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**ERRATA**

Page 24, line 30 should read: establishment  
of Socialism can the Border in Ireland  
disappear.

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SPARE

# MANIFESTO

OF THE

# SOCIALIST

# PARTY

OF

# IRELAND

With

*Declaration of Principles*

PRICE

6d.

1962?

**THE SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF IRELAND  
OBJECT:**

*The establishment of a system  
of society based upon the common  
ownership and democratic control  
of the means and instruments for  
producing and distributing wealth  
by and in the interest of the whole  
community.*

MANIFESTO  
OF THE  
SOCIALIST PARTY  
OF  
IRELAND

*With Declaration of Principles*

# MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND

## PREFACE

On May 28th, 1949, a number of workers, representing Socialist Groups in Dublin and Belfast, met in Belfast and decided that the groups should coalesce and form the Socialist Party of Ireland. That decision was subsequently ratified by the members of the Dublin and Belfast Groups; and so was born the first political party in Ireland to publicly and unequivocally declare its object to be the establishment of Socialism.

We Socialist workers formed the Socialist Party of Ireland not in any sectarian spirit or in order to gain kudos of any kind for ourselves, but so that, as an organised Socialist body, we could all the better point out and reiterate that truth — which we are firmly convinced has long since been made clear — that the social evils in our midst, and from which the mass of the people suffer, are caused not by the “wrong party” being in power, not by Toryism in the north of Ireland and Republicanism in the south, nor by “Partition,” but by the social and economic system under which we are born and exist, and which is termed capitalism. That, simply, is our reason for forming this party and entering the field of politics in Ireland.

The following pages, comprising the Manifesto of the Socialist Party of Ireland, are an elucidation of those principles to which we, as Socialists, adhere (and which can be found elsewhere in this pamphlet). The Manifesto is, at the same time, a demonstration of the application of those principles to the life and conditions of Irish workingmen and women.

December, 1949

The Executive Committee of  
The Socialist Party of Ireland

# MANIFESTO OF THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND

## TO THE WORKINGMEN AND WOMEN OF IRELAND

To tell the average worker in Northern Ireland or the Republic of Ireland (Eire) that certain fluctuations on the New York or London Stock Exchange may be more indicative of his future welfare than whether Unionist or Nationalist, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, or Labour candidates are returned at the next Irish Elections, would be indeed inviting derision. Yet that is the nature of capitalism. It is an international system and is not dependent on national barriers or governments; it is not conditioned by the "evil" or "goodness" of men, nor the sagacity or blundering of political parties. In a word, it has a nature of its own—a nature which directs, and is not directed.

Whether we in Northern Ireland are governed by Unionists, Nationalists, or Labour, and we in Eire by Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, or Labour, the working class will still be obliged to hire themselves out to employers by the hour, the week, or the month in return for money—the rate of which is stipulated by the employer—which under capitalism is necessary in order to "live." That is the sort of world—a capitalist world—which we, for our part, experience here in Ireland.

But how many understand what is meant by "a capitalist world"? Let us here define what capitalism is: a social system where the things necessary to produce wealth—factories, mills, mines, all the means and instruments of production, in fact—are owned and controlled by a relatively small number of individuals who comprise that class in society termed the capitalist class. The remainder of the community—the great majority of the population—being devoid of ownership in the means of production, propertyless, are known, simply and clearly enough, as the working class, that is, the class which is compelled to sell its labour power (the worker's physical and mental abilities) to the

capitalists for wages in order to exist. From this it follows that the capitalist class is in the position of dictating to the workers when they shall work, and so, when and what they shall eat and wear, and what sort of dwelling they shall have. In short, the life and death of countless millions is in the hands of this very small minority.

Now those who purchase our labour-power will want us to produce something greater in value to the wages we earn. It is reasonable to assume that this being so the working class produce wealth, the money equivalent of which is greater than the sum total of the wages paid to the workers. Accordingly, it is impossible for the workers, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, to buy back these goods, so they must be disposed of on the world markets.

The Stock Exchanges are the barometers of these world markets. Falling prices may generally mean a glut of goods which are unsaleable. That for us, the workers, means that there is no sale for the things we produce; that our employers will no longer require the production of these goods; that, because we have produced more than can be purchased, we must become unemployed. Production under capitalism is only sanctioned, only undertaken, when and while it ensures to the owners of industry further enrichment. As soon as this becomes inoperative—as soon as production oversteps the limits of "economic demand" and the workers haven't the wherewithal to buy back what they've produced—production slackens, and eventually stops.

Capitalism then presents us with the greatest paradoxical picture in human history: **POVERTY AMIDST PLENTY**. Warehouses stacked with food, clothing and other commodities, and millions outside hungry, ill-clad, and destitute—the same millions who produced the wealth now piled high behind locked warehouse doors! "Economic adjustment"? "Recession"? Or just plain **SLUMP**? Whatever way you spell it, it spells misery and suffering for millions the world over.

