James Connolly gave in his resignation as a member of the I.L.P. and also as secretary of the Central Division Parliamentary Election Committee, because of the non-attendance of members at meetings, and especially the slowness and laxity in getting the Requisition Sheets filled up'.⁷⁷

73. Connolly to Keir Hardie, Edinburgh, 8 June 1894.

74. Connolly to Keir Hardie, Edinburgh, 3 July 1894.

75. I.L.P. (Central Division, Edinburgh), Minute Book, 19 June 1894.

76. Ibid., 10, 17, 19, 24, 31 July 1894.

77. Ibid., 7 August 1894.



Connolly's departure from the I.L.P. inevitably invites comparison with the resignation of John Leslie twelve months earlier. It is a highly significant commentary on the general disarray of the Left at this time - and of the tensions set up by the constraint of the marxist dogma within it - that such marxian activists as Leslie and Connolly should feel obliged to resolve the ambiguity of their position in this manner. It may be that Leslie and other comrades in the S.S.F. had finally convinced Connolly that his now considerable and developed talents would be better used in the propaganda of the marxist body, rather than expended in showing up the routine functioning of the I.L.P. party machine. Leslie had resigned over the issue of what he considered to be the ruinous fragmentation of party organisation: Connolly now had one year's experience of an organisational structure whose disparateness vitiated its effectiveness in terms of the division of finance and manpower. Although the organisation of the party was orientated towards its parliamentary goals, this very orientation enhanced the problems immanent in its poverty of funds and of capable manpower. It was the middle class element in the S.S.F., as well as its unitary structure, which enabled it to surmount such problems. This element provided most of the organisational and speaking talent, and enabled the S.S.F. to achieve financial solvency even to the point of ownership of its own hall. Indeed, the S.S.F. became the I.L.P.'s landlord, the latter deciding to rent meeting space from it in April 1894.⁷⁸ Moreover, there are indications, in the Summer of 1894, of an increased level of S.S.F. propaganda in the Edinburgh district, and of attempts to achieve a more integrated form of socialist activity in Scotland generally.

On July 14th, a Conference of Scottish Socialists was convened in Dundee, delegates being present from the Edinburgh S.S.F. and from the

78. Ibid., 26 April 1894.

S.D.F. branches in Dundee, Falkirk, Glasgow and Aberdeen.⁷⁹ Leo Melliet of the S.S.F. was elected to the chair, and James Connolly was present among the Edinburgh delegation. On the questions of organisation and propaganda, it was decided to begin a guarantee fund which would hopefully support a full-time organiser for a six month period, '... to form new branches ... and also to help on the work of the bodies already in existence'. The formation of joint S.S.F./S.D.F. rambling clubs was proposed to facilitate propaganda work in agricultural districts, with a collateral theoretical provision of 'two or more leaflets dealing with capitalism and landlordism'. It was also agreed to attempt to organise ancillary women's groups attached to the various socialist bodies. However, it was made clear that the S.S.F. at that time had no intention of being in the least absorbed by the S.D.F. On a motion that all the Scottish socialist groups appoint a single secretary to contribute official "Scottish Notes" to Justice, Connolly moved a successful amendment that,

'... the secretaries of the various organisations send their notes direct to Justice, and that the editor be asked to devote one column weekly to notes on the Scottish movement'.

The proceedings ended with a decision to convene a second conference in Edinburgh, on March 9th 1895. In the Edinburgh district, S.S.F. propaganda extended significantly in scope that Summer. In addition to the old sites on the Meadows and Leith Links, a new station was opened at Stockbridge on August 8th by Katherine St. John Conway, thus inaugurating regular weekly meetings on Wednesday evenings.⁸⁰ On Saturday, August 11th,

79. Justice, 21 July, 1894.

80. Justice, 11 August, 1894. Katherine St. John Conway was a graduate of Newnham College, Cambridge and a Bristol schoolmistress. A tireless and popular propagandist of national reputation, she later married Bruce Glasier, and devoted her life to the cause of the I.L.P.

the S.S.F. propaganda reached the miners of the Lothian coalfield for the first time with a meeting in the village of Loanhead,⁸¹ and the Federation anticipated soon having branches 'in every village and hamlet of Midlothian'.⁸²

During the same months that the S.S.F. was beginning to extend the scope of its propagandist net, the S.D.F. published in booklet form, John Leslie's analysis of the Irish problem under the title of The Present Position of the Irish Question.⁸³ This was a reprinting of a series of articles Leslie had contributed to Justice in the period March-May 1894 under the title "Passing Thoughts Upon the Irish Question" (by one of the "Wild Irishrie"). The work was an analysis of nineteenth century Irish political and social history from a marxist standpoint, and was perhaps the most crucial seminal influence on the young Connolly, Marx himself excepted. The occasion for the appearance of this formidable and original study was given by Leslie himself as the resolution passed by the Irish T.U.C. that year in favour of a working class party in Ireland.⁸⁴ Leslie based his arguments on the known views of Marx on Ireland, as expressed in correspondence and 1st International documents dating from 1869/70;⁸⁵ but whereas Marx had stressed the revolutionary potential of the Irish agrarian system for an overthrow of the English ruling class, Leslie undertook a critique of the modern Irish Nationalist movement with a view to formulating a sound, class-conscious strategy for the Irish working class party of the near future. In the past, he argued, propertied demagogues had exploited the sentiments and grievances of the working people for their own ends. In his introductory section,⁸⁶

81. Justice, 18 August 1894.

82. Justice, 25 August 1894.

83. Justice, 18 August 1894.

84. Justice, 5 May 1894.

85. Vide "Der Generalrat an den Föderalrat der romanischen Schweiz" January 1870 : "Konfidentielle Mitteilung" March 1870 : Marx to Engels, 10 December 1869: Marx to Meyer and Vogt, 9 April 1870.

86 First published in Justice, 24 March 1894.

the Land League was indicated as the first movement in Irish history which aimed at the economic 'root of the matter' but was later '... diverted into the mere political channel ...'. He averred that the root cause of Irish misery lay, not in the political structure of the Union with Britain, but

'... in the fact that the means by which the Irish people must live, are in possession of a class, which class will not allow the people to use these means unless by so doing a profit will accrue to this class'.

James Finton Lalor, the ablest of the "Young Irelanders" in his view, was '... the man who first pointed out the class nature of the Irish movement'. Quoting from his paper, the Irish Felon, Leslie brought out the internationalism of Lalor's faith:

'... the reconquest of our liberties would be incomplete and worthless without the reconquest of our land ... I want to put Ireland foremost in the van of Democracy in Europe ...' 87

In his section devoted to clericalism,⁸⁸ Leslie argued that the Catholic church in Ireland had consistently taken an anti-nationalist stand, since its prime aim was the re-conversion of Britain. Hence its role as one of the strongest instruments for the preservation of the British connection. Those Protestant scaremongers who denounced the Home Rule Bill as 'a general prelude to the cutting of Protestant throats', were merely interested to '... use the anti-Popery cry as a means of keeping the Irish democracy split into two parts ...'. Warning against sectarianism, he said, 'Life is too short to be wasted in agitations of which the fruits are only gathered by the church ...'. In his conclusion on the outlook

87. James Finton Lalor (1807-49) represents the extreme left-wing of the 'Young Ireland' party - the radical and youthful element which broke away in 1846 from Daniel O'Connell's Repeal movement, advocating physical force tactics. Both in the Nation (the official organ of Young Ireland) and in his own Irish Felon, Lalor consistently advocated republican political values and land nationalisation as the only real means to the achievement of Irish independence.

88. First published in Justice, 21 April 1894.

for the future,⁸⁹ Leslie saw the opening up of virgin agrarian lands in the U.S.A. as prefiguring the end of viable peasant proprietary and the merely constitutional Irish nationalist politics associated with it. He perceived both the need and the opportunity for a new working-class party to fill the vacuum, but expressed grave reservations about the possibility of Ireland becoming a viable industrial country under present conditions of international economic competition. Such a process would entail enormous suffering and deprivation for the Irish people. He suggested that in order to obviate social catastrophe, the establishment of a socialist government should precede industrialisation. It would only be through independent working class organisation that Ireland might be freed, and Leslie enjoined Irish labour to:

'... join hands with the English party that hates the English exploiting classes as deeply as do the Irish themselves ... It is this party, the Socialist party, that alone, will or can atone for the wrongs, and heal the feud of centuries ...'.

All of these points would later be taken up and elaborated upon by James Connolly in his own writings; particularly in Erin's Hope (1897), Labour in Irish History (1910) and The Reconquest of Ireland (1910). On the practical level, it was to the creation of Leslie's envisioned independent Irish working-class organisation, that Connolly would devote the greater part of his active life.

It was no doubt with a confidence based upon Leslie's arguments that Connolly crossed swords with Irish National Leaguers during the S.S.F.'s Lothian campaign of Summer-Fall 1894.⁹⁰ When Enid Stacy spoke for the S.S.F. in the last week of August and first week of September, the Edinburgh comrades took her as far afield as

89. First published in Justice, 5 May 1894.

90. Justice, 1, 15 September 1894.

Falkirk and Dunfermline, Fife.⁹¹ The extension of the S.S.F. campaign, together with the large and enthusiastic popular response evoked, encouraged the Federation to propose running a candidate for St. Giles ward in the municipal elections of November 1894.⁹² Rather more ambitiously, it began to consider contesting the Central Parliamentary division at the next election with 'a purely socialist candidate',⁹³. On October 15th, the first issue of the Edinburgh and district Labour Chronicle appeared. This 'local organ of democratic socialism' was jointly sponsored by the S.S.F. and I.L.P. bodies, its declared aim being 'to defend the principles of Social-Democracy and Collectivism'. This paper, published monthly by Alec Dickinson, and edited by John Gilray and Haldane Smith,⁹⁴ had a pleasing presentation reminiscent of William Morris's Commonweal. In addition to advocating '... the public ownership and management of land, mines and all the means of production and distribution' its stated objective also expressed the wish '... to exclude from public life all men guided by the false morality of commercialism'.⁹⁵

When James Connolly received the S.S.F. nomination for the St. Giles contest, his candidacy was announced on October 22nd.⁹⁶ The Socialists were rather tardy in beginning their campaign: the I.L.P. had been in the field for over a fortnight by this time, and had held on the 12th a mass meeting attended by Keir Hardie in support of their candidates.⁹⁷ Connolly's programme was based upon the one he had drafted for the I.L.P. a year earlier: taxation of unlet property; erection of workmen's dwell-

91. Justice, 1, 8 September 1894.

92. Justice, 15 September 1894.

93. Justice, 6 October 1894.

94. Album of John Gilray.

95. Labour Chronicle, 15 October 1894.

96. Edinburgh Evening News, 22 October 1894.

97. Edinburgh Evening News, 13 October 1894.

lings at low-cost rents; taxation of ground rent; pensions for municipal employees, and municipalisation of the liquor trade.⁹⁸ On more particular local issues, he opposed the Fountainbridge improvement scheme which, he said, would benefit only property owners, but favoured both the St. Mary's Loch water supply scheme, and the plan to amalgamate the various Edinburgh parishes. He gave much weight to the issue of housing the poor, and at public meetings in the first week of his campaign he laboured the point of living conditions in Edinburgh's swarming single-room dwellings, and urged that more open spaces should be provided by the corporation for the recreational use of the poor.⁹⁹ The prowess in public speaking that Connolly brought to his campaign was acknowledged with much ill grace, particularly by the local Tory press. His capable performance at the nomination meeting held for all candidates on October 24th, was churlishly held to be a function of the Socialists' having 'packed' the meeting, and he was dismissed as a mere 'windbag' who would be summarily deflated on polling day.¹⁰⁰ Connolly was opposed by both an 'independent', who presented himself to the electorate 'as a Catholic and as an Irishman' and an official Liberal.¹⁰¹ The independent castigated Connolly as,

'... a young man who, without any business experience, sought to enter the Council in order to ventilate extravagant ideas repugnant to all right-thinking citizens' 102.

For the local section of the Irish National League - who were committed to marshalling the "little Ireland" electorate behind their Liberal allies - the appearance on the scene of both an Irish Catholic independent and an

98. Labour Chronicle, 15 October 1894.

99. Edinburgh Evening News, 23 October, 1894.

100. Edinburgh Evening News, 25 October 1894.

101. Labour Chronicle, 15 October 1894.

102. Edinburgh Evening News, 27 October 1894.

Irish Catholic Socialist was something of a crisis. They publicly attacked both of these candidacies as a service to the Tory interest.¹⁰³ This last interest had appeared as a surprise Unionist candidacy which had been promoted subsequent to Connolly's own. Writing under his pseudonym R. Ascal, in his discursive Labour Chronicle column "Plain Talk", Connolly explained that this was a 'bogus' Unionist effort, the sole aim of which was to strengthen the official Liberal 'by an appearance of Tory opposition'.¹⁰⁴ It seems likely that the local Unionists, normally intimidated by the hopelessness of assailing the hold of the Liberal-Nationalist caucus in St. Giles, had been emboldened by this new prospect of the Irish Catholic vote being split three ways. Connolly seized the opportunity to make the partisan point that '... the Liberals and Tories are not two parties but rather two sections of the one party - the party of property'.¹⁰⁵ Connolly addressed the electorate where and when he could, normally in the evenings and in the open: the Socialist candidate was generally denied access to local halls by unsympathetic proprietors. He spoke to the electorate at street corners on Chambers Street, Jeffrey Street (Canongate), the Grassmarket, Guthrie Street and on Hunter Square: on the day before polling, Monday November 5th, he managed to gain access to the Free Tton Hall. Attendance at his meetings seems to have been around the 300-500 mark.¹⁰⁶

Connolly appealed to the electorate to support his candidacy on the grounds that the present councillors - all drawn from the men of property - were '... incapable of realising the wants and wishes of the working classes'.¹⁰⁷ To the Irish, he urged the necessity of identifying the

103. Edinburgh Evening News, 29 October 1894.

104. Labour Chronicle, 5 November 1894.

105. *Ibid.*

106. Edinburgh Evening News, 27, 30 October; 1, 3, 6 November 1894.

107. Edinburgh Evening News, 27 October 1894.

struggle of the oppressed in Ireland with the supra-nationalist struggle of the working class:

'... the landlord who grinds his peasants on a Connemara estate, and the landlord who rack-rents them in a Cowgate slum, are brethren in fact and deed ... the Irish worker who starves in an Irish cabin and the Scotch worker who is poisoned in an Edinburgh garret, are also brothers with one hope and one destiny ...'. 108

The Home Rulers of the Edinburgh W. E. Gladstone branch of the Irish National League opposed Connolly with particular venom. No opportunity was lost to make use of clerical influence to sway the voters against the supposed atheism of the Socialist candidate, or to utilise the Unionist interest, whose formal opposition now so greatly enhanced the chances of the official Liberal. R. Ascal reported that among the Irish, Mr. Connolly had been vilified as '... a Freethinker, who wanted to overthrow the church', while in Unionist propoganda he figured as an '... Irish Papist who wanted to introduce the Scarlet Woman'.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, a candidacy such as Connolly's was especially unwelcome to National Leaguers at this time. The death of Parnell in 1891 had cleared the way for a renewed union of the fragmented Irish national movement which his personal ruin had divided into pro and anti-Parnell factions. At the 1892 general election their Liberal allies in Parliament had again won office and Irish Home Rule was a prominent item on the new administration's legislative programme. Accordingly, Gladstone had introduced a new Home Rule bill within a year of taking office, and although the measure had been blocked by the Conservative majority in the Lords, hopes within the Irish movement remained high, and there was a correspondingly urgent need felt to demonstrate and confirm the electoral strength of the National League at all elections, both municipal and parliamentary. Against this background, it

108. Labour Chronicle, 5 November 1894.

109. Labour Chronicle, 1 December 1894.

becomes clear why any candidacy - such as Connolly's - which might tend to split or diminish the Irish vote in any way, automatically incurred the fullest measure of hostility from the nationalists.

Nevertheless, Connolly had received one seventh of the votes cast and opined that this percentage would have been higher, had the 'advanced working class voters' been left free, without the intrusion of a 'bogus' Unionist candidate, to choose between the Liberal and Social Democrat. As it was, hundreds had voted official Liberal simply to ensure a Tory defeat.¹¹⁰ Reporting the election results to the S.D.F. paper, John Leslie averred that with full manhood suffrage - many working class voters were voteless "lodgers" - Connolly would have '... swept the floor with his opponents'.¹¹¹ He expressed at this point an hostility to the I.L.P. that, naturally enough, was not evident in the Labour Chronicle. Deploring the I.L.P.'s action in withdrawing from the fight in the 'crucial' Canongate ward, he reported that the S.S.F. had tried to retrieve the situation, but had been given insufficient time to make an effective effort.

Early in the new year, the S.S.F. combined with the I.L.P. to establish an election committee to contest the Central division 'in the interests of Socialism' at the next election. Connolly's fight in St. Giles was described as 'a preliminary skirmish' for this next effort; and, the severe divisions of the Parnell split within the Irish National League yet being unhealed, it was hoped to make significant incursions into the working class Irish vote.¹¹² In late February, it was announced that the S.S.F. was considering running a candidate at the forthcoming Parish Council elections.¹¹³ Connolly had drawn attention to this new

110. R. Ascal in Labour Chronicle, 1 December 1894.

111. Justice, 8 December 1894.

112. Justice, 9 February 1895.

113. Justice, 23 February 1895.

system of Poor Law administration in December. Under a new act to become effective in April 1895, Poor Law Guardians were to be replaced by Parish Councils elected on a new democratic franchise: Connolly called upon the working class to seize the opportunity to elect '... a sufficient number of Social Democrats to counteract the despotic tendencies of our Liberal and Tory taskmasters'.¹¹⁴ Connolly's second candidacy in St. Giles was announced on March 1st. It was hoped that;

'... the Irish vote ... may this time be cast with more discrimination as to the real interests of the poor electors. There is no "Liberal" vote to "split" now, and the population of St. Giles should know by this time the folly of handing over the care of its poor to those who have made them poor'.¹¹⁵

The same month, Justice carried a vitriolic attack on the Edinburgh I.L.P. and its Parish Council nominees, written by Daniel Currie of the S.S.F. Like Connolly, Currie was a sometime leading member of the I.L.P. (Central) branch. Currie felt '... forced to conclude that the socialism of the local labour party is of the adulterated order'. Referring to the general lack of theoretical clarity on the part of the I.L.P. and its leadership, he thought they appeared to be '... able to make their own economics, in which case there is no saying at what conclusions they may arrive'.¹¹⁶ None of the eight I.L.P. candidates was returned in the Edinburgh Parish Council elections, and in St. Giles, Connolly came bottom of the poll. He '... fought a valiant fight ... though the poll was small, proving that where poverty and ignorance are rampant, there socialism meets her greatest foe'.¹¹⁷ Despite this disappointment at the polls, the S.S.F. open air propaganda began in April with high morale. The organisation disposed of a 'plathora of talent' - Connolly himself

114. Labour Chronicle, 1 December 1894.

115. Labour Chronicle, 1 March 1895.

116. Justice, 16 March 1895.

117. Labour Chronicle, 1 May 1895.

being the foremost speaker - and six weekly meetings were felt to be possible.¹¹⁸ Connolly also spoke at the joint S.S.F./I.L.P. May Day Demonstration, held on May 1st in the East Meadows, when Bruce Glasier was the principal speaker. For the first time, an anti-war resolution, as well as the normal one in favour of the eight-hour day, was carried: the assembled crowd numbered about three thousand.¹¹⁹

Although the S.S.F. was enjoying increased attendances and collections at its open-air propaganda meetings,¹²⁰ Connolly's personal situation was far from happy. He appears to have lost his job with the Cleansing Department during the previous winter and, as a last resort, had opened a cobbler's shop at 73 Buccleugh Street. He had announced the availability of tickets for various S.S.F. - I.L.P. functions at his shop in the Labour Chronicle since February, and it was only in the issues for May and June that he advertised his shoe-repairing activity. The advert ran:-

"Socialists Support One Another, CONNOLLY, 73 Buccleugh Street, Repairs the worn out understandings of the brethren at standard rates. Ladies boots 1/6d: Gents 2/6d. He looks towards you".

He seems to have been unable to make a go of the cobbling business and, in mid-June, he took charge of the new clubrooms the S.S.F. had opened at 65 Nicholson Street.¹²¹ At the time, attempts were made to secure some paid organisational or lecturing work for Connolly, both by S.S.F. comrades, and also by Dan Irving, the S.D.F. organiser in Burnley. Describing how Connolly had been blacklisted by Edinburgh employers after his two election contests, Daniel Currie stressed that:

118. Justice, 6, 20 April 1895.

119. Labour Chronicle, 1 June 1895.

120. Justice, 18 May 1895.

121. Justice, 15 June 1895.

'... there can be no mistake that if Connolly is compelled to leave this district, his loss will be a severe blow to the socialist movement here'.¹²²

He proceeded to praise Connolly's abilities as an outdoor propagandist, together with his 'thorough knowledge of his subject and untiring zeal', and characterised his situation as that of a martyr for the cause. Connolly would, he said, make 'an efficient and capable lecturer and organiser' for any S.D.F. or I.L.P. branch who might need one. Dan Irving lent his weight to this appeal, and wrote; 'I can also speak of the high estimation in which Connolly is held by his comrades'. He was himself making attempts to organise a lecturing tour for Connolly,¹²³ although no record of any actual engagements survive.

It seems clear that, at this time, there was much internal pressure within the S.S.F. for the organisation to become an integral part of the S.D.F. Leslie and Currie were especially enthusiastic for this line of action,¹²⁴ and the strong criticism of the local I.L.P. they expressed in Justice was indicative of a growing tendency within the S.S.F. to eschew its longstanding bipartisan and co-operative policies in favour of the ideological robustness and exclusivity of the S.D.F. In September, the S.S.F. voted to become the Edinburgh branch of the S.D.F.,¹²⁵ although not without a 'certain loss' of membership among those who wished to retain autonomy. The Federation was something of a catch for the metropolitan organisation and its national secretary, H. W. Lee, expressed the hope that other local socialist bodies would follow its example and help build up a really effective national organisation.¹²⁶ The fact was, that S.D.F. leaders were increasingly dismayed by the failure of the

122. Justice, 22 June 1895. Currie attributed Connolly's loss of employment to his municipal candidacies. Lee & Archbold, in Social Democracy in Britain, p.145-7 suggest as an additional reason for victimisation, that he had attempted to resuscitate the Cleansing Department branch of the carters' union.

123. Justice, 29 June 1895.

124. Lee and Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain, p.145.

125. Justice, 7 September 1895.

126. Justice, 14 September, 1895.

I.L.P. to die the natural death they had forecast for it. Indeed, its steady growth, despite its lack of commitment to 'socialist' (i.e. marxist) principles both worried and irritated them. This anxiety - shared by local Social Democratic leaders like Leslie and Currie - was well expressed in the same month by Ernest Belfort Bax, the S.D.F.'s acknowledged ideologue, in an article on "International v. National Socialism".¹²⁷ Bax described the immediate danger posed by attempts to:

'... detach the awakening class-conscious English proletariat from the main movement of International Revolutionary Socialism ... and ... to exploit those elements of the population with inchoate Socialistic instincts in the interests of a reconstructed Liberal Party ...'

'In the very molluscousness of the I.L.P. lies the hope. Emphasis is laid on its "Labour Churches", on its "Broad Social Christianity"... and even its "Roman Catholic Secretary" has to do duty as part of the show'.

In the winter of 1895, the Edinburgh Socialists embarked upon an indoor campaign of unprecedented calibre. The Operetta House in Chambers Street, with a seating capacity of 1,500, was engaged for a series of Sunday evening lectures from some of the leading figures of British Socialism. Eleanor Marx Aveling and Edward Aveling appeared on October 6th and 13th respectively, delivering lectures 'perfect of their kind': significantly, many middle class people were evident in the audience.¹²⁸ With ill-disguised disdain for the activists of the

127. Ibid. Ernest Belfort Bax, a member of the first S.D.F. executive who seceded with Morris to institute the Socialist League, had studied philosophy in Germany and undoubtedly possessed the best theoretical brain in the British movement. A prolific writer on historical and philosophical subjects.

128. Justice, 19 October 1895. Dr. Edward Aveling (1851-98) was a distinguished scientist who held two chairs at London University. He was co-translator of the first (1887) English edition of Capital I, and served on the executives of both the S.D.F. and the Socialist League. His personality suffered from a lack of moral sense and it was the duplicity of his behaviour which both forced his retirement from the socialist movement and brought about the suicide of his wife Eleanor (Marx's younger daughter) in 1898. Aveling himself committed suicide that same year.

I.L.P., the Edinburgh S.D.F. spoke of itself 'becoming the strongest working class political organisation in the East of Scotland'.¹²⁹

Harry Quelch, the editor of Justice followed on October 20th, and by this time, so successful had these meetings become, that they were deliberately boycotted by the local press.¹³⁰

The death of Alec Dickinson in December was marked in Justice with an obituary by Connolly, the tone of which indicates a generous spirit not given to dwelling overmuch on the importance of organisational differences. Speaking of Dickinson as 'a staunch comrade and faithful worker in the cause of socialism', Connolly made it plain that he '... was never enrolled in the ranks of the S.D.F.' but singled him out for praise as '... a comrade whose breadth of sympathy and genuine enthusiasm in the fight against oppression overleapt all barriers, and had ever a hand and voice ready to assist every party engaged in the holy war against monopoly'.¹³¹ The same issue also carried Leslie's appeal for help to '... secure a situation for one of the best and most self-sacrificing men in the movement'. Connolly's situation had progressed from the desperate to the impossible, and he had even seriously considered the possibility of emigration to Chile. Leslie continued:

'... no man has done more for the movement here than Connolly ... he is the most able propagandist, in every sense of the word, Scotland has yet turned out. And because of it ... he is today on the verge of destitution, and out of work, and we all know what that means for the unskilled workman, as Connolly is ...'.

Meanwhile, Connolly was untiring in his efforts to build up the Edinburgh S.D.F. On December 15th, he appeared in the Operetta House,

129. Ibid.

130. Justice, 26 October 1895.

131. Justice, 14 December 1895.

on the same platform as Henry Hyndman himself, the national leader of the S.D.F. and made 'a capital show'.¹³² By the new year, the membership roll having been 'vigorously revised', the S.D.F. branch equalled in membership strength the old S.S.F., with 140 paid-up members.¹³³ An important feature of meetings in Edinburgh in the new year was the exposure given to the thoughts of avant garde Socialists on the issue of Marriage under Socialism. Such speculations were an unwelcome deviation from the tenets of conventional (including working class) morality. Speaking on "Socialism and Marriage" in Edinburgh's Albert Hall on Sunday, January 12th, a local presbyterian minister, the Rev. Jackson of Leith, gave what the Edinburgh Socialists regarded as 'undue place' to the views of certain advanced socialist writers of the 'free love' persuasion. It was Connolly who expressed the sense of outrage felt by those working class Socialists present in the audience.

'At the close, Comrade Connolly, amid loud applause, took exception to the lecturer's method of treating Socialism, and pointed out that it could only apply if he was prepared to saddle christianity with the opinions and conduct of professing christians'.¹³⁴

The next month, Connolly crossed swords with the socialist feminist, Edith Lanchester, on the same issue, when he chaired her meeting in the Operetta House on February 2nd. He felt obliged to remind the packed meeting that,

'... socialism had no connection with speculations on family life and was nowise responsible for the opinions of individual socialists on that subject'.¹³⁵

The Sunday meetings in the Operetta House were brought to a close with return visits from Edward and Eleanor Aveling on March 22nd and 30th

132. Justice, 28 December 1895.

133. Justice, 18 January 1896.

134. Labour Leader, 18 January 1896.

135. Labour Leader, 15 February 1896.

respectively. In terms of membership gains for the S.D.F. they had been a great success: sixty new paid-up members had joined the organisation, while 'many more had been converted to Socialism, and were intending to join'.¹³⁶

During the course of 1896, it was planned to form an S.D.F. branch in Leith, and to reactivate the Loanhead and Falkirk groups as S.D.F. branches. The theoretical pivot for the projected expansion was the economic class, held on Sunday afternoons in the Nicholson Street centre, where;

'The gospel according to Marx is then and there expounded by Connolly and needless to say, his exegesis is the authoritative one ... free from dilution or adulteration. All those ... who intend taking part in outdoor propaganda ... should make it a point to attend the economic class'.¹³⁷

By April, the new S.D.F. branch, although fortified by its substantial increase in membership, suffered a severe loss by the removal to Falkirk of John Leslie. On Sunday, April 12th, Connolly, with a supporting speaker, opened the summer propaganda in the East Meadows, 'speaking to a large audience'.¹³⁸ The following month, the branch, having outgrown its old clubrooms in Nicholson Street, moved to 'more commodious premises' at 6 Drummond Street. Connolly's address at the Meadows May Day Demonstration on Sunday, May 3rd, as principal speaker, was his last platform appearance for the flourishing branch.¹³⁹ Dublin socialists had offered him a position as paid organiser, after seeing Leslie's appeal in Justice,¹⁴⁰ and he left Edinburgh in May. Before

136. Labour Leader, 28 March; 4 April 1896.

137. Justice, 22 February 1896.

138. Justice, 18 April 1896.

139. Justice, 30 May, 1896.

140. E. MacLysaght, ed., Forth the Banners Go - Reminiscences of William O'Brien, (Three Candles, Dublin, 1969), p.7-8.

his departure, Edinburgh comrades held a special branch meeting at which he was presented with a testimonial,

'... in token of the respect and esteem in which he was held and as a recognition of the splendid services he has rendered to the cause of Socialism in this city. Connolly is one of the best propagandist speakers in the movement, and was indefatigable in preaching the principles of Socialism. His loss to us will be severely felt, but he may be trusted to continue the good work in the place to which he has gone'. 141

141. Justice, 30 May 1896.

3.

The Republican Critic

The Dublin group which invited Connolly to become its organiser in May 1896, had originally been established as a branch of the British I.L.P. in November 1894. However, it was soon evident in the nationalist Dublin of the 1890's, that dependence upon a metropolitan British organisation was severely dysfunctional to effective propaganda.¹ Not only was the group criticised simply because of its organisational links with Britain, but, more important, it suffered from the fact that all of its propaganda literature, imported from I.L.P. sources, was signally lacking in Irish appeal. The change in nomenclature to "Dublin Socialist Society" was a simple way of meeting the first problem, but the question of literature and of the whole non-Irish tone of the propagandist effort remained. In this situation, the members decided that

'... what the movement in Dublin wanted was some member that was well grounded in socialist literature...' preferably, '... some Irishman in Great Britain who might come here, and the same objection would not be made to him'.²

So, it was clear from the outset, that the prime commitment of Connolly's new appointment was a theoretical one; the accommodation of socialist

1. O'Brien, Forth the Banners Go, p.6.

2. Ibid, p.7.

teaching to the Irish nationalist tradition, which would hopefully facilitate a more effective approach to an Irish working class imbued with republican and nationalist sentiments. It should be remembered that Connolly was, at this time a committed Social Democrat in background and temperament, trained in the North British echelons of the S.D.F. and I.L.P. It is likely that he approached his new task with the practical needs of the propaganda in Dublin foremost in his mind, rather than with any wish to give expression to supposed personal predilections for 'advanced nationalist' views. His Edinburgh Irish background had given him a definite ethnic consciousness, but this did not mean that he could be considered an Irish nationalist. His municipal campaigns - waged chiefly against the power of the St. Giles I.N.L. caucus - indicated his complete detachment from the emigre nationalist cause.³ However, it should be emphasised that the orientation of the membership of the Dublin Socialist Society could certainly properly be described as 'advanced nationalist'.

Connolly decided upon a further change of nomenclature to make clear the precise nature of this new departure in Irish politics; the society was now dubbed the Irish Socialist Republican Party, and its first manifesto, issued at the end of May, clearly showed its indebtedness to the programme of the British S.D.F.⁴ The socialist objective

3. O'Brien, in Forth the Banners Go, p.8, advances the proposition that Connolly '... had been a pronounced nationalist before he became a socialist'. Greaves develops the same notion in "James Connolly - Marxist" in Marxism Today, June, 1968. John Wheatley (1869-1930), the notable Glasgow I.L.P. leader, and also born in Scotland of Irish parents, did not hold himself aloof from the Nationalist movement as Connolly had done. By the turn of the century, Wheatley was a leading member of the Shettleston Dan O'Connell branch of the United Irish League, and subsequently worked hard to persuade the U.I.L. to endorse labour candidacies at parliamentary elections: vide Glasgow Evening Times, 17 August 1903.

4. For the full text of the I.S.R.P.'s manifesto, see Desmond Ryan, ed., Socialism and Nationalism (Three Candles, Dublin, 1948), p.185.

was established by the commitment to take into public ownership '... the land, and instruments of production, distribution and exchange', while there was an attached scheme of 'palliative' measures designed both to vitiate the worst 'evils of our present social system' and to accelerate the process of working class organisation. These measures were selected from among those comprising the addition to the S.D.F. programme, first published in Justice on May 14th, 1892, and were set out by Connolly as a ten point programme. This included: railway and canal nationalisation; abolition of private credit; provision for a system of technical aid to agriculture; a graduated income tax; the statutory eight hour working day; free child maintenance; public control of provision and supply of 'all the necessaries of life'; the establishment of National schools controlled by popularly elected boards; free higher education and universal suffrage. Significantly, the S.D.F. and I.S.R.P. parted company on the question of Imperialism: while the British organisation demanded only 'legislative independence for all parts of the empire'; the Irish party demanded complete separation, and the establishment of an Irish Socialist Republic.⁵ Like the I.L.P., the new party was unequivocally parliamentary in orientation, and would seek '... political power in Parliament, and on all public bodies in Ireland ...' The style of "party" in the nomenclature - as opposed to the more normal style of "League", "Society", or "Federation", used by contemporary socialist propagandist bodies - was perhaps indicative of

5. Under Henry Hyndman's leadership, the S.D.F. did tend to support current British foreign policy of imperial expansion, in a rather chauvinist vein. A function of English (and perhaps Scottish) nationalism, it was of course a wholly impossible response for nationalists in Ireland, itself a dependent unit within the British imperial structure.

a political will more reminiscent of the I.L.P. than the S.D.F.: just as Keir Hardie hoped to detach the British working class from political dependence upon the Liberal Party, so did Connolly determine to wean the Irish workers away from subservience to Home Rule politicians. It seems likely that Connolly's experience in the Edinburgh S.S.F. had convinced him - on similar lines to Andreas Scheu⁶ - that the educational-propagandist mode of activity without organisation for political action, was fruitless.

Understandably enough, the links between the Dublin socialists and the I.L.P. remained close. Quite apart from the prior organisational contiguity, there was the personal rapport developed between Keir Hardie and Connolly during his Edinburgh days.⁷ Hardie's paper welcomed the formation of the I.S.R.P. with warmth and enthusiasm;⁸

'... This new movement, born on Irish soil and inaugurated by Irishmen, will appeal to the Irish people as nothing else has yet done, and the times we believe to be right for this development'.

The evident concern within the I.L.P. leadership for the recent development in Dublin resulted, during the next month, in an arrangement for Connolly to contribute a series of articles for the Labour Leader, to give its readership '... an accurate statement of the principles and future policy of this new party'.⁹ From this time, it seems that Connolly

-
6. For Scheu's tactical re-appraisal of November 1892, see p.26 above.
 7. Connolly had corresponded with Hardie while seeking a labour candidate for Edinburgh's central division in May, 1894. See p.50-1 above. Hardie had been impressed by Connolly's abilities during visits to Edinburgh and Leith in October 1894 and February 1895; vide Greaves, Life & Times, p.57, 66. After Connolly's departure from the I.L.P., Hardie had even bypassed the local party branch, during a by-election campaign to ask Connolly to distribute an I.L.P. manifesto, and been reproved by local I.L.P.'ers for so doing; vide, Justice, 15 June 1895.
 8. Labour Leader, 20 June 1896.
 9. Labour Leader, 11 July 1896.

acted as the Leader's ex gratia Irish correspondent: although basically a Scottish paper, it was published in London as well as Glasgow at that time, and could afford him a sizeable British audience in addition to being a good forum for socialist debate. It might also serve as a forum in which Connolly could counter the propaganda of merely constitutional nationalists. A review, probably written by Connolly, of T. Martin's The Irish Bog & The Way Out, appeared in August.¹⁰ This was a pamphlet issued by the "United Irish Association" and appealed for unity among the Irish nationalist factions, still divided by the Parnell issue. Connolly commented;

'... it is saddening to read through 32 pages of print without finding the least trace of an idea ... beyond national independence. If Ireland achieved political independence ... the bulk of the population would still have to fight for economic independence. We think that such fight would be waged quite as successfully under the existing political arrangement, as under that proposed by Mr. Martin'.

The articles promised in July appeared in three successive editions of the Labour Leader during October, under the title "Ireland for the Irish": these texts were later incorporated - together with an article written by Connolly for the Nationalist journal Shan Van Vocht¹¹ in November 1896 - in the first edition of Connolly's booklet Erin's Hope, published by the I.S.R.P. in 1897. In his first article,¹² Connolly's Materialist interpretation of the Irish Question was expounded in the formula; '... that the two opposing nations England and Ireland ... held fundamentally different ideas upon the vital question of property in land'. He identified the struggle between the individualist ethic

-
10. Labour Leader, 15 August 1896. Mr. T. Martin was an unknown and obscure propagandist, but his approach was a fair representation of the ideology of the Irish movement.
 11. Gaelic for "Poor Old Woman" - a poetic term for Ireland. The Shan Van Vocht was founded by Alice Milligan in Belfast in 1886, as an organ for the expression of Gaelic and literary nationalist opinion.
 12. Labour Leader, 10 October 1896.

of proprietorship advanced by English authority and the primitive communist values of the native Irish septal system as the '... pivot around which centred all the struggles and rebellions ...' of Irish history until the mid 17th century. However, it is interesting to note Connolly's concessions to the non-marxist orientation of the Leader's, mainly Scottish, I.L.P. readership. When dealing with the methodological issue, he displayed a sensitive diffidence toward the positivist/determinist aspects of Historical Materialism. In this first article he spoke of the method as;

'... the strange theory that the progress of the human race has been in some strange manner pre-ordained to pass through the various economic stages of communism, chattel slavery, feudalism and wage slavery, has been but a preparation for the higher ordered society of the future; [teaching] that since society has walked along certain lines, it might not under altered circumstances have reached the same goal along totally different lines ...'

In the booklet Erin's Hope, the same passage was pressed in exemplary marxist determinist fashion;

'The ardent student of sociology ... believes that the progress of human race through the various economic stages of communism, chattel slavery, feudalism and wage slavery has been but a preparation for the higher ordered society of the future; that the most industrially advanced countries are ... albeit often unconsciously, developing the social conditions which, since the break up of universal tribal communism, have been rendered historically necessary for the inauguration of a new and juster economic order in which social, political and national antagonism will be unknown ...' 13.

In his second article,¹⁴ Connolly dealt with the situation of the Irish bourgeoisie who, after the liquidation of the clan system in the mid 17th century, and the collateral lapse of demands for collective land ownership, 'stepped to the front as Irish patriot leaders ...'.

13. James Connolly, Erin's Hope (I.S.R.P., Dublin, 1897), p.6-7.

14. Labour Leader, 17 October 1896.

This class he regarded as being composed of apostates to the cause of Irish freedom, their economic power being derived from '... the manner in which they had contrived to wedge themselves into a place in the commercial life of the "Saxon enemy", assimilating his ideas and adopting his methods ...' Home Rule, the political project of this class was merely,

'... the transfer of the seat of government from London to Dublin, and the consequent transfer to their own or their relatives' pockets of some portion of the legislative fees and lawyers' pickings ... expended among the Cockneys'.

He thought it clear, even to the proponents of the scheme, that 'Home Rule is simply a mockery of Irish national aspirations ...' since the Irish legislature's powers would be severely attenuated. Connolly then argued against the Nationalist view that Home Rule would facilitate industrial progress for Ireland, and he did so in terms very reminiscent of John Leslie's The Present Position of the Irish Question.¹⁵ Under current conditions of international capitalist competition for markets, and the ongoing imperialist seizure of such unexploited world market potential as remained,

'... our chance of making Ireland a manufacturing country depends upon us becoming the lowest blacklegs in Europe'.

Inexperienced Irish industrialists would be hopelessly disadvantaged in competition with their European competitors, and would even be unable to meet them on equal terms in the home market. Besides,

'... the sudden development of the capitalist system in China and Japan, has rendered forever impossible the uprising of another industrial nation in Europe'.

He concluded with a dismissal of the autarky implicit in the enthusiasm shown by middle class Home Rule leaders for the value of peasant propri-

15. See p.54-6above.

etary. Again, taking up a theme from Leslie's work, he averred that small scale production was useless in the face of the '... improved machinery and mammoth farms of America and Australia'.

In the final article,¹⁶ Connolly urged the necessity of Ireland's developing industrially only after the establishment of a socialist regime; this would obviate the creation of '... an industrial hell in Ireland, under the specious pretext of "developing our resources".' This was yet again a familiar theme from Leslie. In the light of these cogent economic considerations, the Irish democracy should use the 'revolutionary ballot' to bring about a constitutional separation from the British state. Meanwhile, the principal task was to press forward the I.S.R.P.'s programme of palliative reforms, in order to base '... our revolutionary movement upon a correct appreciation of the needs of the hour ... [and upon] ... the vital principles of economic justice and uncompromising nationality'. The sanguine emphasis upon the utility of parliamentary reformism and of agitation for palliative measures show how close Connolly remained to his Scottish Social Democratic background; this reformist tone remained unchanged in the actual booklet Erin's Hope when it was issued by the I.S.R.P. in 1897. The Leader carried an advertisement for the booklet in its May Day number for 1897, recommending that,

'Irishmen in search of something to circulate among their countrymen, could find nothing better ...'.¹⁷

It was made available for purchase from the Leader office at 66 Brunswick Street, Glasgow.

In January 1898, Connolly wrote to the Leader to defend the I.S.R.P. position against the charge of chauvinism which, he had heard, was advanced by several (unnamed) British socialists.¹⁸ He said that he '... would be

16. Labour Leader, 24 October 1896.

17. Labour Leader, 1 May 1897.

18. Labour Leader, 22 January 1898.

sorry to think such confusion of thought was at all general'. In this letter, Connolly first introduced to his British readers an important contribution that a genuine, nationally based Irish socialist movement might make to the socialist cause in Britain. He said,

'When Irish organisations, led officered and manipulated by middle class tricksters with middle class ideas, are confronted by Irish organisations of class conscious workmen officered by convinced Irish socialists then the Irish vote will cease to be a disturbing factor in English socialist electoral calculations - but not till then'.

Connolly emphasised the point by reporting that the previous year, the I.S.R.P. had produced a special appeal to 'the working class Irish of America' to support the Socialist Labor Party of America's effort in the New York municipal elections. In March, he addressed himself unequivocally to the working class Irish in Britain. The occasion was a review of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's autobiography, My Life in Two Hemispheres, which the Leader printed especially 'for Irish Nationalists'.¹⁹ Connolly wrote:

'Sir Charles Gavan Duffy's autobiography is published in too expensive a form for the private possession of most Labour Leader readers, but it is a book that all of them should certainly read, and will be available at most libraries. Where it is not, an entry in the library suggestion book should be made with a view to securing it. Naturally, our Irish readers will take a deeper interest in it than any others. We trust that they - and especially those of them who have been led off into the dismal morass of the Liberal alliance

19. Labour Leader, 26 March 1898.

Charles Gavan Duffy (1816-1903) was a founding member of the "Young Ireland" movement and co-founder of its journal, The Nation. Socially an ultra-conservative, Duffy's political demands for Ireland never advanced beyond the notion of legislative independence and an "Irish-born" Viceroy. He was briefly arrested in 1848 during the fiasco of Young Ireland's half-hearted attempt at insurrection that year. He then turned his back on his revolutionary past, emigrating to Australia in 1855 and eventually rising to become prime minister of the state of Victoria. He was awarded the order of K.C.M.G. for his services in that capacity to the British Empire.

and hostility to the Labour Party at the command of their essentially reactionary middle-class leaders - will read it thoughtfully, for it has a lesson for them of which they and all Irish Nationalists stand greatly in need.

The story of a revolutionary movement, told from the inside, is always fascinating; and we have here the most intimate account yet written, or likely to be written, of the Young Ireland movement of the forties, of its men and methods and weaknesses. In The Nation and the band of young men associated with it Irish nationality found the best, the most ardent and sincere expression to which it has attained during this century. They failed, and to the thoughtful reader the reason of their failure is very clear from Duffy's narrative. For, like all Irish movements, the Young Ireland movement never attained to the level of a revolutionary movement in the true sense of the word. The Irish aim has always been, even in this its highest expression, essentially narrow and parochial. No Irish party has ever been in line with the world movement of revolutionary principles. Its fight has always been for nationality, and nothing beyond nationality. Nationality is a splendid fighting ideal when it is based upon principle. It is not, and never can be, a principle in itself. Other revolutionary parties in other lands, in Austria and Italy especially, have fought for a national ideal; but it has been with the fervour of the Revolution, in its international sense, as the inspiration of the fight. "Ireland, a nation" has been the battle-cry. But "Ireland a nation" may mean, and has meant to many of the reactionary persons who have been loudest in raising the cry, Ireland a class-ridden nation.

The Principles of the Revolution, therefore, go deeper than nationality. They are the expression of the world-wide craving for liberty, economic freedom, the destruction of class privilege, and the establishment of justice. The Irish movement has never yet based itself upon the broad foundation of human liberty, but only upon the narrow foundation of local political freedom. How utterly these Young Irelanders were out of touch with the world-movement in these essential matters is pitifully revealed by incident after incident. Indeed, they went so far as to avow their want of sympathy with the wider aims of true freedom-loving men; for when an article appeared in Fraser's Magazine accusing them of being revolutionists in the real sense, John Mitchell issued this remarkable reply:

Be it known to Fraser's Magazine and all Cockneyland that those persons (the Young Irelanders) are not Republicans, that theories of Government have but little interest for them; that the great want and unvarying aim of them all is a National Government, no matter what may be its form; that those of them who may be democrats in abstract principle

yet prefer an oligarchy of our own aristocrats to the most popular forms of government under foreign institutions and foreign governors; that those of them who are aristocrats in feeling are yet ready to say, "Give us our own democracy to rule over us before the haughtiest peerage of another nation".

Nothing could reveal more clearly than this the narrowness of the Irish movement. We, and all revolutionists, cordially agree with the desire for freedom from foreign despots; but the essential revolutionary desire is for freedom itself, i.e. for freedom from all despots. "Theories of government have but little interest for them". To the true Revolutionist theories of government are the sole interest, and local and national movements are only of importance as attempts to apply the general principle. And, again, here is an illuminating extract from The Nation itself:

We have received a printed address from the Chartists of England to the Irish people, with a request that we should insert it in The Nation. We desire no fraternisation between the Irish people and the Chartists. Some of their five points are an abomination to us. Between us and them there is a gulf fixed; we desire not to bridge it over, but make it wider and deeper.

Is it not pitiful? One revolutionary party, based upon generous principles, seeking fraternisation with another party claiming to be revolutionary, and being repulsed in this way! The interests of freedom are the same all the world over, and the Irish parties have always, as can be plainly enough seen from these extracts, cut themselves off from communion with the living spirit of liberty, and gone on their narrow, sectarian way to failure after failure.

Even more significant of the reactionary character of the principles underlying the Irish movement is the attitude of these men towards the slave question in America. John Mitchell wished publicly for "a plantation of fat niggers", that he might teach them what slavery meant; and some of the Protestant Ulster party, notably Dr. McKnight, who were favourable to the idea of working with the Nationalists for the formation of the Tenants' League, drew off in disgust on the express ground that Mitchell "had joined the base band of slave-owners in America".

The Continental revolutionists saw all this plainly enough. When Duffy paid a visit to the Continent before his departure for Australia, he met many notable men, amongst them being Louis Blanc; and in the course of conversation about the outlook, Blanc, with true insight, said that "Ireland would find little favour with the leaders of the movement in other countries, " and, being pressed for his reasons, frankly avowed that everything in Ireland was under the influence of men who were "the sworn enemies of the revolution".

And so we get a clear view of the position of the Irish parties all along the century, and an explanation of their failures. With no coherent principles, they have included men of all shades of political thought. Many of their leaders have been rank reactionaries, advocates of slavery, Conservatives, Liberals, Radicals - everything, in fact. And so, at the least encouragement, they have quarrelled and divided, as is only to be expected of a party with no binding tie of principle. Their failure to grasp the revolutionary principles of which nationality - if it is to be a living and real nationality - is only a local embodiment, fully explains their willingness, on the one hand, to desire no fraternisation with English working-class parties (the I.L.P. now, as the Chartists in the forties), and on the other hand their readiness to sell their chance of success for the sake of a crippling alliance with English reactionists, as O'Connell allied with the Whigs, as the Tenants' League Party - or a large number of them - allied with Lord John Russell, and as in these later days they have allied with the Liberal Party, and at the bidding of their English masters have sent their emissaries to election after election to support some snivelling old fool of a Liberal place-hunter or sweating capitalist, and oppose the Labour Party.

And they have gained nothing by it all. That is the point to be impressed upon Irish readers. They stand today as far off as ever from their goal, for all their time-serving. Nor can they ever expect to gain by it. There is one policy, and one policy only, for the ultimate attainment of success - of such success, that is, as is worth attaining. And that policy is the recognition of the common aims of the revolutionary party in all lands; the stretching out of hands across the narrow sea to their English working-class comrades, in helpful co-operation against the common enemy; the knowledge that it is not in nationality alone, but in social emancipation, that the hope for the future of the poor and oppressed in Ireland, as in all lands, lies; and the dispensing alike with Liberal alliances and middle-class leaders without an ideal or a high aim with which to rally their followers.

These pages of the inner history of a period of Irish unrest proclaim the moral in their every chapter. Are there no Irishmen wise enough to read it and strong enough to act upon it?¹.

In July, Connolly crossed to Scotland for a short lecture tour. He began in Edinburgh on the 10th, giving 'stirring addresses to large crowds' for the local S.D.F. at his old venues in the East Meadows and Leith Links.²⁰ An S.D.F. branch had recently been formed in Leith,

20. Justice, 23 July 1898.

mainly as a result of the efforts of a young Irishman, George Yates: Connolly appears to have been genially sceptical about its staying power, since the district had proved obdurately unresponsive to socialist propaganda during his Edinburgh days. Yates reported continued progress,

'... despite the incredulity of a certain Dublin socialist who shall remain nameless ...' 21.

Connolly found that relations between the S.D.F. and I.L.P. were at an unprecedentedly high level. Many I.L.P. branches were then expressing a wish to fuse with the S.D.F. - on the basis of the latter's rules and programme - to form a united socialist party, just as the German parties had "fused" at the Eisenach congress. Although conscious that metropolitan I.L.P. leaders were seeking to discourage these wishes,²² some branch secretaries were openly advocating unilateral fusion with the S.D.F. at the latter's forthcoming annual conference to be held in Edinburgh at the end of July.²³ John Leslie had now become organiser for the S.D.F.'s recently instituted Scottish District Council,²⁴ and, in mid June had done a week's propaganda activity for the Vale of Leven and Clydebank branches of the I.L.P.²⁵ Connolly, perhaps on Leslie's recommendation, was now offered a fortnight's engagement by the same branches, now styled the "Scottish Western Federation" of the I.L.P.²⁶ Connolly spoke on the 1st and 7th August at the Paisley Racecourse on "Irish topics", and addressed at least two large meetings in Clydebank: there was apparently 'plenty of Irish wit, and somebody sorry they spoke'.²⁷

21. Ibid.

22. Bruce Glasier, at the I.L.P. conference held in Birmingham in April, called upon the party to 'avoid the compulsion to spurious uniformity'. Labour Leader, 16 April, 1898.

