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IRISH IN

BRITAIN

BY

PAT DOOLEY

A CONNOLLY ASSOC. PAMPHLET

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THE IRISH IN BRITAIN

By PAT DOOLEY

THE Irish in Britain. What are they doing here? Why do they come? Where do they stand? These are questions which can readily be answered.

There are approximately 300,000 "recent" Irish in Britain. Not the Irish of the second and third generation who populate Britain's northern counties, working in mine and factory; the Irish who have become so integral a part of Britain's Trade Union and Labour Movement that any list of organisers and secretaries necessarily includes a Kelly here, a Donovan there, and a Flaherty somewhere else. No, the "recent" Irish arriving during the war years include those who have joined the armed Forces in the present struggle against

The British Ministry of Information has issued a pamphlet listing fifty-five distinctions, including V.C.s, won by Irish volunteers in the Armed Forces and civilian organisations in Britain.

Fascism. During the last war 250,000 fought against Germany. 50,000 gave their lives: The Finucane's, Kenneally's, Fogarty's and Esmonde's have proved their valour in resisting Fascism today as their fathers displayed their heroism in the past.

IRISH MANPOWER

TO-DAY the sinews of war lie in the factory, farm and aerodrome, as well as in the ranks of the armed forces, and strengthening these sinews everywhere you will find the Irish. Harvesting in Scotland, working in arms factories in the Midlands, on important jobs in East Anglia, Hampshire and elsewhere, the Irish tongue is heard from Irishmen, the quality of whose labour is unchallenged by their fiercest critics.

Britain today needs manpower, and Ireland can supply it, for Ireland's own industries and agriculture are seriously hampered because of shortages of imported raw materials, coal, machinery,

and fertilisers, upon which they largely depend. The Irish say with truth that with a little give and take Ireland could provide more than the labour of her emigrant sons in the present crisis.

A larger allocation of fertilisers, a little more coal, a more generous supply of raw materials and the idle factories of Ireland could supply the people of Britain with the foodstuffs and industrial products at present so sorely needed. The Irish Channel is shorter to cross than the Atlantic. The possible sinking of supplies would be almost negligible, the speed in delivery greater, and the saving in shipping immense.

No Lease-Lend would be required immediately, for Ireland has £300 million investments "frozen" in Britain and is unable, under present conditions, fruitfully to employ them.

WHAT DO THEY SAY?

ALL the possibilities exist for better trade relations, but what stands in the way? These were the questions so eagerly discussed at the Conference of the **Connolly Association** recently held in London. For the Irish in Britain are not the unorganised rabble that many would have us believe. Throughout Britain there exist branches of this Association, the only national organisation of the Irish workers in Britain.

Who are they, what are they like, and what do they say, you ask? Well, let's see what they said at their Conference.



D. GREAVES

Here's **Desmond Greaves**, National Secretary of the **Connolly Association**, whose leadership of the Irish in Britain and firm grasp of the problems affecting them, is expressed in the growing strength and prestige of the Connolly Association.

Emphasising each point, he reasserts the opposition of the democratic Irish to the political and economic system of Fascism, stigmatising it as a "dying creed," and reminding the Conference that the recent Irish Trade Union Congress in Cork recorded their unqualified opposition to Totalitarianism.

NEUTRALITY AND TRADE

TACKLING the question of Irish neutrality, Mr. Greaves reiterated Ireland's inalienable right to decide her own state policy, the privilege of an independent state and incidentally a right guaranteed to Ireland under the Statute of Westminster, which permits Ireland as a co-equal of Canada or Australia, to exercise her right to remain neutral if she desires. Ireland has chosen to remain neutral, though, as Mr. De Valera describes it, it is a friendly neutrality, and one which the absence of any major restriction upon Irish labour in Britain's war industries so proves.

There are forces in Britain, continued the National Secretary, who regard Irish Neutrality as a barrier to economic and political collaboration between the two countries. But Argentine, with a policy and form of government distinctly contrary to that of Britain, appears to be favoured rather than spurned in the matter of Trade.