That is by no means the only evil of capitalism and its production-for-profit, but it serves to prove our opening contention that it is world capitalism and not any local political party that is responsible for the evil conditions amidst which we "live." It serves to show that our problems will not go with the "putting out" of one party and the "putting in" of another, both of which stand for the system as we know

it, and whose "social policy" must be similar — because conditioned by capitalism.

It will also show the reader why we do not deal exhaustively with those political parties existing in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. In the last resort they all stand for that which we oppose: capitalism. Whether they are Unionist, Nationalist, Fianna Fail, Fine Gael, or even Labour or Communist, they stand for the maintenance of the present system.

### CAPITALISM IN THE REPUBLIC

Capitalism has manifested itself in the "Republican" part of Ireland through the creation of a native class of "gombeen-men"—small industrialists and manufacturers—nurtured and fed behind tariff walls and import and quota barriers, particularly during Fianna Fail's 16 year rule from 1932 onwards.

This class was the main driving force in the national struggle in Ireland against the occupying power, Great Britain. No further back than 1917 and the days of the Sinn Fein (Nationalist) party this was then made abundantly clear. That "Ireland for the Irish" meant no more than **Ireland for the rising native capitalist class**, let the words of Sinn Fein itself substantiate:

"The farmer is indifferent to the industrial revival, failing to realise **the increased market an Ireland with a manufacturing arm means to the agriculturalist**; the manufacturer is indifferent to the agricultural interest, failing to realise that **the extension of agriculture means the extension of the market for his products**.

"(Quoting a letter): 'It is a comparatively simple matter for English capitalists to crush out their Irish competitors, and we know that this has been too often the fate of Irishmen striving to promote the manufactures of the country, but once the obstacle is removed it is easy enough for them (the English capitalists) to advance prices, and thus obtain compensation for preliminary losses. **It is to this system that we, as Irish manufacturers and large employers of labour object . . .**'

"Under the Sinn Fein policy such a deplorable error could not occur . . . and no possibility would be left as far as (Sinn Fein) were concerned for a syndicate of unscrupulous English capitalists to crush out **the home manufacturer and the home trader.**" (From Arthur Griffith's "The Sinn Fein Policy," 1917).

Such were the motives and aims of the nationalist leaders in Ireland; fundamentally no different from those of the Griffiths elsewhere—Pandit Nehru in India to-day, for instance. But so far as the working class were concerned all that was accomplished by the achieving of national independence and self-government for 26 of the 32 Irish counties was a change of masters. The boss-worker relationship remained, though the British left; and the first Irish (Free State) Government soon settled down to its job of administering capitalism in the interests of its masters, the property-owning class of that part of Ireland.

The conditions of the working class during the first ten years of the "Irish Free State" became apparently no better—in fact, deteriorated. The political party that ruled during that period, the Cumman na nGaedheal party (now the Fine Gael party), well earned the distinction of being the most anti-working class party in Irish politics—on a par, at least, with the Northern Ireland Tory party of Craigavon and Brooke.

This party, Fine Gael, whose present leader, Mr. Costello, is now Prime Minister of the Republic's Coalition Government, lost power in the 1932 Elections, leaving behind it the slums and the poverty-diseases it was going to wipe out, and tens of thousands of unemployed and poorly-paid workers whose conditions it had promised to improve. Its ten year record stinks in the nostrils of any intelligent Irish worker who has a political memory; for those **now prominent** as shiny, brand-new Republicans were **then prominent** as strike-breakers. Mulcahy and McGilligan and the rest, who speak of the "divine right" of private property, were then using armed force against workers who dared to use strike action in an attempt to get back a little more of what they produced.

In 1922 this government-party called on the British Postmaster-General for blacklegs to break the Post Office workers' strike; in 1923 they used their own State troops to smash farm workers' strikes in Kildare, Waterford and elsewhere (actually arresting and interning union officials and members at this time); and in 1926 they callously declared that the unemployed were no concern of the State, and that it was not the State's duty to provide them with work. Such was the treatment meted out to the working class in the new-born Irish Free State.

Workers, many of whom had a few years previously been speculating with their lives in the cause of "Mother Ireland" had now found her to be a "Mother Hubbard."

Mulcahy, McGilligan and the others are all now Ministers and supporters of the present Coalition Government in Eire. The very same individuals; and pursuing much the same policy to-day as in 1922-26, and after—certainly showing the same hostility to the working class, to its Trade Unions, and to the unemployed, now as then.

The alleged workers' party in Eire, the Irish Labour Party, is working in "perfect harmony" (as Mr. Norton, its leader, stated during some recent Court proceedings) with this same set of politicians who have never attempted to conceal their bitter hatred of the working class and its organisations and ideas . . .!

With unemployment, emigration and the cost-of-living reaching new heights, with the numbers of slums and disease-ridden people steadily increasing, it was no great surprise that in the 1932 Elections, faced with the choice of either re-electing "Tweedledee" (Fine Gael) or "giving a chance" to "Tweedledum" (Fianna Fail), the electorate choose the latter. The alternative was a purely illusory one. Identifying the reigning political party with the rotten social and economic conditions, the people thought that by changing the ruling party they'd change their conditions. But not so at all; for "Fianna Fail" was no more than "Fine Gael" spelt differently.