23. Vide letter from W.J. Lloyd, secretary of the Marylebone I.L.P. in Justice, 2 July 1898.

24. Justice, 9 July 1898.

25. Labour Leader, 2 July 1898.

26. Labour Leader, 9 July 1898.

27. Labour Leader, 6, 13 August 1898.

Meanwhile, both Leslie and Yates had been elected to the S.D.F. Executive Council at the organisation's Edinburgh conference.²⁸

While in Scotland Connolly had secured a loan of £50 from Keir Hardie for the establishment of an I.S.R.P. paper. Unfortunately, the Irish party was only able to repay £10, Hardie having to bear the loss;²⁹ the first issue appeared on August 12th, and it was named, appropriately enough, The Worker's Republic. Both Justice and the Leader welcomed this 'literary champion of Irish democracy' in their issues for August 13th. On August 20th, Justice commented editorially on its being '... a timely and welcome addition to the socialist press of these islands', but, significantly enough, although expressing support for the I.S.R.P.'s anti-imperialist line, did so only in the African and Indian context; there was no mention of the imperial relationship between England and Ireland. During this period, Connolly secured a further loan of at least US \$50 from a source that was to be of increasing significance, the Socialist Labor Party of America.³⁰ The influence of the American party - and particularly of the theories of its leader, Daniel De Leon - loomed larger on Connolly's horizon as he faced the imperialist issue in the concrete form of the South African war, and grappled with the theoretical problem of post-capitalist relations of production, as outlined by Marx in Capital III.³¹

28. Justice, 6 August 1898.

29. O'Brien, Forth the Banners Go, p.10: Letter from E. W. Stewart to Keir Hardie, 6 November 1898. There is also extant a receipt for a loan of only £25 from Hardie, signed by Connolly and dated 17 August 1898.

30. Letter from Connolly to the S.L.P. of A., 31 March 1899. Quoted C. Tsuzuki, "The Impossible Revolt in Britain", in International Review of Social History, I. (1956), p.377.

31. This work, edited by Engels, had appeared - in German - in 1894.

Writing in the Workers' Republic on August 27th, 1898, Connolly dealt at some length with the proposal of the Dublin Trades Council to sponsor "Labour" candidates in the first elections for the Irish local authorities to be instituted in the new year. He anticipated that this effort - although by no means a socialist commitment - would yet lead to an 'application of socialist principles' (i.e. pressure for I.S.R.P. type "palliatives"). He envisaged that this involvement in local government would enhance the class consciousness of both the workers and their representatives, and thus move organised labour closer towards the acceptance of Socialism. Once workers' representatives were active on such government bodies, Connolly foresaw that:

'the next step in the intellectual development of the worker will be to consider ... whether there is indeed any useful function performed by the capitalist and landlord class which the organised workers cannot perform without them [and] whether the ownership of property cannot be vested in the organised community, and the conduct of industry entrusted to our trade unions ...'.

Now, according to Marx, the management function in the production process,

'originates from the social form of the labour process, from combination and co-operation of many in pursuance of a common result, it is just as independent of capital as that form itself as soon as it has burst its capitalistic shell'. 32

Marx hints that, after the production process has outgrown the shell of capitalist relations, labour will be self governing and co-operatively organised; co-operative factories will overcome the contradiction between Capital and Labour by:

'... making the associated labourers into their own capitalist i.e. by enabling them to use the means of production for the employment of their own labour. They show how a new mode of production naturally grows out of an old one, when the development of the material forces of production and of the corres-

ponding forms of social production have reached a particular stage'. 33

Clearly, Connolly's notion of the supervision of the production process by labour unions is predicated upon Marx's vision of 'associated Labourers' becoming the embodiment of working capital. It is in this sense that Capital III may be seen as the Marxian authority for the syndicalist movement which emerged in both Europe and North America in the first decade of the 20th century;³⁴ and to which both Connolly and De Leon were to make important individual contributions.

At this time, Connolly was aware that De Leon was developing a critique of the forms of craft unionism in terms of the political potential inherent in class conscious unionism. Notably in his booklet What Means this Strike? published in February 1898, De Leon condemned what he called 'pure and simple' trade unionism, which was unable to improve the worker's lot in any way, even being powerless to prevent depression of wages. Officered by 'labor fakers' who organised support for reformist capitalist parties at the polls, these unions were weak because of their political inertia and dependence. Politics, said De Leon, were not separable from the wages issue, and the only form of unionisation of any value would be in organisations with a class conscious commitment to the political end of Socialism. De Leon's scheme of action was a policy of 'dual unionism'; the establishment of socialist unions as rivals to the older craft bodies, and subordinate to the party machine. To this end the "Socialist Trade and Labor Alliance" had been instituted as a client union of the S.L.P. of A. For Connolly, the impact of Capital III, together with De Leon's theoretical approaches to the problem

33. Ibid., p.431.

34. For a treatment of Syndicalism as a theoretical rival to Social Democratic orthodoxy, see Lichtheim, Marxism, p.222-233. His dismissive attitude to De Leon does, however, make for an incomplete and unbalanced account.

of union organisation, represented a challenge to the accepted views of the mainstream of British Social Democracy. If the socialist republicans of the I.S.R.P. were,

'... trade unionists, but ... more than trade unionists ...' working towards '... the application to agriculture and industry; to the farm, the field, the workshop, of the democratic principle of the republican ideal', 35

then this indicated substantial disagreement with the S.D.F. view of trade unions as incorrigible bulwarks of capitalism and of absolutely no value, as an organisational mode, for the socialist movement.³⁶

However, these considerations were soon occluded by the imperialist issue, as actualised in the Transvaal crisis of 1899 and the resultant hostilities between British and Boer forces in South Africa. From the outset, Connolly had taken an intransigent anti-imperialist stance, on internationalist lines, and the I.S.R.P. became a leading element in the anti-war campaign of the Irish Transvaal Committee. Connolly took the opportunity to co-operate with other republican activists such as Maud Gonne, addressing huge gatherings in Dublin that Autumn deploring British adventurism and urging young men of military age not to enlist.³⁷ Indeed, Connolly's anti-war line was part of a general Irish response to the Boer War, in which nationalist opinion of all shades united. Arthur Griffith's paper the United Irishman was strident in its defence of the Boer cause and even Home Rule politicians, from parliament and Dublin corporation, expressed publicly their support for the Boer republics. The most dramatic political gesture was made by Michael Davitt, then a nationalist M.P. Davitt summarily withdrew from Westminster, took passage for South Africa and spent the duration of the war working as a

35. Workers' Republic, 27 August 1898.

36. Collins, "The Marxism of the S.D.F.", p.55.

37. Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.113-123.

pro-Boer journalist. On his return to the British Isles, he wrote a justification of the Boer campaign, The Boer Fight for Freedom, published in 1902.

In Britain, the socialists were divided over the war issue. Robert Blatchford, editor of the popular socialist journal the Clarion came out in support of British arms,³⁸ as did the Fabian Society. The war issue became the occasion of a bitter dispute between Connolly and his old Scottish comrade Bruce Glasier, who came to Ireland in November 1899 on a lecture tour for the Fabian Society. For Glasier, Connolly's defeatist approach was mere 'self indulgence and irresponsibility'.³⁹ Of greater importance was the attitude of the S.D.F. Hyndman, although opposed to the war at this time, articulated his opposition in terms of a pronounced anti-Semitism, rather than internationalist values. Chauvinist statements about the war's being conducted '... on behalf of German-Jew mineowners ...' and of its being 'worse than the Dreyfus case',⁴⁰ were in line with the S.D.F. leader's consistent support for British colonial expansion. In the Workers' Republic for November 4th, 1899, Connolly criticised both Blatchford and Hyndman, noting that,

'all the journals of the [socialist] party on the continent of Europe and in America ... came out ... wholeheartedly on the side of the Transvaal ...'.

-
38. Robert Blatchford (1851-1943) journalist and ex-soldier, had edited the independent socialist journal, the Clarion, from 1891. This paper, together with his "commonsense" justifications of Socialism, Merrie England and Britain for the British made many thousands of converts to the socialist cause in the nineties. Blatchford was a strong advocate of S.D.F./I.L.P. fusion, and both in 1899 and again in 1914, was an unhesitating supporter of the British war effort.
39. Desmond Ryan, Socialism and Nationalism, p.7-8.
40. Tsuzuki, Hyndman and British Socialism, p.128.

Hyndman, he wrote, approached the whole colonialist issue with 'the reasoning of a political radical', as in the case of his support for British, as against Russian, colonial expansion in the Far East, on the grounds of the greater constitutional liberty enjoyed by British Subjects. Connolly made the determinist point that for a capitalistically developed country like Britain, the frustration of imperialist goals 'necessary for the prolongation of the life of capitalism', would advance the revolutionary crisis at home; hence the 'strong and irreconcilable hostility between English imperialism and socialism'.

The shortcomings of the British socialist leadership on this imperialist issue inclined Connolly increasingly to sympathise with the criticisms of the S.D.F. which regularly appeared in the S.L.P. of A. paper, the Weekly People. The People had conducted a vitriolic campaign against S.D.F. "opportunism" since the London congress of the Socialist International in 1896: these attacks, characterising the S.D.F. as a party of "Freaks", "Fakirs", "Skates" and other abusive appellations, had intensified after the 1900 congress held in Paris. In part, this appears to have been the result of the S.D.F. refusal to support the attempt of Lucien Saniel, the delegate of the S.L.P., to exclude the delegation of its domestic rival, the American Social Democratic Party.⁴¹ At Paris, the I.S.R.P. delegation had insisted upon sitting separate from the British, as representing the distinct Irish nation: despite opposition from the S.D.F. the congress accepted their claim.⁴² The assembled delegates found themselves called upon to adjudicate upon a domestic quarrel between the French socialists which raised the whole

41. Justice, 5, 19 January 1901; Tsuzuki, Hyndman and British Socialism, p.383.

42. O'Brien in Forth the Banners Go, p.27.

question of the nature of political activity permissible for Social Democrats. In 1898, the French socialist deputy Millerand had entered the cabinet of Waldeck-Rousseau, on the pretext of being better able thereby to aid Dreyfus. This cabinet included General Gallifet, the notorious butcher of the Communards in 1871, and Millerand was denounced as a traitor by the ultra-left of the French socialist movement. Italian and French marxists, faced with strong reformist wings in their national movements wished for an unequivocal veto from the International against participation in bourgeois governments and co-operation with non-socialist parties: more flexible tactics were desired by the Belgian, British and Austrian delegations, together with the French "moderates". Karl Kautsky, as representative of the German S.P.D. - largest and most prestigious of the national parties - drafted a compromise resolution allowing that socialists might enter a bourgeois government as 'an exceptional and temporary measure', but that the national party must give prior approval of the action.⁴³ The resolution was approved, receiving support from the British, Germans, Austrians and Belgians; the Americans, French and Italians were divided, while the Irish and Bulgarian delegations remained opposed. The American S.L.P. voted against the proposal, as did George Yates, representing the Leith S.D.F.⁴⁴ The Kautsky Resolution would come to be regarded by the left wing of the international socialist movement as a charter for reformist policies and "opportunist" tactics: the opposition to it expressed at Paris by the De Leonists of the American S.L.P., the Socialist Republicans from Dublin and the solitary "mutinous" delegate from Leith, was a precursive indicator for the future development of the Left in Scotland.

43. James Joll, The Second International (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1955), p.94-7.

44. Tsuzuki, Hyndman and British Socialism, p.383.

The "Unholy Scotch Current"

The British S.D.F. was severely hit by the impact of the South African war. In 1899-1900 its branches were reduced by almost a quarter of their total, from 137 to 96: in Scotland, in the climate of jingoistic enthusiasm, the membership was 'lying low', disabled from doing any constructive propaganda work.¹ George Yates wrote to Connolly deploring the current laxity and ineptitude of the Edinburgh branch, which was then doing no propaganda at all and had no consistent anti-war line to express. '... All the manliness has more or less evaporated', he complained.² However, with the subsidence of the immediate furore surrounding the South African campaign, the Socialists of the S.D.F. faced the first year of the new century with a renewed dedication: as the name of the organisation's own "Twentieth Century Press" indicated, it was during the course of this new century that Socialism was expected to be realised as social and political reality. At this time, and in the aftermath of the Paris congress, there was evinced a new sensitivity to the American S.L.P.'s criticisms of the organisation's errors, both on the part of the leadership and of those who found De Leon's insistence on doctrinal purity congenial.

1. Justice, 13 October 1900. Tsuzuki, Hyndman & British Socialism, p.284.

2. Yates to Connolly, Glasgow. (Summer 1900).

In addition to What Means this Strike?, another of De Leon's pamphlets was then available in the British Isles, Reform or Revolution first issued in the USA in 1896: both works were advertised in Justice by the turn of the century. The journalistic polemic apart, it is apparent that in these two early works, De Leon had already attempted, with some success, to formulate a theoretical approach to the crucial problem of the relations between class conscious socialists and the trade union movement. That these theoretical approaches were of relevance in the British Isles was due to the similarity between American and British conditions of labour organisation. In both contexts, trade unionism - basically of a craft, skilled nature - ante-dated the appearance of the Socialist movement, and the mutual distrust between them vitiated the impact of socialist propaganda and led to a division of socialist forces. As British socialists were well aware, the American movement had divided during the course of 1900, precisely over the issue of relations with trade unions. Two factions had emerged: a pragmatic 'reformist' Social Democratic Party, analogous to the British I.L.P., which held to the so-called 'kangaroo' policy of attempting to win trade union support for socialist electoral efforts; and the De Leonite Socialist Labor Party with its utter opposition to the 'fakirism' of the established union structure and its 'dual union' alternative, the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance. In general, however, S.D.F. sensitivity to De Leonite criticism in this period displayed a marked lack of concern with the theoretical issue. One moderate wrote to Justice expressing the opinion that such concern over the relations with unions was a non-issue, on the grounds that socialism was a political matter and trade unions '... are principleless and hence irrelevant to socialist

work'.³ Even the S.D.F. editorial commentator "Tattler" seemed to think that if only the organisation would clarify its attitude to the I.L.P. - '... we should either fight or fuse' - then the whole issue would subside.⁴ That the problem was not one of simple clarification and consistency of policy can be seen in the criticism made by Len Cotton of the Oxford S.D.F. Making the case for the primacy of theoretical soundness over organisational considerations, he stressed the 'utopian' - i.e. non - 'scientific' - nature of the American S.D.P.'s socialism and urged that the S.D.F. finally dissociate itself from the I.L.P., that '... horde of sentimentalists and cranks'.⁵

Cotton's emphasis upon the need for an organisation based upon a conscious doctrinal orthodoxy indicates the direct influence of De Leon's Reform or Revolution. According to De Leon, the socialist movement must be as '... intolerant as science',⁶ and the party, - the 'head of the column' of the working class movement - should be the '... incarnation of principle'.⁷ De Leon's concept of party was of a select, doctrinally pure vanguard, subject to a rigorous discipline, both personal and ideological, and he readily used the conquistadores of Francisco Pizarro as an exemplary organisational model.⁸ Only under the direction of such a vanguard body could the working class be saved from the 'miseducation' of reformers like Henry George and the charlatan leadership of the craft unions.⁹ De Leon's sectarian demands for organisational and doctrinal exclusivity reflected his conviction that, despite the objective maturity of the USA for development from capitalist to socialist property re-

3. George Aspden in Justice, 23 February 1901.

4. Justice, 5 January 1901.

5. Justice, 12 January 1901.

6. Daniel De Leon, Reform or Revolution, (Socialist Labour Press, n.d.), p.7.

7. *Ibid.*, p.19, 14.

8. *Ibid.*, p.19-21.

9. *Ibid.*, p.16-18.

lations, the subjective factor of the workers' consciousness was peculiarly retarded.¹⁰ This subjective 'backwardness' was a function of the ethnic diversity of the American labour force, the overtures made to labour by the competing political parties, and of the refuge from proletarianisation offered by the availability of free land in the American West, still an important psychological factor at the end of the 19th century. Hence the irony that in the New World, where the absence of feudal elements permitted the most advanced type of capitalist relations and proletarian exploitation, the labour movement was characterised by a more retarded and opportunist mentality than in Europe. It was De Leon's self-appointed task to undermine this false consciousness of the American worker, and to this end he undertook his analysis of the genesis of labour organisation - and of the 'opportunist' ideology which grew out of that process - first outlined in What Means This Strike?¹¹

The problem of that 'subjective factor' to which De Leon addressed himself had a peculiar urgency in the British Isles, in terms of the political attitudes of the socialist bodies. Both the I.L.P. and S.D.F. identified the revolutionary evolution from bourgeois politics toward Socialism, with functional connections with the bourgeois parties: the I.L.P. consistently sought Liberal support for its candidates and even the policy of the supposedly orthodox S.D.F. was that;

'... the Socialist vote go Tory, 'til the Liberals left them free to fight seats ...' 12

10. L. G. Raisky, Daniel De Leon - The Struggle against Opportunism in the American Labor Movement (New York Labor News Co. 1932), p.10-11.

11. See p. 85 above.

12. Henry Hyndman at the 1900 Annual Conference of the S.D.F.: Tsuzuki, "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.380.

Both socialist bodies were active, together with the T.U.C., in the venture of a "Labour Representation Committee" launched in 1900 and designed to become the nucleus of a parliamentary labour party. In the general election of October 1900, the substantial vote recorded by L.R.C.-sponsored candidates owed much to support given by the Liberal Party.¹³ It was the joint action with the I.L.P. in the matter of the Labour Representation Committee which particularly laid the S.D.F. open to De Leonite criticism, since it involved such blatant collaboration with non-marxists such as Keir Hardie, Robert Blatchford and Bruce Glasier.¹⁴ It could be argued that such disparate political action militated against the creation of a genuine working class consciousness, and merely served to channel the workers' movement into a formalistic subservience to the institutions of the bourgeois state. Once this logic was accepted, a De Leonite type sectarianism followed: proletarian autonomy was restored through an adherence to abstract dogma.

Within the Scottish S.D.F. many activists were beginning to think along such sectarian lines, and by the end of 1900, De Leon's booklets and the People had reached great popularity and influence among the Scottish branches. The leaders of the De Leonite sympathisers were George Yates himself, from Leith, and J. Carstairs Matheson, a school-teacher from Falkirk. At the half-yearly meeting of the S.D.F.'s Scottish District Council, held in Falkirk on March 10th, 1901, the dissidents tried their strength. Yates's motion that the Scottish District Council withdraw unilaterally from the Scottish Workers Parliamentary Election Committee - the Scottish element of the L.R.C. - was carried by a narrow margin. Yates had condemned that body in terms of

13. Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, p.213.

14. Justice, 5 January 1901.

'the few shreds of class consciousness with which it began' having been 'obliterated' during its first year of existence, and its representatives '... may now stand upon any political platform'.¹⁵ The Aberdeen branch refused to comply in this reversal of central policy and sent a notice to Justice 'respectfully declining to acquiesce' in what it considered an unconstitutional move by the District Council.¹⁶ It was left to Matheson to state the principled standpoint of the dissidents in a motion which achieved the unconscious humour of true didacticism;

'That the Scottish District Council of Social Democrats repudiate all alliance with the I.L.P., trade unionists, co-operators, vegetarians, anti-vaccinators, the YMCA, or any body which does not make its principal aim the intelligent and purposive prosecution of the class war ...'¹⁷

The motion was lost, to Matheson's ill-disguised chagrin. In his complaint to Justice, he included an ominous and sardonic observation:

'We at Falkirk are contemplating a course of study in the Logik of Hegel so that we may be able to perceive the identity of Millerandism and Marxism ... after long and painful study we are now able to perceive the differences between Bernstein & Kautsky'.¹⁸

This deliberate conflation of the theoretical "revisionism" of Eduard Bernstein with the tactics of 'Millerandism' as justified at Paris by Kautsky's resolution, and practised by the S.D.F. in its operations through the L.R.C., was an indication that, for Matheson, such tactics embodied a renegacy from marxist principles. Such renegacy, Matheson concluded, would '... justify the worst that the People has said of us'. Quelch, expressing official S.D.F. policy, dismissed the point in a patronising editorial note.

15. Justice, 23 March 1901.

16. Ibid.

17. Ibid.

18. Justice, 13 April 1901.

At this juncture, James Connolly intervened in Matheson's support. In a letter on "Justice and Millerand", Connolly deplored the official S.D.F. support for Millerand's action '... out of a mistaken tenderness for the feelings of M. Jaures and party'.¹⁹ If it really was the considered view of the S.D.F. leadership that '... the presence of Millerand in the French cabinet is an injury to Socialism all over the world', and the issue had reached proportions of 'an international scandal',²⁰ then the S.D.F. must repudiate Kautsky's resolution and accept the problem as one of principles, and not merely a tactical difficulty. The current equivocal stance of the party was, according to Connolly, '... opposed to the whole traditions and policy of the S.D.F.'. He drove his point home with a characteristic directness and pith: remarking that 'over a dozen' strikes had been broken by the military in France since Millerand entered the government, he reflected that whatever good Millerand did, would redound to the administration's credit, and whatever ill by the administration to the Socialist party's discredit; 'Heads they win, tails we lose'. Quelch commented that Kautsky's resolution explicitly condemned the '... continuance of a socialist in a ministry under such circumstances as now obtain in Millerand's case', but re-asserted that issue to be one of tactics - decided by the party - and not a matter of principle in any way.

In the first week of May, Connolly had made the crossing to Scotland to begin a Summer lecturing season throughout Britain. Apart from any

19. Justice, 25 May 1901. Jean Jaures (1859-1914) was the outstanding parliamentary leader of the French Socialist movement. An ex-Radical, he voted with the socialists in the Chamber of Deputies after 1893. He remained firmly attached to the Radical-Republican "Defence of the Republic" notion and had encouraged Millerand to join the Waldeck-Rousseau ministry on that basis.

20. Justice, 11 May 1901.

influence he might hope to have upon the British movement thereby, it should be remembered that such paid engagements were a vital part of the income of a struggling professional propagandist. His tour began in Glasgow on May 5th when he addressed the May Day meetings of the local S.D.F. in Jail Square and on Glasgow Green. The persistent drizzle and the non-involvement of the Glasgow Trades Council meant that a relatively small crowd gathered to hear Connolly, Don Stewart of the Crewe S.D.F. and two local comrades, Johnstone and Armour.²¹ Connolly was to fall foul of the capriciousness of the Scottish weather that Summer; his week in Glasgow following the May Day meetings was bedevilled by wet weather and his meetings were either washed out or poorly attended. The Glasgow comrades were in the main sympathetic to the 'clear cut'²² approach, and this was well reflected in the manner of their praise for his propagandist abilities:

'Comrade Connolly's speeches have the true revolutionary ring about them and he preaches the class struggle in a clear and convincing manner ... we are all sorry that the bad weather prevented us reaping the benefit which would have been ours had the conditions been favourable'.²³

Connolly visited Edinburgh from May 19th to 24th. On the 19th, a Sunday, he delivered both an afternoon and evening lecture in the East Meadows, and on the subsequent week nights, spoke at various street locations throughout the city. These included Nicolson Square, Easter Road, Jeffrey Street, and Henderson Terrace.²⁴ At his Easter Road meeting on the Tuesday, he took advantage of the opportunity afforded by the current visit to his native land of the U.S. Steel magnate, Andrew Carnegie, to deliver a topical address on "America, Carnegie and

21. Justice, 18 May 1901.

22. A De Leonite expression for his own supporters: it indicates adherence to uncompromising principles of thought and action.

23. Justice, 18 May 1901.

24. Edinburgh Evening News, 18 May 1901.

Scotland".²⁵ In mid-June, Connolly visited Falkirk, and, according to Matheson, the results were very gratifying. The 'slackness of trade and security of work' at the time had drawn increasing numbers of workers to S.D.F. meetings in the town, and the branch membership was growing. It seems that '... comrade Connolly's clear, incisive and convincing method of dealing with his subject' helped further to enhance the S.D.F.'s appeal. Matheson stressed that Connolly's lectures were:

'... simple and perfectly intelligible to the ordinary man and also perfectly accurate and rigid in his adherence to scientific verity'.

He was recommended to all English and Scottish branches by Matheson as an 'able exponent of Socialist truth'.²⁶ Connolly's blend of lucid simplicity and 'scientific verity' was also noted by the local press. Reporting in sum on his lectures during the week June 15th - 22nd, a local paper commented:

'Mr. Connolly's lectures were mainly devoted to an exposition of the elementary and fundamental principles of Socialism. He represented Socialism as being not a theory conceived by the mind of one man, or any number of men, but as a tendency existing in and resulting from the forces latent in modern industry. Modern society had developed antagonistic elements - the two classes bourgeoisie and proletariat - whose interests were necessarily and inevitably hostile in the nature of things, an antagonism which no conceivable device could bring to an end, save the political and social supremacy of the proletariat and the extinction of the bourgeoisie as a class, by the expropriation of the means of production, distribution and exchange, which was the basis of their classhood'.²⁷

From Falkirk, Connolly went first to Aberdeen, where he spent the week June 24th - 29th,²⁸ and then to Leith for the first week of

25. Edinburgh Evening News, 21 May 1901.

26. Justice, 22 June 1901. Matheson used the pseudonym of "Sans Culotte".

27. Falkirk Mail, 22nd June 1901.

28. Justice, 29 June 1901.

July. Bad weather continued to disrupt his meetings. Despite this disappointment, the Leith branch was fulsome in its praise of Connolly's speaking ability and his theoretical soundness;

'Comrade Connolly is certainly one of the best propagandists we have. While his lectures are scientifically accurate, they are at the same time, so simple that even the most dense of his hearers cannot fail to grasp their meaning. like our Falkirk comrades we can recommend the English branches to secure his services ...' 29

By the second week in July, Connolly had left Scotland and travelled South to Salford: an advertisement for a return visit to Salford at the end of August details his current lecture repertoire; "Labour and Revolution", "Capitalist Paradoxes", "The Politics of Labour", "Socialism and War", "Socialist Teaching Made Easy", "The American Socialist Movement" and "Labour and Revolution in Ireland".

At the 21st Annual Conference of the S.D.F. held in the Town Hall, Birmingham, on August 4th and 5th, 1901, it became clear that the organisation faced a revolt of major proportions from its Scottish membership. The official view readily compared the Scottish dissidents with Morris's anti-parliamentary followers of 1884/5, who had split with the Federation and formed the now defunct Socialist League. According to the leadership, the Birmingham Conference was:

'... one of the most critical in S.D.F. history ... we here had developed and brought to the light of day an attack on the whole policy of the S.D.F. and Justice which has long been in preparation by a few who wish to sidetrack the Socialist Movement in this country into the impossibilism which 17 years ago led to the formation and later the collapse of the Socialist League ... [i.e.] ... the wrecking policy ... of comrade Yates of Leith, and those who acted with him'. 30

Yates and Cotton attempted to move resolutions repudiating the action of

29. Justice, 13 July 1901.

30. Justice, 10 August 1901.

the S.D.F. delegates who supported Kautsky's resolution at Paris the previous year. They were backed by Matheson and by William Gee, a Northampton comrade who was then full-time organiser to the Scottish District Council. Gee was seated at the conference as the Edinburgh representative, but his official position as Scottish organiser made him aware that he spoke with a wider mandate from the Scottish branches. Significantly, he denounced Kautsky's resolution in typical De Leonite style, castigating it as an abandonment of the class struggle and as having '... opened the door to all kinds of freaks ...'³¹ Kautsky's resolution was defended by Herbert Burrows and Harry Quelch, speaking for the S.D.F. executive. The challenge of the dissidents had put Quelch into deep ill humour, and it was at this point that he used the phrase "impossibilist"³² to describe what he considered the futility of their approach. He made it clear that he regarded this attack upon Kautsky's resolution as one upon the S.D.F., its leadership and its 'settled policy'. He dryly called to mind a similar move 17 years previously when similar malcontents had withdrawn to form the Socialist League; 'Where was that party now?' he demanded. He carried the mood of the delegates with him as he went on to detail the 'scurrilous attacks' made by the People on Hyndman, himself and other leading

31. Ibid.

32. This was the first time the term "impossibilist" was used in Britain. It was actually an American term, coined during the attempts made in 1900 to form a united Social Democratic Party in the U.S.A. Erstwhile De Leonites who had broken with the S.L.P. of A., clashed within the new organisation with a reformist or "opportunist" faction. This latter faction dubbed the ex S.L.P.'ers as "impossibilists" on account of their opposition to all 'immediate demands' (or palliatives). D. D. Egbert and Stow Persons, Socialism and American Life (Princeton U.P., 1952), I, p.274.

S.D.F. members: the Cotton-Yates amendment against Kautsky's resolution was thrown out by 45 votes to 9, and an additional motion sponsored by Yates and Gee repudiating official policy of exploring the possibility of fusion with the I.L.P. shared the same fate.³³

On the second day of the conference, Monday August 5th, H. W. Lee, S.D.F. national secretary, read a letter from H.M. Hyndman intimating his resignation from the executive; the loss to the organisation of its most prestigious figure was, at this time a severe blow. Hyndman's reasons for his withdrawal were given as: 'I wish to look at matters from the outside'; that he was 'deeply discouraged' by the evident failure of the party's propaganda efforts; that the S.D.F. 'seems wholly destitute of political aptitude', and that he felt that he had made what contribution he could to 'the detail work' of the organisation.³⁴ There had been some trenchant criticism of Hyndman's stand on the South African/imperialist issue by other S.D.F. leaders, notably by his fellow executive member Theodore Rothstein,³⁵ who urged that in terms of general policy the S.D.F. should abandon Hyndman's policy of total non-involvement with trade unions and identify itself more closely with these mass working class organisations.³⁶ Having absorbed the shock of Hyndman's resignation, the conference then approved Quelch's proposal to withdraw from the L.R.C. - a motion to which Yates spoke in support.³⁷ With support from Cotton and Gee, Matheson attempted to move acceptance of his resolution repudiating all alliances with 'any organisation which does not make its principal aim - prosecution of the class war ...' on similar lines to the one he had proposed to the Scottish District Council in March. Quelch rose impatiently to talk out a

33. Ibid.

34. Ibid.

35. Justice, 27 July 1901.

36. Walter Kendall The Revolutionary Movement in Britain (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1969), p.12-13.

37. Justice, 10 August, 1901.

resolution which,

'... would make us political impossibilists. The S.D.F. was possibilist and opportunist ...'. 38

Yates then proposed the formation of a committee 'to devise ways and means for the taking over of Justice by the party'. This was a reflection of the awareness by the dissidents that the People and its press was owned by the American S.L.P., whereas Hyndman was by far the largest shareholder in the 20th Century press, almost to the point of being its proprietor. This motion too was lost after some ill-tempered remarks from Quelch, who then made a final appeal for party unity. Dan Irving, the conference chairman, closed the proceedings by urging:

'... the Scottish members to exercise a spirit of toleration towards others in the organisation from whom they differed'. 39

In the aftermath of the conference, Matheson seized the opportunity afforded by Hyndman's disillusioned resignation, to attack the erstwhile leader's policy. He stressed Hyndman's implicit recognition that the S.D.F. had failed even to promote class consciousness among its own membership. Mere 'possibilist' pursuance of palliatives on elective bodies had necessitated alliances with bourgeois parties, or with class unconscious working class organisations - trade unions and the I.L.P. - and this he characterised as a detour into reformism. 'There is no room', he maintained 'for the S.D.F. as a reform party'.⁴⁰ Gee had been severely criticised for his action at the conference in support of

'... those who came to completely change the S.D.F. out of existence, which is a peculiar policy for an organiser of the organisation itself ...'. 41

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Justice, 17 August 1901.

41. Justice, 10 August 1901.

Gee then offered to resign⁴² since such an impeachment

'cannot do other than play into the hands of those who ... are systematically aiming at the destruction of the S.D.F. ... and this at a most critical period in the organisation of the S.D.F. in Scotland'.

Gee's report, submitted towards the end of August, read like a eulogy of the 'clear cut' activists.⁴³ Leith had 'an able energetic and consistent body of workers' in a 'branch of so-called impossibilists'; while at Falkirk, the year old branch was described as having a 'remarkable' personnel, 'composed of a number of so-called "wreckers".' Matheson was singled out for particular praise as 'one of the best educated and best informed men in the whole movement'. It is clear that deep divisions were appearing in the S.D.F.'s Scottish membership at this time. In Aberdeen a faction of the local branch still adhered to the I.L.P. alliance within the Workers' Election Committee under the leadership of Thomas Kennedy;⁴⁴ while, in Edinburgh a substantial faction, headed by John Leslie, deplored the significance ascribed to 'impossibilist' elements by Gee, and complained about pressure from the Falkirk branch '... trying to force the Federation in Scotland up a cul-de-sac'.⁴⁵ In Edinburgh, feeling was so intense that leaders of both the 'clear cut' and the 'possibilist' elements were seriously considering the expedient of dividing the local organisation. Against this background, and given Connolly's known support for the 'clear cuts', there must have been some tension among Edinburgh comrades during his visit there in May. However, it seems that his position as a guest lecturer made him eschew factionalist statements. During the

42. Justice, 17 August 1901.

43. Justice, 24 August 1901.

44. Justice, 7 September 1901.

45. Justice, 31 August 1901.

latter part of the Summer propaganda season, Connolly was again occupied on a British lecture tour, but confined his attentions to Salford, where he formed a branch of the I.S.R.P. among Irish immigrant mineworkers,⁴⁶ and to the centres of De Leonite influence in England; he spent a week with Cotton in Oxford,⁴⁷ and two days with the Finsbury Park branch of the S.D.F.⁴⁸

On September 21st, Justice printed an article by Rothstein in which he accused what he called the "unholy Scottish Current" within the S.D.F. of being antagonistic to trade unionism. Rothstein deplored the 'abnormal relations between British Socialism and trade unionism' but was fully aware that this was caused by the fact that in Britain trade unionism was established before the Socialist movement. He asserted that 'trade unionism must become part of the Socialist movement or the two are lost'. In this regard, he thought it particularly unfortunate that the "Scottish current" should appear at precisely the conjuncture when two judicial decisions of the Lords⁴⁹ had presented 'a golden opportunity to improve relations'. This article, accusing the Scottish dissidents of nothing short of betrayal of the long term interests of the British labour and socialist movements, appears to have moved John Leslie to give his personal view of the 'present difficulty in Scotland'.⁵⁰ Leslie said that he spoke as one who had 'only the welfare of the S.D.F. at heart' and as an activist who had

46. Justice, 14 September 1901.

47. Justice, 5 October 1901.

48. Justice, 19 October 1901. At Finsbury Park, the comrades were 'much pleased' with Connolly's 'thoroughly Marxian' addresses.

49. The Taff Vale judgment (July 1901) made unions liable for damages incurred by employers during strikes, and in Quinn v. Leatham (August 1901) the Lords gave judgment against a union for boycotting an employer.

50. Justice, 28 September 1901.

struggled consistently for 'the recognition of the revolutionary principle in the labour movement'. He condemned the dissident 'impossibilists' as those 'who seek to antagonise the revolutionary principle with the labour movement in all its manifestations'. The question of alliances was, he said, a subordinate issue for those sectarians 'who desire to pose such antagonism', and who received help from the People, a paper conspicuous for its 'literary black-guardism and scurrility, the weapon of the small mind ...'. Warming to his point, he asked:

'Has Gee never heard a wish expressed for the formation of a branch of the Socialist Labor Party? Has he never heard scabbing advocated? 51 Or the smashing of the trade unions?'

Leslie identified the 'impossibilist' difficulty as - in origin - a perennial one for the movement. Enthusiastic youth in the party always tend to think that Socialism only has to be explained to the people, '... to have the people embrace it en masse'. These young activists,

'... jump to the conclusion that only defects in the advocates or the advocacy of the doctrine can explain the backwardness of the people in accepting it'. Normally, time disillusiones them, but, '... it is a different thing when these young men, speaking in the name of the movement, and having at their back an unscrupulous journalistic partisan, seek to carry out the antagonism I have referred to'.

For Leslie this was a situation which was unequivocally 'mischievous'. He evidenced the recent dispute over policy with regard to relations between the Scottish S.D.F. and the Scottish Workers' Parliamentary

51. British and American Social Democrats readily dismissed De Leon's 'dual unionism' as mere organised scabbery upon the established 'bona fide' trade unions. In Justice, 2 February 1901, Pete Curran of the British Gasworkers, recently back from a visit to the USA, described the Socialist Trade & Labor Alliance as analagous to the British 'Free Labour Associations', supplying scabs to replace strikers: the scabs were then enrolled in the 'dual union'.

Committee. After the severance of formal ties in March, Leslie accused that the 'impossibilist' element wished to attack some of the S.W.P.C. men: men whose reputations 'as whole-hearted workers in the labour movement were above reproach ...'; these worthies were '... to be denounced in a projected manifesto as "freaks" and "fakirs", and "Labour Lieutenants of Capital".' Leslie asked his readers to consider the position of the S.D.F. in the face of the imminent by-election in N.E. Lanark - where the I.L.P.'er and Scottish mineworkers' leader Robert Smillie was standing with S.W.P.C. endorsement - had that manifesto in fact been issued:

'... it would be a woeful day for the S.D.F. in Scotland if, in case of his defeat, that defeat could be attributed in any degree to the S.D.F. So far as effective political work is concerned, it might disband for some years to come'.

Leslie concluded with a demand for more stringent party discipline, asserting that '... for those who will not obey, their place is not within the S.D.F.'.

The week following the appearance of Leslie's statement, Justice printed letters from two Edinburgh 'clear cuts' - J. Robertson and Alex. Anderson - defending the impossibilist position against the approaches of both Rothstein and Leslie.⁵² Defending the 'dual union' line attacked by Rothstein, Robertson quoted Daniel De Leon's Reform or Revolution, to the effect that;

'... of all the revolutionary epochs, the present draws sharpest the lines between conflicting class interests. Hence the organisations of the revolution of our generation must be the most uncompromising of any that yet appeared on the stage of History'.

He denied that the Scots were opposed to trade unionism: they fully appreciated that the workers must be organised on both the political

52. Justice, 5 October 1901.

and the economic fields, but this should be done on 'independent class lines'. Many activists did not 'see eye to eye with Rothstein in regard to "boring from within" in bolstering up the present fakir-ridden trade unions', (the reformist policy despised by De Leon as "Kangaroo" futility). The answer lay in the organisation of Socialist trade unions drawing recruits from the vast majority of the workers who remained as yet untouched by the craft union structure. Robertson defended sectarianism with a neat sense of historical relativism:

'The Communist Manifesto is quoted to show the soundness of your [i.e. the official Social Democratic] position, but surely you must recognise that the conditions which dictated support for the revolutionary bourgeoisie fighting for conditions which were essential to the working class also in their fight against the bourgeoisie, do not exist today'.

Alex. Anderson - at that time secretary of the Edinburgh S.D.F. - made a direct and personal attack upon Leslie: all the latter's fears about the disastrous effects upon the S.D.F. of opposition to non-socialist Labour had been rehearsed when the Scottish branches severed their connection with the S.W.P.C. in March. On Smillie's candidature, he reminded Leslie that the S.D.F. executive had decided not to support him;

'We know he ran as a Home Ruler and catered for the Irish vote, but whatever effect that might have on Leslie, to the Socialist it means nothing'.

Anderson suggested that Leslie was in contravention of S.D.F. rules in terms of his support for such a non-socialist candidacy. William Gee weighed in against Leslie shortly afterwards, deploring his 'unconscious treachery' and his 'maladroit and utterly unscientific arguments'.⁵³ The preponderance of the 'clear cut' strength within the Scottish S.D.F. was well demonstrated at the half yearly meeting of the

53. Justice, 12 October 1901.

Scottish District Council on September 22nd; 19 delegates were present, representing 10 branches, and despite Leslie's expressed reservations it was decided to re-issue the manifesto 'agreed upon at the Falkirk meeting of the Council in March', and that it should be brought up to date for immediate circulation, in view of the impending N.E. Lanark contest.⁵⁴

In this situation, James Connolly's support for the Scottish 'clear cuts' was unequivocal, and he readily offered them all the moral and material aid he could. It is clear that in terms of the Irish context, the vital issue of the types of alliances permitted by genuine class-conscious policy was a particularly urgent one. At this time, Connolly had cause to be especially vexed by the British I.L.P.'s electoral alliance with the Irish Parliamentary party led by John Redmond. As regards the position in Britain, Connolly said;

'We do not propose to criticise Hardie's voting alliance with the Home Rulers, but a voting alliance need not be accompanied by indiscriminate praise of your temporary allies'.⁵⁵

In other words, he feared that too deep a commitment to alliances - albeit of a temporary nature - with class unconscious bodies such as the capitalist Home Rule party, would lead to the adoption of incorrect policy lines not based on a class standpoint. However, what might be excused in terms of theoretical muddle from the non-marxist I.L.P. could not be lightly tolerated from the S.D.F. For Connolly, the denial of the class line implicit in the reduction of the Millerand issue to a matter of tactics, was not simply a doctrinaire point: it went to the heart of the very basis of working class organisation in Ireland, given that country's relationship of imperial dependence on Great Britain.

54. Ibid.

55. Workers' Republic, October 1901.

It is in the anti-imperialist sense that Connolly's attempt to build a class conscious workers' movement in Ireland gravitated naturally to a "sectarianism" vis a vis the British socialist bodies. The S.D.F. opposition to the separate seating of the Irish delegation at the Paris congress showed the inability of the British marxists generally to conceive of an Irish working class movement outside the imperial structure. Hyndman's longstanding solution to the political aspects of the Irish problem was simply to deny any possibility of real self expression of Irish nationhood; he had supported Home Rule consistently out of a belief '... in the widest possible extension of the principle of local self government'.⁵⁶ He had glibly dismissed separatist nationalism with the advocacy of the formula of 'Complete national independence for each of the different nationalities in these islands, and federation of the whole'.⁵⁷ These views had remained essentially unchanged by 1901: in an article written in November, Hyndman reiterated S.D.F. support for Home Rule in similar imperial terms. He opined that if the Irish were given such responsible government, they would not prove themselves in the least anti-imperialist, but would govern themselves efficiently and remain loyal, on similar lines to the Canadians.⁵⁸ Thus, British socialist support for Irish Home Rule was limited precisely to that limited form of local autonomy and nothing more: this was strikingly at variance with the I.S.R.P. position that a Home Rule parliament would merely be an interim measure, and indeed one that might actually strengthen the power of the Irish capitalists vis a vis the Irish workers in the short term.⁵⁹

56. Justice, 17 September 1892.

57. Justice, 18 February 1893.

58. Justice, 30 November 1901.

59. James Connolly, Erin's Hope, p.10-11.

Given these known limitations of British socialists, sectarianism was a natural means of self expression for the Irish Socialist Republicans,

'We ask nothing from the English democracy but we do not wish to cross one another's path. We believe the Irish working class are strong enough to fight their own battles and we would be the last to advise them to seek outside help in the struggle that lies before them'. 60

Connolly hoped that through rank and file discussion of the whole 'opportunist' problem, the broad mass of S.D.F. members might be won over to the 'impossibilist' position. However, although he opposed at this time all notions of a sectarian walkout by the S.D.F. 'impossibilists', he had determined to give all possible support to any projected attempt by the De Leonite faction, to take control of the organisation. Their lack of a paper and of printing facilities was a crippling deficiency for the Scots dissidents, since they were unable to counter the "official" arguments as then expressed in Justice. Connolly was prepared to commit his own party paper to the struggle - at the expense of immediate propaganda needs in Ireland - so important did he consider the need of the Scots to be. In a letter written to Alex. Anderson as secretary of the Edinburgh S.D.F. in November 1901, he said;

'... I must take this opportunity to congratulate you on the magnificent stand made by the Scotch, and more especially the Edinburgh comrades against the present compromising policy of the leaders of the S.D.F. Things may seem to look dangerous for you at present, but time is on your side, and when the English branches really realise the issues at stake and understand your position, the triumph will be yours. I speak with the knowledge of one who having been all through England, KNOWS that the only hope of the gang in power is to keep the English comrades ignorant. The present issue of our paper is primarily intended to prevent that hope being realised by giving the large number of English branches who now take our paper, a more clear exposition of this question than JUS'TICE has allowed them to have.

60. Workers' Republic, October 1901.

'I only wish our paper was bigger or that our plant was more suitable for rapid printing than it is at present, but we are but poor and we are still short of the cash necessary to supply us with a quick printing machine, but such help as we have we will readily give to you.

'I would only say in conclusion to beware of all dodges and devices to drive you out of the S.D.F. Help in the organisation, do not be brow-beaten, nor get disgusted; for the sake of those who are in, remain in also, and sooner or later you will find your policy tacitly adopted by the whole body, even if they do not admit their indebtedness to you'. 61

Connolly must have been encouraged in his efforts to convert the S.D.F. from within by current developments in London socialist circles. In October, the De Leonist leader of the Finsbury Park S.D.F., Percy Friedberg, had written him to advise that his branch had decided to take a dozen Workers' Republics each month. Further, London "Impossibilists" had challenged the S.D.F. leadership openly by giving notice of a motion for the next metropolitan quarterly meeting on the issue of whether social democrats were to be driven out of the party '... for refusing to believe in co-operation with capitalist and class unconscious labour factions'.⁶² In mid-December, Friedberg wrote again with fulsome praise for the November issue of the Workers' Republic. Its London customers were, he said, 'very impressed' by its thorough treatment of the whole "opportunist" issue. As a direct result, the Marylebone branch of the S.D.F. had now decided to place a substantial order for the I.S.R.P. paper. Friedberg confidently anticipated an "impossibilist" take over of the S.D.F. executive at the party's annual conference due to be held at Easter, 1902.⁶³

61. Memo from Connolly to Anderson, 1 November 1901. Reprinted in Socialist Standard, October 1973. Unfortunately there is no extant copy of the crucial November 1901 issue of the Workers' Republic.

62. Friedberg to Connolly, London, 21 October 1901.

63. Friedberg to Connolly, London, 16 December 1901.

At this time, Connolly found that he had a personal bone to pick with the S.D.F. leadership. For the Dublin Municipal elections of January 1902, the I.S.R.P. put up three candidates, Connolly himself standing in Wood Quay ward. The Redmondite Home Rulers of the United Irish League opposed the I.S.R.P. candidates with their utmost vigour, and in his election address, Connolly drew attention to the U.I.L.'s 'inconsistent and treacherous' policy of flirting with Labour and Socialist candidacies in Britain, while vehemently opposing such candidacies in Dublin.⁶⁴ Harry Quelch was then standing as S.D.F. candidate in a parliamentary by-election in Dewsbury, and hoped that the U.I.L. might support him. During the course of the Dublin municipal campaign, the I.S.R.P. had issued a manifesto to British socialists denouncing the I.L.P./U.I.L. electoral alliance in terms of the U.I.L.'s inveterate hostility to Labour in Ireland: Justice did not publish this appeal to the "International Solidarity of Labour" until its March 29th issue, and Connolly accused Quelch of suppressing it until the campaign in Dewsbury had ended. Connolly noted that,

'Our manifesto was noticed favourably in the Socialist press of Germany, France and America: that it should be ignored by the English socialists, to whom it was addressed, was not calculated to the promotion of fraternal feelings between us'.⁶⁵

The total disregard for this appeal by the Labour Leader and its belated publication in Justice, came as further proof to Connolly that in Britain, the Irish Socialist Republicans could expect genuine internationalist solidarity only from the De Leonite fellow travellers within the S.D.F. Matheson had hastened to assure him in November of

64. Justice, 7 December 1901.

65. Justice, 29 March 1902.

the inveterate hostility on the part of Scottish branches such as Falkirk and Edinburgh, to the current 'Bernsteinian tendencies' within the British socialist movement. He indicated widespread resentment among the Scottish membership against the S.D.F. executive's tacit support for Smillie and his U.I.L. allies, and against the suppression of Connolly's manifesto. He concluded, '... we're not all fakirs or fakir-led over here ...'⁶⁶ Early in the new year, a rather more flamboyant assurance of solidarity on the part of the Glasgow S.D.F. was given by Yates. After some trouble with the 'Kangs' in the branch, (moderates disposed to support non-socialist "labour" candidacies), he boasted that,

'... our side have straightened up their backs ... and are going to settle the business without any further toleration of the degenerates'.⁶⁷

During the course of November 1901, John Leslie and his associates had been expelled from the Edinburgh S.D.F., but were given sanction by the Executive to constitute themselves as a separate branch of the organisation. They immediately formed themselves into the Edinburgh (Eastern) S.D.F., of which Leslie became chairman.⁶⁸ At the same time, George Yates and the Glasgow S.D.F. were preparing to establish a Scottish agency of De Leon's New York Labor News Co., with the avowed intention to 'flood the party with S.L.P. literature and the People.⁶⁹ With an eye to the convening of the S.D.F. annual conference at the end of the month, Connolly wrote to Matheson in mid-March urging him to formulate "impossibilist" criticism in terms of principles rather than personalities.

66. Matheson to Connolly, Greenock, 11 November 1901.

67. Yates to Connolly, [January?] 1902.

68. Justice, 16 November 1901.

69. Yates to Daily and Weekly People, November 1901. Reprinted in Justice, 1 March 1902.

He was clearly anxious about the influence of Harry Quelch, an adept platform performer and infighter, and now - after the resignation of Hyndman - the unrivalled leader of the S.D.F. He advised,

'... re Quelch. I would advise you to go slow in attacking him just now. Rather get the conference to discuss the principles of tactics, and object to Quelch obtruding his personality into the subject under discussion'.⁷⁰

Connolly followed this advice with a letter written the following day urging Matheson to defend the "impossibilists" against the charge of intriguing against the party by making reference to the unconstitutional activities of both the Aberdeen and the East Edinburgh membership.⁷¹

In his subsequent protest to Justice, Matheson carried out Connolly's instructions almost verbatim. He deplored the action of the 'possibilist Gironde' of Aberdeen in co-operating with the 'class unconscious proletaires' of the Workers' Election Committee, and demanded its expulsion and thorough reorganisation. Referring to the formation of the East Edinburgh branch, Matheson said:

'It is a matter of common scandal in the Scottish Labour Movement that members of the Edinburgh branch who were expelled for breach of rules in supporting Robert Smillie in N.E. Lanark (the protege of the bourgeois U.I.L. and the supporter of alien exclusion, Catholic Universities and increased grants for sectarian education) against the declared orders of the Executive Committee, were within a fortnight given sanction ... to establish another branch in the same town'.⁷²

The following week;⁷³ Quelch asserted that Matheson '... and his friends have done the movement considerable harm in Scotland'. Quoting from

70. Connolly to Matheson, Dublin, 13 March 1902.

71. Connolly to Matheson, Dublin, 14 March 1902.

72. Justice, 22 March 1902.

73. Justice, 29 March 1902.

'a member of Falkirk branch' he stated that under Matheson's direction, that branch had passed a resolution '... which practically prevented any member from holding any official position in a trade union'.⁷⁴

Further,

'The "leader" [Matheson] ... admitted that when the time was ripe, which was not yet, they would form a branch of the S.L.P. ...'.