"Eire's policy is one of neutrality. We have declared and still declare that Eire has an inalienable right to decide her own state policy. This applies to any independent sovereign state. Does the word neutrality alone summarise the situation? There are many different kinds of neutrality. There is the non-belligerency of Franco-Spain which sympathises with the Axis power. There is Swedish neutrality which has afforded Germany special facilities. And then there is Irish neutrality, which De Valera himself has described as 'friendly neutrality.'"

GOOD NEIGHBOUR POLICY

Mr. Greaves then outlined the possibilities of trade between Britain and Ireland and the benefit such improved trade relations could bring to the peoples of Britain and Ireland, urging that negotiations between the two governments should be re-opened with a view to a new and improved Trade Treaty being agreed upon. "Britain," said Mr. Greaves, "must drop the 'big sister' and institute the 'good neighbour' policy."

PRESS ATTACKS

TWO must play if 'good neighbourliness' is to be the rule.

That means the exercise of restraint by Irish and British alike. The sores of centuries take more than a decade to heal—as the bitterness still expressed by the diminishing few on both sides constantly remind us.

Joining their Trade Unions as James Connolly urged them to do; recognising that similar problems affect them both as workers, apart from differences of race or religion, Irish

workers, labouring beside British workers, are finding that matters of agreement between the two are greater than those of disagreement, and that the solution of the latter will be quickened by the degree with which they can mutually combine for their settlement.

There are well-organised forces, however, who will do anything to prevent the two peoples coming together. These belong to the class of "Irish baiters." We denounce these splitters as the enemies of both peoples. To resist them and to give Irishmen in England a square deal, we will open a great campaign to rouse and rally the Irish and their friends in England for the programme set out in our resolution.

British workers are finding not only good workmen among the Irish, but staunch Trade Unionists and good comrades who, never averse to a fight, are prepared to fight *with* them *against* their mutual exploiters.

But powerful sections of the Press seek constantly to divide the Irish and British peoples. Distortion is the order of the day. These forces are fearful of the growing unity of the common peoples of both lands; a unity which menaces the continued exploitation of both peoples by the financial and economic forces such newspapers represent.

"We denounce these splitters," said Mr. Greaves, "and we will open a campaign to rouse and rally the Irish and their friends in Britain."

CAMP CONDITIONS

TO improve the growing unity among Irish and British workers, the conditions on many building and camp sites must be improved. Regulations are too complicated, unequal pay and conditions abound. Men recruited in Ireland for skilled work find themselves pushed into unskilled jobs at a lower rate of pay. Difficulties abound with regard to the subsistence allowances and the issue of permits to visit Ireland for holidays.

"Regulations are complicated and require a Philadelphia lawyer to unravel them," said Mr. Greaves, who urged the "simplification and codification in a single handbook of all the legal regulations relating to Irish citizens in Britain."

Unfriendly critics of Irish emigrants sometimes forget that Irish workers brought to Britain on contract have to report regularly to the police and notify their change of address as aliens are expected to do. This is a continual source of irritation to the Irishman, who objects to being harassed in this unfriendly way, more particularly when he is, in fact, doing a good job of work in Britain.

It is time that public recognition from the people in Britain was given to the Irish for the service they are performing at present in Britain.

Conditions of workers on camp sites are far from satisfactory. There are many grievances which are a scandal. Regulations are complicated and require a Philadelphia lawyer to unravel them. Men working on the same job, at the same bench, may receive entirely different treatment according to their time of landing in Britain. Nominally, holidays are obtainable twice a year, but there are innumerable formalities to be gone through. Recreational and cultural facilities, especially of an Irish character are almost absent, and in many cases there is nothing in the evening but a long trek to the distant bar.

THE REMEDY

CLOSING his review, Mr. Greaves urged the importance of the increased growth of the **Connolly Association**, and greater participation in Trade Union life, with active work as Shop Stewards and Welfare Committee members.

THE remedy for these conditions is the organisation of Irishmen into the trade unions, participating in the union life and taking part in the shop and job committees. In this way we secure an official voice in the running of affairs. But our members will need to help the union branches to understand their responsibilities. Given this, a most powerful movement can be built up.