The Fianna Fail Government's record is a record of service to the only class which can be served under capitalism—the capitalist class. A brief glance through that record will prove that this is so.

It was this Government which introduced the Wages (Standstill) Order, the Trade Union Bill, the Industrial Relations Bill (which set up the now rather notorious Labour Court)—all measures designed to hold down wages and to cramp the efficacy of Trade Union strike action and, in general, to extract a greater quantity of wealth from the workers' labours than hitherto.

Proof? Well, taxable profits grew from £6,592,000 in 1939-40 to £19,640,322 in 1947-48—**an increase of nearly 200% in eight years!** Did the workers' wages increase by that much? We should say not! On the contrary, real wages decreased; for while prices kept rising, wages were held

by the Standstill Order and the double-dealing diplomacy of the so-called Labour Court. The International Labour Office published cost-of-living findings in February, 1947, and they picked out four countries for special odium as the ones in which "real wages have actually dropped below 1937 levels." The four countries are: France, Japan, Czechoslovakia, AND EIRE. This was as a result of deliberate policies pursued by Fianna Fail.

That the Labour Court was designed to help the employers as against the workers, let its first annual report (ending August, 1947) speak for itself:—

"... the Court decided that it would be premature and unrealistic (!) to attempt to increase wages and salaries at once to the extent necessary to compensate fully for the reduction in the purchasing power of money. The situation appeared to call for prudence and restraint (!) . . . the Court felt that the wise course was to scale down the increases in wages, realising that this policy meant a **continuance for some time longer of the fall in real wages . . .**"

The second, and latest, report of the Labour Court (ending December, 1948) would seem to indicate that that body still considers it "premature and unrealistic to attempt to increase wages" to the level of prices. (No doubt the situation still calls "for prudence and restraint"—on the part of the workers!) Comparing wages at the end of 1948 with wages in 1939, the report states that money wages in 1948 did not **in most cases** fully compensate for the rise in retail prices.

Thus did the Fianna Fail policies (now being continued by the Coalition Government) ensure the continued validity of that old Socialist axiom: the rich get richer while the poor get poorer.

This was the party, too, which had cures for everything . . . for unemployment, for emigration, for the slums, for tuberculosis . . .!

Registered unemployment seldom went below the 50,000 mark. Emigrants numbered over 250,000 from 1932 to 1948. The recently-issued report of the British Royal Commission on Population estimated a rate of 10,000 per year of Irish emigrants to Gt. Britain during 1933-37 alone. After 1939, needless to say, that rate was much increased. For the year

1947, for instance, the figure given for travel permits and passports issued was 31,238.

As for housing: with twelve years yet remaining of Fianna Fail's Government, the 1936 Census of Population revealed that there were then 80,997 persons occupying one-room dwellings in Dublin. In 1948, however — and after 16 years of Fianna Fail rule—the late Mr. Murphy (as Minister for Local Government in the Coalition) could declare that there were then over 80,000 persons “living” in one-room tenement dwellings alone. Then, compare that with the figure of 70,000 for 1912 given by Dublin's then Medical Officer of Health, Sir Charles Cameron!

Regarding disease: take tuberculosis as an example, a disease which is now admitted on all sides as being due almost exclusively to poverty. The Medical Superintendent of Dublin Fever Hospital, Dr. McSweeney, well summed-up this in a recent statement which calls for little or no comment. Said the doctor: “Until the Dublin wage-earners and their wives and children were decently housed and fed, more beds in sanatoria and tuberculosis hospitals would be needed.” (“Irish Independent,” 24/6/49). The extent to which the workers and their families were not “decently housed and fed” may be judged from the report of the Registrar-General for 1946, wherein we are informed, in cold, statistical language, that the majority of the deaths of people between the ages of 15 and 45 is caused by tuberculosis.

So speaks the records of Fianna Fail government . . . but so speaks all the louder the record of capitalism itself. The conclusion is inescapable: **poverty and the diseases of poverty are to-day as much rampant as they were 10, 20 and 50 years ago; “self-government”—27 years of it—has not in the least altered the overall picture of the poverty and insecurity of the mass of the Irish people.**

On the 4th of February, 1948, the workers of Eire, having had enough of Fianna Fail's “efforts” to solve their problems, refused to give them a majority in the Elections which took place then. The result was that Fianna Fail was supplanted by as colourful and heterogeneous a collection of political quacks and glib-tongued lawyers as the world of politics had ever seen. “Pros” and “Antis” of every political creed united to bask in the sunshine of Governmental office. Different personalities, no doubt, yet modelled on the same pattern as their predecessors.

Hardly had the new Ministers donned their robes of office when there uttered forth from their lips that time-honoured cry, “The workers must work harder!” They were all merely mimicking the previous set of Ministers, however; for **they** had never ceased exhorting the workers to work hard and increase production. Yet despite the fact that, according to the United Nations' Statistical Bulletin (6/11/'47), countries showing monthly production averages higher than 1937 INCLUDED EIRE, and despite the fact that the 1948 volume of production for all industries was 16% above 1947 and 28% above the 1938 volume (Mr. Costello, in the Dail, 20/7/'49), the resulting higher profits were certainly not finding their way into the workers' pockets (as we've already shown).