According to Quelch's informant, the activists of Falkirk were even then raising funds for production of a paper similar to the People, were systematically boycotting Justice and, in general, were simply using the S.D.F.'s name as a cover.

When the delegates to the S.D.F.'s 22nd Annual Conference did assemble in Blackburn on March 28th, it was apparent that the 'clear cut' dissidents were a severe embarrassment to the leadership's hopes for 'socialist unity' with the I.L.P. They were denounced in Justice as;

'... the little knot of irreconcilables who appear to have got the upper hand in two or three of the Scottish branches ... their intransigence and political ineptitude afford an excellent text for trimmers to preach from, against anything like an amalgamation of Socialist forces'.⁷⁵

Bickering between the Scottish factions took up much of the conference's time. The delegates from Aberdeen and East Edinburgh - Kennedy and Gunn - objected to the Scottish District Council's candidates for election to the S.D.F. Executive - Anderson and Matheson - on the grounds that,

74. It was mandatory within the American S.L.P. that members should not hold office in "pure and simple" trade unions. Quelch's information was correct. Matheson had himself described the decision (and the resultant expulsion of 4 "Kangaroos") in a letter to Connolly from Greenock, dated 4 March 1902.

75. Justice, 5 April 1902.

'... these men had been acting contrary to the general policy and spirit of the S.D.F. ...'. 76

In the upshot, Leslie himself was returned to the Executive, the other Scottish representatives being Anderson, and John Armour of Glasgow.⁷⁷ Anderson proposed that the East Edinburgh branch be dissolved, and in this attempt was supported by the English "impossibilists", Percy Friedberg and E. E. Hunter, the delegates from Finsbury Park and Bethnal Green: the motion was massively defeated. Quelch then spoke for the Executive about the desirability of cultivating good relations between the socialist movement and the trade unions - particularly in the light of the Lords decisions in the Taff Vale and Quinn v. Leatham cases. Yates, speaking for the Leith S.D.F. immediately moved,

'the formation ... of trade unions on Social Democratic lines, the formation, development and propaganda of which shall form part of the functions of the S.D.F.' 78.

This appeal for commitment to a dual union policy was seconded by Anderson, but was also massively defeated. On the final day of the conference, Sunday March 30th, the 'impossibilists' unsuccessfully opposed a proposal for a socialist unity convention at which the S.D.F., I.L.P., Fabian Society and the Morrisite Kelmscott Club⁷⁹ would all be represented. Edinburgh branch resolutions disallowing joint S.D.F./I.L.P. membership and shared speaking platforms with the I.L.P. were also lost. The events of the Blackburn conference were a severe lesson for the De Leonite dissidents: despite consistent mutual support between the Scottish

76. Ibid.

77. Armour had "Kangarooed" early in 1902; Yates to Connolly, [January?] 1902.

78. Justice, 5 April 1902.

79. An organisation which was a "rump" of the old Socialist League.

and London "impossibilists" they had been unable to muster more than a dozen delegate votes in support of their various proposals. Discouraged by this lack of support from the general membership, the Scottish 'clear cuts' began to despair of the hope of converting the organisation from within - as advocated by Connolly in his letter of November 1st, 1901 to Anderson: henceforth, the establishment of a new party, based upon their capture of the Scottish District Council, seemed the most sensible course open to them. John Leslie, speaking now as a member of the national executive, applauded the conference's condemnation of what he called '... insolent and ruffianly Yankee interference'. In a thinly veiled reference to Connolly and the I.S.R.P. he continued:

'But there is another outside interference, nearer home, which while neither ruffianly nor insolent is none the less to be deprecated. The parties concerned will know what is meant ...' 80.

Connolly crossed over to Scotland at the beginning of April,⁸¹ and the short letters he wrote at this time to Tom Lyng, I.S.R.P. secretary, help trace his movements and activities. After his arrival, on April 10th, he seems to have spent about two weeks in the Edinburgh area, before visiting Glasgow. He wrote to Lyng from Leith on the 15th, and was in Glasgow by the 21st.⁸² While in Edinburgh he had had some bitter exchanges with John Leslie who had, he reported, 'turned Kangaroo'. Despite this personal and ideological divergence, Leslie had made a small contribution to I.S.R.P. funds, and Connolly asked Lyng to arrange a subscription to the Workers' Republic for him.⁸³ Connolly had been advertised as principal speaker at the Edinburgh S.D.F.'s May Day

80. Justice, 12 April 1902.

81. He was scheduled to arrive at Greenock on April 4th. Connolly to Matheson, Dublin, 24 March 1902.

82. Connolly to Lyng, Leith, 15 April 1902.

83. Connolly to Lyng, Glasgow, 21 April 1902.

Demonstration, to be held on Thursday, May 1st, in the East Meadows.⁸⁴
The De Leonites of the Edinburgh branch carried their sectarian proclivities to the length of a refusal to co-operate in a joint demonstration with the local I.L.P., the Trades Council and the East Edinburgh S.D.F., to be held on May 3rd. Anderson reported that the success of the May 1st meeting proved that the S.D.F., when willing, was well able to stand alone,⁸⁵ and that 'Our comrades here who spent the two nights previous to May Day in chalking the pavements of the city ... were more than repaid' by a 'stirring address' from James Connolly. It was, he said,

'a brilliant and telling exposition of the class struggle of today ... [couched in] ... words of hatred and revolt against the enslavement and degradation of his class'.⁸⁶

The sectarian cast of Connolly's speech is unmistakably De Leonite in inspiration; with

'an eloquence unsurpassed in those meadows [Connolly] dealt with the mission of the working class, expressing his complete faith in its own strength and ultimate success as a class: he brought his address to a close with an impassioned appeal to his hearers to rally to the side of the S.D.F. as the only party in Scotland worthy of their confidence ...'⁸⁷

The resolution put at the close of the meeting was couched in explicit terms advocating the S.L.P. policy line of "dual unionism". It exhorted the workers

'... to rally to that party whose mission it is to organise on the economic and political field for the overthrow of capitalism ...'⁸⁸

84. Justice, 24 April 1902. Edinburgh Evening News, 1 May 1902.

85. Justice, 17 May 1902.

86. *Ibid.*

87. *Ibid.*

88. *Ibid.*

Connolly was later entertained by the branch at an evening gathering in its rooms in Drummond Street, where he gave 'a short address' to the members.

The theme of Connolly's Edinburgh May Day speech - the insistence upon the necessity of class conscious exclusivity within the workers' movement - had already appeared in the American S.L.P. republication of his booklet Erin's Hope issued in February. In this version, his prior emphasis upon the utility of concrete palliative reforms⁸⁹ was replaced by an abstract sectarianism:

'The Irish Working Class must emancipate itself, and in emancipating itself it must, perforce, free its country ... the first actions of a revolutionary army must harmonise in principle with those likely to be its last, and ... therefore, no revolutionists can safely invite the co-operation of men or classes whose ideals are not theirs and whom, therefore, they may be compelled to fight at some future critical stage ... The freedom of the Working Class must be the work of the Working Class'.⁹⁰

Connolly remained in Edinburgh until Sunday, May 11th, and his meetings were advertised daily in the local Evening News. On both Sundays, 4th and 11th, he spoke in the Meadows, while on the Monday, Wednesday and Friday, he held forth at the Mound. Nicolson Square was his venue on the Tuesday and Rodney Street on Thursday.⁹¹ The Eastern branch discreetly avoided these locations, deciding on Calton Hill as the site to open their open-air propaganda on Sunday, May, 4th.⁹² Connolly spent the second half of May in the Glasgow area, and it is evident at this time that he was conscious of both the crucial nature of his personal influence in the controversy which then divided British Socialists, and of the limitations of that influence. From Govan, he wrote to Lyng

89. See p. 77 above.

90. James Connolly, Erin's Hope (New York Labor News Co. 1902), p.48-9.

91. Edinburgh Evening News, 3 May 1902.

92. Ibid.

to urge the necessity of re-activating branches of the I.S.R.P. outside Dublin which had become defunct. If this could be done, it would give him a greater personal standing in British circles as a representative of a wider area.⁹³ In the first week of June, Connolly lectured for the tiny and struggling S.D.F. branch in Kirkcaldy,⁹⁴ before going on to visit Dundee and the Aberdeen "Gironde".⁹⁵ By the last week in June he was back in Falkirk, speaking for Matheson's branch, where his Scottish tour ended.⁹⁶ Connolly's current ideological penchant - as well as his professionalism - is well illustrated by his 1902 lecture diet. He then offered new prepared lectures on "The Working Class and Trusts" and "Socialism and Imperialism", both of which dealt with the increasingly ramified economic relations of international capitalism; two other new lectures, "The Mission of the Working Class" - which he had delivered in Edinburgh on May Day - and "Trade Unionism, Its Limitations" were vehicles for De Leonite arguments.⁹⁷ Perhaps more important than his lecturing work, were the preparatory discussions he held, especially with Yates and Matheson, for the launching of that Scottish "De Leonite" paper rumoured to be in preparation by Quelch at the end of March.⁹⁸ Since the Scots still lacked printing facilities, Connolly undertook to print the paper on the I.S.R.P. plant in Dublin; Yates and Matheson were to be joint editors.

93. Connolly to Tom Lyng, Govan, Glasgow, 26 May 1902.

94. Connolly to Lyng, Kirkcaldy, 2 June 1902. Justice 12 July 1902.

95. Justice, 20 September 1902.

96. Connolly to Lyng, Falkirk, 23 June 1902.

97. Justice, 5 July, 9 August, 1902.

98. See p. 115 above. Connolly to Matheson, Leith, 9 May 1902.

The establishment of a Scottish socialist paper, to be the organ of the S.D.F.'s Scottish District Council, had been a project desired for some time by leading Scottish activists.⁹⁹ While, in one sense, this demand was in line with a Scottish sectionalism which, since the late 1880's, had been impatient and critical of the metropolitan dominance within the British Left,¹⁰⁰ the circumstances of the paper's birth in 1902 meant that it was a De Leonite challenge to the S.D.F. leadership and to its mouthpiece, Justice. The "impossibilists" within the S.D.F., both in England and Scotland not only read the Weekly People regularly, but found that it could be an alternative publicity medium when Quelch closed the columns of Justice to them. On March 1st, Justice republished from the People a letter from an anonymous Scottish dissident (actually George Yates) which purported to:

'... explain the "Unholy Scotch Current" which the People has incited and which is the first promise seen here for a long time that we too in Great Britain shall enjoy a bona fide Socialist and Labour Movement ás America does through the fighting S.L.P.'

In August, Quelch revealed to the readership of Justice that Matheson had been engaged in writing a series of articles for the People with the thematic title of "Stalwart Class Conscious Workers Expose the Fraudulent S.D.F."¹⁰¹ Polemic apart, when Percy Friedberg had written to the Weekly People in April about certain inaccuracies in the official report of the Blackburn Conference, a communication which had been

99. Justice, 2 March 1901.

100. See Chapter 1 , p. 5-6 above.

101. Justice, 16 August 1902.

rejected by Quelch for publication, he, together with the entire membership of the Finsbury Park branch who stood by his action, was expelled summarily from the S.D.F.¹⁰² At this initial stage, it seems that the Scots hoped for additional financial support for their paper from the newly egregious Finsbury Park socialists; indeed their leader, Friedberg, had acted as linkman between the Scottish and London "impossibilists" since the Blackburn conference.¹⁰³ Meanwhile, Connolly himself was preparing to leave for the USA: he had been invited to undertake a three-months' lecture tour for the American S.L.P., and had accepted with enthusiasm.¹⁰⁴ Connolly sailed from Liverpool in the last week of August, but not before he had seen the first issue of the new Scottish paper off the press. The Socialist was published for the S.D.F.'s Scottish District Council at 6, Drummond Street, Edinburgh, and printed by the I.S.R.P. press - the Workers' Publishing Co. - at 6 Lower Liffey Street, Dublin. It was presented to the workers of Scotland in the hope that:

'Here in Scotland, we look forward to the Scottish working class maintaining that position of sturdy independence and fighting strength for their class which they have in days gone by allowed to be used against it. This journal will assist to that end.'¹⁰⁵

The appearance of the Socialist marked a turning point in the history of the Scottish Left. Having acquired - through the instrumentality of James Connolly - a propagandist organ of their own, Scottish marxists might feel themselves free to pursue a more autonomous form of propaganda, no longer being simply a small "unholy current" within the

102. Justice, 30 August 1902: Tsuzuki, "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.389.

103. Ibid.

104. Socialist, September 1902.

105. Socialist, August 1902.

mainstream of British Social Democracy. However, in their zeal to maintain a 'sturdy independence' for the Scottish working class movement, they now appeared ready to replace the tutelage of London with that of New York.

Marxism - De Leonism and Beyond

It had been a consistent charge levelled at the "impossibilists" by the S.D.F. leadership that they were in principle opposed both to political action and to agitation for "palliative" measures for improvements in working conditions and remuneration. In this regard, Quelch had made the comparison between the "impossibilist" malcontents and the anti-parliamentary founders of the old Socialist League, at the 1901 S.D.F. conference; and Rothstein had written his original letter anent the 'unholy Scottish current' and its supposed hostility to trade unionism. Hyndman himself reiterated this double charge in April 1902 in a leading article in Justice, in which he attacked the "impossibilist" stand with the assertion that palliatives and politics were essential to the programme of revolutionary Social Democracy. He compared the principled opposition of the "impossibilist" faction to the new interest shown by trade unions in politics, with the old Anarchist policy of support for 'our non-political trade unions on that ground', and accused the dissidents of a non-marxist ignorance of historical development and unconcern for concrete social conditions. He concluded with the pithy formula that 'Impossibilists are only

Anarchists in Socialist clothing¹.

The S.D.F. leadership and the Scots dissidents agreed that the political response of the trade union movement to the Lords' decisions of 1901 was a crucial factor for the future development of socialist strategy.² The S.D.F. attitude, as laid down by its Blackburn conference, remained; no alliances with trade unions in support of non-socialist aims or candidacies, but 'hearty co-operation' with unions whenever they took action 'on socialist lines'.³ The official line was further amplified by Theodore Rothstein as:

'Socialists MAY run as trade union candidates, and consequently are entitled to our support, if they openly and explicitly, before both the electors and those who bring them forward, reserve to themselves the right to act on all general political questions according to their socialist convictions'.

On 'pure and simple' labour candidacies he said,

'In all cases where the trade union candidate does not declare his intention to act on all questions beyond his election programme as a socialist, socialists must remain neutral'.⁴

The first issue of the Socialist announced the candidacy of George Yates in the next Parliamentary election to be held in the Leith Burghs division, a commitment which would be the S.D.F.'s first parliamentary campaign in Scotland.⁵ Meanwhile, the Scots threw themselves into the local election campaigns of late 1902: Scottish S.D.F. candidates stood in two wards in Glasgow, two in Falkirk and one in Leith.⁶ The Socialist urged participation in all forms of electoral activity - parliamentary and municipal - with a view to 'the political and

-
1. Justice, 5 April 1902.
 2. Matheson in Justice, 22 March 1902: Justice editorial, 26 July 1902.
 3. Justice, 2 August 1902.
 4. Justice, 30 August 1902.
 5. Socialist, August 1902.
 6. Socialist, November, December 1902.

economic overthrow of the capitalist class by striking at the ballot box'.⁷

'The working class must be their own emancipators, they and themselves alone ... [through] ... consciously using their power as citizens, concentrated on some chosen champion at the ballot box'.⁸

The most vehement opposition to these Scottish candidacies came from I.L.P. and trade union backed Workers' Representation Committee men, and these 'fakirs' were fought with sectarian verve. If the Scots were therefore untroubled by the tortuous electoral politicking which concerned Rothstein and the metropolitan leadership, their involvement in the unprecedented campaign of 1902 remains ample answer to the charge of their being anti-political.

Hyndman's concern about impossibilist rejection of the importance of palliatives was really something of a canard. The De Leonite notion of 'striking at the ballot box'⁹ was based upon an updated analysis of the problems of the late 19th century labour movement which made such straightforward concern for the elementary utility (or otherwise) of palliatives per se, seem antediluvian. The leading article in the October Socialist, on the subject of the 1902 Trade Union Congress, amplified the point at issue. Here, the Taff Vale verdict was referred to as:

'a mere reflex in the political and juridical plane of what had already taken place in the economic plane'.

7. Socialist, August 1902.

8. Ibid.

9. Socialist, August 1902.

The recent rush into political action on the part of craft union leaders who had hitherto supported Liberal candidacies, was evidenced in a new 'clamour for "labour" representation'. The aim of this move was:

'Not the emancipation of the working class, but simply the perpetuation of the existent form of trade union organisation, with its secretaryships, organiserships, delegations - and the salaries attached'.

However, the article argued that even before the Taff Vale decision, the existing form of trade union organisation had become tactically bankrupt: huge combinations of employers and industrial trusts were becoming the norms of capitalist organisation, and these it was fallacious to fight 'by mere economic organisation'. The following month, Yates included in the paper an article which dealt with "The Passing of 'Old' Trade Union Methods".¹⁰ 'Trustified capital', it argued had rendered the strike weapon impotent, and hence the old trade union structure was now obsolescent. During the heyday of entrepreneurial capital - when labour had no political power and when employers were financially weak and fiercely competitive among themselves - the trade union of the old type was of great benefit to the working class. Under modern conditions it could be nothing more than 'a cumbersome fetish'. Realising the need for new weapons in the fight against trusts and their crucial power of political lobbying, the Socialist urged:

'... the extension of union principles to the ballot box ... [because] ... with the passing of time and the development of capital, the old style union has lost the greater part of its usefulness'.

These arguments were a familiar restatement of issues raised by De Leon himself in his two booklets What Means This Strike? and

10. Socialist, November 1902.

Reform or Revolution. However, the problem of the 'American model' of a trust-dominated economy was generally evident, and had become the subject of much public discussion, in Britain by the turn of the century. Indeed, the potential legal and economic power of such industrial structures had already, before Taff Vale, disposed certain British trade union leaders to take a new look at the need for political action.¹¹ As we have seen, the S.D.F. leadership's response to the problem - especially as elaborated by Rothstein - had in effect been a pedantic recipe for inaction: this had amounted to a reaffirmation of the S.D.F.'s persistent denial of the utility of economic organisation per se. The S.D.F.'s enthusiasm for palliatives was an enthusiasm for political reforms achieved through legislative action, and had nothing at all to do with the economic struggle of the unions. This incorrigible disregard for the value of trade unionism remained a consistent feature of S.D.F. policy right up to the Great War and beyond, statements about 'hearty co-operation' notwithstanding.¹² In this regard, the political stand of the Scots dissidents, together with their demand for an S.D.F. lead in the institution of 'dual unions' at the Blackburn conference, represented the emergence of a definitive policy towards trade unions within the S.D.F. for the first time in its history.

Another significant aspect of the election campaigns of 1902/3 was the solidarity felt between the Scottish S.D.F. and Connolly's I.S.R.P. The Scots had approached the matter with a desire for strict moral probity. When confronted by a body such as the L.R.C. they found

11. Pelling, Origins of the Labour Party, p.214-5.

12. Collins, "The Marxism of the S.D.F." p.55-7.

only 'two logical and honest choices': one should either join wholeheartedly 'and loyally abide by its choice of candidate - whether socialist or not' (the I.L.P. line), or remain aloof and 'treat it simply as a fresh political development of the clashing and contending interests of capitalist society'.¹³ The S.D.F. was at fault - according to the Scots - in that it did neither the one nor the other; but having withdrawn nationally from the L.R.C. was to be found sending delegates locally to divisional L.R.C. meetings, attempting to secure nomination of socialist candidates. This the Socialist criticised as 'a ridiculous and absurd policy': the S.D.F. should choose its own candidate, formulate its own platform and subsequently approach trade unions for support. If this was unforthcoming, then:

'... remember that those who are not with you are against you, is the salt and savour of revolutionary policy'.¹⁴

In the event, trade union support was thrown against the Scottish S.D.F. in the 1902 campaign, and the Socialist for January 1903 reported the I.S.R.P. stand in the current municipal elections in Dublin in similar vein. Connolly had returned from the USA just in time to offer himself as one of the two I.S.R.P. candidates in these elections: both were defeated with a reduced vote on the party's showing the previous year. The Scottish paper drew attention to collaboration between the "Dublin Labour Party" - the electoral organisation of the Dublin Trades Council - and the capitalist United Irish League in an amusing item entitled "Labour and Nationality get together - in each other's hair". It reported that the I.S.R.P. opposed

13. Socialist, October 1902.

14. Ibid.

both the U.I.L. and this bogus labour body. Connolly had consistently criticised the performance of this body since 1899, when he had described it as using 'the name of labour as a cover for the intrigues of a clique'.¹⁵ In 1903, neither of the I.S.R.P. candidates was actually opposed by "labour" men, and Connolly was in part sponsored by his own union, the United Labourers of Ireland. Nevertheless, it was clear that both the I.S.R.P. and the Scottish S.D.F. had taken a pronounced stand against non-socialist "Labour representation" bodies, in a way that the S.D.F. metropolitan leadership refused to risk. In this connection the Socialist persistently criticised the treachery of the I.L.P. in terms of its electoral alliance with the U.I.L. 'which our comrades of the I.S.R.P. have to fight in Dublin and other parts of Ireland'.¹⁶

The De Leonite tone of the Socialist consisted not only in the obvious source of inspiration for articles written by Scottish activists themselves - especially Yates and Matheson - but also in excerpts from De Leon's own works and reprinted items from various S.L.P. journals. Papers like the Socialist, chronically short of copy and of competent staff, were naturally heavily dependent upon reprinted items and exchange of material with other struggling journals. In this regard, the Socialist was able to draw on a fair number of American and Australian S.L.P. sources: these included the New York Daily and Weekly People, the Brisbane Worker, the Sydney People and the Brockton Vanguard, on a more or less regular basis. Thus the Edinburgh Socialist should be seen as the latest addition to a De Leonite press that could be considered global in range; it was in this sense that

15. Workers' Republic, 16 September 1899.

16. Socialist, March 1903.

De Leon might have justifiable grounds to hope that the S.L.P. would emerge as the organised expression of socialism within the entire English-speaking world. At a mass meeting in the Lyceum Annex, New York, on January 2nd 1903, 'held to bid farewell to comrade Connolly on his departure from America', De Leon had averred that '... it was the historic mission of America to liberate the world'.¹⁷ He envisaged that competition between American trusts and the European economy:

'would produce the universal industrial upheaval out of which the world would emerge liberated ... Ireland, Finland, Poland and all subject nations would be freed'.¹⁸

It has been argued that Connolly's absorption in the S.L.P. orbit at this point was such that he returned to the British Isles determined to work for that American socialist Vanguard which held the key to Ireland's emancipation.¹⁹ It is not likely that Connolly had been swept off his feet in this way: indeed, he had written in the S.L.P. press that he found such 'egotistical feeling' to be 'ridiculous', and dismissed such pretensions thus:

'Permit me ... to say that in one respect the S.L.P. is thoroughly American; it has its full share of the American national disease, - Swellhead'.²⁰

Far from disposing him in any way toward becoming an S.L.P. client, it would seem that Connolly's 1902 American tour confirmed him in his resolve to build a genuinely class conscious and autonomous Irish working class organisation.

17. Socialist, January 1903.

18. Ibid.

19. Tsuzuki "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.392.

20. Weekly People, 22nd November 1902; quoted M. O'Riordan, Connolly in America (Irish Communist Organisation, 1971), p.9. See also Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.150-1.

'We believe - that is, the Irish Socialist Republican Party - that the conditions in America are not so rosy as they are painted by Irish middle class politicians, and that if Irishmen were to remain at home and fight for Socialism there, they would in the near future attain to better conditions of life than is possible by merely throwing themselves on the labour market of the United States'. 21

The point is, that Connolly stood in an entirely different relationship to the American S.L.P. than the Scots dissidents. The I.S.R.P. and its organ the Workers' Republic, had been established prior to the outburst of the Millerandist/opportunist controversy, and had come under a post hoc De Leonite influence. Connolly himself had already published his first major work - Erin's Hope - and had laid the theoretical and organisational groundwork for an autonomous propagandist effort in Ireland, before his ideological development involved response to De Leon's thought. As he said himself,

'... the S.L.P. was following in America the same line of action which we in Ireland had mapped out for ourselves before we came in touch with S.L.P. literature ...'. 22

Among the Scots, there was no one of Connolly's stature in terms of either intellectual independence, or theoretical creativity. The "unholy Scotch current" had itself been a response - within the context of the opportunist controversy - to external criticism of the S.D.F. from the American S.L.P. From the first, the Socialist had been a De Leonite inspiration, consciously modelled upon the Weekly People, and the Scots dissidents had readily expressed their rebellion in terms of the desirability of forming Scottish branches of the S.L.P. As Yates had indicated in his anonymous letter to the People in November 1901, the Scotch movement had been incited by that

21. Connolly in Detroit Today, quoted Greaves, p.152.

22. Weekly People, 10 November, 1902; quoted O'Riordan, p.9.

paper's criticisms of the S.D.F.²³ While Connolly had proved himself, and remained, his own man, the Scots dissidents were adherents who were in process of changing allegiance from the "Anglo-Marxism" of the S.D.F. to the "Marxism-De Leonism" of the S.L.P.

There is nothing as indicative of this differential in calibre than the appearance in the Socialist for January 1903, of an initial instalment of Connolly's historical work, Labour in Irish History.

He had turned to the writing of history in order to:

'... do what in us lies to repair the deliberate neglect of the social question by our [i.e. Irish] historians and to prepare the way in order that other and abler pens than our own may demonstrate to the reading public of this island [Ireland] the manner in which economic conditions have, unknown to ourselves, controlled and dominated our history'.²⁴

This article also appeared in the Workers' Republic in February, and was later reworked and expanded to become Chapter 1, "The Lessons of History", in the completed volume published by Maunsel & Co., Dublin, in 1910. This seminal essay by Connolly in the area of creative historiography, contrasts markedly with the literary efforts of the Scottish comrades at that time. These consisted largely of attempts to employ as much De Leonite terminology as possible in polemical denunciations of their opponents. In the same issue of the paper as Connolly's article, an anonymous Scottish activist - probably Neil Maclean of Glasgow - criticised two 'banqueting reformers', I.L.P. members of Glasgow Corporation, for their total lack of a theoretical understanding of the true nature of the subjection of labour, as 'political rocketsticks'. This appellation, implying a

23. Reprinted in Justice, 1 March 1902.

24. Socialist, January 1903.

dazzling but useless attempt to further the working class cause, was drawn from De Leon's Reform or Revolution.²⁵ A more up-to-date example of the same type of approach was the analogy drawn between the attempt by Lord Tweedmouth, chairman of the Scottish Liberal Party, to win over the allegiance of the I.L.P. to that body, and the guile of Menenius Agrippa, the Patrician politician who had persuaded the Plebs of ancient Rome not to secede from the Republic.²⁶ This analogy was suggested by De Leon's Two Pages from Roman History - itself an analogy between the 'misleaders' of the Plebs who proved susceptible to Agrippa's arguments, and the modern day 'misleaders' of the craft unions who readily co-operated with employers in such institutions as the American Civic Federation.²⁷ De Leon's Two Pages was published by the American S.L.P. only in January of that year. Clearly, such derivative work stands no comparison with Connolly's history: it might be said, however, to be in some important respects more in keeping with the propaganda needs of the moment.

The initial instalment of Labour in Irish History dealing with the nature of Irish traditional society - characterised by a communal ownership of land - its forcible dissolution during the English (Cromwellian) conquest of the 17th century, and the resultant middle class dominance within the Irish national movements, is clearly the beginning of a more ambitious treatment of themes already evident in Erin's Hope. In this sense, it is a continuation of Connolly's theoretical work designed to accommodate Socialist ideology with the Irish

25. Daniel De Leon, Reform or Revolution, p.19.

26. Socialist, March 1903.

27. See Raisy, Daniel De Leon, p.7.

nationalist tradition: a commitment that might be described as the "Hibernicisation of Marxism".²⁸ However, Connolly's efforts in this direction were interrupted by the acute financial and personal difficulties which had appeared within the I.S.R.P. during his absence in the USA, and which were to result in the collapse of both the party itself and the Workers' Republic in February-March 1903. Connolly had himself played a major role in the intra-party factional disputes which ruined the organisation, struggling resolutely against what he described as a 'hidden Kang tendency' led by E. W. Stewart. The I.S.R.P. thus became a victim of the abstract absolutism which characterised the ideological climate of this sectarian period.²⁹

The petrification of the Irish party not only halted Connolly's historical writing, but also affected the publication of the Socialist: loss of Dublin printing facilities - the mortgage on the I.S.R.P. press was foreclosed by the party's creditors - meant that the February issue did not appear. For the March issue, a Scottish printer was found; this was McLaren and Co. of St. Giles Street, Edinburgh. This issue contained further attacks upon 'pure and simple' labour political bodies. The Scottish Workers' Representation Committee had met in conference the previous month in Dundee, and its deliberations had been featured in several of the Scottish papers, especially the Dundee Advertiser. The March Socialist commented:

28. c.f. Mao tse-tung's notion of the "Sinification of Marxism" in his report of October 1938 On the New Stage; quoted Stuart R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao tse-tung (Pelican Books, London, 1969), p.171 ff. For some remarks on the usefulness of a comparison between Mao and Connolly as Marxist revolutionary nationalists, see O.D. Edwards and B. Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings (Jonathan Cape, London, 1973), Introduction passim.

29. Connolly to Matheson, Dublin, 9 and 24 March 1903.

'"The Deil is kind tae his ain bairns", and Capital, through its press has naturally offered an amicable front to its little proteges ...'

The whole 'Dundee Circus' was denounced as

'a mere handful of unconscious dupes ... got together and manipulated by certain too well known labourites ...'.

Neil Maclean contributed a further article of criticism of the Glasgow I.L.P. and concluded that,

'... the I.L.P. is running the revolutionary activity of the workers into the ground ... The principal purpose of revolutionary political organisation must be to educate ... and to spread such education there must be an organisation in charge of the work. Such an organisation must be fearless; merciless in its logic, intolerant as science, narrow as the truth alone can be'.

Maclean had restated the classic organisational schematic of the American S.L.P. notably as outlined by De Deon himself in Reform or Revolution, even to the point of including De Leon's striking phrase calling for the party to be as 'intolerant as science'.³⁰ It was also announced that Yates' candidacy in the Leith Brughs parliamentary division was now to be opposed by an official S.W.R.C. candidate, who was dismissed as a 'tool of fakirism'.

In addition to such polemic - which remained a vital element in the paper's campaign against the whole gamut of 'class unconscious' labour politics directed toward its non-socialist proletarian readership - the March Socialist contained two crucial articles in which the Scots dissidents sought to justify their stand against the S.D.F. leadership to other socialists. In a leading article "Socialism and

30. See p. 92 above.

Sectarianism" a neat attempt was made to demonstrate that the S.D.F. Executive's line of

'... inducing compromising alliances ... with middle class or class unconscious working class bodies',

was without authoritative validity in terms of what Marx had written in the Communist Manifesto. This was an urgent theoretical undertaking because it was precisely the formulation from the Manifesto that:

'The Communists do not form a separate party, opposed to other working class parties'

which was used by the S.D.F. leadership to condemn the sectarian stand of "impossibilists" as anti-marxist. The leader stressed the differences in social and political conditions between 1848 - the date of the appearance of the Manifesto - and 1903. In 1848, when the workers were without the franchise, and the revolutionary movement was both small and illegal,

'it was inevitable that Socialism should adopt the underground methods of a secret society, namely permeation and assimilation'.

However, by the end of the century,

'... wherever Socialism has become a serious political force it has ... assumed the position of an independent political party; it has made good its claim to be, not a section of the working class movement, but the working class movement itself, not the rival, but the enemy of other working class organisations based on middle class principles'.

As a clinching argument against this 'primitive benevolent attitude', it was pointed out that,

'... so far was Marx from falling into line with Unity mongers, that he opposed the union between the Eisenachers and the more backward Lassalleans'.

This last point was a telling one for the initiated: it made the comparison explicit between contemporary Social Democratic opportunism and that Lassallean Realpolitik of the mid 1860's, so deplored by Marx.³¹ In this way, it was argued that opportunist alliances with bourgeois or 'class unconscious' labour groups were as damaging to the workers' movement as Marx had feared Lassalle's pragmatism to be, involving as it did an alliance between the German workers' party and the forces of Prussian Junkerdom.

George Yates wrote a special article for the March Socialist, entitled "The Official S.D.F.": this was nothing less than a calculated provocation to the leadership. Yates accused the S.D.F. of having failed to undertake the urgent task of mass political education, and described its penchant for electioneering and 'opera bouffe' attitude to dynamite - a sarcastic reference to Quelch's remarks at the 1901 party conference - as

'a substitute for drilling the workers on the one and only field - that of politics, and of organising the class struggle from our side in real earnest'.

The whole mentality of opportunism, said Yates,

'has made it a criminal offence for any member to criticise the officials of the S.D.F.'.

This pathological weakness of the leadership - evidenced in such measures as the arbitrary expulsion of the entire Finsbury Park branch - led Yates to the conclusion that the organisation was unequal to the task 'as the real exponent of working class revolt'. This challenge to the leadership was issued with an eye to the forthcoming

31. Lichtheim, Marxism, p.95.

annual conference of the party to be held in mid-April in Shoreditch. It also had the unfortunate effect of alienating support from the London "impossibilists", many of whom resented the Scots 'forcing matters' in this way without prior consultation with them.³² Meanwhile, the work of organisation had not been neglected: at its half yearly meeting held on February 8th, the Scottish District Council decided to engage a paid lecturer for the five months of the Summer season,

'... with a view to strengthening existing branches and also endeavouring to form new and resuscitate defunct branches'.³³

The choice of lecturer was a foregone conclusion;

'... it was agreed unanimously that Comrade James Connolly of the I.S.R.P. be engaged for the first three months, his tour to begin about the 1st of May'.³⁴

This engagement was of vital importance to Connolly at that time, since the collapse of the I.S.R.P. had left him without remunerative employment.

At the 1903 S.D.F. conference, held in the Town Hall, Shoreditch, on April 10th, 11th and 12th, "impossibilist" delegates were very thin on the ground. Yates was accused of obstruction with regard to the official policy of working toward socialist unity, of vilification of the S.D.F. leadership and of refusal to sell Justice and 20th Century Press literature. He was then expelled from the organisation by 56 votes to 6.³⁵ The conference then passed two resolutions which amounted to an ultimatum to the Scots dissidents:

32. Tsuzuki, "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.392.

33. Socialist, March 1903.

34. Ibid.

35. Tsuzuki. "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.393.

- (i) 'That the new Executive Council be empowered to expel without right of appeal those branches or individuals endorsing the actions of G. S. Yates, and for which he was expelled'.
- (ii) 'That this conference strongly condemns the whole tone and conduct of the Socialist and calls upon those branches responsible for its appearance either to immediately alter its tone, or cease its publication'. 36

The immediate withdrawal from the conference by the Scottish delegates prefigured a split which had been anticipated: indeed, Glasgow comrades had foregathered in the local S.D.F. premises to await the expected telegram bearing news of the walkout, and a pot of white-wash was at the ready to erase the legend "S.D.F." from the building.³⁷ The May Socialist was issued with a defiantly exultant "Warning to Socialists" on its front page; this read as follows:

'The Social Democratic Federation declares that any person or branches in its organisation supporting the Socialist will be expelled their party'.

Beside this warning was printed James Connolly's A Rebel Song: a march whose voluntaristic enthusiasm well expressed the mood of the Scots dissidents. Significantly enough, it proclaimed:

'Tis Labour's faith and Labour's arm
Alone can Labour free'.

The De Leonite tone - demanding an exclusive reliance upon working class principles and organisation - is unmistakable.

A special meeting of the Scottish District Council was convened on April 15th in the premises of the Glasgow branch, to consider the position in the light of the two London S.D.F. conference resolutions.

36. Socialist, May 1903.

37. Thomas Bell, Pioneering Days (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1941), p.40.

Charles Geddes of Edinburgh chaired this special delegate meeting and representatives were present from the Edinburgh, Glasgow, Falkirk and Leith branches.³⁸ Understandably enough, the meeting was boycotted by the Aberdeen "Gironde" and by Leslie's East Edinburgh group. T. Drummond of Leith moved

'That the Scottish District Council withdraw from the S.D.F. as a protest against the opportunist policy now being pursued by that organisation' and

'This resolution, which meant severing our organic connection with the S.D.F. was ... carried unanimously'.

A further motion endorsing the actions of the editors of the Socialist, and also 'the tone and policy of the paper' was carried without dissent. Yates and Matheson were confirmed in their positions as editor and sub-editor of the Socialist, and it was agreed to issue a manifesto 'explaining our position and containing a declaration of our principles'. An invitation would be circulated to all S.D.F. branches:

'... to withdraw from the S.D.F. and form a new party which will not adopt the class war and class consciousness as theories or mere phrases, but as actual facts which must be recognised by every uncompromising militant socialist'.

Matheson was appointed to draft the manifesto for the new party, and branch secretaries would sit as a pro tem executive council 'to transact all preliminary business'. Neil Maclean - as late Secretary to the District Council - was appointed to act as secretary to the new party.³⁹ James Connolly was present at this meeting in his capacity as District Council lecturer, and it was he who resolved the difficulty of nomenclature for the new party. After some discussion about the desirability or otherwise of choosing a name that would closely identify

38. Socialist, May 1903.

39. Ibid.

the new organisation with the American S.L.P.:

'It was Connolly who, with his characteristic directness, proposed "The Socialist Labour Party". "It doesn't matter what you call yourselves", he declared, "you'll be dubbed the S.L.P. anyway". And the S.L.P. we became'. 40

Connolly appears to have begun his speaking tour on Wednesday, April 29th at the Easter Road site in Edinburgh.⁴¹ There followed a meeting at Rodney Street on the Thursday,⁴² and at his Sunday meetings on May 3rd - the afternoon session being on Leith Links and the evening one in the Meadows - carters' union meetings scheduled for the same times and locations seem to have been utilised to secure an enlarged audience. The carters were enjoined to turn up to '... hear about Sunday labour and other questions'.⁴³ A week later, Connolly was again in Edinburgh, speaking in Portland Place on Friday 8th, and at his Sunday meetings on Leith Links and the Meadows, he addressed his audiences on the principles and practice of "The New Party".⁴⁴

While in Edinburgh, Connolly attempted to rally some of the elements of the broken I.S.R.P. He wrote both to Tom Lyng and the party's erstwhile secretary, Thomas Brady, urging a union between

40. Thomas Bell Pioneering Days, p.40. Bell records the date of this meeting wrongly, placing it in August 1903. That his remarks must refer to the April 15th meeting is clear from the fact that the party manifesto - headed "Socialist Labour Party" was issued by May.

41. Edinburgh Evening News, 29 April 1903.

42. Edinburgh Evening News, 30 April 1903.

43. Edinburgh Evening News, 2 May 1903.

44. Edinburgh Evening News, 7, 9 May 1903.

the I.S.R.P. "rump" and the new British S.L.P.⁴⁵ He was active in the Glasgow area in mid-May and wrote of his distress over the collapse of the Irish Party. '... It is as if I had lost a child', he mourned.⁴⁶ From Dundee in the last week of May he remitted a small amount of cash for the Lyng-Brady group, and enjoined them to act in defiance of the "Kangaroo" faction.⁴⁷

Meanwhile, Matheson's manifesto had been published in the Socialist for May 1903. It made the point that a party which really represented the working class must have

'a clear, definite and practical basis, and an intelligent conception of its position, method and goal'.

The Socialist Labour Party was introduced to the workers as essentially different from the various socialist and labour organisations currently active. It appealed to the working class, and the working class alone, for support; the I.L.P., S.D.F., Fabian Society and L.R.C. were dismissed as being all 'dominated either by middle class men or, working men influenced by middle class habits of thought'. The absolute primacy of political action was stressed since, under current conditions, the power of the state was the crucial factor instrumental in the subjection of the workers by organised capital. State power had been used in two main ways; either judicially, as evidenced in the Lords' decisions of 1901, or coercively, as witness the use of the military to break strikes - a practice on

45. Connolly to Lyng and to Brady, Edinburgh, 1 May 1903.

46. Connolly to Lyng; Glasgow, 15 May 1903.

47. Connolly to Lyng and to Brady, Dundee, 26 May 1903.

the increase since the Featherstone shootings of 1893.⁴⁸ Hence,

'... all efforts of the workers to better their conditions must be centred in the task of overthrowing the supremacy of the master class in the state ...'.

To this end, the new Socialist Labour Party would

'contest on behalf of the working class ... every election, municipal or national ... [since] ... we are not merely an educational or propagandist body, but stand for the political expression of our class interests for the formation of the Socialist Republic'.

The De Leonite inspiration of the manifesto is obvious both in its class sectionalism of belief and activity, and in its emphasis upon the role of the state. However, of special interest is the denial of the limitation of socialist activity within the educational-propagandist mode, particularly since this point was made in terms of self-differentiation from the practice of the S.D.F. This activism, however, was virtual rather than real: based upon a position of abstract dogma, it lacked even such contact with the real political struggle of Labour as the S.D.F. maintained through its vacillating approach to the L.R.C.

At this point, it is worth pausing to note that the self-identification of the Scots dissidents with the American S.L.P.

48. During the course of the prolonged Miners' Lock Out of 1893, a military detachment was summoned to the Yorkshire colliery of Featherstone after some minor local disturbances. After a reading of the Riot Act, the soldiers fired on a large gathering of locked-out miners who refused to disperse, killing two and wounding sixteen. This was at the time the first case of the military firing on an unarmed crowd in Britain for fifty years.
vide R. Page Arnot, The Miners: History of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain 1889-1910. (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1949), p.236-237.

meant that they had placed themselves on the ultra-left of the IInd International.⁴⁹ As the overwhelming support for Kautsky's resolution at the Paris Congress of 1900 had indicated, parliamentary reformism was the hallmark of the political practice of the IInd International parties. It may be judged that such reformism was a natural political corollary of the positivist cast of marxist theory at the time;⁵⁰ however, in the view of the Scots dissidents, it was a practice very much in conformity with the theoretical revisionism of Eduard Bernstein which had agitated the conscience of the German S.P.D. since the late '90's. Indeed, it seemed that orthodox Social Democrats - both in Germany and in Britain - practised that revisionism which they deplored in theoretical terms. In this connection we might remember Matheson's sardonic comment of April 1901, deliberately conflating reformism and revisionism in the light of Hegel's purely meta-physical exposition of the Dialectic. He said:

'We are contemplating a course of study in the Logik of Hegel, so that we may be able to perceive the identity of Millerandism and Marxism. This we are at present quite incapable of doing ... however ... after long and painful study we are now able to perceive the differences between Bernstein and Kautsky ...'⁵¹

49. Rasky, Daniel De Leon, p.29. Here, the S.L.P. is numbered with the Russian Bolsheviki, the Bulgarian Tesniaks and the Dutch Tribunists.

50. Lichtheim, Marxism, p.265.

51. Justice, 13 April 1901. See p. above.

Now in August of 1902, Max Beer, sometime member of the American S.L.P., now its bitter critic and London correspondent of the German socialist journal Vorwaerts, was given space in Justice for an article, "The Politics of Marxism".⁵² Beer argued that socialists should identify themselves unreservedly with the ongoing labour struggle of the trade unions, and should go so far as to endorse non-socialist labour candidacies and political measures. He summed up his argument with the phrase,

'The class line is as important as the socialist goal'.

In the present circumstances, he said, the class line should be given priority. The Socialist for October 1902 criticised Beer's position editorially and took his meaning to be:

'let us have a working class party whether it seeks to emancipate the workers or not'.

Noting that Beer, having been 'discarded by the S.L.P.' is now 'colleague of Herr Bernstein on the Vorwaerts staff' in London, the editorial averred that Beer's meaning was identical to Bernstein's formula, "The movement is everything, its ideal or aim nothing". The editorial concluded with the cryptic observation,

'... the editor of Justice, who persistently denounces Bernstein as a traitor who should be expelled from the S.P.D., regards Beer as "our friend and comrade"; and Geo. Lansbury who advocates a Bernsteinian alliance for the S.D.F. with the Radicals, is another "comrade"'.^t.

52. Justice, 9 August 1902.

In this way, the revisionist controversy - although a non-issue for the socialist movement in Britain - afforded the ultra-left with further material with which to assail the reformism of the orthodox.

However, the most immediate means of attacking S.D.F. reformism was in terms of comparison with the American socialist movement. This was a task for which Connolly was especially qualified, and he wrote two articles for the Socialist with this particular intention in mind. In "The Socialist Labor Party of America and the London S.D.F.",⁵³ he set out to make a detailed comparison between 'what the S.D.F. has not done' with 'what the S.L.P. has done, and is still doing'. This took the form of criticism of three main aspects of party activity: the performance of the party press, electoral policy and performance, and relations with the trade union movement. The S.D.F., he pointed out, despite being over twenty years old, did not then own or control a paper of any kind, since shares in the 20th century press were held by such varied political animals as socialists, anarchists, Fabians, Labourists, Christian Socialists 'and every kind of freak'. The broad party membership remained without control over shareholders or editorial policy. The S.L.P., however, ran English language daily, weekly and monthly papers, together with weeklies in German, Swedish and Yiddish. All of these journals were 'owned and controlled entirely by the party membership', and were printed in a printworks owned by the party. There was an additional Italian language paper affiliated to the party. On electoral policy, Connolly drew attention to the S.D.F.'s record of never having contested any parliamentary election without seeking support from the I.L.P. and

53. Socialist, June 1903.

the Radicals - despite its pretensions to being an independent political party. This compromising stand had resulted in a damaging ambivalence toward the L.R.C., which it criticised in terms of its unsatisfactory position on the class war, but yet it 'counsels its branches to refrain from criticising or opposing' its candidates. The S.L.P., however, having declared itself to be the only genuine socialist party in the USA, 'opposes every other party, and fights them at every election'. On trade unionism, the S.D.F. 'declares trade unionism played out' and yet it 'denounces any attack on labour leaders who declare trade unionism to be all powerful'. The S.L.P. always 'attacks and exposes the treacheries and sophistries of the trade union leaders' and resolutely refused party membership to officials of pure and simple unions. The inevitable conclusion from this rather pedestrian schedule of comparisons was duly given: the S.L.P. is seen to practise its principles, while the S.D.F. does not.

Connolly's second article was directed against the "kangaroo" American Social Democratic Party, which he stigmatised as 'the pet protege in American politics of the S.D.F.'⁵⁴ Connolly stressed the utopian and pre-scientific origins of this body which '... at its foundation was not a political, but a colonising party', based upon a proposition for socialists to emigrate to a chosen state, there to form the majority and duly return a socialist state government, as a working example to the rest of the USA. Connolly commented:

54. Socialist, July 1903.

'This plan was undoubtedly simple - so were the people who thought it practicable'.

In a somewhat forced sectarian vein, Connolly described the events of 1898, when "renegades" from the S.L.P. defected to the Social Democratic body. At that time, the People was printed by a private concern which accepted adverts from capitalist politicians and advocated 'all kinds of tax reforms as Socialism'. The party membership then voted overwhelmingly for a proposal to print all S.L.P. organs on a party owned press, but:

'Affrighted at this, the unclean section of the party strove to avert disaster and keep the press in their hands by making a midnight raid on the premises of the National Executive, and by force to override the constitution of the party and set at naught its vote'.

Now this was a selective and somewhat one-sided view of the events. The secession from the S.L.P. of the "kangaroos" in 1898 led by Morris Hillquit, was merely one of the factious divisions which occurred within the party after 1895, though perhaps the most spectacular and certainly the most violent. Hillquit disagreed with De Leon's dual union policies and with his hostility to the 'pure and simple' trade unions; but personal and temperamental incompatibility contributed much to the split, as was usually the case where the difficult and autocratic De Leon was involved. Both factions schemed and intrigued to win control of the party machine, and after considerable violence, the state courts decided in favour of De Leon.⁵⁵

55. D. D. Egbert and S. Persons, Socialism and American Life (1), p.257-8.

Connolly made much of the heterogeneity of the American S.D.P., noting the autonomy of its state organisations and its lack of a central party organ.

'What anarchist could desire more?' he asked, than this 'hybrid organisation'.

He concluded with the observation that the London S.D.F. justly recognised its own affinity with the American S.D.P. since:

'Inconsistency and sacrifice of principle for the sake of votes mark both organisations ...'.

These articles - in which Connolly both justified and interpreted the purist practice of the American S.L.P. to the Scottish De Leonites - might be said to represent the nadir of his journalistic effort. They were a propagandist undertaking conceived within the mould of doctrinal and organisational constraints; a time-service to De Leonism.

The first annual conference of the British S.L.P. was held on the weekend of June 6th/7th, 1903. Delegates were present from the Edinburgh, Falkirk, Glasgow and Leith branches,⁵⁶ and foregathered in the Edinburgh branch rooms at 6 Drummond Street. Connolly took the chair, and

'... in a brief address congratulated the delegates upon having seceded from a moribund organisation, their membership in which hampered their efforts and fettered all attempts at action'.⁵⁷

56. At that time the strength of the British S.L.P. consisted of five branches: that not represented at the June conference was the East London branch (the former Bethnal Green S.D.F.) which joined the S.L.P. on May 30th.

57. Socialist, July 1903.

Connolly gave a report on his recent propaganda efforts. These included a visit to Dundee in the last week of May and a week in Edinburgh from June 1st - 6th.⁵⁸ His Dundee visit was felt to have been successful enough to justify sending him to Kirkcaldy for a week, from June 15th. He was appointed national organiser of the party with a wage of 30 shillings a week,⁵⁹ and his contract was extended for a further three months. The Oxford "impossibilist" Len Cotton was appointed party agent for the South of England, while Neil Maclean became national secretary, and Yates and Matheson were again confirmed as editor and sub editor respectively, of the Socialist. It was also decided - with considerable regret - to withdraw Yates' candidacy in the Leith Burghs division on grounds of cost: Yates piously hoped that he might contend 'a more compact and therefore cheaper constituency'.⁶⁰ The conference considered the two vital issues of 'socialist trade unions' and palliatives. It was readily agreed that it would be premature to attempt the formation of 'dual unions' at that time, given the party's numerical and financial weakness. There was a harder struggle over palliatives: after much vehement opposition from the Edinburgh comrades a series of 'immediate demands' was included in the party platform; these included advocacy of such measures as the statutory eight-hour day and full manhood suffrage, and closely paralleled the schedule of S.D.F. palliatives.⁶¹ The nomenclature 'immediate demands' was significant:

58. At which time, Connolly sent a further contribution to the funds of the Lyng-Brady group in Dublin. Connolly to Lyng and to Brady, Edinburgh, 2 June 1903.