Stressing the need for a wider sale and support of **Irish Freedom**, increased educational and cultural facilities for the camps and in the Branches of the Association, Mr. Greaves concluded by asking support for the £100 Fund now opened to finance a great campaign of organisation and enlightenment upon Irish problems in Britain.

"If we can achieve this, then we can claim that we are playing no mean part in Ireland's history. The time spent abroad will not be

wasted, but used to gain a new experience, to enrich the great Labour Movement now sweeping North and South of Ireland."

To this brief statement of "What they are Saying," much supporting opinion could be added.

CO-OPERATE WITH FARMERS

VETERAN Jack Judge from **Birmingham**, slow of speech, careful and deliberate in his conclusions, with a wealth of experience in the Irish National and Labour Movement, no fire-brand, no bombs, without even a "troth" to beguile those who appear determined to present the Irish as charming irresponsibles. He brings his wide knowledge to the support of the executive's statement. "Look after the young ones, too," he said, "and let Labour in Ireland co-operate with the farmers and so unify the town and country interests in the cause of Labour."

Fresh from a large factory came **Mr. McDermott** of **Luton**, who said, "We have a great job to do to combat the pernicious propaganda against our country from some sections of the Press in Britain. Hence the importance of **Irish Freedom** in counter-acting such slanders." With justifiable pride he declared, "I have obtained 500 members for my Trade Union. Any *unorganised* Irishman should be ashamed to admit it. They are working against the *organised* workers in this country."

EAST ANGLIA SPEAKS



WELL, strictly speaking that isn't true. It was a Trinity College man speaking for the Irish workers in East Anglia. He spoke well, making an outstanding contribution to this discussion.

He was **Flann Campbell**, recently at Trinity College, Dublin, which is usually associated with the old Dublin Castle pro-British viewpoint. But not all its representatives forget their Nationalism or the workers who keep it alive. Campbell cer-

FLANN CAMPBELL certainly hasn't.

Through the Nissen huts, concrete mixers, mud and sand piles, Campbell has tramped the building sites of East Anglia, assisting building workers and shop stewards to organise better conditions for the Irish lads.

"There is no race-hatred here," he said. "The Border, too, is forgotten here. Belfastman and Dubliner work side by side and neither have any time for any Fascist propaganda. Unscrupulous employers who think they can split our ranks by dividing British from Irish workers, will get short shrift from Irishmen united in defence of their class rights." "But," said Campbell, "grievances must be remedied. Bonus rates are often incompletely assessed. An end must be put to the discrimination with regard to clothing coupons, and," to great applause, "an end to the verminous condition of the Kingdom Hotel in Dublin, through which Irish workers pass en route to Britain."

COMMANDOS—FROM NEUTRAL EIRE

CALLING for improved living conditions, better transport facilities from the towns to the outlying camps, recreation rooms and more concerts, Campbell urged that E.N.S.A. should take up the **Connolly Association's** suggestion and invite a group of Irish players to tour the camps. Paying great tribute to the work the Irish boys are doing, Campbell concluded by saying that in their own field they were "Commandos—and they come from neutral Eire."

DAGENHAM DIGS IN

NOT all the best reports showing "Where the Irish stand," and "What they are doing," came from the provinces. London representatives, eager to report, described their work in

the surrounding factories; visits to Trade Union Branches, whose members record the growing sympathy and understanding of Irish problems to be found particularly in the Trade Unions of the Building and Engineering workers. **Dagenham** recounted the best work organised in unity with the local Trade Union and Labour Movement.

Here is **Mr. J. O'Connell**, a Shop Steward in Fords factory in Dagenham, which, like Liverpool, has almost as many Irish to the square yard as Dublin. O'Connell was one of a deputation of the twelve just men who recently staged a sit-down strike in the headquarters of the Ministry of Labour until they secured some attention to the problem of sailing tickets to enable Irish workers to visit their homes at holiday times.