Increased production under capitalism can in no way benefit the working class. On the contrary; for as the rate of production increases so, proportionately, does the insecurity of the working class. The quicker the goods pile up, the sooner is reached that point where their very plentitude constitutes the beginning of the “economic crisis.” The “economic crisis” being, as we've already pointed out, “over production.”

Less than 20 years ago that happened. “Too much of everything . . .” Yet during those very years of plenty, millions were under-fed, barefooted and ill-clad, and “living” in wretched dwellings. But then capitalist production is not production for use, but for profit.

To-day, all the indications of another world slump are present. Capitalist recovery from the late war and its aftermath has been much easier, and quicker, than from the 1914 one. The “Marshall Plan” administration recently stated that Western Europe had practically solved its problem of production—but that now it was meeting the greater economic obstacles of lack of markets. So the signs of a repeat performance of “1929 and after” are all there.

Due to the workings of this insane capitalist system of society, where poverty and wealth production reach their maximum simultaneously, millions will want **because too much has been produced.**

The Irish Labour Party, now assisting in the administration of capitalism in the Republic, at one time, like most reformist parties, made a practice of emitting revolutionary utterances. Its leader, Mr. Norton, once boldly declared that “under our present social system (that is, capitalism)

greater productivity means a lower wage for the worker, higher profit for the owner of industry." ("Labour News," 29/1/'38). That was eleven years ago, and though the social system in Ireland is still the same—still capitalism—Mr. Norton and the Labour Party, in at least one respect, are definitely not: **they are not now given to the making of revolutionary speeches.** The Minister for Social (!) Welfare (Mr. Norton) is as vociferous as any of his Fine Gael colleagues in the Cabinet in calling for "increased production, harder work, and more exports."

In the past he and the other Labour Party leaders shed many a tear for the unemployed, and the workers in general, who suffered poverty. Typical of all their out-of-office speeches was one of his own, in 1932, when he stated: "There is no excuse for unemployment in a country such as this . . . there is less excuse for the misery and poverty which we see all around us." (Dail Report, 20/4/'32). So on down through the years, up to February, 1948. Then things began to "look up"—for the Labour politicians.

The Labour Party's participation in the new Government was a great change—for the Labour careerists and opportunists. In return for the power and privilege of Government office, and the opportunity to show how efficiently they could administer capitalism through the Government departments under their control, they readily joined hands with the "Blueshirts" and other representatives of capitalist property interests.

So Mr. Keyes, the other Irish Labour Party Minister, occasioned no surprise when, following the signal of McGilligan, the "Blueshirt" Minister for Finance, he attacked the unemployed as idlers and a work-shy lot because the bulk of them refused to accept the miserable pay and conditions obtaining on the Bog Schemes and the Lough Erne Electricity Scheme. The last-mentioned Scheme being one on which even Maltese labourers refused to stay more than three days — and yet Irish unemployed workers are expected to gratefully accept such work which the often-enough despised coloured man refuses! Is it too much to hope that the unemployed in particular, and the working class in general, will take note **now** of the actions and policy of the Labour Party in Eire, and remember them when next these Labour politicians come seeking their votes?

Nor can the Labour claim here that they are not free agents — that they are merely "in office but not in

power." That excuse is the excuse of all political parties similarly placed in any country. If they know that they cannot put into practice all the grandiose schemes for the "improvement" of the workers' conditions which they freely retail during Election-times, then they must also know what will be expected from them by the dominant party in a capitalist Coalition Government—**yet such a consideration acts as no deterrent, and they accept office.**

We have, however, seen Labour parties at work elsewhere: as a minority party in a Coalition Government, and as the sole Government party with complete power. Britain, Australia, New Zealand, for example. Labour Party government has effected no change in working class conditions for the better in any country. Confirmation of this is provided by the fact that, in November and December, 1949, the people of New Zealand and Australia staged "revolts" in their much-boasted (elsewhere!) "workers' paradises" — aged respectively, 14 and 8 years — by refusing to re-elect their Labour governments.

Labour parties are elected to power pledged to administer the system of capitalism and **not** to abolish it. Capitalism, calling the tune, makes Labour governments dance.

The Irish Labour Party is as hopeless and useless an instrument for the workers to use in getting rid of their poverty and insecurity as Fianna Fail or Fine Gael. The Labour Party serves capitalism just as faithfully as the other political parties, and as you cannot serve capitalism and the majority of the people at the same time, the Labour party is as much to be condemned from the workers' viewpoint as the others. **It does not and cannot act in the interest of the Irish working class.**

#### CAPITALISM IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The workers of Northern Ireland, who produce the wealth of this province, have good reason to know what a depression is. They have always felt the full blast of capitalism's economic blizzard; and it has blown in the face of workers who support Unionism and workers who support Nationalism, not to speak of those who, while knowing better, must suffer from this support of capitalist parties.