59. Socialist, July 1903. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.46.

60. Socialist, July 1903.

61. Platform of the S.L.P. (n.d. [1903?]).

this was North American usage, the term 'palliative' being restricted to Britain. The adoption of the immediate demands at this initial stage represented a significant variance from American De Leonite practice, since the American S.L.P. had dropped this plank from its platform at its 1900 congress:⁶² such a plank was, however, a cardinal feature of the American S.D.P.'s policy line. This incongruity shows, in part, the reluctance of the dissidents entirely to slough off their S.D.F. heritage, but also of weight was the consideration that such demands were of some import in a constitutional monarchy such as Britain. It seems that the British De Leonites felt unable to adopt such a dismissive attitude to such measures as their American comrades, who lived with a pure capitalist democratic system unfettered by feudal vestiges. This was felt to be a serious differential between the two countries and the intensity of feeling on the constitutional issue explains the vehement response of the Scots to the coronation of King Edward VII in the very first issue of the Socialist. Connolly's presence and the close relationship with the I.S.R.P. served to keep this problem in mind: but it was a question of a thoroughgoing socialist attitude to constitutional affairs which determined the Scots approach to 'Edward's bourgeois monarchy',⁶³ and not simply a matter of Connolly's impact having revived in some way a traditionalist but latent Scottish republican sentiment.⁶⁴ As we shall see, Connolly would examine the vital constitutional issue in detail at a later date.

62. Egbert & Persons, Socialism and American Life (I), p.265.

63. Socialist, August 1902.

64. As suggested by Tsuzuki in "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.389.

After the winding up of this first S.L.P. conference, the party adjourned to the East Meadows, where a 'bumper' open air meeting was held.⁶⁵ This was in the late afternoon of Sunday June 7th. Neil Maclean opened the proceedings, speaking against the utility of reforms to benefit the working class, and emphasizing the inevitability of increased poverty under capitalism. Connolly followed with an address on the threat to international peace posed by international capitalist competition, and stressed the

'sham peace-loving propensities of the various capitalist governments and their hireling press ...'.

He dealt in detail with the Russian occupation of Finland, Belgian atrocities in the Congo, and the Boer War - perpetrated by "God's Own Englishmen". That sobriquet was apparently well received by his Edinburgh audience. He concluded with a strong appeal to this audience to join

'the international peace movement, the party of their class, the Socialist Labour Party'.

Intense interest was shown in his speech, and 'hearty applause' was given at its conclusion. Yates and Drummond followed with more pedestrian speeches and the party reaped a substantial benefit from the occasion, selling a good amount of literature and making a good collection. The Party was now well established upon its independent course. The newly elected Executive met on the next Sunday, June 14th, and approved a statement of 'recent events' to be forwarded to the American S.L.P. at the latter's own request.⁶⁶ At Connolly's

65. Socialist, July 1903. Edinburgh Evening News, 6 June 1903.

66. Socialist, July, 1903.

request, it was agreed that the Socialist be sent to the American subscribers of the now defunct Workers' Republic. The establishment of the S.L.P. had meant the final break between the Scottish "impossibilists" and those in London. The London men were:

'... no more ready to blindly follow would-be geniuses from Scotland, than "highly educated leaders from Queen Anne's Gate". [a reference to H.M. Hyndman] '. 67

They were, however, under no illusions as to the crucial influence of Connolly in the foundation of the Scottish party.

'... it soon became apparent that the members of this party had really only changed their idols: Hyndman, Quelch and Co. were deposed, and De Leon and Connolly took their places'. 68

Connolly brought a tireless energy to his work as national organiser. He spent the second week of June in Glasgow,⁶⁹ and during his week in Kirkcaldy (June 15th - 21st) he managed to establish an S.L.P. branch. The following week he lectured in Falkirk.⁷⁰ Concentrating his efforts in the Edinburgh and Glasgow areas, he was hard-worked by the party, sometimes holding as many as a dozen meetings in a week.⁷¹ Tom Bell remembered him as:

'A short stocky man, with heavy auburn moustache, a roguish twinkle in his eye, and pleasant Irish brogue in his speech, Connolly made friends everywhere. His quiet, reticent disposition concealed the store of knowledge he had acquired from extensive reading and wide travel. But, provoked into discussion or debate, he would rout opponents with incisive and merciless logic'. 72

67. Tsuzuki, "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.393.

68. Socialist Party of Great Britain, Questions of the Day (London, 1953), p.115.

69. Connolly to Michael Rafferty, Glasgow, 10 June 1903.

70. Connolly to Matheson, Falkirk, 24 June 1903.

71. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.49.

72. Ibid., p.47.

A picture of the "complete agitator", thoroughgoing in his professionalism emerges from Bell's recollections:

'Connolly's speeches were a model of simplicity, conciseness and burning class invective; always backed up by quotations and statistics of fact ... A brilliant writer, he not only wrote his articles, but hand-set them, ran the printing machine, and did everything in connection with the production of a newspaper, including its sales at meetings. When the linotype machine was introduced he promptly set about learning to become an operator'. 73

One of the most crucial aspects of Connolly's work was the training of young speakers and propagandists; the S.L.P. felt itself critically short of such manpower at this time, especially in the Glasgow area. On his visits to the West of Scotland Connolly took pains to coach promising young Glasgow comrades like Tom Bell and William Paul, encouraging them to chair public meetings and to give short addresses to the audience for ten minutes or so, before he took the meeting himself.⁷⁴ The warmth of his comradeship and diffident manner contrasted markedly with the pomposity and pretentiousness of some of the London leaders. The younger Scottish members had found the patrician aloofness of Hyndman and the bluntness of Quelch offensively patronising. Moreover, Bell charged that:

'It was the practice of the [S.D.F.] officials ... to inveigle promising young comrades from the provinces into public houses to stupify them and win them over to the side of "possibilism".

Lee and Quelch were particularly prone to this kind of behaviour and had observed that 'Temperance seemed to be one of the cardinal

73. Ibid., p.48-49.

74. Ibid., p.47.

principles of "Impossibilism". Connolly - like Yates and Matheson - was teetotal, and the younger members followed his sober lead.⁷⁵ The tone of Connolly's leadership was not that of a drunken bonhomie; at social gatherings of the party he would give recitations - delivered with fine feeling - from Freiligrath, of whose work he was especially fond.⁷⁶ Nor did Connolly neglect the importance of the genre of the popular ballad for the movement. Singing was at that time an essential ingredient for social events of both a private and public character, and Connolly would always be ready to sing a song to the assembled members; the Socialist at this period regularly featured songs he had written specially for the party. His most formidable tour de force in this area was a translation of Max Kegel's Socialistenmarsch rendered into English verse especially for the Socialist: it was printed in the issue for February 1904, some five months after Connolly's immigration to the USA. His energy and devotion were not always rewarded by prompt payment of his stipend. Bell recalled:

'... Nor did he always get his 30/- on a Saturday. Many a time I had to whip up the comrades, to collect their coppers, threepenny bits and sixpences to let him have his salary by Thursday. But never a murmur or complaint did we hear, though he had a wife and about six of a young family in Dublin depending on him'.⁷⁷

That Summer, Quelch had determined to visit Edinburgh, to see for himself the damage done to the Scottish S.D.F. by the "Impossibilist" split. On getting wind of this, the S.L.P. immediately challenged him to meet James Connolly in public debate on the motion

75. Ibid., p.42.

76. Ibid., p.48

77. Ibid., p.49

"Does the S.D.F. deserve the confidence of the working class?"

Leslie, replying on Quelch's behalf, asked:

'... what good purpose could be secured by discussion before the unregenerate heathen of Socialist policy and tactics ... The newly formed S.L.P. in the true spirit of its yankee prototype seems to be more desirous of ... covering other socialist organisations with obloquy than in attacking the common enemy ... The S.D.F. will be no consenting party to such puerile antics'. 78

During July, Connolly concentrated his energies in 'vigorous propaganda' in Edinburgh. The Socialist for August reported:

'Comrade Connolly, S.L.P. organiser, addressed a series of meetings in his own indomitable trenchant style, sowing sound economic seed despite unfavourable weather conditions'.

Connolly's personal economic outlook was anything but sound or favourable: he was then 35 years old, with a large and growing family to support. Although his competence in his chosen occupation was beyond doubt, the collapse of the I.S.R.P. and the continual difficulty for the tiny S.L.P. to raise his salary clearly indicated the precariousness of his livelihood. At that time, the S.L.P. had a membership of only around 250-300, and a professional organiser - no matter how small his stipend - was clearly an impossible burden on the party finances. Once again, as in 1895, he faced destitution in the Scottish capital; an unskilled worker without a trade. As before, he had recourse to emigration: he announced his intention to leave for the USA in mid September, to the 'great regret'

78. Socialist, July 1903. Edinburgh Evening News, 6 June 1903.

of the party. The Socialist reported that:

'In all the three countries of the United Kingdom, he had taken part in the work of organisation, earning for himself the bitter hatred of the capitalist and labour fakir on the one hand, and the middle class "highly educated" socialist dilettanti on the other'. 79.

On his departure, it was hoped that the arrangement with the diminutive I.S.R.P. rump which still survived, whereby the Socialist was sent to American Workers' Republic subscribers, might be:

'... the means of bringing the real Labour movement of the three countries into closer relations'. 80

Meanwhile, Connolly had made a final theoretical contribution to the Socialist, an article entitled "Loubet and Other Things", which was printed in the August issue. Connolly noted that the recent visit to Britain of President Loubet of France had been greeted as 'a portent of Peace ... as well as proof of the growth of democratic feeling' in this country. The socialist papers, Justice and Labour Leader 'as well as the other organs of the classes' had welcomed Loubet's visit in these terms. Connolly pointed out that the French Republic - despite its constitutional advance upon the monarchy of Britain - should be seen clearly for what it was:

'a bulwark of economic conservatism and an ally of the most brutal reaction ... the revolutionary tradition has departed from France, and ... her rulers have finally merged themselves in the ruck of European exploiters'.

The London S.D.F. - said Connolly - had recently attempted to cover

79. Socialist, August 1903.

80. Ibid.

up its treachery over the Millerand issue by denouncing his continued presence in the French cabinet. Connolly asked:

'Why all this denunciation of the servant and such effusive praise of the master?'

In addition to making an obvious partisan sally against the S.D.F., Connolly was urging a very serious plea for socialists to guard against a facile enthusiasm for republican constitutionalism per se without regard to the actual property relations upon which that political form might subsist. He implied that it was only typical of the theoretical 'blundering' expected from the S.D.F. that they should confuse substance and form in this non-marxist way. Connolly then proceeded from the constitutional issue to develop an extremely prescient attack upon the Blanquist and ultra-materialist currents within the IIInd International. Associating these with the French revolutionary tradition, he maintained that its persistence within the modern socialist movement was nothing short of 'disastrous'. In both Europe and North America he said:

'... we find many of our writers and speakers still thinking and acting politically in terms of that past revolution. As a result, we find imported into our movement ... a whole host of theories of political action, tactics and strategy which are foreign to our principles and destructive of our class spirit ... [i.e.] ... The sneaking fondness for any man who "talks physical force" even when he does it to cloak semi-reactionary principles, the concession of "honesty of purpose" to every man who mouths radical phraseology, the idea ... of building a Socialist party upon the working PEOPLE instead of upon the working class, the vague but harmful belief that irreligion is necessarily linked with social revolution and religious orthodoxy with Capitalism, the tendency to rush off into all manner of speculations about the future, and the desire to exclude all who do not agree with the speculation upon the tendency resultant from the economic change ...'.

What he characterised as an emphasis upon iconoclastic destruction, rather than construction, Connolly described as 'our baneful inheritance from the first French revolution'. Connolly concluded with a striking statement of what might be called "revolutionary quietism", itself a reflection of the positivism of scientific socialism at the end of the 19th century:

'The capitalist French revolutionist had to fight to destroy the institutions of his enemy; the socialist revolutionist has to fight in order to give the economic institutions of his enemy room to grow...'.⁸¹

This is an extremely instructive article: it clearly shows that before his emigration to the USA - and his resultant immersion in the movement of North American syndicalism - Connolly had, in this condemnation of Blanquism and ultra-determinist materialism, taken his stand against two elements within the Social Democratic tradition which were later to become the base for Leninism.

After a further month's propagandist effort, Connolly ended his Scottish contract. Tom Bell and some of the Glasgow comrades gave him an emotional send-off at the Broomielaw when he sailed for Dublin early in September.⁸¹ He would not see Scotland again for seven years, and during this time, personal involvement in the North American socialist movement - including some four years in the American S.L.P. - would enlarge his own ideological development beyond the limits of De Leonism.

On Connolly's departure, the I.S.R.P. rump had, on his advice, joined the Scots in the De Leonite camp, and became the Irish section

81. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.49.

of the Socialist Labour Party. This was not simply a question of ideological piety: a breakaway group from the Dublin socialists had already adopted the S.L.P. title with the object of gaining American financial support; the change of nomenclature was therefore necessary to pre-empt this move.⁸² Connolly was not the only loss to the S.L.P. at this time. In September, George Yates resigned as editor of the Socialist, having announced his intention to remove to Middlesborough. The loss of this talented worker was a severe blow to the party: it was he who had taken the leading part in the establishment of both the paper and the International Labour Literature Depot,⁸³ and had, in addition been instrumental - through his economics classes - in attracting significant numbers of young men to the party in the Glasgow area.⁸⁴ Once in Middlesborough, he seems to have dropped out of socialist activity altogether, certainly his contributions to the S.L.P. paper ceased at that point.

Connolly, then resident in Troy, New York State, did not disappear from the columns of the Socialist so abruptly: he regularly remitted songs for publication in the Scottish paper. "The Flag" was printed in the October issue; "Freedom's Pioneers", his translation of Kegel's "Socialistenmarsch" and "Freedom's Sun" followed in January, February and June, 1904 respectively. Also in the Socialist for June 1904, appeared Connolly's article "Wages and Other Things" written, he said, at the request of that paper's editor for a letter from America.

82. Socialist, September 1903; O'Brien, Forth the Banners Go, p.40: Connolly to Rafferty, Glasgow, 17 August 1903.

83. Socialist, September 1903.

84. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.10, 35-6.

As its nomenclature indicated, Connolly had returned to certain issues dealt with in his article on Loubet printed the previous August.⁸⁵ In this latest article, Connolly sought to explain why, in his opinion, the American S.L.P. could be considered to be 'the clearest and most revolutionary' of world socialist parties. The socialist movement elsewhere, he said:

'... was to a great extent hampered by the presence in its ranks of faddists and cranks who were in the movement, not for the cause of socialism, but because they thought they saw in it a means of ventilating their theories on such questions as sex, religion, vaccination, vegetarianism, etc.'

Connolly averred that the socialist movement was concerned '... only with the question of political and economic freedom for our class', and he deplored the tendency of European socialists to make their press and platform 'the stamping ground for every idea that had the distinction of being unconventional'. Now the American S.L.P. he said, prided itself upon being in American parlance, 'hewed close to the line of the class struggle' and sedulously avoided being 'seduced into any more speculative theories'. In amplification of this position, Connolly cited statements printed in the Weekly People giving the opinions of De Leon on the socialist attitude to monogamy, religion and trade unionism. While August Bebel in Germany and Belfort Bax in England had, Connolly charged, 'striven to link Socialism with hostility to the monogamic marriage system', De Leon had put himself on record as saying that this was an issue with which Socialism had nothing particularly to do. On Catholicism, De Leon had

85. See p. 158 above.

repudiated the notion that because certain anarchist assassins were Catholics - as in the case of Czolgosz, the murderer of President McKinley - that there were grounds for socialist opposition to Catholicism per se on account of its affinity with the mentality of anarchism. On the question of trade unions, and with particular reference to the notion that such economic struggle was counter productive because of the operation of a supposed "Iron Law" of wages, De Leon had castigated this Lassalleian crudity as 'substantially false' and having appeal to 'half-baked marxists' only.

Now it might appear that Connolly, returning to his attack upon the ultra-rationalist (or perhaps extreme secularist) materialism he deplored within the parties of the IInd International, had found a valuable ally in the person of the leader of the American S.L.P. In actual fact, the Socialist article was written during the course of a prolonged personal and ideological dispute between Connolly and De Leon which first erupted and continued during 1904, and was revived later in 1907. This controversy and its background of Connolly's American activities, cannot be dealt with here in detail; some thematic consideration of the basic issues concerned must suffice.⁸⁶ The initial dispute centered upon the issues of Wages, Marriage and the Church, and was opened by an article with that title written by Connolly for the Weekly People and printed in the issue for April 9th, 1904. De Leon's lengthy reply appeared in the same issue, and the controversy, fuelled by the contributions of other disputants, lasted until July. Connolly's article in the Socialist - to which he had

86. For a full treatment of Connolly's American activities and his dispute with De Leon, see Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.168-228, and O'Riordan, Connolly in America.

turned when De Leon closed the columns of the People to his further letters - was far from being a recognition that De Leon's views constituted support for his own stand against ultra-materialism; rather, it was an attempt to bring home to the S.L.P. leader that he had encouraged the party in that same determinist error. In this connection, Connolly reminded De Leon of his own previous utterances on the points at issue. He did this both as a tactical debating point and, more importantly, to emphasise the inconsistency of De Leon's - and therefore the party's - current position.

The dispute over monogamy centred upon August Bebel's book Woman. Connolly deplored such speculation on moral issues being thus identified with Socialism, and commented that:

'The abolition of the capitalist system will undoubtedly solve the economic side of the Woman Question, but it will solve that alone. The question of marriage, of divorce, of paternity and of the equality of woman with man are physical and sexual questions, or questions of temperamental affiliation as in marriage and were we living in a Socialist Republic would still be as hotly contested as they are today'. 87

De Leon had written a fulsome introduction to his own English language translation of Bebel's work, and adduced that,

'... the facts fathered by Bebel and the further facts and argumentation presented by the translator's preface, leave room for no conclusion other than that monogamic marriage only awaits the economic freedom of the race to blossom like a rose'. 88

De Leon further commented on Connolly's limitation of the impact of a socialist economic structure upon the Woman Question to precisely those

87. Weekly People, 9 April 1904. Quoted O'Riordan, Connolly in America, p.16-17.

88. Ibid. Quoted O'Riordan, p.20.

elements of female subjection which were economic only, as:

'... utopian in that it denies the controlling influence of material conditions upon any and all social institutions'. 89

That he could criticise Connolly's non-totalitarian approach as 'utopian', is ample comment itself upon the relatively crudely determinist impulse which underpinned De Leon's Marxism. On religion, both Connolly and De Leon subscribed to the position adopted by the German S.P.D. at its congress held in Erfurt in 1891, and subsequently adopted as authoritative by the International. This was that the practice of religious belief was a private matter for socialists, and not a concern for party pronunciamento. That this position was not one that Engels had been happy about, and was later to be reversed by Lenin, does not alter the fact that both Connolly and De Leon followed known marxist authority on this matter. However, despite his supposedly orthodox position on the issue, De Leon readily gave vent to anti-clerical - and especially, anti-catholic - prejudice. In Two Pages from Roman History, he had written of the need for socialists to oppose the influence of 'organised churchdom',⁹⁰ but most urgent for the current dispute with Connolly, was his action in opening the columns of the People to the Belgian socialist leader, Emile Vandervelde, whose article "Socialism or the Catholic Church" appeared in the March 19th issue. This article contained arguments astonishing for a major European socialist leader and the secretary of the International Socialist Bureau. Vandervelde combined an apology for

89. Ibid.

90. De Leon, Two Pages, p.11.

bourgeois liberalism with hortatory comments on the value of opportunist politics for the workers' struggle: he even went so far as to suggest that the real enemy of the workers' movement was not the bourgeoisie at all, but the Catholic church; in this way he viewed the ultimate struggle as one between the forces of the 'Red International' and the 'Black', capitalist institutions being mere transient intermediaries. He maintained that:

'Justice forbids ... to reproach English Liberalism as a body with the reactionary complaisance of the right wing. In France ... the Republican middle class and the radical democracy do not hesitate to accept the help of the Social Democracy against the Catholic church by enrolling Millerand in the Ministry and electing Jaures Vice-President of the Chamber of Deputies'. 91

Connolly charged that for Vandervelde:

'... the great struggle for freedom is but a kind of side-show, or perhaps an auxiliary, to the free-thinking movement'. 92

De Leon airily ignored the Belgian leader's treatment of the class struggle and simply asserted that his facts anent the political activities of the church in Belgium were of importance in themselves - something that Connolly had not disputed.⁹³ This was hardly sufficient justification for the inclusion in the People of such heresy as his article contained. We may leave the final word on the theoretical shortcomings of the Belgian leadership to Karl Kautsky; two years previously he had said of them:

91. O'Riordan, Connolly in America, p.15.

92. Ibid., p.17.

93. Ibid., p.20.

'I maintain an entirely unprejudiced attitude towards them; the talk about their revisionism leaves me cold. They have nothing to revise, for they have no theory. The eclectic vulgar socialism to which the revisionists would like to reduce marxism is something beyond which they (the Belgians) have not even begun to advance. Proudhon, Schaffle, Marx - it is all one to them: it was always like that ...'. 94

It should be stressed that on neither of these issues did Connolly and De Leon find themselves in fundamental doctrinal disagreement. The reverse was indeed the case, each man being committed to the notion of the perfectibility of monogamic marriage under socialism - along the lines discussed by Engels in his Origin of the Family - and to the Erfurt position on religion. In taking issue with De Leon on these points, Connolly was exposing and attacking that iconoclastic materialism which he had characterised as the socialist movement's 'baneful inheritance' from the French Revolution in the Edinburgh Socialist the previous August.⁹⁵ To paraphrase Connolly's arguments from the Edinburgh paper, De Leon was guilty - as far as he was concerned - of having confused irreligion with the social revolution, and religious orthodoxy with Capitalism; in his preface to Bebel's Woman, De Leon had speculated wildly 'upon the tendency resultant from ... economic change', and had attempted to enforce this deduction as some kind of marxist canon. These iconoclastic peccadilloes, Connolly regarded as a serious threat to the party's pretension of being 'hewed close to the line' of the class struggle.⁹⁶

94. Kautsky to Adler, 23 May 1902. Quoted Lichtheim, Marxism, p.279.

95. See p. above.

96. Socialist, June 1904.

On the wages issue, De Leon's position has been usually interpreted in terms of an obtuse Lassalleanism which was itself a reflection of the peculiar backwardness of the American socialist movement.⁹⁷

In this view - which has been advanced by orthodox marxists of various schools - Connolly is seen as defending the true Marxian doctrine of wages against De Leon's 'vulgarisation' or 'revision' of it.⁹⁸

Connolly had taken issue with the S.L.P. position on wages as expressed by a party organiser in Kansas during a dispute with 'a spokesman of the Kangaroos' [i.e. the American "reformist" Social Democratic Party] ; it formed the spearhead of his attacking article in the People of April 9th, 1904.⁹⁹ The point of contention was the question of whether wage increases were necessarily nullified by an automatic increase in prices: this formulation, so reminiscent of Lassalle's "Iron Law" of minimum wages, was vigorously defended by S.L.P. propagandists.

Connolly had commented:

'... the theory that a rise in prices always destroys the value of a rise in wages sounds very revolutionary, but it is not true ... it is no part of our doctrine'.¹⁰⁰

He appealed to the authority of Marx's Value Price and Profit to exorcise this heresy. De Leon's distortion of what Marx had actually written in this work in his reply to Connolly has been ably disclosed.¹⁰¹

97. See p. above. O'Riordan, Connolly in America, p.24: Greaves, Life & Times of James Connolly, p.172-3: Raisky, Daniel De Leon, p.13.

98. Greaves, p.177: O'Riordan, p.24.

99. Greaves, p.174-5: O'Riordan, p.16.

100. Ibid.

101. Greaves, p.176-7.

De Leon's insistence that wages would always level out to the value of labour power, no matter what 'ups and downs' there might be in adjustments of remuneration, ignored Marx's further elaboration on the point. He maintained that, in addition to the physical element - 'the necessities absolutely indispensable for living and multiplying'¹⁰² - there was an historical and social element. Hence:

'... you will find that the value of labour itself is not a fixed but a variable magnitude, even supposing the values of all other commodities to remain constant. For this reason ... although we can fix the minimum of wages, we cannot fix their maximum'.¹⁰³

Clearly, in terms of what Marx had written in Value, Price & Profit, Connolly had been vindicated: in the two years since his statement against the "Iron Law" - quoted by Connolly in the Socialist that June - De Leon and the S.L.P. had moved toward acceptance of its basic tenet.

Connolly had put his finger on the real cause of this drift toward Lassallean wage doctrine in his article in the People of April 9th. If that doctrine were to be accepted by the party, he said:

'... it knocks the feet from under the S.T. & L.A. and renders that body little else than a mere ward-heeling club for the S.L.P.'.¹⁰⁴

Apart from his inordinate - for a marxist - admiration for Lassalle,¹⁰⁵

102. Karl Marx, Wages, Price & Profit (Moscow, 1970), p.50. This work has always been variously described as Value, Price and Profit or Wages, Price and Profit.

103. Ibid., p.51.

104. Quoted O'Riordan, Connolly in America, p.16.

105. Ibid., p.24.

it seems likely that De Leon had been impressed by the rate of decline both of real and monetary wages in the industrialised world during the final decade or so of 19th century: the "Great Depression" seemed to presage the fulfilment of the immiseration process outlined by Marx in Wage Labour & Capital. As he said in his reply to Connolly, labour unions were powerless to prevent the decline, but might act as a braking mechanism on the rate of decline toward what he spoke of as the 'coolie stage' of wage labour.¹⁰⁶ It should be remembered that in his Reform or Revolution and What Means this Strike, De Leon had outlined the reasons for the failure of the 'pure and simple' unions to cope with the "Great Depression": in the face of this demonstrable failure of the methods of economic struggle, he had demanded political action by unionised labour - organisation in support of the S.L.P. It was in this regard that the S.L.P. had created its own 'client' union, the S.T. & L.A.: its utility was not its potential for economic struggle at all, but its political function as the 'shaft' to which the party spear 'head' was fixed. This lance analogy was drawn from his latest polemical work on the topic, The Burning Question of Trades Unionism, first published in 1904. With the appearance of this book, the De Leonite rationale of dual unionism was completed and it must be said that De Leonism so constituted properly implies as strong a condemnation of the merits of economic struggle, as anything to be found in Lenin's What Is To Be Done? It was in this sense of De Leon's own struggle against "economism" that the Lassallean wage doctrine was revived, as a necessary theoretical function of the

106. Ibid., p.18

subordination of the socialist union to the control of the party.

De Leon's schema for a peaceful road to socialism centred upon the party's geographical-territorial principle of organisation - itself a necessary reflection of the nature of capitalist politics:

revolutionary organisation must follow this pattern in order to assault the legislative and executive organs of the state - the seat of the coercive power of the ruling bourgeois class - and this task should be undertaken by the party independently of industrial concerns or organisation.¹⁰⁷

This explicit reduction of the value of industrial struggle and organisation to a mere dependent role did not exclude the notion that post-revolutionary government would be 'industrialist' in complexion, when 'industrial constituencies' would replace political ones: nor did it underrate the importance of the industrial union's power should the bourgeoisie refuse to recognise the victory of the socialist party at the polls - in that situation, the union would apply the quietus measure of the general strike, the 'general lock-out of the capitalist class', to enforce the revolutionary decision of the popular vote.¹⁰⁸

These considerations notwithstanding, the client relationship between party and union, together with the exclusive concern for the union's political role, led to that negative quietism in the everyday industrial struggle which became a hallmark of De Leonite industrial organisations.^{109.}

Scottish response to this dispute was remarkably muted given the personalities involved and the seriousness of the issues raised, albeit

107. Daniel De Leon, The Burning Question of Trades Unionism S.L. Press, n.d. [1904], p.16.

108. Ibid.

109. O'Riordan, Connolly in America, p.53.

in nascent form. Partly, this was because the dispute was allowed to become quiescent within the American party itself after the July congress¹¹⁰, and partly because Connolly's contributions to the Socialist at the time were couched in unimpeachably orthodox form. His article in the June issue was reassuringly argued with support from the published opinions of De Leon himself, and, the following month, Connolly's poem "Be Moderate" appeared with a short subscript: this brief addendum echoed the De Leonite tone of the poem itself with reference to the sectarian stridency of The Burning Question of Trades Unionism, even to the point of inclusion of De Leon's phraseology of the commitment to 'war to the knife'.¹¹¹ There was also the point that the most important issue - that of wages - the theoretical appreciation of the problem of economic organisation, was of no urgency for the Scottish De Leonites. Unlike the American S.L.P., the British party did not yet have an economic arm, a socialist industrial union; it would not be for two years that the first tentative steps toward forming such a body would be taken, with the establishment of the Advocates of Industrial Unionism on the initiative of the Leith S.L.P. in 1906. Religion, however, was another matter. Connolly's old Glasgow comrade, Tom Bell, was an activist of a type common in the Scottish movement, who had come to Socialism via religious scepticism, and was disposed to regard Christianity and Historical Materialism as mutually exclusive systems of belief. He had tackled Connolly on his own commitment to Catholicism while both had been active in the Summer campaign

110. Greaves, Life & Times of James Connolly, p.182.

111. De Leon, The Burning Question of Trades Unionism, p.20. Socialist, July 1904.

of 1903, and had not been satisfied with Connolly's tart reply.¹¹²

He noted that in their disagreement on religion, De Leon attacked the "ultramontanism" of the Roman church, while Connolly opposed giving the matter undue prominence and took the line of the IInd International that this was a private concern. Bell commented later,

'The authority of the International, and my admiration for the intellectual level of Connolly, disconcerted me somewhat, yet I really felt that De Leon was fundamentally correct'.¹¹³

No mention of the "Connolly matter" - as it was dubbed in American S.L.P. circles - was made in the Socialist: probably Bell's was the general response within the Scottish membership, to a matter that did not concern them directly.

On the issue of Religion, Connolly was decidedly at variance with the general trend within Scottish socialism. All of the socialist organisations were then stridently secularist in tone, even the mild mannered and 'respectable' I.L.P. Those socialists who were Catholics by background tended particularly to express their socialism in terms of a pronounced anti-clericalism and antagonism to the institution of the church. The S.L.P. was especially hostile to organised religion, and Neil Maclean recalled numerous occasions when Connolly had been hard pressed by the comrades on this issue and had spiritedly defended his faith. The intellectual justification for this extreme secularist

112. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.51. Owen Dudley Edwards, The Mind of an Activist - James Connolly (Gill and MacMillan, Dublin, 1971), p.35 ff. Connolly had merely stressed that in Ireland, Protestantism produced conservatives and "jingoes", while Catholics tended to become "rebels". This could not be said to meet the general theoretical point at issue; but to be fair to the spirit of Connolly's reply it should be said that there was a strong hint in Bell's original query of a partisan belief that Protestant Christianity was at least more "progressive" than the "reactionary" nature of Roman Catholicism.

113. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.52.

approach was the reflection theory of knowledge as advanced by Engels in his Anti-Duhring, which, together with that crude determinism already noted, formed the basis of "Historical Materialism" as then understood.¹¹⁴ In terms of theoretical consistency, Bell's position - which was shared by most of the Scottish S.L.P. membership - must be granted to be stronger than Connolly's. Using the authority of the Erfurt congress, Connolly had attempted to work out an accommodation between Catholic theology and Marxist materialism which rested upon a pragmatic and dualist approach. His first treatment of this issue was contained in an article "Socialism and Religion" published in his Workers' Republic for June 17th 1899, and later incorporated in his booklet The New Evangel (March 1901). In this work he maintained that:

'... Socialism is based upon a series of facts requiring only unassisted human reason to grasp and master in all their details, whereas Religion of every kind is admittedly based upon 'faith' in the occurrence in past ages of a series of phenomena inexplicable by any process of mere human reasoning ... to identify Socialism with Religion would ... mean that our members would be required to conform to one religious creed, as well as to one specific economic faith ... Socialism as a party, bases itself upon its knowledge of facts, of economic truths, and leaves the building up of religious ideals or faiths to the outside public, or to its individual members if they so will. It is neither Free-thinker nor Christian, Turk nor Jew, Buddhist nor Idolater, Mahomedan nor Parsee - it is only HUMAN'. 115

114. Personal Testimony of Harry M'Shane, sometime activist in the Glasgow I.L.P., B.S.P. and C.P.G.B.

115. Edwards and Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, p.197-8.

Connolly's position might have been excellent from a merely propagandist view, but its theoretical inadequacy clearly worried - with justification - initiated Marxian Materialists like Bell. Nor can it be said that Connolly later supplied this lack: at the risk of anticipating, it must be said that in his most sustained treatment of the issue, Labour Nationality and Religion, published in 1910, he failed to advance beyond a simplistic ethical relativist approach. The straightforward pragmatism of Connolly's approach to the religious issue is well documented in a private letter he wrote to Matheson at a later date. It is clear from the nature of Bell's recollections that Matheson did not impart any information he had thus gained about Connolly's views to other party members. Connolly wrote:

'... though I have usually posed as a Catholic, I have not gone to my duty for 15 years, and I have not the slightest tincture of faith left. I only assumed the Catholic pose in order to quiz the raw freethinkers whose ridiculous dogmatism did and does annoy me as much as the dogmatism of the Orthodox. In fact, I respect the good Catholic more than the average free thinker'. 116.

Despite an intermittent private correspondence with Matheson, Connolly faded from the consciousness of the British S.L.P. after 1904, and did not write further for the Socialist. The British party continued to draw its main strength from Scotland - especially from the industrialised West - in the succeeding years. Its unremitting hostility to both 'pure and simple' trade unions and the I.L.P. and, of course, to the orthodox social democrats of the S.D.F. kept it isolated from the mainstream of the labour movement and its member-

116. Connolly to Matheson, 30 January 1908.

ship remained small. Its emphasis upon theoretical competence - albeit of a catechistic nature - for party members meant that it emerged as something of an elite: in the main it attracted skilled tradesmen, there being in particular a high percentage of moulders in its ranks.¹¹⁷ Because of the strictness of party discipline and ruthless treatment meted out to defaulters, turnover of membership remained high: expulsion was a sanction in frequent use for those who challenged the De Leonite standards of ideology or behaviour. Alex. Anderson, to whom Connolly had written his letter of support for the Scotch 'current' in November 1901, was expelled, supposedly for misappropriation of Edinburgh branch funds, in October 1902.¹¹⁸ It seems that he had been opposed to the establishment of the Socialist on the grounds of prohibitive cost: after his summary expulsion, this able activist removed to London and became a member of the tiny "impossibilist" Socialist Party of Great Britain.¹¹⁹ In March 1909, Neil Maclean, national secretary of the party, found himself in a similar position. He was expelled from the organisation after an intra-party dispute of intense, and characteristic vitriol, in which the comrades of the Edinburgh Branch took the leading part against him. He was accused of support for non-marxist principles while participating in a Labour

117. Personal testimony of Harry M^rShane. For a full account of the history of the British S.L.P., two unpublished theses may be consulted: D. M. Chewter, "The History of the S.L.P. of Great Britain, 1902-21", B.Litt. Oxford, 1965/66, and Helen Vernon, "The S.L.P. and the Working Class movement on the Clyde, 1903-21", M.Phil. Leeds, 1967/68.

118. Justice, 8 November 1902. Socialist, June 1903.

119. Socialist Standard, October 1973. Tsuzuki, "The Impossibilist Revolt", p.391.

demonstration at which 'pure and simple' fakir resolutions were approved. Maclean defended himself spiritedly, and gained the support of some of the members of the national executive, who sent a delegate to investigate the matter: he was hounded out of the party nonetheless.¹²⁰

Maclean referred to attempts by Edinburgh activists to have the national executive replaced by a presidium type committee drawn from the Edinburgh district: these demands had been pressed regularly since 1907, and were no doubt actuated by the knowledge that the American party delegated similar functional powers to a sub-committee drawn from the New York area.¹²¹ These jealousies on the part of the Edinburgh branch - which felt itself to be the parent or senior element in the party - of the power of the national executive, irritated by sectional and personal grievances, led to a mass secession of the Edinburgh membership. They constituted themselves the following year as the 'British Section of the International Socialist Labour Party' and brought out their own organ, the Proletariat.

Naturally such internecine factionalism crippled party activity. Nevertheless, the S.L.P. gamely fought municipal elections when they could, Neil Maclean making a special attempt to cultivate the Gorbals district of Glasgow, from 1906.¹²² On the industrial front, little progress was made for some years. The Advocates of Industrial Unionism (later the Industrial Workers of Great Britain) published its own journal, the Industrial Unionist, but remained little more

120. S.L.P., MS "Edinburgh branch Statement on Recent Happenings anent the Expulsion of N. Maclean" 1909. Neil Maclean, MS "Reply to Edinburgh branch Lying Statements anent Neil Maclean" (March, 1909).

121. N. Maclean MS.

122. Personal Testimony of Harry M'Shane.

than a function of the party. This body attempted two policy lines: the formation of industrial union propaganda groups within established craft unions, and the organisation of non-unionised semi-skilled and unskilled labour. The first approach met with little success, since unionised craftsmen saw no reason to forego the insurance and other benefits which existing bodies afforded them, in pursuit of some De Leonite chimera. The I.W.G.B. did enjoy some success in organising the unskilled and semi-skilled: its later strength in Scotland would be demonstrated in the celebrated Singers' strike of 1911. Despite this isolated - and exceptional - achievement, it proved incapable of sustaining its growth.

It was the party press that was perhaps the most significant aspect of S.L.P. activity. The S.L. Press, as agent for the New York Labor News Co. and for Kerr and Co. of Chicago, became the major source of socialist literature in Scotland, and by far surpassed any of the other parties in both volume and quality of material available.¹²³ The S.L. Press was instrumental in popularising socialist theory among the Scottish working class through its dissemination of cheap editions of marxist classics and American pamphlets; and, in addition to this vast work of informal evangelisation, it was always ready to offer printing aid and expertise to any revolutionary or labour cause. Before its demise in the early twenties, its services were to be extended to such diverse organisations as the Clyde Workers' Committee - that ad hoc syndicalist agency of Clydeside revolt against wartime restrictions - and the Irish Republican Army. As we shall see, it

123. Personal Testimony of Harry M'Shane.

would also be of great service to James Connolly himself during the first year of the Great War.

In mid-January of 1907, the De Leon - Connolly dispute on Wages marriage and the church was revived within the American S.L.P. at National Executive level: De Leon's stand upon these issues was then endorsed as official policy.¹²⁴ An additional bone of contention was the question of race or language federations within the S.L.P.; Hungarian and Swedish national federations were already in existence, but had become a controversial issue of party policy. Connolly had been active in the establishment of the Irish Socialist Federation that same month, but had been at pains to indicate that this body was organised on an independent basis, entirely outside the S.L.P. Its joint purpose was to propagate socialist teaching among the Irish-American working class, and to demonstrate solidarity with the Irish socialist movement. This venture - begun in New York city, at the heart of S.L.P. organisational and electoral strength - occasioned a prolonged controversy in the columns of the People: majority S.L.P. opinion solidified heavily against Connolly.¹²⁵ Also in January 1907, De Leon and Connolly clashed over the rights of the presidium-type sub-committee elected from the New York area to discharge the duties of the National Executive pro tem. Connolly served on both of these bodies, representing the party's New Jersey organisation. The matter turned upon the right of access enjoyed by the sub-committee to the party press, and it was upon this constitutional nicety that Connolly

124. O'Riordan Connolly in America, p.47.

125. Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.198-200.

appears to have challenged De Leon's degree of personal control over both the executive and the press: it seems to be the case that in this instance, Connolly was attempting to achieve some constitutional definition in favour of greater democratisation of party structure. As a result of these developments, Connolly became a target for the pious indignation of the De Leonite orthodox, and, after a campaign of mounting vilification, he was moved to resign from the S.L.P.¹²⁶ Interestingly enough, on at least one of these points Scottish opinion remained favourable to Connolly - although of course of no effect upon the progress of the dispute. Tom Bell recalled that he and other Scottish De Leonites:

'... entirely approved of Connolly's special work amongst the Irish emigrants of America'. 127.

This was not in any sense a testament to the British party's breadth of sympathy or lack of dogmatism compared with its American counterpart. It should rather be seen as indicative of the persistence of the strain of sectionalism evident in the Scottish Left since the earliest days of the socialist movement, and of the British party's original basis as a current of Scottish protest against metropolitan leadership. Bell and the Scottish comrades were sensitive to the problem of a socialist movement which made insufficient allowance for ethnic and cultural diversity, having themselves seceded from just

126. A detailed discussion of the dispute is given by Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.198-204 and O'Riordan, Connolly in America, p.40-47.

127. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.52.

such a movement. It is likely too, that Connolly's involvement with organisation for both Irish and Italian socialist bodies in the USA owed much to his appreciation of the disastrous failure of the British S.D.F. to retain the allegiance of its Scottish membership in 1902/03. It was in this sense that he feared that the S.L.P. might lose ground to the "Kangaroos" who became active within ethnic federations and used them both to spread socialist propoganda and to enlarge the strength of the American S.D.P.¹²⁸

This culmination of the Connolly - De Leon dispute in 1907 cannot adequately be understood without reference to the formation, at a gathering in Chicago in 1905 of the "Industrial Workers of the World". This syndicalist trade union had been established with the avowed aim of organising all grades of workers into 'One Big Union' (OBU). A preparatory "conference of industrial unionists" convened in January and issued a Manifesto in which the basis of the new organisation was spelled out:

'... one great industrial union embracing all industries - providing for craft autonomy locally, industrial autonomy internationally, and working class unity generally ... founded on the class struggle and [upon] the recognition of the irrepressible conflict between the capitalist class and the working class'. 129.

Clearly this rationale is an admixture of trades unionism, Anarchism and Marxism. An American analyst, writing only eight years later, described it thus:

128. Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.197.

129. Manifesto of the Conference of Industrial Unionists at Chicago, January 2, 3 and 4, 1905; reprinted in Daniel De Leon Socialist Reconstruction of Society (S.L. Press, n.d.) p.61.

'Syndicalism is the most modern phase of the revolutionary movement ... a snythesis of elements: the Socialist indictment of Capitalism and part of the Socialist programme; the anarchist method and ideal; and the unionist idea of organisation in trade or industry'. 130

The Manifesto embodies a strong condemnation of craft unionism as well as Anarchist-cum-Marxist rhetoric, describing it as a 'worn out and corrupt system'. Craft Unionism was castigated for its inability to end wage-slavery, its effectiveness in perpetuating divisions within the working class, its assistance to the employers in the creation of trades monopolies, and its role in fostering political ignorance and hindering the growth of class consciousness among the workers. The whole tone of the Manifesto is shot through with the sombre tenor of Marx's Wage Labour & Capital; 'there is no silver lining to the clouds of darkness and despair settling down upon the world of labor', it averred. But this vision was modified - though not brightened by - consideration of the role of employers' combinations and the domination of modern industry by automation and trusts. The Manifesto asserted,

'The great facts of present industry are the displacement of human skill by machines and the increase of capitalist power through concentration in the possession of the tools with which wealth is produced and distributed ... Class divisions grow ever more fixed and class antagonisms more sharp. Trade lines have been swallowed up in a common servitude of all workers to the machines which they tend. New machines, ever replacing less productive ones, wipe out whole trades and plunge new bodies of workers into the ever-growing army of tradeless, hopeless unemployed'. 131

130. Paul Brissenden, The Launching of the Industrial Workers of the World, (California Univ. Press, 1913), p.1.

131. Reprinted in De Leon Socialist Reconstruction of Society, p.59.

For the Chicago industrial unionists, it was axiomatic that craft unionism, and indeed, the entire structure of craft-differentiated labour in industry, would be numbered among the necessary casualties of the accelerated productivity of maturing Capitalism, as outlined in this most popular of Marx's works: loss of trade skills would be one prime function of proletarian immiseration.

In general terms, syndicalism may be said to have its origins in the Anarchism that was so deplored by the Marxian socialists of both the First and Second Internationals, yet which clung - incubus like - to their organisations. Marx and Engels were disposed to regard Anarchism as a form of protest associated with pre-industrial society, and anticipated that it would disappear with the emergence of a well defined urban-dwelling proletariat concerned with the labour struggle and the socialist goal. This forecast was not realised in fact, and the anti-political heresy re-emerged around the turn of the century, having accommodated itself to the labour movement in the form of syndicalist unions.¹³² The movement is best typified perhaps by the emergence in 1902 of the French C.G.T., a confederation of autonomous syndicate. Syndicalism embodies a rejection of the orthodox "state socialism" of the social democratic movement, being hostile or at best, indifferent, to political activity; but it was genuinely marxist in terms of its acceptance of Marx's critique of the pathology of Capitalism and of bourgeois society. The I.W.W. may be seen as an American counterpart of the C.G.T., although it would differ from the latter

132. Lichtheim, Marxism, p.222-4.

in the important respect of developing a much more centralised organisational structure. In North America, the term "Industrial Unionism" was used to describe such organisations: "Syndicalism" remained European terminology. The American S.L.P. was early interested in the new venture launched in Chicago, as the signature of its national secretary, Frank Bohn, on the January Manifesto testified. As originally constituted in 1905, the I.W.W. could not be called a "pure" syndicalist body: although an economic body 'without affiliation with any political party', it did call for concerted action by the working class 'on the political, as well as on the industrial field',¹³³ a political concession to the strength of De Leonite influence and membership within the organisation.

As originally established, the I.W.W. was of variform composition. 'Simple' industrial unions such as the Western Federation of Miners, were counted among 'multi-industrial types' such as the grandiosely named American Labor Union of Eugene Debs. There were ordinary unitary structured 'Amalgamateds' together with various state federations and conventional craft union locals which had defected from the A.F.L.¹³⁴ Leadership was drawn heavily from the 'Kangaroo' Socialist Party of America (sometime the American S.D.P.) and of particular note were Eugene Debs - Railwaymen's leader and head of the American Labor Union - and William D. Haywood of the Western Miners. Daniel De Leon

133. Preamble of the I.W.W., clause 3. Quoted De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society, p.7.

134. Brissenden, The Launching of the I.W.W., p.11-12.

established himself as the I.W.W.'s leading ideologue, and the supremacy of De Leonite ideas was unchallenged at this early period of the organisation's life.¹³⁵ The S.L.P. client, the S.T. & L.A. dissolved itself into the I.W.W., perhaps like some other 'paper unions' involved in the venture, as its only means of continued existence.¹³⁶ In address given at Minneapolis in July 1905, "The Preamble of the I.W.W.", De Leon outlined further developments in his conception of the place of the industrial union in the class struggle. De Leon at this point accorded the OBU equal status to that of the party, 'socialist economics' being translated into twin elements - the party and the union - as mutually dependent essentials in labour organisation for the overthrow of Capitalism.¹³⁷ In the post-revolutionary Industrial Commonwealth, sovereignty would fall to the central administrative organs of the OBU, the political state having 'withered away', or, in De Leon's pithy formula,

'Where the General Executive Board of the Industrial Workers of the World will sit, there will be the nation's capital'.¹³⁸

The OBU was also charged, under this new De Leonite scheme, with the task of keeping watch over the politicians, to prevent their corruption and betrayal of working class interests by the 'lures and wiles' prevalent in the 'parliaments of capitalism':

135. Ibid., p.38.

136. Ibid., p.16-17.

137. De Leon Socialist Reconstruction of Society, p.39-40.

138. Ibid., p.47.

'... nothing short of such an economic organisation can keep sharp the edge of the special sword wielded by the political movement of labor'. 139

Given this strategy, a peaceful revolution was assured in the USA - something impossible in Europe¹⁴⁰ - and the OBU remained to support the party with that ultimate sanction outlined in The Burning Question of Trades Unionism, the 'general lock-out of the capitalist class'.¹⁴¹ This address, later published by the S.L.P. as a pamphlet entitled Socialist Reconstruction of Society, can perhaps be regarded as De Leon's maximum theoretical concession to the reality of an industrial union that enjoyed organisational autonomy, and was not - like the old S.T. & L.A. - a client of the S.L.P. The tasks of the OBU, as thus elaborated by De Leon must be seen in relation to the highly structured organisation of the I.W.W.: this is particularly so with regard to the supervisory and governmental functions prescribed for the organisation in the post-revolutionary "Industrial Commonwealth". The structure provided for 13 international industrial divisions - "departments" - which supposedly matched the current achievement of the concentration of capitalist forms of production. These were subdivided into national industrial unions which consisted of area 'locals' (or branches) in the normal way. A General Executive Board presided over the departments, which exercised general administrative and financial authority throughout the organisation: this body controlled the OBU's press, and enjoyed the power of absolute veto over all

139. Ibid., p.50

140. Ibid., p.48, 53-4.

141. Ibid., p.52.

actions of subordinate bodies; it also had the authority to call any part of the OBU out on strike without any kind of ballot. The structure did allow for one territorial aspect of organisation in the form of District Industrial Councils; these were intermediaries between the locals and the G.E.B. and paralleled the departmental and national union structure. Each level of the structure was administered by an appropriate executive; while ultimate authority rested in the annual international convention, with provision for a referendum of the general membership beyond that.^{142.}

At the same time that Connolly's dispute with De Leon was revived and intensified within the S.L.P. in 1907, there erupted in the columns of the I.W.W. organ, the Industrial Union Bulletin, a controversy over wages in which that old chestnut of Lassallean theory was defended by certain of De Leon's supporters. Connolly again opposed this wage theory on the same lines he had taken in 1904, and this led, in turn, to a vicious personal attack upon him by De Leon himself who vainly attempted to have him dismissed from his post as I.W.W. district organiser for New York City.¹⁴³ This incident formed an unpleasant epilogue to Connolly's connection with the S.L.P. and from that point he concentrated his energies upon organisational work for the I.W.W. and later, for the S.P.A. In 1909, Kerr & Co. of Chicago published his first sustained programmatic work, Socialism Made Easy: there was little that was original in this and it was, in essence, a restatement

142. Brissenden, The Launching of the I.W.W., p.31-35, 45. At its 1906 Convention, the I.W.W. incorporated into its Preamble the recognition that 'By organising industrially, we are forming the structure of the new society, within the shell of the old'. Ibid., p.41.

143. O'Riordan, Connolly in America, p.49-52.

of De Leon's scheme of organisation and action as it had been developed to the point reached in his Socialist Reconstruction of Society.

Connolly merely added evidence drawn from European and Irish history and Scandinavian industrial experience as material illustrative of De Leon's arguments. The basic premise of this work - taken whole from De Leon - that working class industrial unity, as realised through the collectivity of the OBU, would eventually give rise to political unity among socialists had been set down by De Leon thus:

'Only the trade union is capable of setting on foot a true political party of labor and thus raising a bulwark against the power of Capital'. 144

The authority for thus viewing the political party as a predicate of a prior achievement of industrial organisation, was derived by De Leon from supposed comments of Marx which were subsequently found to be of highly dubious authenticity.¹⁴⁵ Much ink has been expended by orthodox marxists criticising Connolly's deviance in this work from marxist tenets into syndicalist or 'semi-syndicalist' heresy.¹⁴⁶ These arguments turn upon the assumption that Connolly had somehow denied or downgraded the political nature of the proletarian revolution in favour of industrial activity. Nowhere does Connolly do this; his emphasis is given to industrial organisation and solidarity precisely in terms of its being a sine qua non for successful political action following the accepted authority of De Leon's "statement" from Marx himself.