Our British readers perhaps do not know that an agreement exists whereby the Ministry of Labour arrange that workers recruited in Eire are allowed to visit their homes twice a year—they must see "the missus" occasionally. Sailing tickets enabling workers to travel in these days of restricted travel have to be obtained well in advance.

Let O'Connell, a confident, experienced trade unionist and negotiator speak for himself. "We have taken up the problems in Dagenham of the transferred workers, and have a movement in the factories for trade union recognition and we were asked to organise the Irish workers, because if all the Irish were in the union, then it would be recognised.

"The trade unions gave their support to our billeting campaign, the Borough Council gave the help of their chief of the Civil Defence, who brought the billeting officer to a meeting at which were present, trade union representatives, Borough Council representatives, shop stewards and Paddy Clancy, the London District Secretary of the Connolly Association. The result was the formation of a billeting committee and billeting arrangements have now improved.

"We took up the question of holidays in Fords and the T. and G.W.U. also helped. Now the workers have their holidays when it suits them. Subsistence cases and the questions of transport back to Ireland have been taken up. Anti-Irish feeling has been expressed by letters in the Press. We have replied, and our replies were printed. We have 15 footballers ready to play next year for the Connolly Association."

Well done, Dagenham!

HOW ARE THEY DOING AT HOME?



P. CLANCY

IT is well known that no matter how far an Irishman strays from home his interest in his native land remains. The memories recalled in any gathering of Irishmen quickly leads to an exchange of reminiscences and opinions.

This Conference of the **Connolly Association** did not forget the Irish at home. Keenly interested in all that happens at home and longing for the day when they can return, they view the growing advance of Labour in Ireland with undisguised pleasure.

Mr. P. Clancy moved a resolution welcoming Labour's advance in the Twenty-six Counties. Mr. P. Clancy, the London District Secretary of the **Connolly Association**, is a typical dark-haired Leitrim man, a dogged, persistent organiser, indefatigable in his efforts to make London's Branches an example to the country.

Remarking upon the organisational and electoral advances of Irish Labour which recently doubled its representation in the Dail (the Irish House of Commons), Mr. Clancy said: "Since our Conference last year, splendid political developments have taken place in the Labour Party in the Twenty-six Counties, partly due to the economic crisis which exists in Ireland owing to the war and also to the fact that the Irish Government was unable to solve the problems of the common people. He reported that in Galway and Kerry 30 new branches of the Labour Party have been formed. Dublin workers, true to their tradition of 1913, recorded their votes for Jim Larkin, Senior and Junior who were returned to the Dail.

This advance of Labour has resulted in the drawing away of the people from the old political parties. They could not solve the needs of the people. The turning away from the old political parties was shown in the elections where the Labour Party increased its membership and established itself throughout the whole of Ireland.



A group of delegates at the National Conference of the Connolly Association, London, 1943.

DANGERS AHEAD

"**T**HE democratic liberties of the Irish people can only be made secure by the growth of the Labour Movement. We must fight and expose everywhere people who try to spread the rotten propaganda of the Corporative or Vocational State. Any of you who have read about Portugal will see what that kind of State means for the common people.

"We greatly welcome the decision of the Irish T.U.C. against Fascism. Who would have thought this time last year that the views of the Irish people would have changed to such an extent? They now see what Fascism really means. It proves that they know where the true interests of the Irish people are; that they are internationalists."

A NATIONALIST VIEWPOINT

CAPTAIN HENRY HARRISON then spoke. Well-known Irish Nationalist, publicist and writer, formerly friend and secretary to Parnell, Captain Harrison was brief and to the point when he made his fraternal speech.

"The observations I shall make," he said, "will be of a strictly business character. I am not a member of the **Connolly Association**, but there is a great deal in it that attracts me. It performs admirable work which makes me wish to co-operate with you as far as I can.

"The second thing which appeals to me is that the Club furthers Irish national interests of that section of the Irish people which is over here temporarily doing war work or serving in uniform. That is work of great value and I know how well it is done on practical lines.

"I am a defender of Ireland's neutrality under existing circumstances, but if it were not for my age I would be fighting against the Germans at the present moment. But that does not mean in any way that I condemn Ireland for her neutrality, and I am sure that you are up against almost daily reproaches because the country from which we come is neutral. These convictions of mine on this subject are not of recent date.