Practically from its inception "Ulster" (Northern Ireland) has been classified as a "depressed area." True, for a few years during the war there was relative "prosperity"



—but even then there was an insufficiency of jobs. Even during the year 1941-42, when production-for-war was highly geared, the local Ministry of Labour disbursed £1,005,426 in unemployment benefits alone.

Before capitalism on the international plane found a temporary solution to its crisis by indulging in wanton destruction and mass murder on the battlefields of Europe and Asia, the conditions of the workers in this area were particularly desperate. The year 1932 is not so far back that many cannot remember the infamous handling of the unemployed (Catholics, Protestants, Unionists, Nationalists, etc.) by the Ruling clique and their police hirelings. The workers marched then not under a Union Jack, not under a Tricolour—nor was either flag offered them. They marched under the impetus of stark hunger—marched together. Men driven to desperation by the sight of starving wives and children; men without a practical weapon, trying in vain to protest against the crimes of capitalism. They asked for food—the Unionist Government gave them bullets!

The total number of persons in Northern Ireland pre-war who toiled in the linen sweat-shops, the factories and the fields was 260,000; the total number of persons registered as wholly unemployed (and many workers, particularly agricultural workers, did not register pre-war) was 98,000. So we find that, even on the basis of official figures, we had two persons unemployed for every five in employment.

That is over and done with . . . ? Or is it? Have a look at conditions as they are in Northern Ireland at present.

The unemployment figures have risen from 12,000 to 37,000 and orders in Belfast's main source of employment, shipbuilding, are dwindling fast—as lately admitted by Sir Frederick Rebeck, leading director of Messrs. Harland and Wolff's shipbuilding yards. Irish linen, now competing on a buyers' market, is becoming less and less in demand, with the consequent "redundancy" of workers in the linen industry. Small new industries are introduced from Great Britain and usually find it convenient to take over the premises of other small industries who came to the area in the same way a year or two before but have closed shop and gone off again.

And yet while thousands remain idle we find that the city of Belfast alone needs 24,000 houses, and the whole area drastically needs 100,000 — which figure, according to the "Report of the Committee on Housing," set up by the

Planning Advisory Board, could be doubled to 200,000 if the area were to be properly housed.

Nor will taking down the Union Jack and hoisting the Tricolour solve Northern Ireland workers' problems. They are not a manifestation of the evil of Brooke and Co. (the Northern Ireland Tory Government) — it is all just the inevitable logic of an insane economic system of which they (the Brookes, etc.) are the political props.

The Northern Ireland Labour Party—which is now little more than a rather inglorious second line of local Tory defence—is to all intents and purposes programmatically at one with the British Labour Party. In the past the N.I.L. Party tried to maintain its equilibrium by barring from discussion "the Border question." The very fact that it was necessary to mollify opposing faction on this question amply illustrates that, despite its claims, this movement was not Socialist. Socialists see the Border as a child of capitalism and leave its nursing to parties representative of the sectional interests of the capitalist class.

The British Labour Party's nationalisation programme is endorsed by the N.I.L. Party; but Socialists view nationalisation as the greatest political myth ever perpetrated upon the working class. Nor is the N.I.L. Party opposed to class society—indeed they make the boast that they are representative of all classes. Socialists deny the feasibility of this claim.

New in Northern Ireland politics is the Irish Labour Party. The local (Northern Ireland) Council got away to a rather infamous start at an "Inaugural Conference" where (to quote the Chairman's address) ". . . a sharp conflict of opinion was undesirable, and political discussion not in order at this stage." (!) It embraces "the fundamentals of Irish Labour Party policy" which states—as, incidentally, does the "Tory Charter"—that it stands for "social justice."

Previous to the 1948 General Election in Eire the Irish Labour Party made it very clear that they approved and based themselves on the doctrine of the Corporate State—something which stinks in the nostrils of a Socialist, and is repugnant to any class-conscious worker. (Corporatism—or to give it its Irish name, Vocationalism — is treated in a following section).

It is quite possible that the Irish Labour Party may become the strongest opposition party in Northern Ireland

on the basis of their approach to "the Border question." The reasoning, however, of some workers, that it could be used as a possible vehicle for Socialism, only shows their lack of understanding of that system of society we call Socialism.

Labourism, whether in the shape of the Irish Labour Party or the Northern Ireland Labour Party, cannot solve the problems of the Irish workers. Those problems emanate from capitalism, and will cease to be problems only when capitalism ceases to be the accepted system. The cause of Socialism has been done a great dis-service by those who, while paying lip-service to it, yet hold out to the workers the possibility of a "reformed" capitalism.

We affirm that no amount of reforms can improve or make acceptable the capitalist system. Only when the workers realise—as they are beginning to in Britain and elsewhere — that Labour government does not make the leopard change its spots; only when the bluff of the Labour parties is exposed will workers really evince an interest in true Socialist teaching, and, understanding the implications of same, go forward to Socialism.

The Communist Party, which during the war years had a large influx of members, has now gone back practically to its pre-war position, that of a small, politically impotent group of apologists for Russia and her satellites (not now, of course, including Yugoslavia!)

Locally, as elsewhere, the record of the Communist Party during the war years—ranging from support of Adolf Hitler to support of Basil Brooke! — has cast a damning reflection on its propaganda, and the possibilities of its growth in the future are negligible.