The only alternative to this schema was that dangerous Blanquist

144. De Leon in As to Politics; quoted Greaves Life & Times of James Connolly, p.217.

145. Ibid.

146. Ibid., p.218-221. O'Rriordan, Connolly in America, p.56 ff.

adventurism which Connolly had condemned in the Edinburgh Socialist in August 1903;¹⁴⁷ as De Leon had remarked:

'Without the shop organisation and the bona fide union discipline, the transition period from capitalism to Socialism will have to be bridged by a DICTATORSHIP. Scratch the man who sniffs wholesale at unionism, and you will find a man with whom, if he is at all a thinker, the advent of Socialism is inseparable from a bloody revolution, with its concomitant, the MAN ON HORSEBACK.' 148

With the enforced secession of De Leon and the S.T. & L.A. element from the I.W.W. in 1908, Connolly remained a De Leonist in a 'pure' anti-political syndicalist union; he remained committed to the I.W.W. and came increasingly to look to the "Kangaroos". He opined in an editorial in his newspaper, The Harp, that the growth of the I.W.W. had vindicated the more 'tolerant' and more gradualist orientation of the S.P.A. and had rendered absolvescent the 'clear cut' approach of the S.L.P. He pondered:

'... that since the political party was not to accomplish the revolution but only to lead the attack upon the political citadel of capitalism, there no longer existed the same danger in the unclearness of its membership, nor compelling necessity for insisting upon its purification'.¹⁴⁹

Connolly summarised the new approach he was developing to issues of organisational method in a letter to Matheson about this time: he wrote:

'... I have come to believe that Keir Hardie was wise in his generation when he worked to form the L.R.C. and that he showed a nearer approximation to the spirit of the much quoted phrase of Marx about the trade unions alone being able to form the political party of labor than any of our revolutionists (or

147. See p.158 ff. above.

148. De Leon, Socialist Reconstruction of Society, epigraph.

149. The Harp, July 1908, editorial "Political Action".

Danites) ever did or do ... he has demonstrated to us the real method of upbuilding a Socialist Labor Party. What we want to do is to show that the same method can be utilised in building a revolutionary party, free of the faults and shunning the compromises of the L.R.C. If that body was dominated by industrial unionists instead of by pure and simplers; if it was elected by the industrial unions and controlled entirely by them and capable at any moment of having its delegates recalled by the unions, and had also its mandate directly from the rank and file organised in the workshops, it would be just the party we want ...' 150

Connolly became a national organiser for the S.P.A. in June 1909, 'the best job I ever had in my life', as he described it: yet his thoughts were turning increasingly to the possibility of returning to Ireland, if he could only get a living at tradesman's wages there.¹⁵¹ Meanwhile he urged the S.P.A. to establish a working relationship with the I.W.W. and to support the industrial unionist solution to the problem of the chronic division of the working class.

'That problem is intimately allied with the future of the Socialist party in America. Our party must become the political expression of the fight in the workshop and draw its inspiration therefrom ... the most dispersive and isolating force at work in the labor movement today is craft unionism, the most cohesive and unifying force, industrial unionism. In view of that fact, all objections which my comrades make to industrial unionism on the grounds of the supposedly, or truly anti-political, bias of many members of the I.W.W. is quite beside the mark. That question at the present stage of the game is purely doctrinaire. The use or non-use of political action will not be settled by the doctrinaires who make it their hobby today, but will be settled by the workers who use the I.W.W. in their workshop struggles...'. 152

150. Connolly to Matheson, New York, 7 May 1908.

151. Connolly to William O'Brien, 12 September 1909.

152. James Connolly, "Industrialism and the Trade Unions", in the International Socialist Review, February 1910.

Connolly remained as a De Leonist who had advanced beyond the doctrinaire practice of De Leonism. Within the next five months, in July 1910, he would return to Dublin for good. In the succeeding years of intensifying political and industrial struggle in Ireland, he would develop De Leon's dogma into a flexible and powerful organizational method.

6.

The "Forward" Correspondent

or

The Problem of Organisation

When Connolly returned to Dublin in July, 1910, he did so on the basis of a one year contract as paid organiser to the Socialist Party of Ireland. This body dated from 1904, when the rump of the old I.S.R.P. and the breakaway S.L.P. of Ireland had been prevailed upon to fuse in the general interest of the propagandist effort.¹ As had been the case with his I.S.R.P. agreement in the late '90's, engagements in Great Britain - especially in Scotland - were an essential element in Connolly's terms of employment.²

By the time of Connolly's return to the British Isles, the centre of gravity of the Scottish Left had shifted firmly from the leadership of the capital on the Forth to the industrialised conurbations of Clydeside. While the S.L.P. weakened itself by successive purges, both the S.D.P.³ and the I.L.P. now appeared revived by

1. See p.161 above. O'Brien, Forth the Banners Go, p.40.

2. Ibid., p.43-4.

3. The Social Democratic Federation had changed its title to "Social Democratic Party" in October 1907.

fresh infusions of leadership talent. The S.D.P. (re-named the British Socialist Party after 1911) now numbered among its Scottish activists John Maclean, the schoolmaster from Pollockshaws who was to become the most celebrated marxist leader in Scotland. Aided by his able associate James D. MacDougall, and the Glasgow sometime "possibilist" John F. Armour, Maclean spearheaded the S.D.P. propaganda in the West of Scotland; lecturing, fighting local elections, leading demonstrations of the unemployed, and above all, conducting packed classes in Marxian economics and industrial history under the auspices of the Glasgow district S.D.P.⁴ These classes, tutored annually by Maclean each Winter, were perhaps the most important single vehicle for the dissemination of marxist teaching amongst the industrial workers of the West of Scotland. A new generation of leaders had also come into the old I.L.P., leaving Keir Hardie somewhat ill at ease in some respects in his own organisation.⁵ This did not mean, however, that the party's theoretical understanding had made significant progress: some of the new leaders were capable of such unclarity as to present their position as one which rejected the Materialist conception of History, while accepting the Labour Theory of value.⁶ Thomas Johnston was one of the new I.L.P.'ers who enjoyed a unique position of influence within the Scottish working class movement: a graduate of Glasgow University, he was also proprietor of the Civic Press publishing company, and had, since 1906, published a

4. Lee & Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain, p.141-2.

5. R. K. Middlemas, The Clydesiders (Hutchinson, London, 1965), p.49.

6. James Maxton, quoted Ibid., p.80.

weekly journal Forward, edited by himself. Subtitled "A Scots weekly journal of Socialism, Trades Unionism and Democratic Thought", the Forward provided an independent forum for socialist debate and exchange of labour news items from home and abroad. It was by far the most widely circulated socialist and labour paper in Scotland and its tone was characterised by a non-partisan editorial policy of great breadth of sympathy. Above all, the Forward was a thoroughly professional product, run by a serious team of newspapermen: in terms of the level (and scope) of its reportage, its presentation and quality of comment, it could match the best standards of the British press in its day. In this important sense it should be distinguished from the quasi-polemical party organs such as the S.D.P.'s Justice and Call or the S.L.P.'s Socialist: it was in many ways the doyen of labour journalism and its quality was well reflected in its longevity. It ceased publication in 1959.

The Glasgow I.L.P. could also boast at this time, a leader who would, in his own way, achieve a popular fame almost as great as John Maclean's. John Wheatley of Shettleston had been born in Co. Waterford, Ireland in 1869, the eldest son of a miner who emigrated to the Scottish Lanarkshire coalfield when John was about seven years of age. John Wheatley went down the Baileston pit on his 12th birthday, and remained a coalface worker for the next ten years. Subsequently, he moved to the Shettleston district of Glasgow and, with his brother Patrick, bought up the printing firm of Hockson & Walsh: at this time he became active in the I.L.P. and sat as a Labour member on the Lanark County Council and later, on the Glasgow Town Council.⁷ Wheatley came to

7. Testimony of Mrs. Margaret Wheatley, daughter-in-law of John Wheatley.

socialism after much personal soul searching as to whether it might be compatible with Catholicism, and in 1906 founded the Catholic Socialist Society with a view to encouraging other Catholic workers to join the socialist movement: by 1910, however, this organisation was already in the last year of its life. It was finally wound up because many Catholics were beginning to join the labour movement direct, without at that time feeling the need for the special encouragement that such a society had provided in the past, and, because its existence was beginning to provoke an unacceptable and counter productive violent reaction from the U.I.L. and the church.⁸

Wheatley's background - that of the immigrant Irish Catholic working class community of the West of Scotland, centred upon the Lanark coalfield - remained a critical calculation in electoral terms for all political parties and a particular problem for the I.L.P. The Irish vote was practically the private preserve of the U.I.L. caucus and was, with the consistent support of the clergy, marshalled at the polls in support of the Liberal Party, then pledged to the enactment of a limited form of legislative independence for Ireland. Clearly, the stranglehold of the Home Rulers upon the Irish vote was a major obstacle that the Labour Party would have to overcome if it were going to make the desired progress among the electoral loyalties of the Scottish working class. In the general election of January 1910, in the mining constituency of North East Lanark, the official labour candidate - also sponsored by the miners' union - had been the veteran

8. The culmination of this reaction was the occasion in July 1912 when a Catholic mob assembled outside Wheatley's house in Shettleston and burned an effigy of him, while severely beating any Socialist they could lay hands upon. The local priest was much in evidence, encouraging the disorder; vide Forward, 6 July 1912.

activist William Small of Blantyre. This was the same man who had been proposed by Connolly's divisional I.L.P. in 1894 for the Central Edinburgh constituency.⁹ The crucial Irish vote had gone against Small, having been delivered by the U.I.L. interest to the Liberals more or less en bloc. So strong was the influence of the caucus that even those Irishmen who were officials in the miners' union were generally to be seen supporting the Liberal candidate, a lawyer named Pringle. This election epitomised the difficulties of Labour among the Irish-Scottish electorate, and one anonymous Labour activist was moved to write:

'The Irish mandate went for Pringle, and all the Irishmen of N.E. Lanark, with the exception of a sensible few, voted for Pringle, like so many automatons, at the direction of their leaders ... Not a single miners' official, who was an Irishman, voted or worked for Small'.¹⁰

Warming to his point, this correspondent, who described himself as 'a Miners' Leader and a good Irishman' elaborated further on the general situation of the immigrant Irish mining community:

'In every mining village the Irish caucus rigidly throttles all attempts on the part of Irishmen, for political and religious freedom. They pray in herds, they booze in herds at the pub of their fellow-herdsman, they pawn in herds at the pawnshop of their fellow-herdsman, they herd together in the slums owned by one of their countrymen, and they vote in herds at the bidding of their political herdsmen ... A few Irishmen, thinking for themselves politically and religiously, have dared the caucus ... If the caucus failed to bring them to heel, then the aid of the Church was brought to bear. And the man who defied the caucus would be pilloried from the altar...'.¹¹

9. See p.50ff above.

10. Forward, 25 March, 1911.

11. Ibid.

In addition to clerical denunciations and social ostracism, the caucus did not shrink from using violence in its confrontation with Socialist and Labour meetings. According to 'good Irishman', the nature of the Scottish U.I.L. was an agglomeration of private interests hostile to the real interests of the working class.

'The U.I.L. in Scotland is largely officered by publicans, slum property owners, pawnbrokers, model lodging house-keepers and provision merchants - a class of men who only use the Irish workers in Scotland to serve their own mercenary private interests of profit rent and interest ... the Irish Party, as a Party, must be fought by Socialists and Labourists'. 12

Writing in the immediate aftermath of the January 1910 election, P. J. Dollan - another I.L.P. activist of Irish Catholic descent, a close associate of Wheatley and future Labour Lord Provost of Glasgow - made it clear that the problem of Irish working class electoral loyalties in Lanark was part of a serious situation general throughout Scotland. He warned that:

'... as long as there is a large proportion of workers dominated by an alien party and led by clerical influence in politics, so long will we be unable to return Labourists to Parliament in Scotland'. 13

Dollan emphasised that the Irish vote might be manipulated by both major parties, to the general detriment of the I.L.P. On the one hand, John Redmond - leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party - O'Donnell Derrick - Scottish organiser for the U.I.L. - and T. P. O'Connor - influential editor of the popular Star - might urge Irish voters to

12. Ibid.

13. Forward, 29 January, 1910.

support Liberal candidates with the slogan that "a vote given for Labour is a vote given to the Tory": yet it seemed that clerical denunciations of Socialism could be used by either of the major parties. Where the Dockers' leader O'Connor Kessack stood in Glasgow's Camlachie constituency - with an excellent chance in the absence of an 'advanced Liberal' - the Tories swung the Irish vote away from him by the simple ruse of a timely publication of a 'tirade against Socialism' by a well known local priest.¹⁴ When Kessack again fought the division in the following December, he was opposed by an 'advanced' Liberal who - Forward complained - 'swallowed almost everything on our programme'. He also swallowed the Irish vote, and Kessack was beaten into third place with his vote much reduced.¹⁵ Most galling for the Labour interest was the knowledge that when Irish and Catholic workers defied church and caucus, their defection to the Labour ticket was sufficient to turn the scales: in January 1910, the Engineers' leader George N. Barnes had been elected in the Glasgow Blackfriars division after just such a defection.

Such were the electoral perspectives in Scotland for the Labour Party at the end of the first decade of its life, and on the eve of James Connolly's return to the British Isles. I.L.P. concern over the pathology of the Irish vote in Scotland led it to an interest in the pathology of the Irish Question per se - an interest not shared with the same urgency by the marxists of the S.L.P. and B.S.P.¹⁶ From 1910

14. Ibid.

15. Forward, 17 December 1910.

16. Orthodox marxists had, in the main, a consistent disdain for such electoral considerations. It will be remembered that John Leslie had been criticised for his support of a pure and simple 'Labour' candidacy in N.E. Lanark in 1901 by Edinburgh 'clear cuts': see p.106ff. above. Leslie's Irish Catholic background - in addition to his "opportunist" predilections - explains his concern with the problem of the Irish vote, but in this sense he stands out as an exception within the Scottish S.D.F./B.S.P.

onwards, the I.L.P.'s interest in Ireland involved absorption in Connolly's works, notably Labour Nationality & Religion and Labour in Irish History, published in that year: the party enthusiastically pushed sales of these writings both at meetings and at its own bookshop in Glasgow.¹⁷ As a result of these developments, Connolly found himself, on his return, drawn into a closer accommodation with the Scottish I.L.P. than with either his erstwhile colleagues of the S.L.P. or the orthodox marxists of the B.S.P. This accommodation in no wise vitiated Connolly's marxist commitment, but was simply a reflection of his consistent effort to establish in Ireland an autonomous and class conscious working class movement. He had supported the sectarianism of the British "Impossibilists" on precisely that basis:¹⁸ and now - on that same basis - he was to support the efforts of the new I.L.P. leaders, Wheatley, Johnston and Dollan to repudiate that I.L.P.- U.I.L. alliance that he had himself criticised so roundly in 1901.¹⁹ In this connection, it should be remembered that Connolly's approach to the Scottish movement had always a vital evangelistic element; that of gaining a hearing and a foothold - within the British working class movement as a whole - for the claims of the Irish movement for autonomous recognition. This was so in the 1900-03 period when Connolly had identified the I.S.R.P. with the cause of De Leonism internationally, and with the Scottish 'clear cuts' within the British socialist movement. From 1910, with more than a score of labour M.P.'s already sitting in the British Parliament, he sought to use his renewed

17. Testimony of Harry M'Shane.

18. See p.109 above.

19. See p.108 above and Workers' Republic, October 1901.

contact with Scotland - and especially the publicity outlet which the Forward could offer him - to advance the same case within the British Labour Party. If the focus had shifted in organisational terms from events within the tiny British socialist body, the S.D.F. to involvement with the parliamentary Labour Party and its mass following in the electorate and in the trade unions - and its mass readership served by journals such as the Forward - then this development beyond the limits of the educational-propagandist mode of socialist activity had already been urged by Connolly in February of 1910. His defence of the Industrial Union as a principle of organisation at that time rested upon a rejection of the implied elitism of the educational-propagandist mode in favour of an appeal to mass leadership and participation. He had then dismissed the claims of those socialists who sought to preach to the mass movement in a pedagogic way - on the subject of political action for example - as mere doctrinaire absurdity.²⁰ In arguing for a political body that should be an expression of the political will of the industrial union, Connolly had begun to supply an organisational method in place of those elitist De Leonist concepts of organisation which he had rejected. The S.P.I. came to embody this new approach: its manifesto spoke of the necessity for the Irish working class to:

'... organise itself industrially and politically with the end in view of gaining control and mastery of the entire resources of the country'.²¹

20. See p.190 above. "Industrialism & the Trade Unions" in the International Socialist Review, February, 1910.

21. Socialist Party of Ireland - Its Aims and Methods, reprinted Ryan, Socialism and Nationalism, p.190-1.

The party's approach to the issues of mass organisation was evident in the commitment to 'organise the workers of this country ... into one great PARTY OF LABOUR', and to act, either with its own electoral candidacies, or to

'... assist in furthering every honest attempt on the part of Organised Labour to obtain representation through independent working class candidates pledged to a progressive policy of social reform'. 22

The sanguine confidence of this new approach - so strikingly at variance with the old sectarian defensiveness of the S.L.P. - was aptly stated by Connolly in a passage marked for special emphasis:

'We know that every victory won for progress today is a victory for Socialism, even when the victors most anxiously repudiate our cause'. 23

The syndicalist content of this statement - although evident - is considerably muted when compared with the stand of Connolly's Harp, and the Irish Socialist Federation. The view that this was a reflection, not of Connolly's own views, but of the need for a declaration of broad aims on the part of an organisation which was undergoing rapid expansion, is probably well founded.²⁴ Connolly himself explained something of this development within the Irish movement to the Forward's readership in October 1910, in an article entitled "Socialism in Ireland".²⁵ Significantly his argument was prefixed by discussion of the perennial theoretical bone of contention between himself and the British Left: that of the value of Home Rule, or a limited form of legislative autonomy in Ireland, for the Irish working class. Connolly's position on this issue was at this time

22. Ibid.

23. Ibid.

24. Greaves, Life & Times of James Connolly, p.253.

25. Forward, 1 October, 1910.

the same as when he had discussed it in Erin's Hope and the Scottish Labour Leader in the mid-90's. He was at pains to deny that Home Rule was a prerequisite for a successful socialist propagandist effort in Ireland, and compared such a belief - held by all too many British socialists - to the old Radical notion that, in Britain, the abolition of the House of Lords was an essential preliminary to democratic reforms such as the extension of the franchise. Connolly's consistent view on Home Rule was that, even as an interim constitutional improvement, it might imply new powers for Irish capitalism that would severely retard the material and intellectual development of the Irish working class, the sanguine goodwill of British working class leaders notwithstanding.²⁶ Connolly then proceeded to describe the nature of the support then forthcoming for the expanding S.P.I. Its unequivocal nationalist stand had evinced strong response in 'Catholic and Nationalist Ireland', and, as an indication of the level of interest generated by the party's propagandist effort, Connolly cited the instance of the Jesuit Lenten lectures against Socialism, delivered in 1910 by the blind Father Kane. 'Probably no sermons in Ireland have been more extensively circulated in our generation', Connolly commented, and pointed out that his own 'rebuttal pamphlet [Labour Nationality and Religion] sold two thousand copies in Cork and Dublin, in one month!' During the Summer propaganda of 1910, S.P.I. branches had been opened in some provincial centres, and the party was represented in Belfast as well as in Dublin and Cork. The extension of organisation to the north - where Connolly's old I.S.R.P. had lacked the resources to penetrate - was something of a coup. Connolly pointed out that many

26. See p. 77 above.

Belfast workers who had shunned the local I.L.P. were now joining the S.P.I.; the I.L.P., he said, had proved to be '... too unresponsive to Irish sentiment and aspirations'. In this regard, he argued the need for an all-Irish body such as the S.P.I.

'... a party that rests upon Irish conditions, continues the traditional work for national freedom for Ireland as a part of its mission, and draws its inspiration from the revolutionary history of the past as well as the social development of the present'.

So much for the party's geographical impact; in terms of the collectivism of its trans-class appeal, Connolly could mention supporters from the nationalist and Gaelic revival movements and from the Women's suffrage movement, as well as 'staunch labour men' such as the president of the Belfast Trades Council. These myriad sources of support, said Connolly:

'... all represent the manner in which the Socialist Party has caught the imagination of every section of intellectual and industrial life in Ireland'.

Connolly made the crossing to Scotland in September on his first British lecture tour as S.P.I. organiser. To some extent, his literary reputation had preceded him. The Forward had carried advertisements for his paper the Harp since February, 'The organ of the Irish Socialist movement at home and abroad', while it was yet hoped that its continued publication in Dublin might be possible; and William O'Brien, canvassing support through Forward for the S.P.I.'s organiser fund floated to pay Connolly's salary, pitched his appeal in terms of an assumed familiarity of the Scottish movement with Connolly's Labour, Nationality and Religion and Labour in Irish History.²⁷ Connolly's

27. Forward, 29 October, 26 November 1910.

engagements were handled by George Dallas, secretary of the I.L.P.'s Scottish Divisional Council, and Thomas Johnston heralded his arrival with a fulsome notice in the Forward. This recommended Connolly as one who 'understands the Irish question and people better than any other in the Socialist movement'; he was also described as a 'capable organiser' and a 'clever writer', special mention being given to Labour in Irish History which was then in press. In amplification of his assertion that Connolly was 'a magnificent speaker', Johnston included in the notice the following comments from some American papers about him;

'Cleveland Plain Dealer: A forceful speaker, well versed in the History and Literature of his country".

Salt Lake Tribune: "An eloquent Irishman".

Boston Herald: "His manner is that of an orator, and his language that of a scholar"'.²⁸

The largest and most important meeting of the tour was held in the Metropole Theatre, Stockwell St., Glasgow, on Sunday September 9th. This was one of a regular series of meetings arranged each week at the Metropole by the local branch of the Clarion Scouts organisation. With O'Connor Kessack and Dallas to support him on the platform, Connolly lectured on "A Socialist View of the Irish Question"; this was later reported in the Forward under the somewhat more emotive title of "The Black '48 in Ireland". Connolly quoted from a Board of Trade publication, Fifty Years of National Progress, to bring out the full human tragedy of the Irish famine crops of 1847, '48 and '49: in this period, there had been 1¼ million deaths by starvation, more than 3½ million evictions

28. Forward, 8 October 1910.

of tenant farmers, and a total of 4 million people compelled to emigrate through destitution. He spoke with feeling and in a popular, argumentative style, the pronounced anti-English tone of his address evincing a positive response from his Scottish audience.²⁹ Having denounced such calamitous failures on the part of the English imperial government, Connolly went on to describe the engrained sectarianism of working class life in Belfast, yet allowed himself to hope that religious bigotries might soon be submerged by the class solidarity resultant from the 'greater Socialist and Labour agitation' of recent years: the city fathers of Dublin were castigated in fine style for allowing the desperately bad living conditions in that city to persist; here, the mortality rates were second only to Constantinople, despite '... municipal control by local capitalists for sixty years'. On the question of socialism and religion, Connolly was at pains to stress the dualist view of Erfurt; in doing so he gave voice to one of his most celebrated aphorisms. Socialism, he said, was not a religious question, being exclusively concerned with the here and now, and not the hereafter ...

'it was no concern of their organisation whether there was a Heaven or Hell; but if there was a Heaven hereafter, it was a poor preparation to live in Hell here'.³⁰

John Wheatley seized the opportunity of Connolly's visit to have him lecture the Catholic Socialist Society on "Irish Revolutionary History".³¹ This initial contact between Connolly and the Wheatley

29. Testimony of Harry M'Shane, who was actually present at this meeting.

30. Forward, 15 October, 1910.

31. Forward, 22 October 1910.

brothers was to lead to a strong friendship, based upon mutual respect and the natural understanding stemming from similarity of background, and would last throughout Connolly's remaining years.³²

The response of Wheatley and Johnston to Connolly at this time, and especially to his Labour Nationality and Religion and Labour in Irish History, may be seen as indicative of not only the peculiarities of the Scottish Left itself, but also of some of the unique features of Connolly's position as a Catholic socialist. On his own evidence,³³ Connolly had specially written Labour Nationality and Religion as a rebuttal to a series of sermons which sought to denounce the mentality of socialism as irrevocably anti-Catholic: the pamphlet was therefore conceived not only as a defence of socialism against this charge, but also in terms of stressing a necessary interdependence between the two faiths. Indeed, at certain points it is clear that he argued primarily from a Catholic standpoint, and only secondarily as a marxist.³⁴ Now, this degree of accommodation between Catholicism and Socialism - no matter how gratifying in the Irish context - was profoundly ill-received by Scottish Catholic socialists, including Wheatley. The near-ghetto living conditions of the Scottish Catholic workers of Irish descent that we have already noted in the Lanark Coalfield,³⁵ naturally gave form to 'advanced' labour and socialist views which were deeply anti-clerical and secularist in content. Indeed, the needs of the intellectual conflict with the religious and cultural sanctions applied by the Scottish U.I.L. caucus upon dissidents, closely matched the problems faced by Presbyterian comrades within the kirk. Hence,

32. Testimony of Mrs. Margaret Wheatley.

33. Forward, 1 October 1910.

34. Edwards and Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, Introduction, p.36-7.

35. See p.196-7 above.

the secularism of 'good Irishman' may be seen as just as much a product of Scottish conditions as the secularism of Calvinists such as William Nairne, Tom Bell and John Maclean in their generations. Connolly lacked this conscious secularism, the product of the censorious mind developed by a too defensively devotional background. It was in this regard that many Scottish Catholic socialists - especially the members of Wheatley's Catholic Socialist Society - expressed in private deep misgiving about the tone and content of Labour Nationality and Religion.³⁶ Both Wheatley and M'Shane were, for example deeply dismayed by Connolly's attitude - as expressed in this work - to the Papal encyclical on Labour of 1891, Rerum Novarum. The uncompromising conservatism and explicitly anti-Socialist tone of the encyclical had convinced them that it deserved nothing less than their complete and unremitting hostility: indeed Wheatley had never concealed his total opposition to it.³⁷ When in 1910, Labour Nationality and Religion appeared with an epigraph selected from the encyclical at the head of its first chapter, Wheatley and other Catholics in the Scottish movement were signally unimpressed by what, to them, seemed a gratuitous attempt by Connolly to use selected phrases from it - out of context - as '... a possible bridge to socialism'.³⁸ Nevertheless, as propaganda matter, Connolly's work was of much use to the Glasgow I.L.P. and supplemented such Catholic Socialist Society publications as Economic Discontent, written by a pro-Labour local priest, Father Haggerty, and reprints of Wheatley's

36. Testimony of Harry M'Shane

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

rather vitriolic debate with the clerical conservative Father Puissant, initially published by the Glasgow Observer (Catholic Herald) during 1906-07. If Wheatley and the Glasgow Catholics were thus out of sympathy with the spirit in which Labour Nationality and Religion had been written (no matter how much they might appreciate the arguments and evidence it presented), this is indicative of a fundamental difference in propagandist motivation between themselves and James Connolly. In the West of Scotland, the issue was one of a robust effort to re-educate the Catholic working man to the point where he might slough off the baneful influence of the ghetto caucus elite: socialist propaganda had become a matter of replacing a spurious deference to clericalist values and influence with a consciousness of real working class interests. Connolly's work was never restricted to this mould, because he was in a sense, too good a Catholic: in all his debates with clerics, with Father Finlay in The New Evangel (1899), with Father Kane in Labour Nationality and Religion, and with the Rev. John MacErlean S. J. in the London Catholic Times (September - November 1911),³⁹ Connolly was seriously attempting to argue the case of socialism with a view to its acceptance by the Catholic community and its intellectual and spiritual leadership. It can truly be said that no such community consciousness was possible for the Scottish Catholic socialists; they tended to respond to Catholic leaders - whether spiritual or lay - in terms of their utility or otherwise for the subversion of that devotional ghetto mentality which played into the hands of petty

39. See Edwards and Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, p.127-37.

capitalist interests. Wheatley's attack upon the "Economic Delusions of Mr. Hilaire Belloc",⁴⁰ is an example of just such a defensive approach to what he considered to be the dangerous influence of an important lay Catholic leader, conceived very much in the vein of his attack upon Father Puissant some four years earlier.

While Scottish Catholic socialists were thus absorbing the impact of Labour Nationality and Religion, Thomas Johnston - whose own theoretical bent was primarily historical - addressed himself to particular consideration of Labour in Irish History. In a review of the work, printed in Forward on November 12th 1910, he praised the 'scholarly fashion' of Connolly's style, and recommended it as 'a valuable work' which had '... knocked the aristocratic historians on the head'. If his general judgment was extremely favourable - he stated that the book should be in every Socialist Library - his expressed reservations are illuminating. He took Connolly to task for his reticence on the subject of working class conditions prior to the destruction of the clan system in 1649, and for his devotion of excessive space and treatment to the 'philosophy of class struggles'. He thought emphasis given by Connolly to ideology - his investigation of the thought of Tone and Thompson for example - together with the quotations from Marx (actually quite few in number) vitiated the work's analytical achievement. He demanded more facts, upon which the theoretical work must be based. Now this was a genuine historiographical dispute between two gifted working historians of working class history.

40. Forward, 8 July 1911.

Johnston was himself an historical writer of no mean ability, having written occasional pieces of significance for the Forward, including his humorous but trenchant analysis of the origins of aristocratic power and wealth in Scotland, later published in pamphlet form, Our Noble Families. His most sustained work, The History of the Working Classes in Scotland, Connolly would never have the opportunity to read: it was published by the Civic Press only in 1920. Johnston's History included a scholarly, rather antiquarian treatment of the conditions of working people in Scotland in the medieval and early modern periods - hence, perhaps his personal dismay that Connolly had not covered the same ground in Irish History. However, it should be noted that Johnston's coverage of the modern labour movement remained sketchy in the extreme. As his criticism of Connolly suggests - and the tone of his History confirmed - Johnston's approach to history was a decidedly positivist one, his method turning upon the proper presentation of empirical evidence, an irrefutable factual fabric which would sway the reader's reason. Labour in Irish History, because undeniably teleological in tone - one might almost say, eschatological - was not at all conceived within the limits of empirical method. In his attempt to:

'... do what in us lies to repair the deliberate neglect of the social question by our historians, and [indicate] ... the manner in which economic conditions have controlled and dominated our Irish history', 41

Connolly was led to examine the failure of Irish Patriot and National

41. James Connolly, Labour in Irish History (New Books, Dublin 1967 edn), p.2.

movements from the 17th Century, in terms of their failure to articulate working class grievances and demands. It was his view that:

'... under the inspiration of a few middle class doctrinaires, the social question has been rigorously excluded from the field of action to be covered by the rebellion, if successful ...', 42

and that this had resulted in a crippling loss of working class support. The Irish revolutionary movement was thus left as '... idealised expressions of middle class interest' and it was Connolly's self-appointed task to comprehend both the logic and the history of the developing movement and its ideology, to the point at which it might be capable of a theoretical accommodation with working class interests in the form of scientific socialism. This is precisely the motivation and plan of Labour in Irish History, and it is in this sense that the work owes nothing to empirical method or values. Connolly's approach, in that it thus so closely followed the spirit of Marx (and therefore the German Idealist tradition), may be described by the term 'historicist',⁴³ as being distinct from Johnston's approach which recognised only empirical data as valid raw material for historical writing. If Connolly and Johnston emerge as contrasting types of Irish Historicist and Scotch Antiquarian-~~cum~~-British Empiricist, the distinction is far from being merely academic. Even Johnston - in common with the rest of the British Socialist and Labour leadership - was disposed to regard Irish Home Rule in positivist terms as a constitutional sine qua non for democratic progress in Ireland. Further, he allowed this enthusiasm to lead him into a utopian appreciation of

42. Ibid., p.4.

43. As used by K. R. Popper in his The Poverty of Historicism (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London 1957).

Ireland's "Catholic democracy" and a misguided view that the tolerance and freedom from bigotry of the Catholic nationalists in the South of Ireland guaranteed a good economic and social prospect for Ireland's future.⁴⁴ For this standard misjudgment, he was ably taken to task by an Irishman resident in Helensburgh, who urged him to re-read Labour in Irish History as a corrective. It would, this correspondent said, help him over his

'... false judgments of Irish character on its political side and the ultimate aspirations of Irish movements'.⁴⁵

Johnston had not only confused the campaign in Ireland against the landlords with a hostility to landlordism per se, in terms of supposed democratic sentiment, (and therefore discounting the political strength and significance of the new proprietors); but had also failed to appreciate the strength of the anti-socialist Catholic sectarianism of the Ancient Order of Hibernians which was then a growing force within the Rome Rule movement. That such an able observer as Johnston - and one with such demonstrable analytical abilities - should give evidence of such positivist and indeed, utopian, misjudgments about Irish conditions, merely served to stress the urgency of expounding the Irish socialist case to the British left-wing leadership. This Connolly attempted to do during the next few years and it was as Irish correspondent of the Forward that he sought to make the case.

But this was to be but one aspect of Connolly's writing in the Forward. He would also concern himself with the vital problem of

44. Letters from Ireland (III) in Forward, 7 September 1912.

45. Forward, 21 September 1912.

organisation which now appeared most critical in this "age of industrial violence"⁴⁶, when both the decline in real wages and the rising cost of the necessities of life occasioned enhanced levels of labour militance throughout industrialised Europe and North America. A concern for organisational method was nothing new: indeed those early works of De Leon which were circulated within the Scottish Left at the turn of the century, with such important results - What Means This Strike? and Reform or Revolution - were organisational tracts. Lenin's What Is To Be Done? - issued first in 1902 and more widely circulated in 1907-8 - was an organisational work which would become the basis for the future development of the Russian socialist movement and of the IIIrd International structure generally. However, it would be true to say that, by 1910, orthodox Social Democracy in general - both in Europe and North America - was still showing no sign of overcoming its own organisational reflection of the dualist ethic of liberal society. Everywhere, the distinct functional separation between the political and economic organisations of the working class, had led to a formalistic gradualism which seemed to offer no solution to the real decline in living standards associated with the "Great Depression". While socialist agitators preached; while socialists and labour representatives were returned in increasing numbers to legislatures; the trade unions were hard pressed to retain their membership levels, and had begun to recognise that they could not in current circumstances successfully call a strike against powerful federated employers, let alone press for better conditions or payment.

46. A revealing nomenclature for the period, used by Graham Adams for his study, The Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-1915, (Columbia U.P. 1966).

At this time, the unions found themselves powerless to prevent wage reductions, or "speed ups" and labour shedding in return for small increases in money wages, or the reduction in requirements for skilled trades as a result of increased manufacture: and throughout, the rise in prices remained inexorable; in Britain in the period 1902-8, the cost of living rose by some 5%, and in 1909-13, by a further 9%. In this regard, it was hardly surprising that - as Tom Johnston noted - the labour movement was '... drifting into a period of anti-Parliamentary agitation'.⁴⁷ This mood could only be accelerated by the Osborne Judgment of 1909 which disabled trade unions from contributing towards the upkeep of the Labour Party: this decision of the Law Lords was only nullified by the Trade Union Act passed in 1913. In Scotland during this period, the problem of organisation became an issue of urgency, no longer a concern merely of socialist intellectuals, but of vibrant public debate both in the press and in packed lecture halls. Given the demonstrable failure of both socialist propaganda and labourist politics on the one hand, and of craft unionism on the other, in the current crisis, the debate began to hinge upon the potentialities of Syndicalism.

In many ways, those most threatened by this new interest in, and enthusiasm for syndicalism were the parliamentarians of the Labour Party and the orthodox social democrats of the S.D.P. The Labour Party - severely checked by the Osborne decision - was disposed to fear that this was a symptom of a recession in democratic strength within the country and of worrying divisions within the labour movement, which boded ill for the future of parliamentary activity.⁴⁸

47. Forward, 9 July 1910.

48. G. N. Barnes, M.P., Chairman of the Parliamentary Labour Party in Forward, 8 October 1910.

The S.D.P. on the other hand, was beginning to find itself severely embarrassed by the syndicalist propaganda carried on within its own ranks by Tom Mann - who returned from Australia in May 1910 - and Guy Bowman, a director of the 20th Century Press. Mann and Bowman founded a paper, the Industrial Syndicalist to propagate their views, and an "Industrial Syndicalist Education League" as an organisational base. The Mann-Bowman propaganda - which owed much to the example of the French C.G.T. - did speak of something akin to the 'one big union' ideal as its goal;⁴⁹ however, the hostility of S.D.P. leaders like Hyndman led to Mann's resignation from the party in May 1911. Both he and Bowman continued their propaganda, bringing out a new paper, The Syndicalist, in January 1912. It was at this point that many young militants in the S.D.P. (now re-named the British Socialist Party) - sympathetic to the syndicalist cause - began to withdraw from the party.⁵⁰ Before examining the challenge of syndicalism as an organisational theory within the Scottish Left - and Connolly's contribution thereto - it is necessary to deal with the response of the labour Party and the S.D.P. to the new situation.

The leading spokesman for the S.D.P. in Scotland was, of course, John Maclean; and in this regard, it is important to remember that, despite his later work to fuse the elements of socialism and Scottish nationalism, Maclean was at this time an orthodox S.D.P. member, with the one reservation on the rearmament issue, on which he opposed

49. Industrial Syndicalist, December 1910.

50. Tsuzuki, Hyndman & British Socialism, p.182-7.

Hyndman.⁵¹ During the period of July-September, 1910, Tom Johnston and John Maclean engaged each other in a debate over organisational principles in the columns of the Forward: this took the form of a developing critique and defence of the whole stance and raison d'etre of the Parliamentary Labour Party, and is a highly indicative source for the current thinking of both the S.D.P. and the I.L.P., as publicly expressed by their most able leaders in Scotland. Official S.D.P. policy at that time centred upon its aim of "socialist unity" with the I.L.P., on the terms of its - the S.D.P.'s - programme: the I.L.P. national leadership - Keir Hardie, Bruce Glasier, Ramsay MacDonald and Philip Snowden - had been consistent in their rejection of this "fusion" goal since the foundation of the L.R.C. in 1900, on the simple grounds that any such accommodation with the marxist principles of the social democrats would result in the immediate withdrawal of that vital trade union support on which the Parliamentary Labour group depended.⁵² Johnston said of this "fusion" idea:

'... instead of moving the mass to democratic socialism, we are asked to leave the Uneducated and the Semi-Educated and to form ourselves into a new coterie of select persons'. 53

-
51. Testimony of Harry M^lShane. Henry Hyndman remained a consistent advocate of war preparedness and of a big navy, being something of a Germanophobe. Maclean, however, like many other IInd International activists - including both Lenin and Connolly - looked to the large, successful and prestigious German S.P.D. for inspirational guidance, and was disposed to take an optimistic view of German democratic and progressive potential.
52. It should perhaps be pointed out that the term "Labour Party" as used at this time referred to that group of M.P.'s sponsored by the I.L.P. and trade unions through the agency of the L.R.C. Membership of the "Labour Party" was then only possible through an affiliated body, such as a branch of the I.L.P., trade union, local trades council, etc.
53. Forward, 9 July 1910.

He thought that the projected new socialist party would - like the Fabian Society - become separated from the mass movement and die a natural death as a result. He reminded his readers that the S.D.P. had turned its back on the broad labour movement once before - when, in 1901, it had walked out on the L.R.C. He commented:

'When the S.D.P. left the trade unions in disgust and set out on its mission minus the already organised workers ... [it] ... ceased to be an immediately effective fighting force. It became an awful warning - a gibbet by the wayside'. 54

For good measure, Johnston added that the Labour Party was both 'the mass in motion' and the 'heir to the Marxian tradition': Labour M.P.'s he held to be delegates of the 'mass mind', and it was only en masse that there could be said to be a movement at all. 'This is democracy in practice', he averred, 'and Socialism is the only logical outcome of it'. After a chiding reference to the sectarians of the S.L.P. - 'militants ... who shun palliatives' - Johnston went on to make definite overtures to syndicalist sympathisers. Industrial Unionists, he said, were right to anticipate the end of sectional craft unions, and their form of labour organisation '... is bound to come', however, he stressed that such organisational principles should not be considered antagonistic to the idea of a Labour Party. Nor did his concessions to syndicalist values stop there: he pointedly remarked that sabotage, sporadic harassment of employers, production of bad work - indeed all the elements in the crude syndicalist notion of "striking on the job" - were 'quite consistent' with the Labour Party idea.⁵⁵

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

In his reply, Maclean ignored Johnston's remarkable concessions to syndicalism, and merely re-stated the official S.D.P. position with regard to fusion of the two socialist bodies into one unified propagandist organisation. He denied that the Labour Party was anything more than 'a miserable caricature of Marxism', much less the 'heir of Marxian tradition' Johnston had imagined. Non social democratic labour bodies, he observed, were simply tools of the Liberal Party. Now, in his avoidance of the syndicalist issue, as in his reassertion of S.D.P. orthodoxy, Maclean had set clear limits to his approach to the organisational problem. What this amounted to was an inability, or unwillingness, to visualise anything in this regard beyond the old educational-propagandist mode of activity.⁵⁶ The remainder of the debate - which was finally concluded on September 24th - turned upon the nature of the Labour Party, and whether or not, for all of its faults in regard to its non-socialist leadership, support for Liberal policies and the like, it was capable of transformation into a truly class conscious revolutionary working class organisation. Maclean dogmatically stuck to his demand for a re-orientation of all genuinely socialist forces outside the Labour Party, while Johnston argued for socialist agitation within it, since it was the politicised labour movement formed upon the only possible basis, that of '... the Federated Trades Unions'.⁵⁷ Interestingly enough, the basic marxist

56. Forward, 30 July 1910. This theoretical limitation was no less important than Maclean's identification of the causes of Marxism and Scottish nationalism as a cause of his relative isolation and ineffectiveness in the period immediately following the Great War. I would argue that the Scottish Workers' Republican Party - which Maclean organised at that time - was as much an expression of the IInd International educational-propagandist organisational mode as of Scottish sectionalism.

57. Forward, 17 September 1910.

commitment of both disputants was convincingly displayed by a rehearsal of the familiar arguments against socialist sectarianism, taken from the Communist Manifesto, which had been advanced by the S.D.F. leadership against the Scottish dissidents at the turn of the century. Now Johnston attacked Maclean in similar vein, and the latter defended himself using arguments which the "impossibilists" had deployed a decade earlier, together with examples of Marx's own privately expressed opinions during the period of the 1st International. Maclean indicated the changed circumstances of the labour movement from the days of the Communist League - a change from underground illegality to open organisation - and the crucial difference in Proletarian support for the bourgeoisie during the democratic revolutionary effort of the mid-19th century, and that of labour support for Liberal policies in 1910. He also referred Johnston to Marx's expressed distaste for the German Lassalleans and for the revolutionary Anarchists, for their theoretical backwardness, and his known opposition to the Liberal Labourism of the period following the enactment of the second reform bill of 1867.⁵⁸ The debate closed with the agreement to disagree upon the relative merits of the Labour Party as then extant. But Johnston's final word clearly showed the kind of propagandist capital he hoped would accrue from the exercise: he recommended to those of his readers who thought that '... the existence and continued development of the Labour Party is the one vitally important economic fact to the Working Classes', that this position was 'absolutely sound and impregnable' if 'inessential' considerations were excluded. In

58. Forward, 6 August, 17 September, 1910.

discussions with opponents of the Labour Party, they should first insist upon the necessity of a working class party paid for and controlled by the working class, point out that the Labour Party conforms to this pattern since it subsists upon the only possible real basis - that of the Federated Trades Unions - and then demand how much opponents can help to move the party toward Socialism if they intend to leave it and work outside its ranks. He opined that:

'Since such a course of treatment evidently suffices for a heavy weight like John Maclean, rest assured it will adequately meet the attack of the average critic'. 59

The extent of Johnston's accommodation with syndicalist ideas was made evident when he published his own schema, the "Forward Policy" in mid September.⁶⁰ He argued the necessity of both industrial and political action, and stressed their mutual dependence: both weapons, the strike and the vote, must be used together as intrinsic elements in a broad strategy. The 'see-saw method' of using the two separately and without interdependence had led to the situation where employers might repossess conceded wage demands by virtue of their control over the state and its function of price and tariff fixing: use of the political weapon alone meant that the 'educated trade unionists' of the towns would have to await the growth of class consciousness in backward rural areas. Moreover, he castigated the 'sectional strike' (one conducted by a single craft for immediate benefits for that craft alone) as dangerous and useless and proposed instead a general stoppage by workers organised in

59. Forward, 24 September, 1910.

60. Forward, 10, 17 September 1910.

industrial unions.

'The strike of the future will be the national strike, the big strike, the strike of miners and railwaymen and dockers. It will paralyse all trade and industry and commerce. And when it is big enough and well enough organised, it will not last a week, and the men will win'. 61

The only fitting object for such a general stoppage of work was 'the end of exploitation', i.e. nationalisation of industry.

Johnston selected the miners as the vanguard body and advocated that the Labour Party introduce a nationalisation of mines measure in the Commons, which should be supported industrially by a national miners' strike if the need arose. Johnston even angled for De Leonite support, and specifically referred to the propaganda of the I.W.G.B. in relation to his policy. He urged I.W.G.B. members to join the Labour Party while continuing with their industrial work, and saw no contradiction therein.⁶² Johnston's scheme was effective within the Scottish Left, not so much for the support it received per se, but for the job it did in popularising syndicalist notions in concrete British terms, and as a further stimulus in the general debate and concern for the syndicalist alternative. Nevertheless, O'Connor Kessack - Labour candidate for the Glasgow Camlachie division, and an influential figure in the Scottish labour movement - gave it his full imprimatur,⁶³ as did Tom Mann himself, then on a lecture tour in Scotland.⁶⁴ The Liberal press gave some attention to Johnston's services to the

61. Forward, 10 September 1910. It was a consistently held contention of Mann and Bowman, that a strike which lasted longer than a week was useless.

62. Forward, 1 October 1910.

63. Forward, 22 October 1910.

64. Ibid.

propagation of 'Syndicalist anarchism' (sic) in Scotland;

'That this gospel is making headway in Scotland, there is no doubt at all ... FORWARD ... has been advocating it for some time, to the evident appreciation of its numerous readers ... this vicious doctrine [should] be nipped in the bud by the authorities before it is too late, and ... Tom Mann and the editor of Forward should be provided with more useful occupations than that of inciting the public to Anarchy and bloodshed'. 65

It was further reported that the Fifeshire miners 'have become so Anarchistic through reading the Forward's policy' that special measures for the provision of mounted police for crowd/riot control were then being undertaken by Fife County Council.⁶⁶

T. P.'s Weekly was right so to link Johnston's name with Tom Mann. He was at that time Mann's most enthusiastic supporter in Scotland, and readily opened the columns of Forward to him, despite the latter's decided anti-parliamentary stand. In October 1910, he published a strong denunciation by Mann of "Sectional (i.e. craft) Unionism" in terms of its obsolescence in the face of growing capitalist combinations, and its creation of 'antagonistic relationships' within the labour movement itself: he supported the logic of this article with a feature of his own which cited the Board of Trade Labour Gazette showing the existence of 1,153 such sectional unions in Britain, in 1909.⁶⁷ Of more utility in terms of the widespread general interest in syndicalism, was Tom Mann's article, printed the

65. T.P.'s Weekly, 4 November 1910.

66. Ibid.

67. Forward, 29 October 1910.

following week, in which he defined his personal position vis a vis that of the French syndicalists and the American industrial unionists.⁶⁸ Mann identified the main differences between the French and American forms of revolutionary unionism as two: while the French were mainly anti-parliamentary, the Americans tended to insist upon political action as a necessary corollary; and, more important, French syndicalism:

'... does not aim at destroying or superceding existing trade unions ... [but aims] ... to secure concerted action among the unions, and to educate them and guide them into thoroughgoing revolutionary channels'.⁶⁹

Hence, the principle difference between syndicalism and industrial unionism

'... is found in the wholesale denunciation of the existing unions and Federations of Unions by the Americans ...'⁷⁰

In other words, Mann had identified the general legacy of De Leon's "dual unionist" approach as the prime peculiarity of the American movement. Personally, Mann deplored the dogmatic anti-parliamentary stand of the French - he was at pains to insist that although he was anti-parliament in terms of its utility as a 'positive vehicle for social revolution', he recognised that it might have a defensive role to play in checking the use of state power against the workers. He also deplored the standpoint of the American I.W.W. with its call for 'the annihilation of all existing trade unions'. In the light of these reservations about the American and French tactics, but his

68. Forward, 5 November 1910.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

professed sympathy with syndicalist ideas, he applied to himself the label of "Industrial Syndicalist".⁷¹

The general debate on the issue in the Glasgow area was taken further by the appearance of the anti-syndicalist socialist journalist Frank H. Rose. He appeared on the platform at the Metropole Theatre - under I.L.P. auspices - on Sunday, December 11th, to deliver an address on "Syndicalism, Industrial Unionism and Political Action".⁷² Significantly, he opened his attack with a denial of the urgency of the organisational problem. The real problem - according to Rose - was not that of finding an effective organisation: he pointed out that in 150 years of organisational effort, the trade unions had only managed to encompass 2 out of the total number of 15 millions of workers who comprised the British labour force in 1910. He identified the real problem as that of the machine: machinofacture would, he averred, outpace every attempt that might be made to reorganise the working class. It was therefore to the political weapon that he looked for the future progress of the labour movement: syndicalism and industrial unionism, indeed the whole concern with the problem of organisation, he thought to be an illusion. He warned:

'... they could organise as long as they liked, but they would never win another strike ... The machine was [the employer's] slave and all that the machine had done for him, it could do for them ... The machine question was their question today. There was no existing form of industrial organisation that could touch it ... they must use the political weapon ...'.⁷³

71. Ibid.

72. Forward, 17 December 1910

73. Ibid.

The impact of Rose's dismissal of the syndicalist rationale was so great in Glasgow that he was invited back in the new year to take part in a specially arranged debate, the topic being, "Is Industrial Unionism Necessary for the Realisation of Socialism?" The venue was again the Metropole Theatre, and this 'great debate' was held on Sunday, January 8th 1911, with James O'Connor Kessack in the chair.⁷⁴ The very act of arranging such a function as this, was - like the Forward Policy itself - an indication of the strength of the syndicalist appeal within the Scottish I.L.P. This point was further re-enforced by the Glasgow Labour Party's choice of speaker to oppose Rose: this was none other than Neil Maclean - expelled from the S.L.P. only the year before⁷⁵ - and now one of the ablest talents in the Scottish I.L.P. As his performance against Rose was to indicate, he had not by any means abandoned his adherence to De Leonite ideology. Along classic De Leonite lines, he defended the necessary identification of Socialism with the industrial state or Co-operative Commonwealth, in which social organisation would be patterned upon the various departments of wealth production and distribution. To this end he portrayed the essential function of the industrial union as:

'... the building up inside of your present civilised system the necessary machinery to carry on the production of wealth, in order, so soon as your political party may have either captured Parliament, or have a sufficiently strong majority in that Parliament, to bring the capitalist class to their knees'.⁷⁶

74. Forward, 14 January 1911.

75. See p. above.

76. Forward, 14 January, 1911.

The relative importance of the political and industrial organisations of the working class was indicated with the blunt statement that:

'You cannot introduce Socialism by fighting on the political field. Socialism is an industrial, not a political community'. 77

He deplored the 'organised scabbery' implicit in the rationale of the craft union structure, and, on the issue of the general strike, conceptualised the final act of capitalist expropriation in classic De Leonite terminology thus:

'We do not advocate a general strike: we advocate a general lockout so soon as we have the workers organised sufficiently to carry on production for ourselves - not to walk out and leave the machines, but to remain inside and carry on production on our own behalf'. 78

Rose countered with the charge that the supposedly internationalist concept of industrial unionism was a false premise; such unionism - and he quoted William D. Haywood, leader of the American miners to this effect - was supposed to unite the workers on a genuine international basis, through loyalty to their industry rather than to their state. He rather thought that one industry - as one country - might blackleg upon another, or otherwise take individual action for sectional ends. He agreed that craft unionism had been proved to be 'utterly rotten', but again stressed the tiny percentage of workers actually organised by the current union structure, and reminded his audience that machinofacture was pushing increased numbers of working people 'outside the industrial field altogether'. He saw no possible

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid.

practical avenue for the industrial unionists to reach the mass of unorganised workpeople in the foreseeable future, and, with a slighting reference to the S.L.P., remarked that those of them who rejected palliatives had separated themselves from '... some of the workers' vital interests'. In sum, he said:

'Industrial Unionists declare war, yet admit that
Labour is hopelessly badly organised for it!!!'.⁷⁹

Maclean remained unintimidated by Rose's concern for the impact of machinofacture upon the workforce. The machine, he said, '... is preaching industrial unionism or class solidarity more eloquently than the industrial unionist can ever do'. Strikes, he opined, had a positive educational use and, besides, industrial unionism '... has only been going in this country 5 years ...'.⁸⁰ He then made exemplary use of the current organisational work being undertaken by the I.W.G.B. in the Kilbowie plant of the international Singers' sewing machine company. In the light of subsequent events, his words have a poignant and prophetic ring. He said:

'In Singers' factory at Kilbowie, there are already about 150 industrial unionists - in a place that no trade union can enter: a place where they have brought the workers down by the machine to the general level of the handy men: where the Amalgamated Society of Engineers - the aristocracy of the Labour Movement so-called - dare not attempt to enforce its standard rate of wages. There the industrial organisation has commenced by organising that class of men. We have got our coats off and sleeves up to undertake that job of organising'.⁸¹

79. Forward, 21 January 1911.

80. Ibid. The De Leonite "Advocates of Industrial Unionism", later the Industrial Workers of Great Britain, had been formed by the Leith branch of the S.L.P. in 1906.