"**People in this country are not aware that during this war the economic war which raged between England and Ireland has**

been revived, trade has been cut down, just as much as before. In spite of the U-boat menace it is 18 million pounds less per annum. There must be a meaning behind it, which I think requires bringing home to the public of this country."

Numerous speakers spoke of the work done by the **Connolly Association** throughout Britain, particularly the **National Chairman** of the **Connolly Association**, **Mr. J. Griffin**, who does such valiant work for the Irish in Birmingham.

Later, when **Mr. J. Nolan** from **Dublin** rose to speak, all were eager to hear from the man who had come specially to visit us.

With a long record of work for the Labour Movement in Ireland, **Mr. Nolan**, in quiet measured tones, described the indignation expressed by the Irish workers against the Emergency Powers and the recent Trade Union Act which severely restricts the functioning of Trade Unions in Ireland.

Mr. Nolan said, "I cannot say that I am representing any section of the official Irish Labour Movement, but I was asked by the Committee of the Dublin



J. NOLAN (DUBLIN)

Branch of the Labour Party to convey their hearty greetings to your Conference. Those who know about it take a great interest in the work being done by the *Connolly Association*, but there is great need to make its work and aims known to greater numbers in Ireland.

"I have learned a great deal from your Secretary's report about the position of the Irish in Britain and the influence of the *Connolly Association* and *Irish Freedom*."

IN IRELAND TODAY

"**I**N the recent General Election Labour made forward strides. Fianna Fail (De Valera's Government Party) and Fine Gael (Cosgrave's Opposition Party), both suffered a loss in voting strength. **Fianna Fail's loss can be attributed to its policy of driving down the living standards of the majority, while allowing the small privileged few to increase their wealth.** This policy has affected the city and town workers; prices have increased by 60 per cent, while wages have only been allowed to increase by 9 per cent. The mass of the people are badly off in the south of Ireland.

"**The Trade Union and Labour Movement is faced with the problem of defending the interests of the people. The anti-Trade Union Act and the Emergency Powers Act are being used to render difficult, if not ineffective, the ability of the people to safeguard their interests. These obstacles can only be overcome by the Labour Movement pursuing a militant policy in keeping with the great traditions of 1913 and James Connolly. Labour's increased voting strength shows the desire of the people for a change.**

"Unfortunately, the programme of the Labour Party in the elections left a lot to be desired, continuing, as it did, the disastrous policy of ignoring the significance of the world-changing events for Ireland. Likewise, it offered no practical opinions on the important questions of improved relations between Ireland and Britain, or the unity of the country. With regard to internal economic issues, the programme was also weak, most of the proposed schemes to provide employment being impossible of achievement while the war lasts."

WORK SCHEMES

"**F**OLLOWING the elections, Labour must face up to its new responsibilities and use its new strength to compel the Government to ease the burdens on the people. Work schemes, even of a limited character, opening up employment for some sections of workers, must be put into operation, while an all-round increase in social services and benefits is urgently needed.

Likewise Labour must champion the interests of the agricultural community and organisationally endeavour to develop the unity of town and country.

"The exiles," concluded Mr. Nolan, "can best serve the cause of freedom for Ireland by being foremost champions of the Labour and Trade Union Movement in Britain, thus helping to develop real friendly understanding between the two peoples. Furthermore, on their return to Ireland the exiles will be of inestimable value to the Irish Labour Movement because of the experience and knowledge gained during their stay in Britain."

The Connolly Association congratulates the Labour movement of the 26 Counties on its great year of progress. The gains of the municipal elections, the results of the general election, all show that the people are deserting the old parties and turning towards Labour. The Trade Union movement has fought the Wages Standstill Order and the Trade Union Bill, and is showing a growing appreciation of international questions as illustrated by the resolution against Fascism passed at its recent conference at Cork.

THE BORDER

TURNING from the problems affecting the Twenty-six Counties, all the men of the North were eager to hear what was to be said about the Six Counties.