Socialists are irrevocably and uncompromisingly opposed to the social system and the form of government in the Soviet Union, and to the Communist parties. The struggle for Socialism has been made ever more difficult by the "rationalising" of Stalinists and the identification of totalitarian, State-capitalist Russia with Socialism.

### VOCATIONALISM

Ever since the publication of the "Report of the Commission on Vocational Organisation" in Eire, and under cover of such an innocuous-sounding name, this brand of Corporatism has been finding increasing favour among the many aspirants for political power "down south." Not alone

does the Irish Labour Party espouse the fundamentals of the scheme, but the breakaway Labourites, the "National Labour Party," and its industrial counterpart, the Congress of Irish Unions, have been active in propagating the scheme generally.

But if there are those who think that, because such a scheme has the support of Labour parties and Union Congress it must, therefore, be of benefit to the workers, we would submit that they should "think again."

Vocationalism defines no new social system. It is but capitalism with the last vestige of democracy gone. It leaves intact all the essential features of capitalist society. Private ownership in the means of wealth production remains, and the mass of the people continue propertyless, compelled to sell their labour-power to the employers in order to exist. Goods are still produced for profit—the whole wages-system is "as you were" — and the consequent struggle between employer and employee continues as as before. Thus Vocationalism! And it would not solve one working class problem or abate in the slightest one social evil.

But Vocationalism (or Corporatism) holds many attractions for the capitalist class; it has advantages and benefits, all of which would help strengthen the capitalists' power over the working class. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to find that the Irish variety of Corporatism has been greatly welcomed and greeted with satisfaction by this class —as witness the capitalist reception of the "Vocational Report."

The whole of the Press in Eire, spokesmen for Chambers of Commerce, political and religious leaders, all joined in singing the Report's praises. Not a jarring note of discord was heard. (In fact, it was another case of "perfect harmony"!)

Even representatives of the Protestant and Catholic Churches (N.B., Northern Ireland workers) could work amicably on the subject; for to quote the Rt. Rev. Dr. Harvey ("Sunday Independent," 10/9/44): "During the five years over which their sittings extended, not a jarring note from differences of creed marred the harmony of the proceedings." But when all sections of the capitalist class show such a united front, the workers should rightly feel at least a little bit suspicious of whose welfare is going to be promoted by such a scheme.

As long ago as 1938 Mr. de Valera acquainted the Irish

capitalist class with the essential outline of this scheme. Quoting the new (1937) Constitution at a meeting of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, he said: "Parliament may provide for the establishment or recognition of . . . vocational councils." "There is clearly foreshadowed here," he then commented, "the offering to a council of that sort, a certain amount of legislative power."

"Clearly foreshadowed here," also, were certain actions of de Valera's Government between 1938 and 1948 which showed that Mr. de Valera's enthusiasm for such a scheme was no mere "flash-in-the-pan." We refer, of course, to Fianna Fail's anti-working-class legislation: the Wages Standstill Order, the Trade Union Act, the Industrial Relations Act, and the Labour Court.

The stage was never really set, however, for the implementation of the "Vocational Report's" recommendation during Fianna Fail's rule. It may be said, though, that Fianna Fail tidied the stage somewhat; and, considering the present situation in Eire, there would be very little preliminary work for a government to do—assured of the support of the Labour fakirs and the Trade Union bosses, as at present—in order to foist this particular brand of Fascism upon an unsuspecting and politically uneducated working class.

Let there be no mistake about it—this "Vocationalism" is but another name for the Corporate State. That is what is aimed at here. Compulsory "arbitration" and the abolition of the right to strike, and—eventually—the crippling of the workers' independent organisations, the Trade Unions, and the creation of State-controlled ones, subservient to the wishes of the capitalist State. These are some of the measures implicit in this scheme of so-called Vocationalism.

The plight of the working class under such conditions can well be left to the imagination, considering its plight to-day when it has as yet free Trade Unions and the right to strike.

### TRADE UNIONISM

The very existence of Trade Unions—combinations of the workers on the industrial field—and their counterpart, Employers' Federations, presupposes the existence of a cleavage of interests between the workers and employers,

and thus the existence of that which is so often denied by the apologists for capitalism, namely, the class-struggle.

That class-struggle exists and will continue to exist so long as the wages-system — that foundation stone of capitalist society—itself shall exist. No honeyed words can hide the fact that present-day society is divided into two great antagonistic classes—capitalists and wage-workers; the former owning the means of life, the latter possessing nothing but their power to labour. This labouring-power of the working class produces all the economic wealth of modern society, yet the workers only receive back—in the form of wages—but a very small portion of it, just sufficient to keep them as wage-workers and to reproduce their kind. Because the employing class are constantly attempting to reduce even further this small portion a conflict arises between these two classes; for as real wages decrease, profits increase. This conflict, then, between the workers and the employers is a manifestation, on the industrial field, of the class struggle.