81. Ibid.

He then argued that future socialist society would be industrially based and spoke of popular representation through industrial delegates, rather than by means of politicians returned for geographical constituencies. This was, of course, a rehearsal of familiar arguments from De Leon himself, notably as given in his The Burning Question of Trades Unionism, and Maclean completed his description of the De Leonite schema by putting the tasks of the political party into perspective vis a vis industrial action. The industrial union he characterised as 'the scaffolding of the future Socialist Republic', while the political party '... will act as a safeguard and shelter while the scaffolding is being erected'.⁸² Maclean closed the discussion with a telling reference to the growing interest in industrial unionism among the Scottish working class. The opposition of orthodox social democrats like Rose notwithstanding, this interest had grown steeply in recent years; he reminded those present that:

'It is less than five years since the chairman [i.e. Kessack] and myself addressed the first indoor meeting in Glasgow on "Industrial Unionism" with an audience of less than 100. Tonight there are 2,000 in this hall ...'.⁸³

This De Leonite exposition by Neil Maclean is very comparable to that outlined by Connolly himself in his Socialism Made Easy - a rather derivative work that was not at all well known in Scotland before its posthumous re-publication by the S.L.P. in 1917. However, Scottish readers of the well circulated Labour Nationality & Religion could discover the gospel of Syndicalism from Connolly, contemporaneously

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

with the ongoing debate on organisational method within the Scottish Left. Like Neil Maclean, Connolly had, by the end of 1910, long since severed his organisational ties with the De Leonite party; but, again like Maclean, his commitment to the ideas of De Leonite syndicalism remained evident to all. His emphasis upon the necessity of the use of the joint weapons of the 'vote ... and the lockout exercised against the master class',⁸⁴ as essential guarantees of a peaceful Proletarian Revolution could not be missed by readers of this pamphlet. It is worth quoting at some length from Labour Nationality and Religion, Connolly's expressed views upon the nature of the industrial union's tasks, both as a vehicle of revolutionary expropriation, and as an instrument of democratic government in the post-revolutionary socialist commonwealth; this was perhaps his most important individual contribution to the Scottish debate on the problem of organisation. In his view:

'... what is done imperfectly by the competing forces of capitalism to-day, can be done more perfectly by the organised forces of industry under Socialism. Government under Socialism will be largely a matter of statistics. The chief administrative body of the nation will be a collection of representatives from the various industries and the professions. From the industries they represent these administrators will learn of the demand for the articles they manufacture; the industries will learn from the storekeepers of the national stores and warehouses what articles are demanded by the general public who purchase at these stores, and the cumulative total of the reports given by storekeepers and industries will tell the chief administrative body (Congress, if you will) how much to produce, and where to place it to meet the demand. Likewise, the reports brought to the representatives from their Industrial Union as to the relative equipment and power of their factories in each district will enable them to place their

84. See Edwards and Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, p.120.

orders in the places most suited to fill them, and to supervise and push forward the building and developing of new factories and machinery ... When the workers elect their foremen and superintendents, and retain them only during effective supervision and handling of their allotted duties, when industries elect their representatives in the National Congress and the Congress obeys the demand emanating from the public for whom it exists, corruption and favouritism will be organically impossible'. 85

Granted, this scenario was couched in pretty definitive North American terms: the point was made nonetheless, despite the I.W.W. rhetoric. It is all too easy to overlook this organisational contribution contained in Labour Nationality and Religion, simply because it was so obviously conceived within the context of a specifically Catholic - Socialist debate in Ireland. To the interested Scottish working class reader of 1910 or 1911 - whether Catholic or Protestant - Connolly's syndicalist message would loom larger, by virtue of the current intellectual ferment in Scotland over that issue. Connolly's was yet another voice urging the syndicalist solution to the problem of organisation.

Now, from Connolly's point of view, the most important thing to emerge from the ideological debate within the Scottish Left, was a datum with which he might judge the potentialities inherent in the British "Labour Party". He was at this time a regular reader of the Forward, and as he watched Scottish developments, he could not but be aware of the capacity of the new I.L.P. to accommodate convinced industrial unionists such as Neil Maclean and O'Connor Kessack, as well as making genuine overtures to the ideology of syndicalism, as

85. Ibid., p.107.

evidenced in Johnston's "Forward Policy" and close sympathy with the activities of Tom Mann. In this regard, it should perhaps be remembered that Tom Mann's success in organising a combination of seamen and dockers into a National Transport Workers' Federation, in November 1910, had produced an embryo industrial union which was - from its inception - affiliated to the Labour Party. At this time, however, Connolly's prime concerns were political, and he remained specially anxious to assert the claims to autonomy of the political movement of the Irish working class. Nevertheless, it was no doubt with an informed awareness of the progress of syndicalist forces within the Scottish Labour Party at least, that he asked for support from British socialists for the 'militant trade unionists and socialists' who were then attempting to establish in Ireland 'some such arm of Labour, as you have in your Labour Party'.⁸⁶ The surest source of such recognition was the Labour Party itself, not only because its electoral contests in Scottish constituencies made it well aware of the true nature of such "radical" and "progressive" Irish nationalist bodies like the U.I.L. - a point which in the main escaped the orthodox social democrats of the B.S.P. - but also because it was ever open to suggestions which might improve its performance in getting in the Irish vote. Connolly spelled out the advantages in this regard that might accrue to the Labour Party in return for support given to an autonomous Irish party. He hoped that the progress of S.P.I. candidates - as reported in the Forward for instance - might give a 'direct hint' to Irish working class emigres '... hoping for a Socialist lead from the old country'. He continued:

86. Forward, 28 January 1911.

'If the Irish socialists outside Ireland were as wise in their generation as are the Irish supporters of capitalism outside Ireland, and organised and contributed to help their party in Ireland, there would ere long be a strong socialist party in this country, able not only to fight the fight for socialism on the old soil, but able also to counteract and render unavailing such Irish capitalist treachery as was used against our comrade Kessack at Camlachie'. 87

He drew attention to the different nature of the U.I.L. in Britain - where it posed as a 'progressive, semi-socialist' body - and in Ireland itself, where it was 'reactionary and anti-socialist'. He deplored the attitude of many British socialists, who - he said - regarded their Dublin comrades as 'wild impossibilists' on account of their hostility to the U.I.L. He returned to the same theme in an article published in Forward the following month, entitled "The U.I.L.; Ireland; and the Right to Work". This item sought to expose the reactionary character of the capitalist Home Rulers, evidencing the opposition of the Irish M.P.'s to such measures as the Labour Party's "Right to Work" amendment to the King's Speech, the payment of M.P.'s from state funds, and provision of school meals to necessitous children. He quoted a telling item from the Irish-American paper, the Boston Pilot, in which was described the Home Rulers' fear of 'the growing Socialistic tendencies of England', and from this source, he quoted a Catholic cleric - a certain Rev. J. T. Roche - who was of the opinion that if the British Tories would only reach a sensible agreement with the Irish Parliamentary Party, they might find:

87. Ibid.

'... powerful allies in fighting the Budget and other Socialistic propositions'. 88

Some idea of the degree of propagandist capital to be made out of support from Connolly and the S.P.I. became evident at this time to West of Scotland Labour activists, in connection with the current by-election contest in N.E. Lanark. In March 1911, Chisholm Robertson contested this difficult seat for Labour, and as before, the local U.I.L. threw its weight against him and behind the Liberal. Taking his cue from Connolly's own denunciation of the U.I.L. the previous week, Tom Johnston thundered,

'It is time somebody came out and exposed the capitalist trickery which, manipulated behind the noble sentiment of "Ireland a Nation" and labelled "United Irish League", is being utilised to retard social reform and to crush ... the workers' party and the workers' organisations ... a previous election has shown that [in N.E. Lanark] Labour is stronger than Liberalism and ... can win if the Irish Vote is not deliberately stirred into hostility ... it is time we invited the Irish working man's attention to the fact that his generous patriotism for his motherland is being ingeniously exploited to his own hurt by a gang of capitalist politicians'. 89

Appended to this emotional denunciation, was a Resolution from the S.P.I. which called upon Irish voters in N.E. Lanark to support Robertson's candidacy. This appeal - signed by two party representatives each from Dublin, Cork and Belfast, together with Fred Ryan as general secretary and James Connolly as national organiser - also spoke of the general urgency:

88. Forward, 25 February 1911.

89. Forward, 4 March 1911.

'... that in view of the probability that a Home Rule Bill will be introduced and perhaps passed during the life-time of the present Parliament, it is absolutely necessary that every effort be made to return to the House of Commons men of democratic opinions who will vote in favour of giving the Irish people the fullest possible power to institute social reforms in Ireland'.⁹⁰

In the upshot, this appeal was not as effective as all might have hoped, and Robertson was not returned. However, it is noteworthy, yet again, to find Connolly making such necessary distinction between Home Rule per se and what he called '... the fullest possible power to institute social reforms in Ireland'. This distinction - hinted at in Erin's Hope - was the fundamental imperative, as Connolly saw it, for the creation of an Irish workers' movement that was truly autonomous: he could only hope that his Scottish readers - especially leaders like Wheatley, Kessack, Neil Maclean and Johnston himself - would fully appreciate his point and accept that the Irish working class could no longer be regarded simply as an appendage to British labour, in political terms. He was encouraged by Johnston's inclusion in the Forward, not only of his own articles, but of manifestoes issued during S.P.I. electoral contests in Ireland,⁹¹ and of coverage of such cardinal events as the inauguration of the S.P.I.'s first campaign in Belfast.⁹² Nevertheless, as time went on, it would become evident that this hope was in many ways a pious one. During February and March of 1911, Connolly was active in the Belfast area attempting to gain a permanent foothold for the S.P.I. in the North

90. Ibid.

91. Forward, 7, 14 January 1911.

92. Forward, 4, 18 February 1911.

of Ireland. In this connection, he actually advertised in the Forward for contact with socialists 'of any nationality' resident in Londonderry or Newry.⁹³ It was at this time that he followed his polemical attack upon the U.I.L. in the Scottish paper, with an equally trenchant denunciation of the Protestant employers of Ulster, entitled "Sweatshops Behind the Orange Flag".⁹⁴ This exposure of the blatant use of sectional sentiment within the Protestant working class of Ulster to frustrate social reform and facilitate a particularly acute measure of productive exploitation, was far from being a simple diatribe against loyalist capitalists: yet again the imperative of an independent politicised Irish Labour movement was stressed. The S.P.I.'s role was seen to be that of subverting the influence of Irish capitalism - Home Ruler and loyalist alike - and its political task Connolly defined as:

'... to guide and direct the efforts of Labour in Ireland, to find and fashion a proper channel of expression and instrument of emancipation'.

This was always with the proviso that:

'That Labour movement of the future, as well as the Socialist movement of to-day must, indeed draw inspiration from the successes of our comrades abroad, but must also shape its course to suit the conditions within our own shores'.

The following week, Connolly returned to the problem of the social conservatism of the Irish Nationalist movement, with a scathing attack upon both the U.I.L. and its Irish auxiliary body, the Ancient Order

93. Forward, 11 March 1911.

94. Ibid.

of Hibernians.⁹⁵ This article sought to justify the case for an independent Irish labour movement on the grounds of British incapacity to appreciate - let alone deal with - the organised bigotry and obscurantism of such bodies as the A.O.H. Connolly was amply vindicated in this belief by Johnston's utopian view of the democratic proclivities and lack of bigotry within the Irish national movement - a view that he would still express publicly a year later, despite Connolly's warnings to the contrary.⁹⁶

In May 1911, Connolly transferred his residence to Belfast on a permanent basis; economic necessity forced the move, Connolly being anxious about the lack of employment prospects in Dublin for his grown daughters.⁹⁷ He settled in the predominantly Catholic Falls Road district and, the next month, became Belfast secretary of the Irish Transport and General Workers' Union,⁹⁸ an appointment which assured him a welcome degree of personal financial security. The I.T.G.W.U. dated from January 1909, and was in origin a breakaway body from the British National Union of Dock Labourers. During the course of a stoppage of work in the Dublin docks at the end of 1908, the local branch of the N.U.D.L. became dissatisfied with what its membership considered to be the inadequate moral and financial support from the national body: there followed a mass secession from the British union of almost the whole of its Irish membership, who constituted themselves as an independent Irish Transport Union. The prime

95. "Mr. John E. Redmond, M.P.: his Strength and Weakness" in Forward, 18 March 1911.

96. See p.211-2 above.

97. O'Brien, Forth the Banners Go, p.45.

98. Ibid.

mover in this new venture was Jim Larkin, erstwhile Irish organiser for the N.U.D.L. Of Liverpool Irish stock, Larkin was a figure of prodigious energy and with qualities of leadership which approached charismatic proportions; his emotional and impulsive style of leadership was, however, indicative of a lack of analytical abilities, albeit of supreme inspirational value to the demoralised unskilled workers of Dublin. After the formation of the Irish union, Larkin had served three months of a year's prison sentence for diverting to the I.T.G.W.U. funds which were formally the property of the N.U.D.L. - a misdemeanour that was universally held to have been an administrative indiscretion rather than an act of criminal misappropriation.⁹⁹ Although of no great theoretical ability, Larkin took steps to associate himself - and the I.T.G.W.U. - with the forces of syndicalism. He personally attended Tom Mann's Industrial Union Conference, held at the Coal Exchange, Manchester on November 24th, 1910 only a month after his release. A staunch advocate of industrial unionism and of the sympathetic strike, Larkin's name became almost as well known in Scotland as other leaders of the militant stamp of the "new unionism" such as Robert Williams, Ben Tillett and Tom Mann himself. He was invited to Glasgow as the principal speaker for the May Day Demonstration, on Sunday, May 7th, 1911, especially to speak on "Industrial Organisation": the choice of such a speaker and topic for this prime event in the labour calendar was not only a testament to Scottish interest in Larkin himself and in Irish working class militancy generally, but also to the continuing concern within the Scottish Left with syndicalist thought and practice.¹⁰⁰

99. Forward, 25 June, 2 July, 1910.

100. Forward, 15 April, 1911. For an account of Larkin's career, vide, Emmet Larkin, James Larkin (Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1965).

During the course of 1911, the cause of syndicalism in Scotland suffered a severe check in the form of the defeat of the De Leonite I.W.G.B. in a dispute in the Kilbowie factory of the Singers' International Sewing Machine Company. As Neil Maclean had indicated,¹⁰¹ I.W.G.B. penetration among the semi-skilled employees of the Kilbowie plant had begun in 1910, and in February and March 1911, stoppages occurred in various departments at Kilbowie, in protest against the sweated conditions of work enforced by the company: at this stage, less than 10% of the workforce were enrolled in the I.W.G.B.,¹⁰² but as the dispute solidified, the union received massive increases in membership.¹⁰³ By the end of March, over 12,000 workers were involved, and production at Kilbowie had ceased. Despite widespread circulation - especially through the Forward - of the Strike Committee's grievances, which included the petty tyranny of foremen and overlookers, the arbitrary reduction of individual wages as 'penalties' for bad work, the raising of standards of work to that fixed on a basis of Maximum skill and the like - indeed, all the worst abuses of factory discipline which were generally implied by the term "sweating" - the management regarded its stand against the I.W.G.B as:

'... a matter of public interest. We are fighting a public battle when we oppose the Socialist teaching which is at the bottom of the whole business'.¹⁰⁴

The management might thus make an obvious partisan point by taking the I.W.G.B.'s De Leonite rhetoric at its face value, but by the second week in April it was forced to concede 'concessions wholesale', which

101. See p227 above.

102. Socialist, July 1911.

103. Forward, 11 March 1911.

104. Forward, 8 April 1911.

included reform of work practices and wage increases of the order of 50-100% in some cases.¹⁰⁵ The inevitable lay-offs of militants began in June, and were so rigorous that the Clydebank branches of the S.L.P., S.D.P. and even the I.L.P. were virtually wiped out.¹⁰⁶ The men and women involved were efficiently blacklisted by other local employers, especially by the Argyle Motor Works in Alexandria, and by the John Brown engineering and shipbuilding concern in Clydebank: they were virtually starved out of the district. While Tom Johnston attempted to agitate for an international sewing machine boycott of Singers' products, the S.L.P. reacted coolly to the elimination of a unit of its industrial arm. As ever, ideological concerns appeared to be more urgent than organisational ones: the party organ stressed that industrial unionism had not been discredited by the failure of the strike, which was solely due to the limited scope of the I.W.G.B.'s structure in the plant,¹⁰⁷ moreover, it argued, the vast majority of industrial unionists involved were only recent recruits to the I.W.G.B., and the whole enterprise had been weakened by the readiness of the skilled trades to resume normal working.

Despite the S.L.P.'s sanguine dismissal, the failure of the Singers' strike was a salutary warning. Not only did it demonstrate to the full the general power of employing concerns over their work-people in this period, but also justified - with regard to the De Leonite form at least - all that Frank Rose had said of industrial unionism to his Glasgow audiences. The I.W.G.B.'s action had indeed,

105. Forward, 15, 22, 29 April 1911.

106. Socialist, June 1911; Forward, 6, 13, 20 June 1911.

107. Socialist, July 1911.

as he had feared, involved a declaration of war on the part of a workforce hopelessly ill-organised to prosecute the conflict in real terms. John Maclean's response to the collapse of the I.W.G.B. at Singers' was given in Justice on April 15th. Sensitive to the progress of syndicalist sympathies within the S.D.P., he made the point that social democrats approved of the goal of industrial unionism on the basis of the federation of existing economic organisations (thus firmly dissociating himself from the De Leonite 'dual unionists'). It was clear that his attitude to syndicalism was at best one of benevolent neutrality; indeed, he was unable to conceive any political function of revolutionary value for the industrial union. For Maclean, the dichotomy between economic and political action denied any real value to the forms of revolutionary unionism. He wrote:

'... as politicians we rightly hold that the socialisation of industry cannot be accomplished by the direct seizure of the factories and the land by the unions. This ... denies the naturalness of the state and politics, the which, we as scientists, cannot uphold'.

Now it might be argued that the I.W.G.B. was an industrial isolate, practising a doctrinaire exclusivity - vis a vis skilled traded particularly, which closely followed the political sectarianism of the S.L.P. Nevertheless, the clear failure in Scotland of the British version of De Leonite 'dual unionism' - especially since such enthusiasts as Neil Maclean had laid such emphasis upon Kilbowie - tended to discredit the syndicalist alternative. This was the more so since it was then difficult to see the Kilbowie dispute in a more general perspective. Of much greater importance than the Singers' debacle was the Transport strike of 1911, which was something of a triumph for those syndicalists

- like Connolly himself - who were outside the De Leonite fold. Organised by Tom Mann's Transport Federation, the mass strike of Dockers and Seamen, centred in Southampton, London and Liverpool, assumed the proportions of a general stoppage in these areas, and Glasgow and Dublin were among the ports where supporting action was taken. The effectiveness of this sudden strike, both in terms of the wage gains made and the example of sympathetic joint action by workers of different skills, industrially organised, was readily held to vindicate syndicalist claims. Tom Mann referred to 1911 as a touchstone of the industrial possibilities when 'Solidarity is in the saddle', and observed:

'... the strike is the chief weapon of the working class. It is all powerful when wisely conducted over a sufficiently extensive area'. [Such action would] prepare the way ... for the general strike of international proportions. This will be the actual Social and Industrial Revolution'. 108

The solidarity Mann referred to was the antithesis of the "dual union" approach. 'We Syndicalists', he said had no wish:

'... to bring into existence some organisation or society to take the place of the existing trade union movement; we simply wish to facilitate its development towards real solidarity along direct actionist lines ... We of the League, being members of the existing old-line unions seek ... to stimulate discussion on Syndicalist principles and methods, [with a view to achieving] ... industrial solidarity for all grades and industries'. 109

The trouble with such a policy of working through existing and 'old-line' unions was that a successful dispute strengthened these bodies

108. Syndicalist, January 1912.

109. Ibid.

- together with the hold of their incumbent leadership - and, all the energies of the syndicalists notwithstanding, a success on the lines of the 1911 strike did nothing to commit the leadership to further 'syndicalist' mass sympathetic action in the future, or to serious considerations of proposals for amalgamations with a view to the creation of larger, industrial unions. The I.T.G.W.U. had enthusiastically associated itself with the syndicalist effort in 1911, and gave the strongest degree of sympathetic support in its power. Connolly recalled this action with a sense of pride, when, during the great Dublin transport lock-out of 1913, Havelock Wilson, the conservative leader of the Seamen's Union, declined to offer the Dublin dockers the same support, and spoke out against what he regarded as the irresponsibility of Larkin's leadership. Connolly thundered:

'He now attacks Mr. Larkin and condemns the sympathetic strike. He forgets, or wishes others to forget, that in 1911, when the seamen's strike broke out in England, it was saved from ending in a ludicrous fiasco by Jim Larkin and the men of the I.T.G.W.U. When the seamen and dockers of every other port were hesitating or gibbing at the call of the Seamen's Union, every ship that touched the Port of Dublin was immediately held up by Larkin and his dockers until the crew joined the Union, and were signed on under union conditions. This sympathetic action in Dublin gave the cue to all other ports, and the dockers, organised and unorganised, came out in support of the sailors, with the result that Mr. Wilson's union, which entered the strike bankrupt and discredited, emerged from the conflict immensely increased in numbers and prestige'. 110.

At the beginning of May, 1911 Connolly crossed over to Scotland for a lecture tour which was expected to last about two months. The

110. Irish Worker, 29 November, 1913.

tour was managed from the Forward Office at 164 Howard Street, Glasgow, and it was as national organiser of the S.P.I. and 'the great Irish-American orator and editor of the Harp' that Johnston advertised his coming.¹¹¹ He spoke to an audience of around 1,200 - a reduced gathering from that of the previous year on account of bad weather - at the May Day Rally at Garrion Bridge, Wishaw, on Sunday, May 7th. His chairman was no less a figure than Robert Smillie, president of the Scottish Miners' Federation: on the platform in support were Tom Gibb of the Miners' Federation and Alex. Anderson, M.A. a local member of the S.D.P. and associate of John Maclean. Connolly spoke on issues that were of mutual concern for himself and his audience of Lanarkshire miners, many of whom must have been of Irish Catholic stock. He spoke of Irish division into religious factions, which merely enabled capitalists and landlords to rob Catholic and Protestant working men equally. He described how the Union had reduced Ireland to poverty, discontent and depopulation from what he called a '... state of self-sufficient plenty'. Above all, he dealt with the problem of the opposition to Socialism of the Catholic church, and stressed the church's impulse to support the status quo - whatever its political complexion - in the interest of that peace and good order which was the essential prerequisite for its mission. He averred that there was nothing essential in the supposed antagonism between Catholicism and Socialism, and predicted that once the new socialist order had replaced the old capitalist one, the church would then support it as

111. Forward, 22, 29 April, 6 May 1911.

loyally as it had its predecessor. It was '... a powerful address ... illuminated by numerous flashes of humour', and he concluded by urging those present to join the socialist movement.¹¹² He opened the Summer open-air propaganda for the Uddingston branch of the I.L.P. on Friday 12th, but, owing to the constant interruptions from two drunks - and the refusal of the local police to take them in charge - his meeting was disrupted and spoiled.¹¹³ On the 19th he held a more successful meeting at Stonehouse Cross for the local S.D.P.; here, he made a 'splendid impression'.¹¹⁴ Connolly's overriding concern with current problems of Irish working class politics, and with Irish and historical lecture topics - together with his exclusive billing as S.P.I. national organiser - occluded for his Scottish audiences his association with the I.T.G.W.U. ("Ireland's OBU.", as it consciously styled itself) of which he had only recently become a paid official. To orthodox social democrats especially, his syndicalism was something quite lost sight of: at this time and subsequently, he appeared to Scottish members of the S.D.P./B.S.P. as essentially a socialist propagandist for whom his position in the union just provided a living.¹¹⁵

The urgency of the political problem of labour in Ireland for Connolly at this time was well demonstrated in an article he wrote for Forward in May and which sparked off a celebrated controversy in the columns of that paper with the Belfast I.L.P. leader, William Walker.

112. Forward, 13 May 1911.

113. Forward, 20 May 1911.

114. Forward, 15 July 1911.

115. Testimony of Harry M^rShane.

This article, "A Plea for Socialist Unity in Ireland",¹¹⁶ drew attention to the existence in Ireland of two distinct socialist bodies - the S.P.I. and the I.L.P. - the former being dominant in the South of the country, while the latter dominated in the North. Connolly argued that in view of the likelihood of the enactment of some form of legislative independence for Ireland in the immediate future, a consolidation of socialist forces in that country was an urgent necessity. He did not scruple to spell out the terms for such an amalgamation: he condemned the Belfast-based I.L.P. for its intransigent opposition both to Home Rule and to the creation of an Irish Labour Party, and his "Plea" implicitly demanded that the Ulster members of the I.L.P. should recognise the incorrectness of their attitude on these issues. Further, he maintained that this attitude - a function of the organic unity between the Belfast socialists and their parent British organisation - was based upon a false conception of internationalism. He wrote:

'The S.P.I. considers itself the only International Party in Ireland, since its conception of Internationalism is that of a free federation of free peoples, whereas that of the Belfast branches of the I.L.P. seems scarcely distinguishable from Imperialism, the merging of subjugated peoples in the political system of their conquerors ... This is a unique conception of Internationalism, unique and peculiar to Belfast. There is no "most favoured nation clause" in Socialist diplomacy, and we as Socialists in Ireland, cannot afford to establish such a precedent'.

Connolly also attacked Walker by name, and bluntly stated that had he been elected in the North Belfast constituency - which Walker had

116. Forward, 27 May 1911.

contested in the general election of 1906, and in two by-elections in 1905 and 1907 - such a victory:

'... would have killed the hopes of Socialism among Irish Nationalists the world over, [while] ... the conviction spreads throughout Ireland that the rise of the I.L.P. in Belfast means nothing for social democracy in Ireland, but is simply the sign of a family quarrel among the Unionists'.

Now Connolly had timed his appeal rather well: the whole notion of 'Socialist Unity' was familiar enough to his Scottish readers. The British S.D.P. had consistently advocated such a fusion - very much on the terms of its own programme - with the I.L.P. for more than a decade, and had received much rank and file support from within the I.L.P. for its overtures. Only the previous month, the social democrats had re-affirmed their commitment to this policy line at their annual conference, calling for the creation of a 'United British Socialist Party'.¹¹⁷ Nor could it be said that William Walker was a figure unknown in Scotland. He was at that time a member of the Labour Party's national executive, and in 1910, had contested for Labour the Scottish constituency of Leith Burghs: indeed he was then in process of enlarging his interests and reputation from the confines of Belfast to the national British orbit.¹¹⁸ In more particular terms, Walker was familiar to Forward readers as the outstanding and pioneer socialist activist in Belfast: Johnston regularly gave full coverage of his routine propaganda work in the paper at this time, as he did indeed to Connolly's own work. The Connolly-Walker dispute continued in the Forward until July 8th, when Tom Johnston ended

117. Tsuzuki, Hyndman and British Socialism, p.174.

118. J. W. Boyle, "William Walker", in J. W. Boyle ed. Leaders and Workers, (Mercier Press, Cork, n.d.) p.63.

it on grounds of its having deteriorated from a discussion of principles to mere personal abuse. It was indeed, as one commentator has stressed, in many ways an '... ill-tempered ... abusive debate'.¹¹⁹ Connolly charged that Walker's form of internationalism was a type of mere parochialism, while Walker's attempts to defend his position in terms of the advanced 'municipal socialism' of Belfast and with glaringly superficial remarks about Irish History, failed to carry conviction. On the nationalities issue, Walker was totally unable to meet Connolly's argument based as it was upon the known support of Marx for Irish self-government, the consistent support for the Irish national cause on the part of the leading figures in the British socialist movement, marxist and non-marxist alike; the authority of the International itself, together with that of the testimony of internationally renowned socialist leaders such as Gabriel Deville and Jean Jaures was cited by Connolly in support of his case.¹²⁰ It is the socialist-republican v. labour-loyalist character of the Connolly-Walker debate which has been consistently stressed by most commentators - Connolly being seen to crush Walker with the weight of superior argument.¹²¹ Thus far, this is a fair interpretation, but, behind the disagreement upon the political issues, was the deep animosity between Walker the skilled tradesman, an official of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, and Connolly, an unskilled man, and syndicalist theorist, an official of the "Irish OBU", the I.T.G.W.U. Walker was at this time fearful of Connolly's influence on the Belfast Trades Council, where

119. Ibid., p.64.

120. Forward, 1 July 1911.

121. Vide, Desmond Ryan, Socialism and Nationalism, p.12-15, 20-21: Irish Communist Organisation, The Connolly-Walker Controversy (Connolly Books, Dublin, 1969) passim: C. D. Greaves, Life & Times of James Connolly p.259-261.

both men sat as delegates of their respective unions. During the course of the Forward controversy, Connolly had not shrunk from expressing his basic differences with Walker in syndicalist terms. Of crucial importance was his use of North American example to assert that syndicalist demands for industrial unity need not vitiate to any degree the claims for political independence on the part of subject nations such as Ireland. He said:

'If we look at the two nations across the Atlantic, we can see that every trade union and Friendly Society which does business in the United States also does business in Canada, and vice versa, yet the two nations are independent politically of each other. Why can England and Ireland not be as industrially intermingled and yet politically separate?'. 122

Connolly hastened to point out to his Scottish readers that Walker's amendment which opposed the formation of an Irish Labour Party, was carried at the Irish T.U.C. of 1911 by 32 votes to 29 only. And, he left no doubt in mind that this outcome was anything but a temporary victory for the forces of conservative craft unionism, as opposed to the militancy and progressiveness of industrial or "new unionism". He said:

'The 29 votes for the motion represented all the militant forces of the more progressive Trade Unions of Ireland, forces anxious for a battle on behalf of Labour against the political forces of Irish capitalism'. 123

122. Forward, 10 June 1911.

123. Forward, 1 July 1911.

The extent of disagreement between Connolly and Walker on the question of industrial organisation became evident in Scotland a few months later when, in December, Walker accepted the invitation of the Glasgow Clarion Scouts group to speak on the topic of "Industrial or Political - Which?". This address - which might be considered Walker's personal contribution to the continuing organisational debate within the Scottish Left - was delivered at the Pavilion Theatre, Renfield Street on Sunday December 17th, and was reported in Forward under the indicative heading, "The Case Against the General Strike".¹²⁴ Walker's address was both a plea for exclusive reliance upon parliamentary action and a vehement denunciation of syndicalist organisation and tactics. He emphasised that in the period 1903-09, '... two out of every three strikes were won by the employers and that - under current conditions - a general strike would mean starvation for the workers and their families. Speaking of the 1911 Transport Workers' strike as it had affected Ireland, he maintained that this action had hurt the workers themselves more than the employers or shareholders of the firms involved: he added tendentiously that, during that action, '... In Belfast, hundreds of working class babes' died, or suffered permanent debilitation through withdrawal of milk supplies. With an eye to the limitations inherent in the "Forward Policy", he opined that the transport workers would have done better to have spent their cash and their energies in political demands for nationalisation of railways and transport services, rather than undergo the rigours of such a fruitless strike. The next year, William Walker accepted a government post under the new National

124. Forward, 23 December 1911.

Insurance Act: Tom Mann considered him significant enough to be featured in his paper in a "rogues gallery" of renegade labour leaders. His description of Walker is an apt epitaph on his - from the syndicalist point of view - dis-service to the labour movement;

'... formerly a carpenter and joiner, and trade union official; now an insurance commissioner in the pay of the government, at £500 per annum'. 125

If Mann's comments are sufficient indication of the intensity of the industrial aspects of the controversy, it became quickly evident - in the immediate aftermath of the debate - that in political terms, Connolly now held the ground in the North of Ireland. T. R. Johnson, a Belfast member of both the S.P.I. and the I.L.P., wrote to the Scottish paper to defend Connolly's record of '... sacrifice for the cause of socialism and democracy in Ireland' against Walker's 'cowardly innuendo'.¹²⁶ He stressed the relative equality of the S.P.I. and I.L.P. as regards membership strength, but also pointed out that, owing to the I.L.P.'s limitation geographically within the Belfast district, together with its lack of representation on any public authority whatsoever, that:

'... there is no presumption in the suggestion that the Belfast I.L.P. should meet the Socialist Party with a view to federation or amalgamation'.

He appealed for Scottish sympathy by allusive use of Johnston's terminology for his own "Forward Policy", arguing that with some form of Home Rule in prospect:

125. Syndicalist, October 1912.

126. Forward, 15 July 1911.

'... is it not essential that the Socialist movement in Ireland should be "nationalised"?'.

Further indications of widespread support in Belfast for Connolly among the I.L.P. branches were given in connection with the visit to Ulster of two Scottish Presbyterian evangelists whose sectarian agitation threatened the socialists' right of meeting. A Belfast I.L.P. member wrote to Forward,¹²⁷

'For some time past, Pastors Boal and MacDonald, who are here from Scotland to try and encourage the Orangemen against Home Rule, were heard to have threatened to attack us ...'.

On August 6th, MacDonald's followers did indeed attempt to break up one of the I.L.P.'s meetings on the Custom House steps; on this occasion:

'Comrades Connolly, and Cox of Newport, had a lively experience ... [but] ... We held the fort for over three hours, against all opposition, thanks to our speakers, who so nobly held on, supported by the unity of the branches'.

Political developments in Ireland in the new year which followed Walker's speech in Glasgow confirmed that it was Connolly's position which had supervened. It also became clear that, in Scotland, recognition of the autonomy of the Irish labour movement in terms of genuine working class solidarity was now an imperative, and that Walker's conception of an organic all-British movement was now a chimera. The two events which forced on these developments were the successes of the Labour candidates in the Irish local elections of January 1912, and the date of April 11th, 1912, scheduled at

127. Forward, 19 August 1911

Westminster for the introduction of the Irish Home Rule Bill. The Irish elections of January 1912 were hailed by Forward as a 'Great Socialist Sweep'; in Dublin, the Labour results were especially gratifying, five out of a total of six candidates being returned, while in the provinces, less spectacular but solid progress was reported.¹²⁸ Since Larkin was a leading figure in the success - himself being elected for the North Dock ward - the results stimulated more widespread interest perhaps than they would have done otherwise. The Glasgow Observer was moved to complain that the Labour successes were hailed as a "Socialist" victory, and Tom Johnston - with a more concrete sense of solidarity with Irish Labour than ever before - laughed at this post hoc attempt to deny a conflation that had readily been made by the Irish capitalist press to damage the Labour candidates during the campaign itself.¹²⁹ As the tone of the reporting in the Forward bore out, the local election successes had made good the claim of Irish Labour to be recognised on its own terms in Great Britain. Progress towards that "nationalisation" of the Irish socialist and labour movement which Connolly's articles in Forward had demanded was reported at some length in the Forward at this time, particularly in Belfast, the stronghold of "loyalist labourism". On Friday, March 22nd, the Belfast S.P.I., I.L.P. and B.S.P. met in joint devotional colloquy to commemorate the passion of the Paris Commune. To

'... a very large gathering ... comrade Jim Connolly who presided, gave a brief but interesting outline of the foundation and work of the Commune'. 130

128. Forward, 27 January 1912.

129. Forward, 3 February 1912.

130. Forward, 30 March 1912.

In the atmosphere of such positive good feeling between these separate bodies, that conference on Irish Socialist unity so desired by Connolly was not long delayed. On Easter Monday, delegates from all three bodies met in conference in Dublin, and agreed to unify on a common programme and within a new united organisation to be called the "Independent Labour Party of Ireland". Forward reported this achievement - which the British socialists had been unable to match - with the brief hope expressed that '... a more determined and solid front being presented to the common enemy'¹³¹ Scottish readers were, however, left unaware that Connolly's triumph had not been unmixed: both Walker's branch - East Belfast - of the I.L.P. and the Irish B.S.P. remained firmly outside the ranks of the I.L.P.(I). In May, the final denouement of Connolly's design was enacted at the Clonmel conference of the Irish T.U.C. - the decision of that body to support his motion for the establishment of an Irish Labour Party. Its formation was announced to the Scottish working class in a terse telegram from William O'Brien:

'Connolly's Independent Labour Representation motion carried, Irish Trades Congress, 49 - 18. Now we start to move. Publish O'Brien. 132

Tom Johnston was satisfied to give his full approval to the new departure, saying '... things are moving in the right direction over the water'. 133

The clear influence of the Home Rule Bill of April in these events is manifest in the exclusion of the demand for national independence

131. Forward, 13 April 1912.

132. Forward, 1 June 1912.

133. Ibid.

from the programme of the I.L.P.(I): the new party expected to become operational in an Ireland which already enjoyed a measure of self-government. Equally indicative of Scottish response to the full implications of the united Irish party was the total lack of publicity given by Forward to the I.L.P.(I)'s programme. We may attribute this omission to the explicitly syndicalist tone of the programme, which spoke of its ultimate object as the achievement of the "industrial commonwealth" and which relied heavily upon the

'... furtherance of the Industrial Organisation of the wage-earners ... as a means to the conquest of industrial power ...' 134

Tom Johnston had not shrunk from publishing the political programme of the old S.P.I.,¹³⁵ but as we have already noted, the syndicalist content of this schedule was markedly muted for reasons of a broadly based appeal.¹³⁶ Indeed, opinion was hardening against the syndicalist alternative within the Scottish Left and Johnston may have wished to avoid giving undue notice of the syndicalist programme of the new unified Irish party. After his seeming journalistic coup of having the miners accept - on recommendation of none other than Bob Smillie himself - the "Forward Policy" concept of a general stoppage of work to demand mines nationalisation,¹³⁷ Tom Johnston had thrown his weight unequivocally against syndicalism. In February 1912, the Miners' Federation called a national strike for a minimum guaranteed wage and the crippling effect of this stoppage throughout the economy threw the government into something akin to panic. In the tense atmosphere of

134. See Edwards and Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, p.24.

135. Forward, 17 June 1911.

136. See p. 201 above.

137. Forward, 26 August 1911.

this bitter three month long dispute, the violence of syndicalist rhetoric was taken at its face value, and both Mann and Bowman were arrested and detained on charges of incitement to riot: it was also during this strike that the famous "Don't Shoot!!!" manifesto was issued - not by the syndicalists but by the I.L.P. - with a view to dissuading ordinary soldiers from firing on the striking miners if ordered to do so. During the anti-syndicalist hysteria of the strike period, on the part of the government and the press, Johnston worried that many commentators were tending to:

'... confound socialism with syndicalism, and profess to see in the general strike of coal miners, an extension to Great Britain of the anarchistic, anti-political, anti-state propaganda which is known in France as "Syndicalisme Revolutionnaire ...' 138

Johnston had finally lost all sympathy with Mann on grounds of his inveterate hostility to all kinds of political action; and, if his counter-position of socialism against syndicalism might seem rather artificial or abstract - particularly in the light of Connolly's activities - then it was an opposition expressed by Mann himself during the Coal Strike. Ironically enough, Mann adduced the opposition with a form of argument which contrasted democratic centralism with bureaucratic centralism, and which was lifted almost verbatim from James Connolly's Socialism Made Easy - a pamphlet with which Mann had been familiar since the time of his Australian agitation. In 1912 he now said:

138. Forward, 30 March 1912.

'Both syndicalism and socialism look to a worldwide democratic organisation of the workers for co-operative production and distribution. But whereas the socialist looks to social organisation proceeding from the present capitalist state downward to the workers, the syndicalist looks to the evolution proceeding upwards from the workers to organised society ... Syndicalism is inverted Socialism ...' 139

The original argument from Socialism Made Easy had counterposed Social Democratic and Capitalist forms of social and political organisation.¹⁴⁰ Mann's vulgarisation of Connolly apart, he argued further that such measures as nationalisation by the capitalist state - precisely what Johnston's "Forward Policy" amounted to - were useless. Like other Labour Party leaders, Johnston was worried by the effect that heady, crypto-insurrectionist, syndicalist preaching would have in the prevalent atmosphere of mounting industrial tension and violence, and of increased readiness on the part of the government to become coercive. He deplored this '... primitive philosophy of Individualist Anarchy' with its inadequacy with regard to the problem of the state. He said:

'Time is on the side of the Parliamentarians.
Insurrectionism is unnecessary, useless and vicious
on the very day the worker is given the vote!' 141

Thereafter, attacks upon Syndicalism in the Forward became legion: Johnston himself wrote two further studied articles on the issue, emphasising the inutility of the general strike and comparing syndicalist organisational method with the exclusivity of the medieval guilds.¹⁴² William Gallacher - then an industrial unionist sympathiser

139. Syndicalist, March-April 1912

140. Edwards and Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, p.275

141. Forward, 30 March 1912.

142. Forward, 6, 13 April 1912.

within the Amalgamated Society of Engineers, and at that time in the rigid anti-parliamentary phase which earned him special mention in V. I. Lenin's Left Wing Communism - An Infantile Disorder - was one of the few voices on the Scottish Left to speak up for syndicalism. He openly derided:

'... the hysterical funk into which socialists of the "politics only" school are being driven by the steady advance of the syndicalist movement...'

This movement at last threatened the domination of the craft unions, institutions, he said:

'... so long the breeding ground for bureaucratic officials and petty political adventurers'. 143

On a more theoretical note, Gallacher denied that there was any fundamental contradiction between the work of the De Leonites of the S.L.P./I.W.G.B. and that of syndicalists such as were to be found in Mann's I.S.E.L. who worked through established union structures - though he did concede that the former approach might be held to be more "scientific".¹⁴⁴ For Gallacher, the dual unionists and the syndicalists were working toward the same end, the creation of powerful industrial unions or "syndicates". And:

'... from these industrial organisations, will arise a political action the object of which will be to make the edicts of Parliament and the Law courts abortive. Thus, while the worker is steadily strengthening his grip on the industrial life of the country, the machinery of the state is being gradually relegated to the scrap heap'. 145

143. Forward, 8 June 1912.

144. Forward, 22 June 1912.

145. Ibid.

In August, Tom Johnston published what was probably intended to be a theoretical coup de grace to syndicalism in Scotland, an article entitled "Fallacies of Syndicalism" by Karl Kautsky. The impact of such a prestigious contributor may well have been vitiated by the unsubstantiated scientism of some of Kautsky's statements. According to his reasoning, the theory and practice of syndicalism was nothing more than:

'... the expression of the bourgeois spirit which has not been able to adapt itself to modern industrial conditions ... [and therefore] ... cannot penetrate deeply into the ranks of the modern proletariat, because it cannot deny its bourgeois origin'. 146

He continued with a relativist perspective which was intended to prove that syndicalism was merely a function of a labour movement which was - by the standards of marxist teleology - 'immature'. Kautsky wrote as a determinist marxist taking up the cudgels against what he perceived as the crypto-anarchism of the syndicalist movement.

Despite the formulations of theorists such as Kautsky, and the efforts of publicists like Johnston, syndicalism had achieved some degree of penetration into the ranks of the modern proletariat - in the British Isles at least. By this time, unofficial syndicalist "amalgamation committees" were already in existence within the trade unions of the building industry, the engineering and shipbuilding industry, the transport workers, the printing trades, and the miners' federations in Durham and South Wales. In November 1912, Tom Mann's I.S.E.L. organised one conference in Manchester, and two in London,

146. Forward, 10 August 1912.

the successful outcome of which was to establish an umbrella structure to consolidate these disparate groups into an embryo OBU. This was the 'Amalgamation Committees Federation', with its motto, 'One Industry! One Union! One Card!'¹⁴⁷ Its stated policy was the confederation of all trades councils and trade unions into a 'General Confederation of Labour', and the means to be employed included direct action, boycott, sabotage, anti-militarism and strike action, not excluding the 'Revolutionary General Strike'.¹⁴⁸ On Clydeside, the amalgamation movement among existing craft union structures was helped along at plant level by the presence of industrial unionists dispersed throughout the area by the victimisation which had followed the collapse of the Singers' strike; there was as yet, however, nothing in Scotland to compare with the powerful Unofficial Reform Committee of the South Wales Miners' Federation. Nevertheless, these developments did make for unease among socialists of the "politics only" school like Tom Johnston, who feared the disastrous consequences of non-political working class militancy. The counter-propaganda employed against syndicalism's supposed propensity for insurrection became increasingly contrived. When in October, Tom Mann addressed a 'full house' in Glasgow's Pavilion Theatre, and followed up with mass meetings of Scottish transport workers in December at Ayr, Ardrossan, Greenock, Dundee and Glasgow,¹⁴⁹ Johnston printed a special feature by the veteran I.L.P. leader, and sometime "revolutionist", Bruce Glasier asserting that:

147. Syndicalist, December 1912.

148. Ibid.

149. Forward, 12 October, 14 December, 1912.

'Socialism is not insurrectionism at all ... Insurrectionism in countries where the people are the sovereign power, is a negation of democracy'. 150

Against this backdrop of increasing polarisation in Scotland, the uniqueness of Connolly's position is clearly evident. In Scotland, the schism between the Labour politician and the industrial militant had already appeared: in Ireland, Connolly was both; a marxian syndicalist who insisted upon the necessity of joint party-OBU interdependence. Despite any reservations that Scottish Labour Leaders may have had about the social democratic-cum-syndicalist mixture of the I.L.P.(I)'s programme, Connolly's political achievements were undeniable, manifest as they were in the Irish Labour Party and the unified Irish socialist party itself. However, from a reading of Forward reports those in Scotland interested in Irish working class affairs tended to get an exaggerated idea of the precise degree of "socialist unity" which had been achieved in Ireland. In Belfast, a number of leading I.L.P.'ers did join the unified I.L.P.(I), and these workers - mainly Protestants - suffered loss of employment for their pains, when in the Summer of 1912, sectarian troubles in the factories and shipyards, issued in every known "socialist" together with many Catholic workers, being hounded out of their workplaces.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, in the local election of the following January, Connolly - standing as an avowed "socialist" in Belfast's North Dock ward - polled nearly 2/5ths of the total vote cast. Forward reported this

150. Forward, 4 January 1913.

151. William McMullen in Desmond Ryan, The Workers' Republic, (Three Candles, Dublin, 1951), p.4.

and other I.L.P.(I) candidacies in Belfast and throughout Ireland totally without mention of the old I.L.P. rump which still survived in the North.¹⁵² Johnston's total emphasis upon the I.L.P.(I) - stressing as he did its unified composition and its exchange of speakers and literature with the Scottish movement¹⁵³ - amounted to a recognition of the value of an autonomous Irish movement in terms of the electoral feedback which might accrue to the Labour interest in Scotland from the Irish and Catholic elements in the Scottish electorate. This was the point that Connolly had been labouring for over a decade; but its acceptance by the leading Labour paper in Scotland in 1912 meant that it also had to stomach Connolly's ready expression of syndicalist ideas. Those syndicalist statements already noted in Connolly's rebuttals of Walker are the earliest examples of this factor.¹⁵⁴ Another example is to be found in the use of Irish example to counteract the effects of the vicious clerical attack upon John Wheatley which had led to mob violence in Shettleston, and the public burning of Wheatley's effigy by a Catholic mob, in July 1912.¹⁵⁵ Johnston responded to these events with an article entitled "Labour unrest - An Irish Priest Takes His Stand With the Workers": this concerned a 'remarkable and noteworthy speech' delivered by a certain Rev. M. J. O'Donnell, D.D. at the Maynooth Union, details of which had been supplied by Connolly.¹⁵⁶ O'Donnell's address gave evidence of a balanced and sensitive appreciation of the causes of the current spate of labour disputes in

152. Forward, 25 January 1913.

153. Forward, 27 July 1912.

154. See p248 above.

155. Forward, 29 June, 6 July 1912. And see p.195, note 8 above.

156. Forward, 20 July 1912.

terms of the decline in real wages simultaneously with the rise in the cost of living, and of the demonstrable failure of parliamentary action since the formation of the L.R.C. in 1900. Connolly gladly commented on this welcome absence of 'clerical intolerance' vis a vis the labour movement at the most prestigious Catholic seminary in the British Isles, but allowed himself the pleasure of elaborating on the priest's own implicit emphasis upon the importance of syndicalist method. He thought this address was:

'... a frank declaration that in its essence the Labour revolt is justified alike in its method and its organisations ...' 157

In April 1913, Tom Johnston announced that a "North of Ireland letter" from James Connolly would appear each week in the Forward, and this notice was accompanied by the appeal:

'Comrades in the North of Ireland who can do anything in the way of seeing that our posters are exhibited, sales booming, etc., please communicate with this office'. 158

Clearly, apart from considerations of interest on the part of the Scottish readership in Irish labour affairs, Johnston hoped that Connolly's contributions might serve to increase the Scottish paper's circulation among the working class of Ulster.

Connolly's first article returned to the perennial problem of the alliance or "pleasant relations" between the British Labour Party and the Irish nationalists.¹⁵⁹ Just as the understanding between the

157. Ibid.

158. Forward, 26 April 1913.

159. Forward, 3 May 1913.

U.I.L. and the old I.L.P. had vitiated the efforts made to secure independent Labour representation in Irish local elections in the late '90's, so now - over a decade later - the Labour group at Westminster tended, with undue sensitivity, to shuffle off lobbied demands from Irish labour bodies to the Irish parliamentary party. This party - which appeared still in Britain as "progressive" and pro-labour - said Connolly:

'... is bossed locally [throughout Ireland] by small sweating employers, slum landlords and publicans ...'.