Again, how many of our British readers recall that Ireland is geographically and politically divided and has been so since "The Treaty" of 1922, which ended the Civil War for Irish Independence.

Despite the ardent desire of the overwhelming majority of the people in the Six Counties to rejoin their fellow countrymen in the South, Ireland's Six Northern Counties remain under British rule. The feelings of the Six County people can best be understood when we ask our British readers what they would feel if England's six rich and industrial counties in the North of England were severed from the remainder and policed and controlled by another Power. They would constantly desire and



MISS E. TIMBEY

work for their return. And the Irish work for the return of their counties also.

Hence the renewed hope of the Irish people that the practical application of the Atlantic Charter will soon be realised, Clause 3 of which reads: "They respect the right of all peoples to choose their own form of Government under which they will live."

EXPRESSION of this feeling was voiced by Miss Elsie Timbey, a well-known member of the Association and a Belfast woman, who moved a resolution on the Partition of Ireland saying, "This resolution calls for the end of the Partition in Ireland. The North is at war against Fascism and that has brought many problems of production and the safeguarding of democratic rights. The people are alive to these problems and are beginning to solve them. The increase in trade union activity has resulted in the rise of production in the North."

This Conference of the Connolly Association hails the growing unity of the people of the Six Counties of Northern Ireland, and the rapid growth of the Labour movement which has made outstanding progress since our last Conference. Neither the attacks of the Stormont reactionaries, nor the defection of the Midgleyes have succeeded in weakening the movement. This growing unity can finally be consummated only by the ending of the Partition of Ireland, which this Conference demands.

She drew attention to the rapid deterioration now taking place within the old Unionist Party in the North and the drift away from the Nationalist Party whose rank and file are joining the ranks of the Labour Movement in the Six Counties in their endeavour to settle the growing economic problems. "Many changes have occurred," she said, "and the growing strength of the Labour Movement can help to bring further beneficial changes. With trade union unity the workers are solving many of their problems. It is this force which is advocating more Labour representatives in the Government, and the application of the Atlantic Charter to Ireland."

EIRE INDUSTRY AND THE BORDER

NUMEROUS speakers supported this resolution, one of the most interesting contributions coming from **Mr. Harry Craig**, of the Dublin Labour Party who said: "We would be evading the issue if we overlooked De Valera. The Irish have always looked upon "Dev" as a great apostle for the unification of Ireland, but those industries which the De Valera Government has built, one and all depend on Free Trade within the Empire. If the Border was removed the industries would fail. The working class of Ireland alone can win freedom for Ireland. De Valera is a mouthpiece of the Irish governing class and their industries."



T. A. JACKSON AND J. GRIFFIN

MR. T. A. JACKSON followed.

Possessing an inexhaustible knowledge of Irish history (revealed in the series of historical articles, he wrote in *Irish Freedom* and in his History of Ireland now awaiting publication), T. A. Jackson is one of the wittiest speakers in the Labour Movement.

Explaining that he was Irish "not by adoption but by absorption," Mr. Jackson made an impassioned plea, "as a profoundly nationalistic Englishman," for full freedom and Independ-

ence for Ireland. "Ireland," said Mr. Jackson, "has the right

to be neutral with the same respect given to neutral countries like Sweden, Turkey, etc. We see in the campaign to represent something malevolent in Eire's neutrality, the working of the forces of this country which are favourable to Fascism in one form or another."

"We see in the recent attack in the *Sunday Dispatch*, the effort to create confusion and prevent that unity of all democratic forces of this country which is indispensable for the successful conclusion of this war. The Stormont Government is doing nothing to bring about unity. It insists upon creating dissension between Catholics and Protestants which keeps Ireland divided. Morrison's attitude to Labour in this country is changing. We must work against this. Ireland has the right as a sovereign nation to remain neutral. Ireland must be united and defended militarily as a unit, and those who are against this are responsible for her neutrality and for Partition. They have gone out of their way to placate Franco, Turkey, the Argentine. What more could they not do in the case of the Twenty-six Counties?