If we examine the history of Trade Unionism over the last hundred years we find that the workers' attempts to organise have called forth bloody repression from the Ruling class. Men sent to prison for merely talking of strikes . . . men deported because they attempted to unite with their fellows to better their conditions. Yet Trade Union organisation persisted, and to-day workers can organise without fear of being dragged in front of a magistrate and imprisoned.

In Ireland—no less than elsewhere—this has been only as a result of bloodshed, sacrifice and unending toil by the working class. Less than forty years ago the workers of Dublin fought their death-struggle with the Dublin employers organised by William Martin Murphy. It was not very long, however, before the employers saw the folly of trying to smash the Trade Unions. Moreover, it was found that "respectable" Labour leaders could be used to maintain industrial peace — so much desired by the employers, its price being paid for by the workers.

To-day the Irish Trade Union movement is in a crisis. Two rival Congresses seek to dominate the position. Yet the workers of Ireland are no less solid to-day than they were forty years ago. It is not **they** who are divided but the "leaders" — men who have allowed personal ambition and private feuds to over-ride all consideration for the working

class in general and members of their own Unions in particular.

Here is an extract from the Minutes of the Conference of Irish Unions, held at the O'Connell Hall, Dublin, on March 21st, 1945:—

“The issue they were there to consider was a simple one; it was whether they would continue to operate under an executive that was dominated by the British Unions. The British Unions would have to go. We know how to talk to one another in Ireland, but we don't know how to talk to British Unions. They are SLIMY.”

It is not a little difficult to believe that the man who made that statement claims to be a member of the working class. This man forgets (?) that it was the united action of the Irish and British Labour movements which was responsible for the release of the Irish political prisoners on hunger strike in 1920—this man forgets (?) that the Irish workers had the support and backing of British Trade Unionists, as exemplified by the following: A Special Trade Union Congress, held in London on July 13th, 1920, carried this resolution by a large majority:—

“That this Congress protests against the British military domination of Ireland and demands the cessation of the production of munitions destined to be used against Ireland . . . and in case the Government refuses these demands we recommend a general down tools policy, and call on all Trade Unions here represented to carry out this policy, each according to its own constitution by taking a ballot vote of its members or otherwise.”

In this present clash of personalities and ambitions in the Irish Trade Union movement, however, the Socialist Party of Ireland favours neither side. That is to say, we do not urge the acceptance of either set of Trade Union leaders contending for the dominance of the Trade Union movement. We support and favour all steps taken to unite the workers of Ireland—north and south—in one industrial organisation, in one Trade Union Congress; but that support and favour is not to be understood as support and favour for Trade Union officials who shout loudest for “unity.” They may desire unity now—but because their motives are other than the interests of the Irish working class, to-morrow they may commit worse anti-working-class crimes than the one of sundering the Trade Union movement. Unity, yes . . . but

unity in the interests of the working class and its struggle against the employing class and capitalism.

We would take the opportunity here of pointing out to our fellow-workers the moral to be found in all this, namely: put not your trust in leaders — be they Trade Union or political leaders — who split and confuse you, but strive for that goal which can only be brought about by **your own** efforts—let nothing deter you in your fight for the emancipation of your class and the establishment of a society where the need for Trade Unions—born of capitalist, class-society—will be non-existent.

The necessity for industrial struggle and organisation of the workers, as against the employing class and its organisations, is not denied by Socialists. Being workers, Socialists are also Trade Unionists, and engage in, and support, all worthwhile Trade Union action, struggling side by side with their fellow-workers on this battlefield.

The Trade Unions have played no mean part in cementing the workers and instilling into them a certain measure of class-consciousness. All this has not been entirely in vain, not without its beneficial results from a working class point of view. But neither has the whole history of Trade Unionism been without its lessons. And the chief lesson—still to be learned — is this: the struggle of the workers must be **against capitalism**—against the cause, not the effects.

That struggle cannot be waged on the industrial field but only on the political one. The real struggle is over the **ownership** of the means of production. Trade Unions—however fiery their leaders, however militant their members—cannot question in an industrial dispute the ownership of the factory, railway, mine, etc., by the capitalists. Only the workers organised in a working class political party pledged to end all capitalist ownership can tackle and decide this all-important issue.

#### “ THE PARTITION QUESTION ”

The capitalists (British and native) have found this question convenient for the purpose of distracting the attentions of the worker from an ever more evil border—the class barrier between those who own but do not produce and those who produce but do not own.

The Unionist or Tory will tell the workers of Northern Ireland that should the Anti-Partitionists get a majority there the workers will find themselves in an Irish Republic

(that, of course, being a terrible thing to contemplate). The Nationalists (Anti-Partitionists) on the other hand, are veritably delighted at the prospect. These viewpoints, however—daily aired through the Press and otherwise in Northern Ireland and Eire — do not reveal the real attitude of the capitalists, north and south of “the Border.”

While the southern capitalist — for the benefit of the nationalist-minded worker—hurls invective and abuse at “British Imperialism,” he is not immune to an investment in the sweated labour of suffering natives in the British South African gold mines, or any other “good investment,” British or otherwise. Nor is the “Ulster” capitalist any more “patriotic”; a dividend of 15% in Eire is preferable to one of 12% in “Ulster.” Further, they are not loath to quietly unite where such unity assures them of some profitable return. In this connection the case of Lord Glentoran and the “Irish Independent” is most illuminating and instructive.