This entrustment of Irish working class interests to their class enemies had resulted in their exclusion from the benefits of recently enacted social legislation such as the Meals for Necessitous School Children Act and the medical benefits of the Insurance Act. It was to surmount this difficulty that '... we in Ireland are working to establish a Labour party of our own'. Sensitive to the degree of social and religious contiguity between the demography of the Scottish lowlands and the North of Ireland, Connolly was at pains to stress the uniqueness of the Ulster situation, and to assuage the fears of his Scottish readers for their Ulster co-religionists who felt threatened by a native labour movement that was Catholic and nationalist in orientation. He stressed that the form of politicised sectarianism met with in Ulster - of all denominations - was incomparable with anything in Europe save the Balkan situation, and he rapidly proceeded to assert that:

'... the so-called Scotch of Ulster have fallen away from and developed antagonism to political reform and mental freedom as rapidly as the Scots of Scotland have advanced in adhesion to these ideals'.

On the question of the treatment of Ulster protestants by a Catholic majority after the establishment of Home Rule, he had this to say:

'... the Irish Catholic has realised instinctively that he, being the most oppressed and disfranchised, could not win any modicum of political freedom or social recognition for himself without winning it for all others in Ireland ... He has learned that his struggle is and has been the struggle of all the lowly and dispossessed, and he has grown broad-minded with the broadmindedness of the slave in revolt against slavery'.

Thus, this initial article went somewhat beyond the brief of simply '... interpreting the Irish to the Socialists' or even his familiar concern to plead the case for the autonomy of the Irish working class movement. For the first time Connolly had addressed himself directly to the mass Scottish audience which Forward commanded with a propagandist attack upon that Ulster-Scottish pan-Orange solidarity which so threatened his political and industrial work in the North of Ireland. Glasgow had proved a fruitful source of scab labour for Belfast employers during the Irish dockers' strikes of 1907 and 1911; and as we have seen, clergymen from Scotland had already appeared in Belfast as useful sectarian auxiliaries in the Orange fight to resist Home Rule and socialist propaganda alike.¹⁶⁰

Apart from carrying his appeal to the Scottish working class, Forward was also a useful forum of debate extensively circulated in Ulster itself. When Connolly returned to his attack upon the metropolitan style "Orange socialism" of Belfast which he had sought to

160. See p.251 above.

discredit during the controversy with Walker, he was rewarded with a series of spirited - if at times abusive - replies from Protestant working men: the character of these respondents testify to the realism of his widening of the debate to include Scotland, comprising as they did both Ulstermen and Scots residents in the North of Ireland, past and present. Connolly had exposed the collaboration of the Belfast branch of the British I.L.P. with other 'reactionary' Irish nationalist labour bodies in the vain attempt to prevent his Irish Labour Party resolution being carried at the Clonmel congress of the Irish T.U.C. the previous year, and had accused:

'... the Belfast dissenter from the position accepted by most socialists in Ireland says, "We will not have an Irish Labour Party". So he repeats in the labour movement the same feelings of hatred and distrust of his Catholic brothers and sisters, as his exploiters have instilled into him for their own purposes since infancy'.¹⁶¹

There was little of real material weight in the letters of Connolly's Ulster and Scots respondents. However, from several of them it becomes clear that Connolly was not then engaged in a mere self-gratifying polemical debate. Their testimony clearly indicates that not only was I.L.P. organisation at a low ebb in Belfast at that time, but that real co-operation between the I.L.P.(I) and the Belfast rump of the British party was at that time a concrete fact in matters of routine propagandist activity.¹⁶² Moreover, the restraint enforced upon one respondent - who had attacked Connolly virulently - by his comrades in the old I.L.P. rump, indicated both

161. Forward, 10 May 1913.

162. Forward, 24 May 1913; "A Plea for Unity" by W.F.

respect for Connolly's standpoint and at least some degree of awareness that his arguments against their sectional approach were well founded.¹⁶³ It seems reasonable to speculate that in view of the diminished scale of activity and morale of the rump, together with the progress his arguments had so obviously made among these comrades, that Connolly then hoped that he might persuade them into a fusion with the I.L.P.(I) if he maintained his propagandist pressure in the Forward long enough.

Nor, during Connolly's reports to the Scottish paper was the syndicalist perspective lost sight of. On May Day - Sunday May 4th 1913 - the local branches of the I.T.G.W.U. and its affiliate the Irish Textile Workers' Union, held a procession through Belfast to mark international Labour Day - the first in the city for some years. According to Connolly, they held a 'great and successful meeting' at the Custom House steps, where:

'Every speaker drove home the lesson of industrial unionism, the need for greater combination politically and industrially'. 164

Some idea was also given of the use of the sympathetic strike to enlarge the power of the industrial union, and of that generosity of spirit which characterised Connolly's syndicalism. In March, the I.T.W.U. had struck and gained an increase in wages for its members in the linen trade. This had been in face of violent opposition from two older craft unions in the linen industry, the Textile Operatives Society and the Flax Roughers and Yarn Spinners Society. However, when in mid-April the Flax Roughers struck against the employment of unskilled/cheap labour in the trade, they received sympathetic

163. Forward, 7 June 1913; "Belfast Differences" by Thos. H. Daniels.

164. Forward, 10 May 1913.

support from the I.T.W.U. By special invitation of the Flax Roughers, Connolly appeared on their platform at a mass meeting of striking linen workers on May 2nd; on that occasion:

'... all the speakers joined in advocating one big union for the linen trade'. 165

Connolly also took the opportunity afforded by his regular column in Forward to make a generous defence of Mary Galway - the 'Textile Operatives' secretary and sometime energetic opponent of the formation of the I.T.W.U. - who had fallen foul of an anti-Labour Judge during an action for damages against her society.¹⁶⁶

The syndicalist aspect of the I.L.P.(I)'s programme was also emphasised in Connolly's report of the 1913 Irish Trades Union Congress at Cork.¹⁶⁷ In his Presidential Address to the congress, William O'Brien - then representing a craft union, the Amalgamated Society of Tailors - dwelt at some length on the vital necessity of independent labour representation on all political bodies in Ireland: without political action, he said:

'... such resolutions as have appeared on our agenda in the past and as are on our agenda today, are likely to remain mere pious opinions ...'.

However, given the current needs and demands on the part of the working class for a diminution in the near absolute powers of their employers over them, and for increased state legislation in industrial matters, a strengthening of industrial as well as political organisation was vital. O'Brien continued:

165. Ibid.

166. Ibid.

167. Forward, 17 May 1913.

'... our duty is clear. Upon the industrial field we ... must steadily press forward to the greater unification and solidifying of our forces; linking up trade with trade, and industry with industry, and ... consistently push forward to the linking of the whole working class of the country into one great union ...'. 168.

With I.L.P.(I) members like O'Brien in such key positions of influence, there was little effort made to rescind the decision in favour of an Irish Labour party of the previous year. While writing on the Irish T.U.C., Connolly drew the attention of his Scottish readers to a most important matter: that of the great deal of ready support available in Scotland even within the labour movement itself, for the forces of Orange sectarianism in Ulster. Despite there being two fraternal delegates from the Scottish T.U.C. at the Cork congress, local branches of the Scottish Union of Dock Labourers at Ayr and Troon had handled coal boats from Belfast which were worked at the Belfast quays by members of a sectarian rival union to the I.T.G.W.U. - a so-called Protestant Workers' Association.¹⁶⁹ This failure of the Scottish labour movement to overcome pressure from within its own ranks and from employers, and to take an active stand against Orangeism clearly worried Connolly. Joe Houghton - leader of the Scottish dockers - was simply unable to prevent the handling of what were, in the full technical sense, scab or "tainted" cargoes. Connolly was well aware that - given the vital need for sympathetic action in the transport industries, and the political nature of labour organisation in Belfast

168. Ibid.

169. Forward, 24 May 1913.

- Scotland could well become an Orange Achilles' Heel for the I.T.G.W.U. in Belfast. Hence his acute need to expose such activities in the Forward.

Connolly returned to this problem of religious contiguity between Ulster and Scotland in June with a rather courageous article titled "The Irish Presbyterians and Home Rule".¹⁷⁰ Taking the opportunity afforded by the recent pronouncement against Home Rule by the General Assembly of the Belfast Presbyterian Church, he attempted to underscore the intolerance and irrational bigotry displayed at this gathering with reference to the totaliterian theocracy exercised by the kirk in Scotland during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The 'inexorable barbarity' of the rule of Calvinist divines and aristocratic lords of the congregation, Connolly described in extensive quotation from the work of the Whig historian, Lecky, in his History of the Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe. It was not a diet calculated to appeal readily to his Scottish Presbyterian readers, characterising the kirk as it did, as a 'system of religious terrorism, which we can now barely conceive'. For the Episcopalians in his audience, he quoted from the same source a further long passage in which Lecky adumbrated his basic conviction that Anglicanism '... was from the beginning, at once the most servile and the most efficient agent of tyranny'.

'These extracts', he said, 'coupled with the well known hostility shown by the Catholic church towards all forms of intellectual freedom outside of its own rule, should convince all but the most bigoted or unreflective that accusations of intolerance do not come well from the lips of any religious body'.

170. Forward, 21 June 1913.

Connolly followed this uncompromising attack upon clerical tutelage with an article the next week concerning the outcome of the I.T.G.W.U. - directed strike at Larne among the employees of the British Aluminium Company.¹⁷¹ These workers in Larne had been accustomed to work an 84 hour week, and after Connolly had enrolled over 300 of them in the union, they struck in mid-June for a reduction in hours of work. During the strike, Orange votaries castigated the I.T.G.W.U. as a "Fenian" and "Papist" organisation, while Protestant clergy of the district appealed from the pulpit for a return to work. This intervention brought about a speedy collapse of the strike and work was resumed on terms of reduced wages and a new "speed up". Connolly contrasted this quick submission with the Wexford foundry workers' stoppage of 1911, when (Catholic) clerical intimidation had been successfully resisted over a period of three months. He reported:

'... it is a matter of bitter comment in Labour circles here, that the only occasion upon which ... clerical dictation succeeded in acting the part of strike breaker should be among and with Protestants in an Orange community, in the most Orange part of the North East corner of Ulster'.¹⁷²

In May, further progress toward an accommodation between the two Belfast I.L.P.'s was reported in the form of a joint committee to supervise all future propaganda. Forward was sold in large numbers by the Belfast I.L.P. at this time, and so too was another of Tom Johnston's products, his exposure of the origins of the wealth and

171. Forward, 28 June 1913.

172. Ibid.

property of the Scottish aristocracy, Our Noble Families.¹⁷³ Also at this time, Connolly tried his hand along similar lines, exposing the family tradition of a leading Ulster Unionist aristocrat in a more discursive and lighter vein than his usual reports.¹⁷⁴ Since his decision to make a regular contribution each week to Forward, the Scottish paper had become of increasing immediate importance to Connolly. It should be remembered that he had always given primary importance to the party press; and indeed there had been times when he had apparently ascribed a higher priority to the press and party organ than to the organisation itself. At the end of the I.S.R.P.'s life, in February 1903, he had resigned as party organiser rather than allow its press to be foreclosed upon, arguing that without a press there could be no party;¹⁷⁵ and we have the testimony of Tom Bell to the effect that for Connolly, the sustained issue of a party paper was so important, that he personally took pains to perfect himself in every possible aspect of newspaper production.¹⁷⁶ Much of his work as socialist agitator had hinged upon his editorship of his own papers; the Workers' Republic (1898-1903) and The Harp (1908-10). Since the demise of The Harp in 1910, and especially since his removal to Belfast in 1911, Connolly had been without a means of publication. At this time he did write regularly for the Irish Worker, a small paper edited by Jim Larkin in Dublin under the patronage of the I.T.G.W.U., but clearly the nationalist tone of this paper precluded its being of real use in reaching the Protestant workers of Ulster. In default of having a newsheet of his own, Connolly had turned

173. Forward, 12 July 1913.

174. Forward, 5 July 1913; "More about Lord Lansdowne and Ireland".

175. Greaves, Life and Times of James Connolly, p.158.

176. See p.155 above.

seriously to the Forward: in this period the Scottish paper was beginning to serve as the organ of the Belfast I.L.P.(I). In this connection, it is worth stressing Connolly's sustained attack upon the hold of the Irish capitalist press - both Unionist and Nationalist - over the Irish working class, North and South. While exposing - for the benefit of his Belfast readers - the tortured logic of local Home Rule and Unionist organs in their response to the electoral performance of the Labour interest in Britain, he took the opportunity to provide some electoral propaganist ammunition for use against the Irish party by British comrades.¹⁷⁷ He analysed the responses of two Belfast papers, the Unionist Northern Whig and the Home Rule Irish News to the Labour candidacy in a recent by-election in Leicester. The Unionist organ took the view that the size of the combined popular vote for the Conservative and Labour candidates proved how unpopular was the Liberal government in the country generally, and opined that the Tories would have won without a Labour electoral presence. Connolly reminded his readers that such an analysis could hardly be said to square with the old Liberal accusation that Socialist and Labour candidacies were mere "dodges" '... to let the Tory in'. The Irish News on the other hand, referring to Unionist glee at every sign of Socialist development at the expense of the Liberal vote, warned that they were really rejoicing at the portents of their own doom, since:

177. Forward, 5 July 1913.

'English socialists are Home Rulers to an extent no Liberal ever thought of advocating'. 178

It capped this pronouncement with the formula that every vote given the Labour candidate was a vote for Home Rule. Connolly pointed out that this paper - together with the whole Liberal and Home Rule press - constantly attacked and vilified Labour candidates when they appeared in the field against Liberals, particularly misrepresenting their position on Home Rule. He slyly commented:

'The quotation I have given should be noted for use in future elections'.

Connolly's most sustained and acid attacks against Irish anti-Labour publicists were directed against Nationalist papers rather than Orange-Tory journals. This was partly because these organs of the A.O.H. and U.I.L. were much more insidious enemies of Labour - in that they combined formal and gratuitous support with a sustained innuendo of denigration - and partly because it demonstrated his good faith to his Protestant readership: there was also the urgency to discredit the nationalists in British Labour eyes, who were yet disposed to view them as "Friends" to the cause of Labour. In his most virulent article, "Press Poisoners in Ireland"¹⁷⁹ Connolly contrasted the open hostility of the Orange Tory press toward the aspirations of Labour with the attitude of the Belfast Irish News which,

'... has brought to bear against the Labour movement the most refined and insidious arts of character assassination'.

178. Ibid.

179. Forward, 30 August 1913.

As an earnest of this paper's especially hostile approach, he instanced its peculiar distorted treatment of Labour news items transmitted by the Reuter wire service - which it shared with other British papers - and, to bring the point home to his Scottish readers, quoted at length from this paper's "discovery" of the Glasgow Labour Party's supposed politicking in local elections to manage the Irish vote while excluding Irish Nationalist rivals and maintaining an alliance with the Tory party. Such methods, he said, were employed by 'a good many of the Irish Home Rule papers', and he instanced the case of the Dublin Independent which was then giving prominence to an A.O.H.-directed Tramwaymen's union, a "tame" rival to the I.T.G.W.U. with whom the Independent's owner, the Tramway Company proprietor, William Martin Murphy, was then in conflict. Nor was this behaviour of the Home Rule press a newly developed trend; as Connolly had indicated in a previous article, such deceptive and distorted reportage had been a feature of Irish nationalist journalism since its inception.¹⁸⁰

Much as Connolly might denounce the viciousness of the Irish nationalist propaganda in Forward, and comrades such as Frank Sheehy-Skeffington might denounce it at street meetings in Belfast,¹⁸¹ in terms of positive appeal to the Protestant workers of Ulster, it was all largely academic. Since the appearance, in April 1912, of the Home Rule Bill on the Westminster parliamentary schedule, militant Ulster Unionists under the leadership of Sir Edward Carson had begun to arm and organise themselves for the purpose of resisting the

180. Forward, 26 July 1913, "The Irish Nationalist Press".

181. Forward, 16 August 1913.

measure by force if the need arose. By the middle of 1913, these forces of Orange fanaticism had gained such a hold over the Protestant working population that even seaside excursions organised for its members by the "Fenian" I.T.G.W.U. were subject to mob violence,¹⁸² while no socialist - of whatever persuasion - could readily gain a hearing in Belfast. Connolly described the situation thus:

‘... neither Mr. Connolly nor any other Socialist can now hold outdoor meetings in an exclusively Orange district, even those Belfast Socialists who "will not have Home Rule" in their programme, cannot hold open-air meetings in any exclusively Orange district. Socialist meetings in Belfast can only be held in the business centre of the town, where the passing crowd is of a mixed or uncertain nature’. 183

That Summer, Connolly made - through the Forward - his most sophisticated appeal ever to the Protestant working class of Ulster: this comprised two articles, "July the 12th" and "A Forgotten Chapter of Irish History", published in Forward on July 12th and August 9th, respectively. With a characteristically logical deduction from the history of the Protestant plantation in Ulster, Connolly set out to combat the accepted - but highly selective - Orange view of the case,

‘... that the Defence of Derry and the Battle of the Boyne were great vindications of the principles of civil and religious liberty which were menaced by the Catholics, and defended by the Protestants of all sects’. 184

182. Forward, 23 August 1913.

183. *Ibid.*

184. Forward, 12 July 1913.

Connolly described the Ulster plantation in the reign of James I in terms of its social relations as being a mainly Presbyterian Scottish and English tenantry holding their land from Episcopalian courtiers and Merchant Companies. He instanced the sufferings of this tenantry at the hands of their Prelatist landlords throughout the 17th and early 18th centuries: physical harassment, recusancy fines, exclusion from public office and employment, the burden of tithes for the upkeep of the Anglican hierarchy, were all elements in a systematic religious persecution which remained in force throughout the entire period, the great 'victories' of 1690 notwithstanding. Nor was the Boyne campaign as simplistic as the Orange version supposed: Connolly made clear that in diplomatic terms, William's victory was one for the League of Augsburg - to which the Pope was party - and that, in consequence, the 'Protestant' triumph had been accordingly celebrated at the time by His Holiness in Rome.¹⁸⁵ In his second article, Connolly continued his story of the sufferings of this tenantry in the 18th century. He described the situation in Antrim in the early 1770's when the leases of the original tenant families began to expire. The Prelatist landlords had arbitrarily raised rents, often offering the land to the highest bidder. Evictions of those unable to raise the ready cash were ruthlessly enforced to the number of about 30,000 people. These harassed Protestant tenants formed an agrarian secret society as a means of seeking redress through terrorist activities, the so-called "Hearts of Steel", who, when some

185. Ibid.

of their number were arrested, assembled in force and broke them out of Belfast Gaol. He promised to add a sequel to this tale of crude violation of the old 'Ulster Custom' of tenant's rights, and

'... tell the equally shameful story of the suppression of political liberty, of how the Protestant workers were kept outside the franchise while the classes manipulated the powers of the state to their own enrichment'. 186

Connolly did not at that time have further opportunity for further essays in Ulster history: in the last week of August, he was summoned to Dublin to share in the leadership of one of the biggest industrial disputes ever to occur in the British Isles.

The Dublin Transport Workers lock-out of 1913 was in one sense a reflex of the desire of the Dublin employers - organised into an employers' association since 1911 - to break up the growing power of the I.T.G.W.U. The shipping companies and dock employers had already felt the union's power, and, now Larkin was seeking to organise the employees of William Martin Murphy's Tramway system. Already, by mid-August, it was known even in Scotland that Murphy was planning a showdown with the union. At that time Forward had carried a notice of "Boss Murphy's Threat" to smash the union with a fund of £100,000 specially set aside for the purpose, while employees were to be weaned away from their loyalty to Larkin with the promise of an immediate payment of an extra shilling per week.¹⁸⁷ Nor was the information from privy sources from within Ireland: it came from Joe Compton, an organiser of the United Kingdom Society of Coachmakers, and was printed in the Scottish paper alongside Connolly's own description of

186. Forward, 9 August 1913.

187. Forward, 23 August 1913.

I.T.G.W.U. progress in Dublin. He enumerated the recent substantial gains in terms of improved conditions and remuneration made by the union's Dublin members, and remarked:

'The governing factor in winning these battles in Dublin is the fact that practically all classes of general labour are in the union, and that the leader of that union does not act ... on old style trade union lines. The general policy is to use the general body of workers who are organised in order to win concessions for those who are being organised ... The firm and skilful use of this power is what is making for the revolution in wages and conditions in Dublin that is at present going on ...' 188

The Dublin employers may also have been worried by the political implications of the power of "Larkinism".¹⁸⁹ Since the passing of the Home Rule Bill by the Commons in January, the measure had lain under the suspensory veto of the Lords: meanwhile Carson had demanded the exclusion of Ulster from its provisions, and talks were already taking place between the Irish Nationalist and Unionist leaders along these lines. Given the resolute nationalist character of Larkin's syndicalism, there may well have been fears on the part of the employers of a general proletarian outburst against any political accommodation which - although leaving the property relations in industry untouched - foisted an attenuated form of self-government upon a people psychologically unprepared for it. It was certain at any rate, that Murphy was confident that his resources - in terms of funds and of numbers of scabs available - would outlast the union. He circulated a demand to all Tramway workers to pledge that they would ignore any call for a strike by the I.T.G.W.U.: Larkin

188. Ibid.

189. As suggested by Greaves in Life and Times of James Connolly, p.306.

immediately called out all his members in Dublin.

The ensuing events were closely reported in Forward, written up by Tom Johnston himself and given front page billing. Under the emotive banner "Massacre of the Working Class in Dublin" - A Challenge to Scotland, he described the arrests of union leaders which had occurred - including that of Connolly, '... Our Irish correspondent who has got three months in jail' - after the calling of that 'sudden general strike'.¹⁹⁰ Johnston gave full coverage to Larkin's assertion that if it was just for Carson's followers in Belfast to arm, then the same right was claimed by the Dublin strikers for their own self-defence; and full descriptions of the police brutality in Dublin - especially at the proclaimed meeting in O'Connell Street on Sunday, August 31st, where, it was said, two people were killed and about 400 injured. Murphy's boast from his own Weekly Independent was reprinted for the benefit of the Scottish readership:

'I think I have broken the malign influence of Mr. Larkin, and set him on the run. It is now up to the employers to keep him going'.

Connolly was featured as '... the man who will lead the strike if Larkin gets a long sentence': his 'long and honourable record of service in the socialist movement' was recalled, as was his Scottish background, together with his historical work Labour in Irish History. A resolution was appended from William Stewart, I.L.P. Scottish organiser, deploring the brutality of the police and expressing support

190. Forward, 6 September 1913.

for the strike, and all I.L.P. branches were urged to do likewise, while lobbying their M.P.'s on the matter. A Forward fund was begun to give financial support, and Johnston asserted that 'The working class of Scotland must keep the dependants of the martyrs'. Wheatley's Catholic Socialist group - which still survived as a small rump of the former large society - appealed for support for the mass protest meeting to be held on Glasgow Green on Sunday, September 7th, with the assertion that '... the last shreds of all liberty in Ireland are being destroyed! This "Great protest demonstration against the police massacre of Irish people" - actually organised by the local I.L.P. - drew much first rank support from almost every element in the Scottish Left. Johnston and Wheatley were joined on the platform by George Barnes, M.P. for Blackfriars and leader of the Parliamentary Labour group, Robert Smillie of the Scottish miners, and John Muir, editor of the S.L.P. organ, the Socialist; John Maclean appeared for the B.S.P. and there was also a speaker from the Glasgow Sinn Fein group. This last speaker was an indication of left-wing sympathies on the part of the Glasgow branch, not shared by the body's Dublin leadership. 191

10,000 were present at the Glasgow Green protest meeting, and a second was held the same day at Govan Cross. Protest resolutions were carried at meetings of both the Glasgow and Govan Trades Councils and at five local meetings of the Clarion Scouts.¹⁹² Meanwhile, Johnston's

191. Ibid. N.B. "Sinn Fein" was not at that time the political expression of Irish republicanism which it later became under the leadership of Eamonn de Valera. It was then a grouping of moderate nationalists, readers and subscribers of the journal Sinn Fein, edited by the (anti-Labour) publicist, Arthur Griffith. Griffith opposed the I.T.G.W.U. throughout the duration of the lock-out.

192. Forward, 13 September 1913.

reports were stressing that Murphy had made sure of support from the Dublin Castle authorities prior to his ultimatum to Larkin, together with the even more embarrassing revelations - initially published by the Daily Herald - about the identity of major shareholders in Murphy's Tramway Company: these included a Catholic Archbishop, the magistrate and crown prosecutor involved in the trial of the labour leaders, the wife of the Under-Secretary of State for Ireland, and senior officers of both the Dublin Metropolitan Police and the Royal Irish Constabulary. The nationalist press had remained solidly behind the police authorities who had allowed a drunken constabulary to terrorise the slums in the early days of September, breaking into working class homes indiscriminately to enforce evictions, and assaulting all they could find in their search for strikers. Johnston made it clear that the 'Murphy gang' were out to break, not only the power of Larkin, but to discredit the weapon of the sympathetic strike - and appealed to trades unionists in Scotland on that basis for cash to help fight those who:

'... want a signed and pledged agreement against the sympathetic strike'. 193

Despite Larkin's being the public figure of wide reputation in both Ireland and Britain, Johnston emphasised Connolly's role in events, featuring his polemical and historical writing and reminding readers of his propagandist record. He printed a contribution by T. R. Johnson of the Belfast I.L.P.(I) who opined that:

'The authorities have come to the conclusion that he [Connolly] is too dangerous a person to be allowed at large at a time when the Dublin working class is seething with resentment against their employers ... Connolly's voice and pen is a grave danger to their continued dominance'. 194

By mid-September, 10,000 men were locked-out in Dublin for refusal to sign the anti-I.T.G.W.U. pledge; meanwhile Connolly had been released after a hunger strike of 7 days. He returned to Belfast to recuperate, but was as yet unable to resume his writing for the Forward. Spontaneous sympathetic strikes had begun in some English centres in support of the Dublin men, but were discouraged and brought to an end by conservative union leaders such as J. H. Thomas of the Railwaymen and James Sexton, the Dockers' leader, who urged their men to return to work. The British trade union movement contented itself with a scheme for blacking Dublin goods in transit, and arranging foodships to be sent to Dublin. In Glasgow, Tom Johnston took the Glasgow Herald to task for characterising "Larkinism" as 'the breaking of agreements'. If, he said, employers broke the spirit of agreements entered into by attempting to depress wages, other workers in other trades were bound to give sympathetic support in self defence. He found the practice of the I.T.G.W.U. theoretically justified, although he declined to bestow the label "syndicalist" upon it.

'That is not Syndicalism - it is sense; it is a legitimate step in industrial unionism and if, as Larkin wishes, all the petty unions could be merged in one, the necessity for the sympathetic strike would largely disappear ... Larkin is no Syndicalist ... he is no half-hogger. He wants the working class

to capture everything - the police, the military and the administration of the state, as well as the instruments of production ... The Irish Worker ... has a standing appeal to the workers of Dublin to see that their names are on the voters register, and that speaks for itself'. 195

The Syndicalist doctrinaires of the ultra-left - both of the De Leonite and the anti-parliamentary variety - were coming to the conclusion that the practice of the militant Irish OBU was not such as would conform to their own particular definition of the term "syndicalist" either. Writing on behalf of the predominantly Scottish S.L.P., J. C. Matheson of Falkirk - that same comrade of Connolly's during the days of the "unholy Scotch current" - denied that the I.T.G.W.U. was a syndicalist body.¹⁹⁶ In his view, its style of campaign and its literature clearly showed that:

'... neither in the political nor in the industrial field do they pursue syndicalist tactics'.

On the other hand, it could not be called an industrial union either; he plumped for the designation of:

'... a mass union, recruiting all sections of the working class - an organisation which may, and probably will, develop into an industrial union in the future'.

Calling upon the Scottish workers to support the Dublin men against what he called '... the efforts of Capitalism to thrust the trade union model upon them', he showed how firmly he remained within the De Leonite dogmatism of "dual unionism". He warned:

195. Forward, 20 September 1913.

196. Socialist, October 1913.

'If we allow the Dublin men to go down, craft unionism and Capitalism will gain a new lease of life, and our struggle to establish industrial unionism will be rendered infinitely more arduous and precarious'.

Tom Mann's little theoretical paper, the Syndicalist, had been discontinued throughout most of 1913, owing to financial difficulties, and only re-appeared in December. For the I.S.E.L., the I.T.G.W.U. was simply following the De Leonite "two arm" policy of incompatible industrial-cum-political method. On this view, there were many movements currently in the labour world, which were '... going under the name of Syndicalism, yet there isn't one iota of Syndicalism in them'. "Larkinism", it said, was just one of these 'pseudo-syndicalist movements'.¹⁹⁷

Meanwhile, Larkin himself had visited Glasgow on Saturday, September 20th, 1913, holding 'enthusiastic meetings' in the St. Andrew Halls.¹⁹⁸ Supported on the platform by Tom Johnston, John Wheatley and R. B. Cunninghame-Graham, he addressed a 'wildly enthusiastic' crowd of 4,000. Resolutions were passed demanding an impartial enquiry into the events surrounding the dispute, and condemning the police brutality allowed by the authorities in Dublin. Connolly now resumed his correspondence with the Forward, with an article entitled "Glorious Dublin". In the same issue of the paper, Johnston took pains to deny the 'superstition' that Larkinism and Syndicalism were one and the same thing, citing Larkin's assertion that,

'The working class should be in one union, not only an industrial union, but a political union'.¹⁹⁹

197. Syndicalist, January 1914.

198. Forward, 27 September 1913.

199. Forward, 4 October 1913.

It is tempting to say that Johnston's enthusiasm for this avowal of the necessity for political action - like the I.S.E.L.'s equally firm criticism of it - was based upon a too simplistic approach to Irish syndicalism as represented by Larkin, and above all, by the thought of Connolly. The importance of French example, which Tom Mann had studied at first hand, had tended to polarise attitudes in Britain about "Syndicalism" on the formalistic criterion of pro- or anti-parliamentarianism. Hence there could be little in the way of a real understanding of Connolly's developing post-De Leonite doctrine of OBU control of both the industrial and political movements for the expropriation of the capitalists and the supersession of the State. Even where De Leonism was reasonably strong on the ground, as in the West of Scotland, there were marked difficulties in conceptualising the OBU as anything more than a function of the party and its catechistic faith - as Matheson's comments in the October Socialist indicated.²⁰⁰ And yet this inability of Scottish observers like Johnston and Matheson fully to appreciate Irish practice could not be said to rest in any way in Connolly's neglect to explain his position. Even in "Glorious Dublin", he attempted to deal with the larger issues of the relationship between party and union, while undertaking the urgent task of rebutting the public criticism made of the I.T.G.W.U. and of the sympathetic strike by Labour politicians like Philip Snowden. Politics, he said, was but a reflex of the industrial battle, but:

200. For a more lengthy treatment of the problem, see R. Dalgleish, The Decadence of the S.L.P. (Glasgow, n.d.), where the argument centres on the question of relations with the I.W.W.

'At present ... Labour politicians seem to be losing all reality as effective aids to our struggles on the industrial battlefields ... [and] of their true role of Parliamentary outposts of the industrial army. The Parliamentary tail in Britain still persists in wagging the British industrial dog. Once the dog really begins to assert his true position, we will be troubled no more by carping critics of Labour politics ...' 201.

Meanwhile, Johnston noted that many subscribers to the Forward fund for the relief of the Dublin strikers had Irish names and rejoiced at this open defiance of the Irish nationalist press. On the question of effects within the Scottish working class of the Dublin dispute he said, Murphy's threat to starve out the I.T.G.W.U.:

'... has done more in Scotland to break down the barriers between Catholic and Protestant working men, than all the bigots can rear again in another generation'. 202

In October, a Board of Trade Enquiry headed by Sir George Askwith, sat in Dublin to investigate the circumstances of the dispute. It foundered on the employers' unwillingness to accept its arbitration proposals, involving as they did reinstatement of all workers involved and a withdrawal of the anti-I.T.G.W.U. pledge: the dispute dragged on. Larkin had been engaged on speaking tours throughout Britain - arranged by the Daily Herald League - but his health had been undermined by the strain. In the week beginning Sunday, October 19th, Connolly himself travelled throughout Scotland speaking in Edinburgh, Leith, Dundee, Clydebank, Greenock, Falkirk and Glasgow: as in the past this lightning tour was managed from the Forward office.²⁰³

201. Forward, 4 October 1913.

202. Ibid.

203. Forward, 18 October 1913.

His initial meetings at Edinburgh and Leith on the 19th set the tone for the message of his tour: after an afternoon meeting in the Meadows, he spoke in the Leith Gaiety Theatre, under the auspices of the local I.L.P., to a packed house. The lock-out, he said, now affected 100,000 people - one quarter of the Dublin population - and the union's fight was directed equally against sweating employers and slum landlords. He emphasised the 'hellish' living conditions of the Dublin slums, and with a battery of statistics, brought out that its deathrate was comparable to that of Bombay, and unequalled in Europe except by Moscow. The I.T.G.W.U., he said, were advocates of both political and industrial Home Rule, and he stoutly defended the sympathetic strike as being the most effective means of expression of the essential unity of the international working class. He ended with an appeal for practical support from the workers of the port of Leith, not only in terms of contributions to the Dublin relief fund, but also with sympathetic industrial action.²⁰⁴ Some idea of the response evoked by his visit from Scottish workers is to hand in his own report of his visit to Dundee. When he arrived on the Monday, he was greeted with a collection of £22, gathered over the weekend by local I.L.P. and B.S.P. activists. The scope of this achievement is appreciated only in the knowledge that Dundee was a centre for textile production, characterised by a high percentage of low-paid, unskilled female labour, and that at the time of Connolly's visit, over 1200 mill workers were themselves out on strike in the town. Connolly addressed a large open-air meeting in the rain on the Monday evening, many of his audience being mill workers laid

204. Leith Observer, 25 October 1913. Edinburgh Evening News, 20 October 1913.

off by the local dispute. Nevertheless, a further £5 was collected, together with an additional amount for maintenance of Dublin children in Scotland, should it be thought necessary to evacuate them from Dublin. His visit drew further evidence of the left-wing and Labour sympathies of Irish nationalist branches in Scotland. Even the "Home Government" branch of the Glasgow U.I.L. was moved to make a contribution to the Forward relief fund.²⁰⁵ At his meeting in Glasgow's City Hall on Friday the 24th, he renewed his contacts with old S.L.P. comrades like Tom Bell, whom he had not seen for a decade: Bell joined him on the platform.²⁰⁶ After an additional meeting for the B.S.P. branch in Kilmarnock on Sunday the 26th, he returned to Dublin. In an article penned for the Forward during his Scottish tour, Connolly reiterated - in the form of arguments previously printed in the Irish Review - his current theoretical concern; the lack of a sound statistical base for a real appraisal of the conditions of labour and wage rates in Dublin.²⁰⁷ Despite readily available data on the housing conditions (death rate, rent values, etc.), information on working conditions and wages had been:

'... left to be gathered piecemeal by the workers themselves, and applied piecemeal in an unconnected fashion as it became necessary to use it for purposes of organisation and agitation'.

He deplored the lack of a comprehensive study of conditions in Ireland to compare with Rowntree's survey in York and Booth's in

205. Forward, 25 October 1913. The "Home Government" was the most senior branch in Scotland.

206. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.49.

207. Forward, 25 October 1913.

London's East End. The reason for this neglect of poverty in Dublin was, he said, simply because the issue had been treated as a subordinate one in the political disputes between Unionists and Home Rulers. What was required in his view was an independent working class attempt at such a study which, at the same time, identified its findings with the goals of the Irish nationalist cause as a whole. In this generation, the cause of Labour must thus be made the cause of Ireland, just as in a previous period, that of the tenant farmers had been identified as the national ideal. This warning from Connolly of the urgency of laying the theoretical groundwork for the emergence of the Irish proletariat as the "national class" - in the sense meant by Marx in the Communist Manifesto - indicated that he was himself already at work on the problem. His activities would later bear fruit in the form of his analytical work The Re-Conquest of Ireland, which appeared in 1915.

When Connolly returned to Dublin, he found that Larkin had been tried - on reduced charges from the original citation of sedition - and had been jailed for seven months. He was now in sole charge of the strike, and hit on a plan for using the leverage of the Irish working class vote in Britain to secure Larkin's release. Three by-elections were then pending in Reading, Linlithgow and Keighley: Connolly sent a telegram for the use of the Labour candidates in each contest embodying the emotive appeal of the two working class fatalities of the August police actions.

'Locked-out Nationalist workers of Dublin appeal to British workers to vote against the Liberal jailors of Larkin, and murderers of Byrne and Nolan'. 208.

208. Forward, 8 November 1913.

After the government defeats in each of the three elections, even the national Liberal press urged Larkin's release. The initial defeats at Linlithgow and Reading frightened two Scottish Liberal M.P.'s sufficiently for them to write to Forward to assure the labour movement that they were urgently engaged in pressing for Larkin's release: Johnston printed these letters from MacCallum Scott (Glasgow Bridgeton) and Hogge (Edinburgh East) in the issue for November 8th. In Dublin, Connolly countered the government's inaction on Larkin, and the continued importation of Blackleg labour from Britain with the establishment of a mass picket at all workplaces which had locked-out I.T.G.W.U. members. With this last escalation of the fighting methods he was forced to employ, he asked, "Has our peaceful endurance reached its limit?". Dublin was now '... like a city in a state of seige'.²⁰⁹ The government reacted in two ways to these developments; Larkin was summarily released, and further police - and now military - protection was given to the firms operating with scab labour. Matheson, writing on "Larkin's Release and Syndicalist Theory" saw the successful political pressure of lost by-elections as a vindication of the "two arm" De Leonite policy of the S.L.P.²¹⁰; while Johnston concurred with the assertion that Larkin had been freed because '... the British working class showed their teeth, and gave a few good political bites'.²¹¹ Connolly had accompanied his decision to impose mass picketing with an appeal to the rank and file union membership in Britain to refuse to handle all goods from the scab firms in Dublin; again the unofficial response

209. Forward, 15 November 1913.

210. Socialist, December 1913.

211. Forward, 22 November 1913.

throughout Britain was positive and encouraging, but fell short of a general economic boycott of Dublin. As a means of protection against the excesses of the police, Connolly had - with the able help of Captain Jack White - begun to organise a self-defence force of locked-out men, companies of which drilled in the Croydon Park under the Captain's supervision. From the first, the concept of this "Citizen Army" was not restricted to workers' self-defence in the limited area of industrial disputes, but was openly political in motivation. As Connolly explained to his readers in Forward, it was intended as:

'...a protection against the brutal attacks of the uniformed bullies of the police force, as well as a measure possibly needed for future eventualities arising out of the ferment occasioned by Carsonism in the North ...'. 212

The choice of name for this defence force bears out the assertion that, for Connolly, the military organisation of the working class thus formed, would be both an instrument and an extension of social democratic politics. The notion of such a "Citizen Army" or "the armed nation" had been advocated for many years by the British S.D.F. and indeed by the Socialist International, as a democratic counter to the professional armies of the capitalist state. More recently, Will Thorne - an S.D.F. Member in the Commons - had introduced in 1908 a Citizen Army Bill as a counter to the Haldane War Office reforms of 1907-8.²¹³ The first appearance of the Citizen force was at a parade on November 30th, when appropriately enough, a big meeting was held in honour of

212. Forward, 6 December 1913.

213. Tsuzuki, Hyndman and British Socialism, p.203. Lee and Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain, p.280-2.

"Big Bill" Haywood - of the I.W.W. - who had crossed the Atlantic to voice the support of the 'Wobblies' for the Dublin men. The attitude of the craft union leadership of the British T.U.C. could hardly have been less positive. At a specially convened meeting of the T.U.C. on December 9th, British union leaders overwhelmingly rejected Larkin's and Connolly's appeals for official sympathetic action: their one important ally, Robert Williams of the Transport Federation was excluded from the meeting. Larkin left London for Glasgow where, at a packed meeting in the City Hall he astounded his audience with the bitterness and incoherence of his diatribe against the British trade union leadership.²¹⁴ Connolly responded with a more measured appeal for the British leadership to reconsider its attitude; he was still hoping for rank and file pressure to force the leadership into some sympathetic action.²¹⁵ He was well aware that, despite Williams' support, the real power lay with conservative leaders like Sexton of the Dockers' Union and Wilson of the Seamen; even Thomas of the Railwaymen had made clear his unwillingness to countenance official sympathetic action. Without the support of these men nothing could be done in Britain. In Scotland, Sexton's lieutenant, O'Connor Kessack, had publicly denounced Larkin and the sympathetic strike, while Houghton's Scottish Dockers' organisation was too small to risk unilateral action. Scottish seamen and railwaymen were firmly controlled by the London leadership. Connolly, faced with a Christmas of starvation, and knowing that the employers' resolve had

214. Forward, 20 December 1913.

215. Forward, 27 December 1913.

been strengthened by the British union leadership's summary ending of all unofficial action which had been taken in support of the Dublin men by British transport workers, asked bitterly:

'Is this the utmost that the united Labour forces of Great Britain and Ireland can secure for us after starving for four months?'. 216

The 'trade union scabbery' practised on the I.T.G.W.U. by the British transport unions profoundly affected Connolly's sense of solidarity with the British labour movement. It had opened once more 'that chasm of distrust and hatred' between the Irish and British workers which served so well the interests of the master class in both countries.²¹⁷

By February of 1914, it was clear that the I.T.G.W.U. had been abandoned by British trade union officialdom to settle with the Dublin employers as best it could on a saue qui peut basis. Instead of working class solidarity throughout the British Isles contriving to isolate and defeat the Dublin employers, it was the Dublin working class which had been so isolated and defeated. The prevalence of sectional officialism had conspired to bring to nought all the (unofficial) solidarity evidenced in the early days of the dispute, and to discredit the notions of 'Greater Unionism' and the moves for Industrial Unity made within the labour movement since the success of the 1911 transport strike.²¹⁸ Robert Williams, speaking in Glasgow in January on the progress of the "Greater Unionism", delivered an address sobered by the knowledge of its recent failure with regard

216. Ibid.

217. Forward, 10 January 1914.

218. Connolly, "The Isolation of Dublin", Forward, 7 February 1914.

to Dublin. He could only denounce the mentality of the craft union officials '... that of the huckster and the shopkeeper', and deplore their quietistic legalism.²¹⁹ Tom Mann, who spoke in Glasgow on February 1st, drove home the same point. It had only required the application of sound trade union principles to that dispute, such as refusal to handle 'tainted goods' to ensure victory. He said:

'... it stands to our eternal disgrace that these steps were not taken ...' 220.

Speaking of the attitude of the Parliamentary Labour Party toward the lock-out he maintained:

'They say "Syndicalists come along and ask our help when they are in trouble". Such meanness is beyond ordinary meanness ...'.

He hastened to point out that - whatever the Labour Party might think - in his view the I.T.G.W.U. was not, technically speaking, a syndicalist organisation. Indeed, the current issue of his own paper criticised Larkinism as being 'too clericalist in mind' (a reference to Connolly's theoretical work), and deplored the enthusiasm of the Irish industrial unionists for the creation of an Irish Labour Party. For good measure the editorial concluded:

'Besides, we have always said that a strike that lasts more than a week is hopeless'. 221

Perhaps the most percipient comments on the outcome of the strike were made by J. C. Matheson. He maintained unequivocally that both

219. Forward, 17 January 1914.

220. Forward, 7 February 1914.

221. Syndicalist, February 1914.

the 'Greater Unionists' - led by Robert Williams - and the Syndicalists - led by Tom Mann - had let the workers down, while the S.L.P.'s own client OBU, the I.W.G.B., had been too small and impotent to act. He warned:

'... by our pitiful conduct towards these splendid Irishmen and Irishwomen, we have not only betrayed them, but have opened the gates to our own foes'. 222

Indeed, the collapse of the Dublin strike of the I.T.G.W.U. had not merely been a defeat for that body, but, in the larger perspective, a defeat for British Syndicalism - of all varieties - in terms of its confirmation of both the power and the methods of the craft and sectional union leadership.

It was in this light that Connolly sought to analyse the working class failure of 1913-14, but his subsequent examination of the causes of labour weakness did nothing to diminish his faith in industrial unionism. His starting point was a public dissociation from the 'amalgamation' movement fostered by Tom Mann's I.S.E.L., on the grounds that it was both anti-political and unsuited to the current trends of industrial development. For Connolly, the Dublin events showed the urgency for:

'... the amalgamation of all forces of labour into one union, capable of concentrating all forces upon any one issue or in any one fight which can alone fight industrially as the present development and organisation of Capital requires that Labour should fight ...' 223

222. Socialist, March 1914.

223. Forward, 21 February 1914.

He deplored the '... unnatural alliance with mere anti-politicalism' that the 'amalgamation' movement represented. Indeed, the anti-political stand of Tom Mann's syndicalism must have recalled old ghosts for Connolly, in the shape of the anarcho-syndicalism advocated by William Morris during his Edinburgh days in the old Socialist League.²²⁴ Mann's constant pious references to Morris at this time - both in print and on the platform - would only serve to emphasise the point.²²⁵ Connolly's commitment to political action and to a conquest of state power by the organised working class remained as strong at this time as in 1910, when in Labour, Nationality and Religion, he had spoken of:

'... a state which should be a social instrument in the hands of its men and women, where state powers would be wielded as a means by the workers ...'²²⁶

At the height of the industrial struggle in Dublin - during the municipal elections of January 1914 - Connolly had seized the opportunity to give a political expression to the industrial war. This was the type of election fight which, he said:

'... can in the future alone make labour politics a reality. It was the fight on the industrial battlefield being transferred and fought out by the same contestants upon the political battlefield ...'²²⁷

In February, Connolly crossed over to Glasgow to attempt to gain some last ditch support for those workers who were still out on strike. He spoke at the Pavilion Theatre on Sunday the 22nd, under the auspices of the Clarion Scouts. His message was succinct and unequivocal:

224. See p.16ff above.

225. Forward, 7 February 1914: Syndicalist, March-April 1913.

226. Edwards and Ransom, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings, p.98.

227. Forward, 31 January 1914.

'We have tried to build up an Irish Labour movement which will aim at uniting the struggle for political freedom with the fight for economic emancipation, and make the labour movement the real heir of all those past pioneers in the Irish National struggle'. 228

Such was the theme of his pamphlet - to be issued in the following year - The Re-Conquest of Ireland. The next evening, he spoke at the University Union, under Fabian Society auspices, on "The Labourer's Fight in Ireland". He dwelt particularly on the economic and industrial aspects of the struggle of Labour in Ireland.²²⁹ Again and again at this time, he urged the necessity for collateral political and industrial action in the Forward. He fought to delineate and defend a centrist position against those industrial unionists/syndicalists who rejected the need for political action, ignoring the problem of the state, and the conservatives of the craft/sectional unions who gave their support to Labour politicians, yet who rejected the need for sporadic and sympathetic strike action, ignoring the problem of industrial organisation. He stressed the importance of each mode of activity both as functional and propagandist exercises toward the realisation of working class hegemony.

'The only force available to the worker today is economic force; the capture of political power when it does come will come as a result of the previous conquest of economic power, although that conquest can be and should be assisted by the continual exercise of political action by those who have grasped the full meaning and purpose of the working class fight'. 230

228. Forward, 28 February 1914.

229. Forward, 7 March 1914.

230. Forward, 14 March 1914.

In his article "Changes" - published in Forward on May 9th, 1914, Connolly appealed for a tolerant and open-minded approach to the problem of the relationship between political and industrial organisation. Nevertheless, he made clear to his Scottish readers that his reading of Marx had led him to an unequivocal primary commitment to the syndicalist organisational form. He said:

'... a new social order cannot supplant the old until it has its own organisation ready to take its place. Within the social order of Capitalism I can see no possibility of building up a new economic organisation fit for the work of superseding the old on Socialist lines, except that new order be built upon the lines of the industries that Capitalism itself has perfected. Therefore I am heart and soul an Industrial Unionist. But because I know that the Capitalist class is alert, and unscrupulous in its use of power, I do not propose to leave it the uncontested use of the powers of the State ...'.

In his last article to Forward on the organisational problem - titled, appropriately enough, "The Problem of Trade Union Organisation"²³¹ - he was seen to be toying with the notion of a centralised trade union authority - along the lines of the cabinet of the State - whose supervening authority might override the sectional jealousies and concerns that were eroding mass working class militancy even in the new federations which comprised the "Greater Unionism". There is more than an echo here too of the powers enjoyed by the General Executive Board of the I.W.W. The "Wobbly" syndicalist commitment is also unmistakable in his last work, The Re-Conquest of Ireland, completed around January 1914 but not published in pamphlet form until 1915.

231. Forward, 23 May 1914.

'With the industrial union as our principle of action, branches can be formed to give expression to the need for effective supervision of the affairs of the workshop, shipyard, dock or railway. ... the concept of One Big Union embracing all, [is] the outline of the most effective form of combination for industrial warfare, and also for the Social Administration of the Co-operative Commonwealth of the future'. 232

Such was the basic principle of action for 'Reconquest' in Ireland, whereby the Irish working class would regain its own, both in terms of its country and the fruits of its own labour. As Connolly had told his last Glasgow audience:

'... the history of Ireland is, in its economic and political aspects, simply a national setting for the great proletarian struggle which has gone on throughout all the ages'. 233

Connolly was at that time searching for ways and means of giving creative organisational expression to the OBU concept, not only in terms of Ireland's 'Reconquest', but in terms of the proletarian struggle within the British Isles. However, his analytical quest was aborted in the short space of life remaining to him by the urgency of the threat of Irish Partition, and by the crisis of World War.

232. James Connolly, The Re-Conquest of Ireland, in Labour in Ireland (Maunsel & Co. Dublin, 1917), pp. 327-8.

233. Connolly at the Pavilion Theatre, 22 February 1914. Forward, 28 February 1914.

The Deluge, 1914-16

In the second week of March, 1914, the Liberal Prime Minister, H. H. Asquith, made his 'new and final proposal' on Irish Home Rule. It amounted to a scheme of partition in Ireland, certain Ulster counties being able to exclude themselves from the new Irish Dominion, and was the price with which Carson's militant Unionists were to be bought off, and civil war avoided. The actual proposal was that the Ulster counties be given the right to exclude themselves for six years after the establishment of the Irish Dominion, and then automatically to accede to that Dominion, unless it was decided otherwise by the U.K. electorate voting in the General Elections which would occur in the interim. In other words, if the Liberals went out of office during the six year period, an incoming Conservative administration could operate the scheme to its own advantage and make the exclusion permanent.

From Connolly's point of view, the whole scheme was calculated to check the growing political power of the Irish working class, both by a territorial division between its most 'advanced' industrial

section in Belfast, and the more disparate and less skilled work-force of the South; and by ensuring that no Labour leadership emerged to threaten the "natural" political leaders of the Orange and Home Rule religio-political establishments. He drew attention to the dangers of the situation from the Labour point of view in Forward.