FRANK RYAN

E. LESSER of the **International Brigade Association**, brought fraternal greetings, and said they still had close ties with the Irish people because of the Irish members of the International Brigade, who recently founded an Irish section of the I.B.A. in Dublin. Frank Ryan has been missing for five years. We have campaigned for his release and we are going to raise the question again with Sir Samuel Hoare, British Ambassador in Madrid, and the Duke of Alba. The Labour Movement in Southern Ireland and the Irish T.U.C. should take the matter up also.

The Conference later passed a resolution, moved by **Pat Dooley** and supported by several speakers, including **R. Doyle**, former International Brigader, urging a wider and more representative deputation be organised to campaign for Ryan's release.

A further resolution was passed calling for the reconsideration of the sentences upon Irish political prisoners in Britain.

IRISH FREEDOM

Mr. Pat Dooley, editor of *Irish Freedom*, spoke to the resolution on **Irish Freedom**, which urged a wider and more popular content for the paper; the need for a net-



PAT DOOLEY

work of correspondents from all parts of the country; more effective circulation of the copies of the paper; greater attention to the Fighting Fund; and the broadening of the Editorial Board to include representatives of all progressive sections of Irish opinion in Britain.

Mr. Dooley declared that insufficient use had been made of the columns of the paper. Members often failed to report important happenings in their area, or use it as an advertising medium, and they did not yet fully appreciate its value as an introduction to large circles of Irish well-wishers in Great Britain.

"Irish Freedom," concluded Mr. Dooley, "was more than a newspaper, it was an interpreter, an organiser, agitator and educator for the Irish in Britain."

POTENTIAL ALLY

SUFFICIENT has been written here to persuade the reader that the Irish worker in Britain, like his counterpart in Ireland, is a friend and potential ally in the common struggle to maintain good working conditions and maintain the democratic way of life.

This is what the organised Irish are doing in Britain, what they think and where they stand.

They stand in firm opposition to all forms of Fascism.

They demand improved trading relations between Britain and Ireland for the mutual benefit of the peoples of both lands.

They urge the widest support and membership of the Trade Unions which cater for their trades.

They expect the recognition of their rights as Irish citizens and recognition of the work they are doing in this grave hour.

They desire better conditions at their place of work and will mercilessly expose all forces seeking to disrupt the growing unity between the peoples of Ireland and Britain.

They support the widest organisation of their fellow Irishmen and their friends in Britain, recognising that such organisation can effectively protect and advance their common interests with the workers of Britain.

In this task, to which they have set their hand, they are confident of the support and the understanding of all democratic opinion in Britain.

RESOLUTION of the Third Annual Conference of the Connolly Association, held in London, September 18th and 19th, 1943, which was passed unanimously :

THIS 1943 Annual Conference of the Connolly Association sends its warm greetings to all Irishmen and their friends in Britain.

The past year has seen a great increase in the numbers of Irishmen who have left home. It is estimated that approximately 300,000 Irish workers are in the factories and on the building camp sites of Britain as well as in the Armed Forces.

We record with satisfaction that in many places there has been marked improvement of relations between English and Irish workers. There is an increasing appreciation among those who work on camp sites and in factories of the substantial help which the Irish are giving and a growing respect for and understanding of our national point of view. With this goes an increasing willingness to support demands in favour of the immigrants by the British Trade Unions, which Irishmen are joining in increasing numbers.

In spite of these favourable developments, which we will do all in our power to foster, there are many difficulties and obstacles which make the path of Irish citizens in Britain unnecessarily difficult.

NEUTRALITY

AMONG sections of the British public there exists confusion on the subject of Irish neutrality. Every Irishman will assert the inalienable right of Eire to decide its own national policy. This is an elementary right of any self-governing state. At the same time all will deny with Mr. de Valera, that neutrality implies the slightest sympathy with Fascism, or means anything but an expression of National Independence.

Irish neutrality is described by Mr.

de Valera as "friendly neutrality." But criticism of Eire's attitude comes most freely from those who are opposed to accepting the friendship of the Irish people. The presence of 300,000 Irishmen in Britain is itself an answer to these critics.

Those who are the strongest critics of neutrality at the same time refuse assistance which Ireland at this very moment is willing to give. Agricultural production in Eire, which could do so much to solve Britain's food question, is allowed to stagnate for lack of a favourable Trade Agreement. It is as if the Die-hard Unionists would rather refrain from strengthening Britain because in doing so they strengthen Ireland as well.

It is time that official circles in Britain adopted a different method of approach to Eire. There is a solid basis of mutual interest which makes economic collaboration immediately possible. One important gesture which might be made is the reconsideration of the sentences on the Irish political prisoners in Britain with a view to remission. Such a gesture would improve the growing friendly relations between the two peoples.

IRISH WORKERS' CONDITIONS

IRISH workers' conditions leave much to be desired. On the camp sites, in isolated country places, everything is of the roughest. Recreational and cultural facilities are frequently absent. Skilled men are used as labourers. Holiday allowances, travel permits, etc., are obtainable only after passing through the most complicated official procedure and the whole question of Irish citizenship is hedged about with complicated regulations.

We claim that men who are working in British industry are entitled to equality with British workers. Only on this basis can we cement firmly the relations between the two peoples.

DISRUPTIVE FORCES

THIS position of uncertainty and inequality is utilised by unscrupulous persons for the purpose of disrupting the growing unity between the workers of the two nations. They spread reports of "excessive wages" paid to Irishmen, whip up prejudice among landladies, who refuse Irishmen billets and overcharge them for inadequate accommodation. Their favourite pastime is that of writing anti-Irish letters to the Press.

These splitters are our enemies. They must be resisted by the combined forces of both peoples, for they are playing the game of Fascism and Reaction.

We will oppose to the limits of our powers any attempts, either now or after the war, to use the workers of Britain or Ireland against their fellows across the Channel.

The Connolly Association works consistently to counter the efforts of these sections by showing the mutual interests of the two peoples. This work has been successful but its scale is not commensurate with the needs of the situation.

The Connolly Association therefore sets itself the task of launching a great campaign to rouse and rally the Irish people for the following demands:—

1. The opening of negotiations between Britain and Ireland with a view to concluding a Trade Treaty advantageous to both countries.

2. Wider public recognition of the work the Irish are doing in Britain.

3. Closer relations between Irish and British trade unions on all

matters affecting the interests of Irish emigrants.

4. All Irishmen to join their appropriate trade unions for their own protection and increased participation in trade union activities, i.e., shop committees, shop stewards' organisations, etc.

5. Simplification, codification and publication in a single handbook of all the legal and official regulations relating to Irish citizens in Britain.

6. The local authorities to set up consultative bodies, composed of representatives of their own Council, the local working-class bodies and the Irish workers to supervise lodging and billeting of Irish workers.

7. The merciless exposure of all attempts to work up anti-Irish feeling in Britain, such feeling aiding the forces of reaction.

8. Increase the sales and influence of "Irish Freedom," the only Irish paper published in Britain.

ORGANISATION

To carry through this campaign we must strengthen our own organisation; accordingly, we propose:—

1. That the organisation shall in future be known as the "Connolly Association."

2. Strengthen the existing branches, converting them into more powerful weapons in the struggle for this policy.

3. Build up strong branches of the Association in all parts of the country.

4. To undertake an immediate campaign for the raising of £100 by Christmas.

5. Encourage the development of social and cultural activities around our branches.

6. Redouble our efforts to spread the Socialist teachings of James Connolly, which provide the clear light by which the Irish people can guide their way to complete emancipation.

CONNOLLY ASSOCIATION

PREMIER HOUSE, 150 SOUTHAMPTON ROW,
LONDON, W.C.1

TER. 3906

National Secretary - - - DESMOND GREAVES

I am in general agreement
with the aims and objects of the
Connolly Association and wish to
become a member.

Surname _____

Christian Name _____

Address _____

Post to above address.

IRISH FREEDOM

PREMIER HOUSE, 150 SOUTHAMPTON ROW,
LONDON, W.C.1

TER. 3906

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