¹Such a scheme would destroy the Labour movement by disrupting it. It would perpetuate in a form aggravated in evil the discords now prevalent, and help the Home Rule and Orange Capitalists and clerics to keep their rallying cries before the public as the political watchwords of the day. In short, it would make division more intense and confusion of ideas and parties more confounded¹. 1

Connolly had no doubt that the "Ulster Crisis" - the flight of Carson from the Commons back to Ulster, the troop movements into the province, even the subsequent "Curragh Mutiny" - was simply a theatrical show designed to distract the working class Nationalist democracy from ²... the infamous character of the Partition scheme² to which Home Rule leaders - North and South - had given their consent. Connolly regarded acquiescence by the Nationalist leaders in this scheme as the grossest act of betrayal they were yet guilty of against the interests of Ireland and her working people.² The Partition issue opened up debate on Connolly's long-standing bone of contention with the British Labour leadership: the consistent policy of the old I.L.P. and new Parliamentary Labour group of following the lead of the Irish Nationalist Party and its capitalist leadership on all questions

1. Forward, 21 March 1914.

2. Forward, 28 March 1914.

relative to Ireland, to the detriment of the claims of Independent Labour in Ireland. On the Partition scheme, George Barnes, leader of the Labour group in the Commons wrote in Forward:

'We of the Labour Party favour the whole Bill, but we take our cue from the Irishmen on the Nationalist benches'. 3

T. R. Johnson - Connolly's close associate in the Belfast I.L.P.(I) - wrote to deplore Barnes' attitude and stressed that the Irish working class movement was unanimously against Partition; the Irish T.U.C., the Irish I.L.P. and numerous Trades Councils had all passed resolutions against the scheme. He reminded Barnes that:

'The attitude of the Labour Party towards Irish questions has been generally wrong, simply from the fact that they "take their cue from the Nationalist benches" instead of listening to what the Irish labour movement has to say on questions affecting the Irish workers'. 4

Barnes replied with the rather lame observation that:

'... the Nationalists of Ireland have sent men to Parliament, and the Labour men have not. I assume that the Irishmen know their mind and business best, and I take it as expressed in that fact'. 5

Johnson's response to this gambit was as follows:

'... unfortunately for the Irish labour movement, the Labour Party in Parliament prefers to cater for the Irish voter in Britain, rather than assist in developing an independent political party of Labour in Ireland'. 6

3. Ibid.

4. Forward, 4 April 1914.

5. Forward, 11 April 1914.

6. Forward, 18 April 1914.

The Irish socialists, said Johnson, had long been aware of this fact, but had hoped that the enactment of Home Rule would clear the way for mutual co-operation. However, the division of Ireland would merely perpetuate the conditions in which Labour was so obliged to cater to the Irish vote. Now it should be remembered that George Barnes had represented the Blackfriars division of Glasgow for a decade, and had been the first Labour member returned in Scotland who owed his election to massive shifts in allegiance from the Liberal to the Labour interest on the part of the Irish-Scottish working class electorate. In terms of retaining that allegiance, he clearly had little room for manoeuvre outside the demonstrable actions of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Like so many other Labour M.P.'s who had seized the vital Irish vote from the old Liberal-U.I.L. caucus, he felt obliged to "play safe" on Irish affairs in the most formal way he knew how.

Nevertheless, Johnson's response to Barnes indicates the growing sense of frustration and alienation occasioned within the Irish socialist movement by the explosion of the Partition issue. For Connolly, still burdened by the sense of betrayal of the British labour movement of the Dublin transport workers, this new betrayal over Partition would merely serve to alienate him further from the British movement. He did himself deal at some length with the points raised by Johnson in an article devoted to the proposed "Exclusion of Ulster".⁷ He appealed to the British Labour Party to stand out for the whole Bill and to vote against it if any exclusion were attempted,

7. Forward, 11 April 1914.

simply in its own electoral interests. He reminded his Scottish readers that:

'Labour men in and out of Ireland have often declared that if Home Rule were wanted for no other purpose, it was necessary in order to allow of the solidifying of the Labour vote in Great Britain, and the rescue of the Irish voters in that country from their thralldom to the Liberal caucus. [And now] ... the Home Rule question as far as Ulster is concerned, may be indefinitely prolonged and kept alive as an issue to divide and disrupt the Labour vote in Great Britain'.

As far as the situation in Ireland was concerned, he said that the effect of exclusion would be nothing short of disastrous; so much so that as far as the 'organised labour movement in Ireland' was concerned,

'... we would much rather see the Home Rule bill defeated than see it carried with Ulster or any part of Ulster left out'.

Connolly was not at all surprised by Barnes' attitude. It came as a vindication of his perennial contention that, because of the peculiar backwardness of the Irish movement, it needed an autonomous organisation of its own, and could not simply become a British appendage. However, as regards revolutionary impetus, Connolly made clear that Irish backwardness might be a national advantage.⁸ On these lines, Connolly said he had:

'... fought for the separate political organisation of the Irish workers, and for the separate economic and industrial organisation of the Irish workers on a more revolutionary basis than was usual in England and Scotland'.⁹

8. A notion also expressed by Mao tse-tung with regard to China's relative underdevelopment compared with the West. See "China is Poor and Blank", in Stuart Schram, The Political Thought of Mao tse-tung, p.351-2.

9. Forward, 18 April 1914.

However, he added that in working out its own salvation, the Irish movement should expect - now more than ever before - to be misunderstood by the British Labour leadership. While he was on the subject of clarifying the basis of his disagreements with British socialists and Labour leaders in general, Connolly took the opportunity to refer to the differences he had had with John Wheatley of the Glasgow I.L.P. with regard to Socialist propaganda among Catholics.¹⁰ He confessed that his work in that area had been conceived for the needs of '... workers to whom the traditions and aspirations of Irish nationality had been of prime importance'. Speaking of the achievement of Wheatley's Catholic Socialist Society, he said:

'Nowhere have I come across literature so well suited for the purpose of making Socialists of Catholics ...'.¹¹

He said there would be no bad feeling in the Irish movement about Barnes' statements, but, they '... would not help on a better understanding between the militant proletariat of the two islands'.

Thereafter, Connolly became increasingly self-absorbed in Irish political affairs, and - especially in the light of the Larne gun-running for the Carsonite Ulster Volunteer Force in the North - began to make explicit common cause with the nationalists of the Irish Volunteers. Such was the tone of his article to Forward dealing with the Larne incident, and he there made clear some idea of his view of the "natural alliance" between Nationalists and Labour men.¹²

10. See p. 207 above.

11. Forward, 18 April 1914.

12. Forward, 30 May 1914.

Indicatively enough, he refused to speak at the Glasgow May Day Rally, to be held on Friday, May 1st, on the grounds that:

'... it seems to me that my best energies will be required in Ireland for a long time ...'. 13

By late June, the affairs of the Nationalist Volunteers were assuming an almost predominant position in Connolly's reports to Forward; ¹⁴ and the events surrounding the Nationalist gun-running at Howth in the last week of July - the bayonet assault on ammunitionless Volunteers at Fairview and the firing on a defenceless Dublin crowd by British troops - were made the occasion for an explicit conflation by Connolly of the spirit of the Volunteers with that of the Dublin workers in 1913. ¹⁵ This conflation had - in Catholic Socialist circles in Glasgow - become total in terms of the Citizen Army's equation with the Irish Volunteers. Commenting on the Howth events, the writer of Forward's "Catholic Socialist Notes" observed:

'The Belfast gangs (U.V.F.) are paid by the capitalists and controlled by capitalists for capitalist purposes. If they displayed the slightest sign of disobedience to the master class, the "civil war" would be withdrawn. But in Dublin it is different ... The rebel forces are real. They are led by Captain White, a colleague of Larkin's. Such men might use rifles to raise wages. Hence Dublin's latest "Bloody Sunday"'. 16

It was the outbreak of war in Europe, in the first week of August, that completed the isolation of the Irish movement and of Connolly from English and Scottish comrades. On war's outbreak, Connolly himself had immediately sought contact with the militant republican nation-

13. Forward, 13 June 1914. Letter from Connolly to Geo. Hale, Chairman, Glasgow Labour Day Committee, 14 March 1914.

14. Forward, 27 June 1914.

15. Forward, 1 August 1914.

16. Ibid.

alists of the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood organisation.¹⁷ Negotiations were begun with a view to preparing a military insurrection in Ireland with German aid. The I.R.B. structure had had some success in penetrating the organisation of the Irish Volunteers, and it was this capacity, together with proposed musters from the Citizen Army on which these plans depended. Connolly hoped that on the Continent, a general transport strike, a barricades style insurrectionism together with mass desertions from the colours by proletarian soldiers, would yet halt the progress of war. None of these eventualities could lead to as great a loss of working class life as mass participation in the conscript armies of the belligerent powers, even if widespread civil war resulted. For Connolly such an imperialist war was a total abomination:

'... the most fearful crime of the centuries. In it, the working class are to be sacrificed that a small clique of rulers and armament makers may sate their lust for power and their greed for wealth. Nations are to be obliterated, progress stopped, and international hatreds erected into deities to be worshipped'.¹⁸

Referring to the notion that socialists must support the national war effort in terms of the defence of civilisation, and that the enormity of the conflict would ensure its being the last, Connolly scoffed:

'... we cannot draw upon the future for a draft to pay our present duties. There is no Moratorium to postpone the payment of the debt the Socialists owe to the cause: it can only be paid now. Paid it may be in martyrdom, but a few hundred such martyrdoms would be but a small price to pay to avert the slaughter of hundreds of thousands'.¹⁹

17. William O'Brien in Desmond Ryan, Labour & Easter Week, (Three Candles, Dublin 1949), p.2-3.

18. Forward, 15 August 1914.

19. Forward, 22 August 1914.

Such were Connolly's observations to his Scottish audience, made while he was himself seriously associating with nationalist militants with a view to staging an armed insurrection in Ireland. One should never forget that, for Connolly, insurrectionism was only a possibility because the forces of 'industrialism' or syndicalism were so weak throughout Europe. As he made clear in a later article, it was the syndicalist organisational alternative; the vote backed up by a strong class conscious economic organisation, which alone guaranteed to the workers both a structural base upon which to build the post-capitalist socialist commonwealth, and, a flexible weapon with which to meet every exigency - including war - that might arise during the repressive period of Capitalism's death throes.²⁰ As far as the situation in the British Isles was concerned, it was the failure of the I.T.G.W.U.'s struggle against the Dublin employers in 1913 which had signalled the weakness of syndicalism and, besides, that very backwardness of the Irish labour movement which had entailed a more revolutionary basis for its organisation,²¹ meant that it now had special obligations in the current crisis. Connolly was at this time very clear that these obligations could now be discharged only in insurrectionary terms.

In Britain, the Left was divided over the war, but in general both the Socialist and Labour leadership came out in favour of its vigorous prosecution. The B.S.P. executive, firmly controlled by Henry Hyndman's followers, announced cautious support for the recruiting campaign, although there was considerable anti-war "internationalist" dissent both in London and Glasgow. On Clydeside, the

20. International Socialist Review, March 1915.

21. See p.304 above.

B.S.P. under the leadership of John Maclean and William Gallacher was conducting a strong anti-war agitation. They were well aided by the strongly pacifist I.L.P. - particularly by Wheatley and Johnston - and the two organisations held a monster Peace Demonstration on Glasgow Green on August 9th attended by 5,000 people: the meeting was universally boycotted by the press.²² The Parliamentary Labour Party, together with the trade union movement took a strongly 'patriotic' line, and in Glasgow James O'Connor Kessack - Dockers' leader and sometime Labour candidate for Camlachie - accepted a commission and turned his whole energies toward recruiting. George Barnes wrote in Forward to stress the uselessness of the "Stop the War" campaign, which indeed scarcely ever got off the ground. Barnes justified his views thus:

'Germany has challenged the world. She has trampled on a small people whom we were in Treaty bound to protect ... We are in war then in fulfilment of international obligations ... Our position now is that we must go through with it and put into it all our resources ... let us Labour men and Socialists remember that the hope of Labour lies in international solidarity of peoples, and in International Laws duly observed ... The war won't be stopped till victory is won against the German emperor'.²³

The only real protest the I.L.P. might make was the rather negative one of 'advising' its membership to take no active part in the recruiting campaign. Johnston observed testily that the Parliamentary Labour Party had constituted itself 'a recruiting agency for Lord Kitchener's army'.²⁴ Even among those Scottish activists who opposed the war,

22. Forward, 15 August 1914.

23. Ibid.

24. Forward, 5 September 1914.

there was nothing to compare with the extreme disaffection then evident in Ireland. Noting that several Irish Nationalist organs had suffered closure because of their opposition to recruiting and for their anti-British and pro-German statements, Tom Johnston drew attention to the current policy of the Irish Worker, now edited by Connolly himself, Larkin having left for the USA: the paper now appeared with the front page banner of "We Serve Neither King Nor Kaiser". Referring to recent statements by Jim Larkin in New York, indicating his support for the idea of Irish military co-operation with Germany to end the 700 years domination of Ireland by Britain, Johnston commented:

'... you may begin to guess the sort of thing that makes an appeal to the British public against Irish newspaper suppression impossible'. 25

During December, the Irish Worker was suppressed for its pains, and thereafter Connolly could make no serious further contribution to the Scottish paper without expressing views which would render it, in turn, liable for closure. Announcing in a letter to Johnston, the closure of his own paper, Connolly wrote a fitting epilogue to his association with the Forward:

'I wish I could express myself freely in this matter. If I could, I would tell how proud I was to have been associated, ever so slightly with the little paper that held so close to the idea of Internationalism when so many who had given that principle lip service had so basely deserted it. The moral and physical courage required to take up and maintain such a position, is, in my humble opinion, a hundredfold grander than anything on exhibition in the trenches from end to end of the far flung battleline of the warring nations'. 26

25. Forward, 12 December 1914.

26. Forward, 9 January 1915.

On the suppression of his paper, and the seizure of his printing plant, Connolly turned for assistance to his old comrades of the Glasgow S.L.P. They undertook to print a successor to the Irish Worker, simply titled The Worker, on the party press. Each week, thousands of copies were taken over on the Irish boat by Arthur MacManus - disguised as glass shipments - for distribution in Dublin. The enthusiasm of MacManus for the venture is highly indicative. Not only was he himself of Irish extraction, and a Catholic, but had a father and several uncles who had been connected with the Fenian movement.²⁷ Added to this, it should be remembered that MacManus was a convinced syndicalist, whose faith in industrial organisation was not wholly contained within the "dual unionist" formalism of De Leonite doctrine; and he would later, from 1917, become chairman of the "Shop Stewards and Workers' Committee Movement". This organisation, which was a linear successor in many ways to Tom Mann's Amalgamation Committees Movement, was a focus for many syndicalist radicals who were later absorbed into the British Communist Party. In this new doctrinal scheme, the syndicalist committee was conflated with the Russian "soviet".²⁸ By 1915, Connolly's concept of syndicalist organisational method had become of immense exemplary value to S.L.P. radicals like MacManus who were seeking organisational outlets from the impasse of "dual unionism" on the one hand, and of the educational-propagandist mode of party activity on the other.²⁹ Even so, Connolly's Citizen Army acti-

27. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.94.

28. Manifesto on Communist Unity, S.L.P. Communist Unity Group, April 1920.

29. Vide, J. T. Murphy, New Horizons (John Lane, London, 1941), p.42.

vities seemed to be in a world apart from that familiar to the comrades of the Scottish S.L.P. Tom Bell learned of the military preparations from MacManus's excursions to Dublin and was baffled by the meaning of it all.

'It was a revelation at first to me, who had known Connolly, the quiet persuasive propagandist, the editor, the poet, the economist, Historian, Philosopher and organiser, to hear that now he was to be seen in an irregular military uniform, seriously drilling the workers who frequented Liberty Hall. What for? It was not then clear to us'. 30

MacManus asked Connolly at this time if the time were ripe for an Irish armed rebellion, and received the tart reply, "The time is never ripe - until you try. If you fail, then it is not ripe". Hearing this, Bell recalled how often he had heard Connolly pronounce the old Irish revolutionary adage, that "England's difficulty is Ireland's opportunity".³¹ MacManus continued his paper deliveries to Dublin throughout December and January, but in the first week of February, his cargo was seized by the police as the boat docked. With this confiscation, no further deliveries were possible.³²

In May, Connolly started another journal, taking the name of the old I.S.R.P. paper The Workers' Republic. In it he continued to denounce the war effort and the imperial authority of the British government in Ireland in terms of increasing militance. The wide latitude of powers given military and police authorities under the Defence of the Realm Act - which included suspension of trial by jury, power of search without warrant, and penalties of imprisonment or

30. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.50.

31. Ibid.

32. Forward, 13 February 1915.

deportation for activities calculated to undermine the war effort in any way - severely hampered left-wing activists and publicists throughout the United Kingdom. A rigorous censorship of both speech and print was enforced by specially created "Competent Military Authorities", and the system thus imposed on the civilian population amounted to little short of Martial Law. In Dublin, the existence of bodies of armed irregulars such as the Irish Volunteers and the Citizen Army meant that the authorities were rather less thoroughgoing than in Britain; Conscription for example - introduced in Britain in 1915 - was not extended to Ireland for fear of the political and military consequences. In September, John Maclean's first prosecution under D.O.R.A. began in Glasgow; for anti-war propaganda. It would result in the first of three terms of imprisonment that he would serve during the period of hostilities. His associate - Harry M'Shane - then found himself on the run from the Glasgow military authorities for the same offence, and before he left the city he was given a letter of introduction, signed by both Maclean and James MacDougall, addressed to James Connolly; it was hoped that Connolly might hide him up in Dublin.³³ In November, hard pressed Glasgow comrades of the I.L.P., B.S.P. and S.L.P. who were co-operating in determined anti-conscription campaigns, hoped that Connolly might be able to participate. Arthur MacManus got in touch with him, but received the following reply, written on the 23rd.

33. Testimony of Harry M'Shane. In the event, Harry M'Shane did not get to Dublin, but has no doubt about his inevitable involvement in the Easter Rising of 1916, had he used Maclean's letter.

'I need hardly assure you that I would gladly accept your offer and invitation to address an anti-conscription meeting in Glasgow were it at all possible. But every moment in Dublin just now is full of tragic possibilities, as our beneficent Government is becoming daily more high-handed in its methods, and my presence is required here in constant watchfulness.

Hence I must decline your kind invitation, and send you instead this message to yourself and all the Comrades who refuse to be led astray to fight the battles of the ruling Capitalist class. Tell them that we in Ireland will not have Conscription, let the Law say what it likes. We know our rulers; we know their power, and their ruthlessness we experience every day. We know they can force us to fight whether we wish to or not, but we know also that no force in their possession can decide for us where we will fight. That remains for us to decide; and we have no intention of shedding our blood abroad for our masters; rather will we elect to shed it if need be in a battle for the conquest of our freedom at home'. 34

The new Workers' Republic was quite well circulated in Scotland, especially by the I.L.P. The rather greater freedom of speech and of press enjoyed in Ireland, compared with Scotland, could hardly escape the notice of those who saw it. That this was due to the policy of armed self-defence pursued by the Irish nationalists and workers, did not escape one Catholic Socialist observer - possibly John Wheatley - who commented in Forward on the relatively higher degree of coercion suffered by the Left in Glasgow than in Dublin. His remarks referred both to the restrictions of civil freedoms under D.O.R.A. and to the tightened controls of industrial discipline introduced under the Munitions of War Act (1915):

'The character of the British ruling class is clearly illustrated in their public conduct towards Glasgow and Dublin ... [They are like] cowardly bullies. [A bully], when he is up against the weak and feeble,

34. Connolly to MacManus, reprinted Socialist, 17 April 1919.

his inhuman inclination knows no restraint. But when he is faced by men he shudders and skulks and apologies. In Glasgow we are comparatively weak - how weak only those who read the Irish newspapers can realise. We have submitted to being registered, bound, badged and attested. We have permitted our meetings to be suppressed and our speakers victimised ...'.³⁵

It was the operation of the Munitions of War Act, with its provisions for the compulsory arbitration of trades disputes, suspension of trades practices and enforced discipline of the "Leaving Certificate" system (whereby munitions workers must gain their employers' permission to change jobs), which caused such discontent within the skilled workers of the British munitions industry - not least on industrial Clydeside. An ad hoc "syndicalist" body of shop stewards, the Clyde Workers' Committee, emerged as a focus and channel for such discontent at the plant level: but the C.W.C. did not confine its activity to the protest against wartime industrial practices; it took an anti-war line, protested against profiteering and the increased costs of rent and food, and in general took an unreservedly 'Internationalist' stand. Its agitation brought together activists from all elements within the Left; I.L.P., B.S.P. and S.L.P. Its chairman was Willie Gallacher from the B.S.P., and it produced its own journal The Worker, edited by John Muir of the S.L.P. and printed by the S.L. Press in their premises in Renfrew Street. In February, 1916, The Worker was suppressed, the occasion being its publication of a "seditious" article, "Should the Workers Arm?". It is not known who wrote this article, but Tom Bell

35. Forward, 18 December 1915.

hinted that it was John Wheatley; '... an I.L.P.'er, Catholic and pacifist' was his coy description.³⁶ The article was a diatribe against the official union leaders who had negotiated the terms of the Munitions Act; D.O.R.A. was slated in terms of the summary jailing of left-wing activists and the closure of Labour journals; and rising living costs together with Conscription were deplored. Orthodox craft unionism was rejected as insufficient to serve the workers' needs, and the idea was mooted of '... meeting force with force; violence with violence'. The conclusion arrived at was that violence should be avoided if possible, but that the Clyde workers should organise on industrial unionist lines for revolutionary purposes. Whether or not it was indeed Wheatley who was responsible - the tone and the enthusiasm for the strength of syndicalist organisation are certainly very reminiscent of the "Catholic Socialist Notes" in the Forward at this period³⁷ - Gallacher and Muir, together with Walter Bell, S.L. Press Manager, were immediately arrested.

The article had stressed that some of the most enlightened and best comrades in the labour movement felt that the war situation was driving them towards direct action. If this was a reflection of Wheatley's concern for Connolly's possible plans for his Citizen Army, then it must be said that he had ample grounds for such concern. Connolly had written to Arthur MacManus at the end of January that for him:

36. Bell, Pioneering Days, p.113.

37. Forward, 8 May, 11, 18 December, 1915.

'... the one consoling fact ... which stood out in the Government's policy of persecution, was the potentialities of Social Revolution which their action developed'. 38

Above all, there was Connolly's important statement "What is our Programme?" which appeared in the Workers' Republic for January 22nd, 1916. The Syndicalist content of this statement - made barely three months prior to the outbreak of the Easter Rebellion - is unequivocal.

'Our programme in time of peace was to gather into Irish hands in Irish trade unions the control of all the forces of production and distribution in Ireland ... our ends should be secured "peacefully if possible, forcibly if necessary" ... Thus we strove to make Labour in Ireland organised - and revolutionary'.

Referring to the nationalist and class spirit of the I.T.G.W.U., he said:

'We have succeeded in creating an organisation that will willingly do more for Ireland than any trade union in the world has attempted to do for its national government'.

He then made clear that - given the situation of war - the only difference of strategy was that the OBU remained to support the military arm of the workers' and nationalist movement, military action having become the natural function of politics in the changed situation. Had the nationalist leadership in general supported the OBU when it was attacked and undermined by the Dublin employers in 1913 - a reference to Arthur Griffith of Sinn Fein, and Professor Eoin

38. Socialist, 17 April, 1919.

MacNeill, Staff Chief of the Volunteers - it would now be in a stronger position thus to support the military arm.

'Had we been able to carry out all of our plans, as such an Irish organisation of Labour alone could carry them out, we could at a word have created all the conditions necessary to the striking of a successful blow whenever the military arm of Ireland wished to move'.

Just as the OBU was held in readiness in time of peace to enforce the socialist decision of the ballot by means of a general stoppage; so, in time of war, insurrection would be facilitated by widespread strike action, especially of workers employed in the transport and communications fields. In the event, the Irish Revolution, as begun in the rising of Easter, 1916, could not correspond to this formula of offensive insurrection-cum-national strike. Both the organisational weaknesses of the Irish OBU, together with the counter-active caution of the formal leaders of the military arm, conspired to reduce the effort to one of defensive insurrectionism. Connolly's organisational method became obscured by the obvious limitations of the attempted putsch of Easter and died with him on May 12th, 1916. Thereafter, possibilist Labourism and the orthodox Marxism of the IIIrd International would divide the forces of a fragmented syndicalism between them. The death of James Connolly signalled the death of Syndicalism as an autonomous theoretical and organisational revolutionary form.

A F T E R W O R D

Scottish reactions to Connolly's involvement in the insurrection of 1916, tended to be a function both of inadequate understanding of the claims Connolly had made for syndicalism as a revolutionary mode (together with the special forms of activity necessitated by war), and of the obscurity which, for the Socialist faithful, inevitably surrounded the circumstances of a nationalist putsch. In one sense, John Wheatley's article in the suppressed Worker, might be seen as an a priori dissociation from the insurrectionist line he felt Connolly to be taking. For John Maclean, Connolly's final commitment to a nationalist armed rebellion was both an aberration from the point of view of socialist strategy, and of no relevance at all for Scottish conditions. Still firmly within the classic propagandist mould of the IIInd International ethic, and still yet to discover his own sympathy for industrial unionism and republicanism, he was particularly scathing and dismissive of Connolly's role in the insurgency.¹ For John Leslie, Connolly's old Edinburgh S.D.F. mentor, theoretical bafflement was overlaid with a deep personal grief: the 'utter futility' of such a socialist participation in a nationalist insurrection was an unthinkable heresy.²

For Tom Johnston:

'Connolly's appearance in the Dublin outbreak is, to Socialists on this side, wholly inexplicable'.³

-
1. John Maclean MSS: Deposition of James D. MacDougall.
 2. Justice, 18 May 1916.
 3. Forward, 6 May 1916.

He could not understand how Connolly could possibly take part in a nationalist uprising, the like of which had been denounced so fervidly in Labour in Irish History. Johnston affected to see some theoretical backsliding on Connolly's part in recent years that might somehow account for the gross aberration: he immediately hit upon the syndicalist issue as central to this retrograde process, noting that:

'... recently his writing in the Workers' Republic ... has been more Syndicalist and Sinn Fein Nationalist in character'. 4.

It should be remembered that when the news broke of the Easter Rising, many of the leading Scottish activists were either in prison - like Maclean and Gallacher - or on the run, or held in detention awaiting trial, all for offences under D.O.R.A. Nor could the event be mentioned in any but the vaguest or most dismissive terms by the party press, simply because to do otherwise would be to court suppression. Forward took a bemused line; significantly perhaps, the S.L.P.'s Socialist was completely reticent on the matter. There were those in the S.L.P. - Arthur MacManus for example - who well understood that Connolly knew in 1916 that the arming of Ireland was likely to provoke an insurrectionary clash of some sort, and that if he stood aloof, working class leadership would slip from the Socialist's grasp, and the issue of social revolution would not be raised.⁵ In 1916, these voices were muffled.

4. Ibid.

5. Socialist, 17 April 1919.

In some ways, and it is an ironic twist, the main influence of Connolly in Scotland after May 1916, was a function of the partisan history of the S.L.P. During the anti-war, anti-conscription agitation of 1914-16 on Clydeside, that party had been prevailed upon by so-called "broaderfield" activists in its own ranks, to give up its erstwhile sectarian exclusivity in favour of a more open co-operation with the B.S.P. and I.L.P. This was especially the case with regard to the Clyde Workers' Committee, which included several S.L.P. shop stewards, MacManus and Bell among them. After the suppression of the Worker, in February, these men were gradually brought to trial - under D.O.R.A. - and received sentences of imprisonment or deportation to other areas of Britain. Most of the leading "broaderfield" S.L.P.'ers were thus put out of circulation during the course of 1916, among them being Tom Bell, Arthur MacManus and John Muir. At this time, the party, the press and the industrial arm (renamed the Workers' International Industrial Union, from September 1915) fell into the hands of De Leonite 'purists' such as James Clunie and T. L. Smith. Thus it was that in 1917, two of Connolly's early works Erin's Hope and Socialism Made Easy, were re-issued by the Glasgow S. L. Press - not simply as expressions of pietude - but as affirmations of De Leonite orthodoxy. As the Foreward to the 1917 S.L.P. edition of Socialism Made Easy hastened to point out, Connolly performed crucial service for the party in 1903, but it went on to adduce the martyr's imprimatur for the party's subsequent and current stand.

'Due in great measure to his activity then, the S.L.P. adopted that policy which has made it the clearest exponent of Socialist tactics in Britain regarding industrial and political action'.

In the immediate post-war period Connolly also figured prominently in the party's Sunday School Magazines - Red Dawn, Young Rebel and Revolution, as a martyr whose glamour was exceeded only by the value of his theoretical exegesis, as contained in Socialism Made Easy and Labour in Irish History. It was the men who used the legacy of Connolly thus who opposed the Communist Unity Group of MacManus and Bell, retaining control over the official party machine, while the Unity Group fused in 1920 with the mainforce of the B.S.P. (the Hyndmanites being excluded) to form the new Communist Party of Great Britain. The S.L.P. was left as a slowly withering shell, while the new C.P.G.B. absorbed the mass of both S.L.P. and B.S.P. membership. It thus naturally became particularly strong on Clydeside. Just as in Connolly's time, the most activist elements in the Scottish Left had exchanged the tutelage of London for that of New York, so, four years after his death, both London and New York were supplanted by the influence of Moscow.

In methodological terms, it must at length be recognised that the argument of this study has tended to suggest a certain efficacy for the use of Connolly's career as a kind of 'focus' for a thematic approach to Scottish Socialist and Labour History in the period 1890-1920. It would at this point be salutary to set out some of the limitations of such an approach. This will involve consideration of the inter-relatedness of the themes of Scottish sectionalism/

nationalism and Marxism, together with the necessity of viewing these forces against the background of mainstream working class parliamentary ('possibilist') politics.

The historical identification of Marxism with sectional and national demands within the dynamic of the Scottish Left is quite marked. We have seen how the marxists of the S.S.F. long maintained an independence from the metropolitan structure of the S.D.F. out of deference to the particular needs of the propagandist effort in Scotland. Subsequently, the "unholy Scotch current" and its organisational issue, the S.L.P., emerged; at one important level this development involved demands for an autonomous Scottish form of marxist propaganda, analagous to that pursued in Ireland by Connolly's group of socialist republicans. Connolly's later articles in the Forward - persistently asserting the interdependence of nationalism and marxian socialism - did achieve a considerable post hoc justification in Scotland after the Great War, in both the opinion and practice of John Maclean. In the period 1919-23, Maclean - unquestionably the most significant leader produced by the socialist movement in Scotland - adopted a radical 'Red Republican' approach in opposition to the new possibilism of the emergent C.P.G.B. During these last four years of his life, as marxist-cum-Scottish nationalist, he organised a "Scottish Workers' Republican Party"; it was at this time that he first expressed solidarity with Connolly's approach and, significantly enough, began to advocate industrial unionism as the correct marxist organisational method.⁶

6. Nan Milton, John Maclean (Pluto Press, London, 1973), pp. 128-30, 248.

Maclean's republicanism, with its defence of Connolly's example and tardy enthusiasm for syndicalist method, represents the apogee of the sectional/nationalist strain within the Scottish Left. And yet this strain - for which Connolly's actual work and past example were of such importance - came to an end with Maclean's death in 1923: his own party remained diminutive, isolated and ineffective, while Scottish comrades who revered his memory - men like William Gallacher, Harry M'Shane and Tom Bell - repudiated his nationalism and committed themselves to the all-British C.P.G.B. Moreover, in Maclean's case, the fusion of nationalism with syndicalist method was contradictory. In Scotland, that "Greater Unionism", as actualised in the Transport Workers' Federation (and regarded by Syndicalists as a concrete portent of their ultimate success), was antithetical to all forms of sectional consciousness within the working class: both craft and national differentials were eroded by it. In Ireland, the relative backwardness of labour organisation avoided the problem - as Connolly had himself pointed out.⁷

If Maclean's career thus demonstrates the failure of nationalism within the Left in Scotland - and the impossibility for syndicalist method to serve it - then the absorption of the main strength of Scottish Marxism by the metropolitan C.P.G.B. should be understood in this light: the impact of the IIIrd International and the resultant movement for "Communist Unity" in Britain in 1919-20, signalled the ultimate divorce between marxism and nationalism in Scotland. Also signalled was the final reduction of marxism to the

7. See p.304 above.

organisational confines of a utopian sect, an inevitable result of the failure of the syndicalists in the pre-war period to achieve sufficient strength within the trade union movement. The syndicalist challenge, as it had emerged in the years before the Great War, had been a final attempt to commit the general labour movement to marxism, but the efforts of workers like Connolly had foundered on the "officialism" of conservative trade union leaders. Perhaps the staunchest executor of Connolly's legacy was his Scottish comrade Arthur MacManus who was responsible for the formation, in August 1917, of the "Shop Stewards' and Workers' Committee Movement". This neo-syndicalist organisation of national British scope was designed to harness the militancy and revolutionary potential of the shop floor against the employers and the official union leaders. Although it never fulfilled the revolutionary expectations of its founder, it remained throughout the twenties as an industrial adjunct of the C.P.G.B. The political strength of the working class remained channelled in the possibilist Labourism of the L.R.C. and the parliamentary Labour Party and, in the twenties - as in the days of Mahon and Champion - many Scottish comrades abandoned the cause of marxism for that of parliamentary labourism: among these were Tom Kennedy, sometime of the Aberdeen S.D.F. "Gironde", and James Clunie and Neil Maclean of the S.L.P., all of whom later became Labour MP's.

The failure of Syndicalism had been the failure of Marxism to achieve a concrete revolutionary proletarian form in industrial society during the Imperialist era. Even in Scotland, which contained the most revolutionary working class potential in Britain,

Marxism had signally failed to surmount the basic problem already evident at the time of its initial appearance within the Left in the 1880's: that of the imposition of a theoretical and organisational unity within a highly-differentiated and polyglot labour movement, in which the one cohesive force was the promise of the parliamentary method.

APPENDIX I

Rules and Constitution, Edinburgh District Council, I.L.P.

Drafted by James Connolly, September 1893

Constitution: Each branch within the district will elect 5 delegates who, during their term of office, will constitute the District Council.

Duties: To watch over and safeguard the interests of the entire party in the district, to arrange for a uniform policy at elections and in all public questions, adjudicate between branches, to open new branches wherever possible, and always to hold itself in readiness to act and advise in the name of the party.

Officials: President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary and 3 Trustees.

Duties of Officials: The President to preside over all business meetings and enforce the observance of all rules, and to provide for the efficient discharge of all duties in the manner hereinafter specified. The Vice-President to assist the President when necessary and to occupy the chair in his absence. The Treasurer to take charge of all monies for the District Council, and render an account of same whenever called upon; to pay all accounts only after receiving permission from the District Council, and issue receipts of all dues received from branches; to keep a separate account of the income

and expenditure in connection with the formation of each new branch until election of officials of said branch, and then to hand over to Treasurer of said branch any balance in hand, together with a full statement of income and expenditure, a copy of which must also be laid before the D.C. He must also bring forward a balance sheet every quarter, audited by 2 members of the D.C. appointed for that purpose.

Secretary: To keep a faithful record of all business meetings and all meetings organised under the direct auspices of the District Council, and bring such record forward for adoption at next ensuing business meeting; to read all correspondence and answer as the council may direct; to communicate all resolutions bearing on the conduct of branches to the branch secretaries who will in turn communicate them to their respective branches; to summon all meetings in the same manner; to attend all meetings for the organisation of new branches, to help such branches to the best of his ability; to summon the D.C. at such times as they may determine, or upon receipt of a requisition signed by no less than 7 delegates, or upon any emergency he may deem grave enough to require speedy action being taken. Due notice of such special meeting to be given simultaneously to all branch secretaries by post card. Failure to comply with such conditions to be held sufficient to invalidate the proceedings of any meeting so convened. Secretary will also be ex-officio member of all committees, and watch over the interests of the party at all times.

Trustees: Who must be householders, to take charge of all monies not required to meet expected liabilities and bank the same on behalf of the party in their united names. To be present at the

deposit and withdrawal of all monies, and be responsible for all monies withdrawn in their absence, or without due authorisation.

Note: In the event of sickness or other cause preventing the Secretary or Treasurer from fulfilling their duties, the President shall call upon officials holding a corresponding position in the branches in the order named, to take up the duties of that post, until the D.C. provides a substitute - Central, Southern, Eastern, Western.

Finance: Each branch within the district shall contribute 1/- per 50 or part of 50 members per month to the funds of the D.C., but that body may refund the whole or part that sum to any branch, should it deem the payment of such dues to involve too great a strain upon the financial resources of said branch. The D.C. must pay from its own internal resources as a body, any expense it may incur in any way, except when such expense has been entered into with the expressly obtained sanction of a majority of the branches, in which case all expenses to be apportioned among the branches as a meeting of no less than 2/3rds of the D.C. may deem judicious. Any balance ensuing from such joint action to be paid into the funds of the D.C. as representing the I.L.P.

Donations: Any monies reaching the D.C. from any outside source to be paid into the funds if coming unconditionally, but if with any conditions attached, to be returned whence they came if the source be known. (Where source is unknown, cash to be retained and used as D.C. determines, without regard to donor's wishes).

Conduct of Business: The D.C. to meet every alternate Thursday for transaction of ordinary business. All special meetings to be held under conditions specified in Secretary's duties.

Quorum: 7 members to form a quorum.

Method of Procedure: Chairman, Minutes of previous meeting, Correspondence, Business from minutes, Business from correspondence, Old business, New business, Notices of motions.

Order: In case of more than one delegate wishing to speak at once, the chairman to name the speaker. This decision to be final.
The Chairman to have one deliberative veto and a casting vote.

APPENDIX II

James Connolly's Contributions to Forward.

24 September	1910	The Release of Jim Larkin
1 October	1910	Socialism in Ireland
14 January	1911	The Battle in Dublin
28 January	1911	The Battle in Ireland
25 February	1911	The U.I.L., Ireland and the Right to Work
11 March	1911	Sweatshops Behind the Orange Flag
18 March	1911	Mr. John E. Redmond, M.P.; His Strength and Weakness
27 May	1911	A Plea for Socialist Unity in Ireland
10 June	1911	Ireland, Karl Marx and William Walker
1 July	1911	A Socialist Symposium on Internationalism and Some Other Things
20 July	1912	An Irish Priest Takes His Stand with the Workers
7 December	1912	To The Linen Slaves of Belfast
3 May	1913	The United Irish League, the Labour Party and the "pleasant" relations
10 May	1913	Bigotry and Agitation
17 May	1913	The Irish T.U.C.
24 May	1913	Progress in Cork
31 May	1913	Unity in Ireland - A Bit of History Ireland and the Insurance Act
7 June	1913	The Awakening of Ulster's Democracy
21 June	1913	The Irish Presbyterians and Home Rule

28 June	1913	British Aluminium Co. Again The Larne Strike
5 July	1913	More About Lord Lansdowne and Ireland
12 July	1913	July the Twelfth
26 July	1913	The Irish Nationalist Press
2 August	1913	North East Ulster
9 August	1913	A Forgotten Chapter of Irish History
16 August	1913	Socialism in Ireland
23 August	1913	Belfast and Dublin Today
30 August	1913	Press Poisoners in Ireland
4 October	1913	Glorious Dublin
11 October	1913	The Ferocity of Lawyer Healy
18 October	1913	The Police and Peaceful Picketing
25 October	1913	The Real Situation in Dublin Now
1 November	1913	The Children, The Transport Union and The Archbishop
8 November	1913	Dublin - The Press Agency and the Politicians
15 November	1913	Dublin - Has Our Peaceful Endurance Reached Its Limit
6 December	1913	Just Sparring for Time
20 December	1913	A Labourer's Ideal for Ireland
27 December	1913	The Stricken City of Dublin
3 January	1914	Dublin and the New Year
10 January	1914	Murder and Treachery
17 January	1914	When is an Inquiry not an Inquiry?
31 January	1914	Dublin Municipal Fight
7 February	1914	The Isolation of Dublin
21 February	1914	A Lesson from Dublin

28 February	1914	The Police, The Politicians and The Houses of Dublin
7 March	1914	Dividing in Order to Conquer
14 March	1914	Dublin and South Africa
21 March	1914	Industrial Unity and Political Division in Ireland
28 March	1914	The War in Ulster
4 April	1914	Ireland and Ulster - An Appeal to the Working Class
11 April	1914	The Exclusion of Ulster - Capitalist Home Rule Tricksters
18 April	1914	Ireland on the Dissecting Table
25 April	1914	A "Dublin" Debate
2 May	1914	Fraternity or Betrayal
9 May	1914	Changes
16 May	1914	A Revolutionary Irish Poem
23 May	1914	The Problem of Trade Union Organisation
30 May	1914	The Liberals and Ulster
6 June	1914	The Irish T.U.C. and Labour Party
13 June	1914	Larkin on Ireland
20 June	1914	Yellow Unions in Ireland
27 June	1914	Larkin's Resignation in Dublin
4 July	1914	Labour in the New Irish Parliament
11 July	1914	The Walls of Limerick
25 July	1914	The Orange Drum
1 August	1914	The Latest Massacre in Dublin

15 August	1914	A Continental Revolution
22 August	1914	A Martyr for Conscience Sake
5 September	1914	The Real Situation in Ireland
19 September	1914	What Did Carson Get?
12 December	1914	What Has Happened in Ireland
9 January	1915	[Letter to the Editor]
23 January	1915	Municipal Elections in Ireland
13 February	1915	[Letter; "Rob Roy" and Jim Larkin]

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

Private Papers, etc.

William O'Brien Collection of James Connolly's Papers and
Correspondence.

Papers of John Maclean

Papers of James Keir Hardie and Emrys Hughes

John Gilray, MS Reminiscences

"Album"

Burial Record of Merchiston Cemetery, Edinburgh 1916.

Edinburgh Corporation, Council Record (1892-93).

I.L.P. (Edinburgh) Minute Book, 1892-94 (instituted 8 November 1892)

I.L.P. (Edinburgh District Council) Minutes (instituted 2 September
1893)

I.L.P. (Edinburgh Central Division) Minute Book (instituted 18 July
1893)

Register of Births (St. Giles, Edinburgh) 1868, 1892.

Register of Births (Canongate, Edinburgh) 1891.

Register of Marriages (St. Giles, Edinburgh) 1856

Register of Marriages (Perth, Perthshire) 1890

S.L.P. "Platform" (1903)

S.L.P. MS "Edinburgh Branch Statement on Recent Happenings anent
the expulsion of N. Maclean" [1909]

N. Maclean, MS "Reply to Edinburgh Branch Lying Statements anent
Neil Maclean" (March 1909)

S.L.P. Communist Unity Group, "Manifesto on Communist Unity"
(April 1920)

Socialist Standard, (London)

The Harp, New York (Organ of the Irish Socialist Federation)

The Worker, Glasgow (Organ of the C.W.C.)

Workers' Republic, Dublin (Organ of the I.S.R.P.)

Young Rebel, Wallsend (Organ of the S.L.P. Sunday School movement)

Unpublished Theses

Eugene Burdick, "Syndicalism and Industrial Unionism in England until 1918", D.Phil. Oxford, 1950.

D. M. Chewter, "The History of the S.L.P. of Great Britain, 1902-21, with special reference to the development of its ideas", B.Litt. Oxford, 1965-66.

H. R. Vernon, "The S.L.P. and the Working Class Movement on the Clyde, 1903-21", M.Phil. Leeds, 1967-68.

Articles

Henry Collins, "The Marxism of the S.D.F.", in A. Briggs and J. Saville eds., Essays in Labour History (2) (Macmillan, London, 1971).

Hugh Cunningham, "Michael Maltman Barry" in Journal of the Scottish Labour History Society (5) March 1972.

C. Desmond Greaves, "James Connolly - Marxist", in Marxism Today, June 1968.

H. J. Hanham, "The Problem of Highland Discontent, 1880-1885", in Royal Historical Society Transactions, xix, 1969.

- James Hunter, "The Politics of Highland Land Reform", in Scottish Historical Review, LIII, 1, (155), April 1974.
- J. G. Kellas, "The Crofters' War", in History Today XII, 4, April 1962.
- "The Liberal Party in Scotland, 1876-1895", in Scottish Historical Review, XLIV, 137, April 1965.
- T. W. Moody, "Michael Davitt and the British Labour Movement", in Royal Historical Society Transactions, iii, 1953.
- Fred Reid, "Keir Hardie's Conversion to Socialism", in A. Briggs and J. Saville eds., Essays in Labour History (2) (Macmillan, London, 1971).
- C. Tsuzuki, "The Impossibilist Revolt in Britain", in International Review of Social History, I, 1956.

Printed Books

- Graham Adams, The Age of Industrial Violence, 1910-1915, (Columbia U.P. 1966).
- R. Page Arnott, The Miners: History of the Miners' Federation of Great Britain, 1889-1910 (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1949).
- Shlomo Avineri, The Social and Political Thought of Karl Marx (Cambridge U.P. 1968).
- E. Eldon Barry, Nationalisation in British Politics (Cape, London, 1965).
- Thomas Bell, Pioneering Days, (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1941).

J. W. Boyle ed., Leaders and Workers (Mercier Press Cork, n.d.)

A. Briggs and J. Saville eds., Essays in Labour History, (2)

(Macmillan, London, 1971).

Paul Brissenden, The Launching of the Industrial Workers of the World, (California U.P., 1913).

Joseph Clayton, The Rise and Decline of Socialism in Great Britain 1884-1924 (Faber, London, 1926).

James Connolly, Labour in Irish History (New Books, Dublin, 1967)

The Reconquest of Ireland (New Books, Dublin and Belfast 1968).

Labour in Ireland (comprising both of the above, Maunsel & Co., Dublin, 1917).

Erin's Hope (I.S.R.P., Dublin, 1897; New Books, Dublin and Belfast 1968).

The New Evangel (I.S.R.P., Dublin, 1901, New Books, Dublin and Belfast 1968).

Socialism Made Easy (Kerr, Chicago, 1909; S.L. Press, Glasgow, 1917).

Labour, Nationality and Religion (S.P.I., Dublin 1910; New Books, Dublin, 1954, 1962, 1969.)

Revolutionary Warfare (New Books, Dublin and Belfast, 1968).

R. Dalgleish, The Decadence of the S.L.P. (S.L. Press, Glasgow, n.d.).

G. Dangerfield, The Strange Death of Liberal England (MacGibbon & Kee, London, 1966).

Daniel De Leon, Reform or Revolution (S.L. Press, Glasgow, n.d.).

The Burning Question of Trades Unionism (S.L. Press, Glasgow, n.d.).

The Socialist Reconstruction of Society, (S.L. Press, Glasgow, n.d.)

Two Pages from Roman History (New York Labor News Co., 1903).

What Means This Strike? (S.L. Press, Glasgow, n.d.)

Melvyn Dubofsky, We Shall Be All, (Quadrangle Books, Chicago, 1969).

Owen Dudley Edwards, The Mind of an Activist - James Connolly (Gill and Macmillan, Dublin, 1971).

Owen Dudley Edwards and Bernard Ranson, James Connolly - Selected Political Writings (Cape, London, 1973).

D. D. Egbert and Stow Persons, Socialism and American Life (2 vols.) (Princeton U.P. 1952).

P. Berresford Ellis, ed., James Connolly - Selected Writings (Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, 1973).

William Gallacher, Revolt on the Clyde (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1936).

John Bruce Glasier, William Morris and the Early Days of the Socialist Movement (Longmans, Green and Co., London, 1921).

Rev. John Glasse D.D., The Relation of the Church to Socialism (I.L.P., Edinburgh, 1900).

C. Desmond Greaves, The Life and Times of James Connolly (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1961, 1972).

James E. Handley, The Irish in Modern Scotland (Cork U.P., 1947).

The Navy in Scotland (Cork U.P. 1970).

Emrys Hughes, ed., Keir Hardie's Speeches and Writings (Forward Publishing Co., Glasgow, n.d.).

J. W. Hulse, Revolutionists in London (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1970).

Irish Communist Organisation, The Connolly-Walker Controversy (Connolly Books, Belfast, 1969).

Connolly: Press Poisoners in Ireland (Connolly Books, Belfast, 1968).

Connolly: Yellow Unions in Ireland (Connolly Books, Belfast, 1968).

James Joll, The Second International (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1955).

Thomas Johnston, The History of the Working Classes in Scotland (Civic Press, Glasgow, 1920).

Walter Kendall, The Revolutionary Movement in Britain (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London, 1969).

Emmet Larkin, James Larkin (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1965).

H. W. Lee and E. Archbold, Social Democracy in Britain (S.D.F., London, 1935).

John Leslie, The Present Position of the Irish Question (Connolly Books, Belfast, 1969).

Samuel Levenson, James Connolly, A Biography (Martin Brian and O'Keefe, London, 1973).

George Lichtheim, Marxism (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1964)

A Short History of Socialism (Weidenfeld and
Nicolson, London, 1970).

F.S.L. Lyons, Ireland Since the Famine (Weidenfeld and Nicolson,
London, 1971).

E. Maclysaght, D.Litt., ed., Forth the Banners Go, Reminiscences of
William O'Brien (Three Candles, Dublin, 1969).

W. H. Marwick, A Short History of Labour in Scotland (Chambers,
Edinburgh and London, 1967).

Karl Marx/Friedrich Engels, The Communist Manifesto (Progress
Publishers, Moscow, 1967).

Selected Correspondence (1846-95) (Martin
Lawrence, London, 1934).

Werke (Band 16) (Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1964)

Karl Marx, Capital (Vols. I, III) (Foreign Languages Publishing
House, Moscow 1961 edn.).

Wage Labour and Capital (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970).

Wages Price and Profit (Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970).

R. K. Middlemas, The Clydesiders (Hutchinson, London, 1965).

J. T. Murphy, New Horizons (John Lane, London, 1941).

"T.B.M." Slum Life in Edinburgh (James Thin, Edinburgh, 1891).

Kevin B. Nowlan, ed., The Making of 1916 (Stationery Office, Dublin,
1969).

Nora Connolly O'Brien, Portrait of a Rebel Father (Rich and Cowan,
London, 1935).

Patrick O'Farrell, Ireland's English Question (Batsford, London, 1971).

Manus O'Riordan, Connolly in America (Irish Communist Organisation, Belfast, 1971).

Henry Pelling, The Origins of the Labour Party 1880-1900 (Oxford U.P. 1966).

A History of British Trade Unionism (Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, 1967).

K. R. Popper, The Poverty of Historicism (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1957).

L. G. Raisky, Daniel De Leon - The Struggle against Opportunism in the American Labor Movement (New York Labor News Co., 1932).

Patrick Renshaw, The Wobblies (Eyre and Spottiswoode, London, 1967).

Desmond Ryan, James Connolly (Talbot Press, Dublin, 1924).

The Rising, (Golden Eagle Books, Dublin, 1949).

ed., Socialism and Nationalism (Three Candles, Dublin, 1948).

ed., Labour and Easter Week 1916 (Three Candles, Dublin, 1949).

ed., The Workers' Republic (Three Candles, Dublin, 1951).

W. P. Ryan, The Irish Labour Movement (Talbot Press, Dublin, 1919).

Stuart R. Schram, The Political Thought of Mao tse-tung

(Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, 1969).

Socialist Party of Great Britain, Questions of the Day (London, 1953).

E. P. Thompson, William Morris - Romantic to Revolutionary (Lawrence and Wishart, London, 1955).

Laurence Thompson, The Enthusiasts (Gollancz, London, 1971).

C. Tsuzuki, H. M. Hyndman and British Socialism (Oxford U.P., 1961).