Lord Glentoran, one of the foremost Unionist leaders in Northern Ireland, and Mr. Murphy, owner of that infamous Irish daily newspaper, the “Irish Independent” (now very much an organ of the now respectable and fashionable creed of Republicanism), sit together on the board of directors of the Irish Commercial Insurance Co.—and **that** but a subsidiary of the Yorkshire Insurance Co.! Truly, an example of capitalist hands across “the Border”—and across the sea! In short, apart from any ostensible quarrel, capitalists north and south of “the Border” are class-brothers with a common interest: **the exploitation and subjection of the working class, EVERYWHERE.**

Let us examine, however, the nature of this “United Irish Republic” that so appears to frighten the Unionist and gratify the Anti-Partitionist. Let us see if the social conditions of the mass of the workers who toil in the fields and the factories and queue at the dole-exchanges will be alleviated; consequently we will the more appreciate what party the workers should support.

Firstly we must examine the nature of the social system that would be the economic basis of this new Republic; we must think in terms of production and distribution of the wealth that the mass of the people create. It is **this** that dictates how we live . . . **this** that, in the last resort, governs our present and future well-being . . . **this** that in modern **social** conditions our whole life, from the cradle to the grave.

As we have seen, the parties that advocate this Republic stand for the maintenance of the present system, so capitalism would be the economic system that would operate in the “United Republic.” Just as we have in Northern Ireland and Eire to-day, the means of production and distribution of wealth (that is, that which governs our whole lives) would be owned and controlled by a few who would, as at present, buy the labour-power of propertyless workers, who have nothing to sell but their ability to work in order to “live.”

So, in fact, the Unionists and Anti-Partitionists, and the Labour parties, stand basically for the same thing: the maintenance of capitalism. It's true there are various flags involved. Union Jacks, Tricolours, even Red Flags — there exists various sponsored ideologies. But what of these things beside that which controls how we live—even **whether or not we live?**

To talk of uniting on “political questions” with any of these capitalist parties and sections of the exploiting class is, therefore, sheer nonsense. Why should we, for example, at the cost of alienating one section of our own class, make common front with reactionary Nationalist elements, the native petty-bourgeoisie, the landed gentry, the ex-Imperialists and Fascists, who'd prefer a dog — of any nationality—to an Irish Socialist? Why help to change a flag and leave the old enemy, capitalism, with its poverty and exploitation and **class-border**? Why should Socialists assist a clique that even now are eager to speculate with the blood of Irish workers in the markets of international catastrophe?

The reward of the working class for their support and assistance in a venture to establish a “United Republic” would be the reward of the workers everywhere who take up arms on behalf of their masters. The “victory” would be theirs—it always is— but others would reap the fruits. That this would be so—as it always has been so—who are better qualified to judge than those who fought and suffered during 1916 and after for “Irish freedom” and “the Republic”? In the words of Mr. T. A. Gardiner, President of the Old Comrades of the Irish Republican Army (at the annual meeting in Dublin, 3/7/'49), here is their verdict:—

“It was a sad position that to-day, after 27 years of native government, the very men who won the measure of freedom they enjoyed should still be fighting for the justice which had been denied them.”

Let those with visions of Tricolour-flying columns

entering the city of Belfast dwell a little on Mr. Gardiner's words. Their reward would be no greater — a certificate of service, and perhaps a medal.

We affirm that there is only one way to remove borders — borders of class, race or ideology — and that is through the medium of Socialism.

The excuse of Irish Labour leaders—who, of course, are not opposed to class society—that they must “clean up the national question” before they attune the minds of the people to social (?) questions is just so much political eye-wash. Yet it is this very “Partition question” which has proved such a fatal stumbling block to all the reformist parties in Ireland. They veer “this way” and “that way,” and even straddle the fence, and by such political acrobatics hope to curry favour with the electorate and so receive its votes at the next Elections.

Only Socialists can give a clear-cut answer to the “Partition question” and be consistent in it: the removal of “the Border” will not remove one social evil from which the working class suffer; and so, it is obviously not a problem which concerns the working class.

No matter what means the reformist parties employ they cannot solve the “Partition question.” Though the Customs huts go and Stormont be ousted, “the Border” will still remain; for “the Border” in the last resort is one of ideologies and so will continue as long as that class-system which engenders such ideological differences—capitalism—itself continues. Only through the establish-  
... only through Socialism will all such borders, wherever  
... only through Socialism will all such borders, wherever they may be, cease to exist.

### THE WORLD TO-DAY

In the preceding pages we have recorded the proof of the inability of the political parties which workers have supported in the past to solve their problems. We have shown that the bland promises made at Election-times do not suffice to put roofs over the heads of those who need them, or put food on the bare tables in workers' homes, or ensure to workers' children that security of life to which they are entitled. In this, however, we are not merely accusing any particular party or parties, but that which is really responsible for the appalling conditions of the mass of the people, the capitalist system of society.

We indict capitalism, for it is capitalism which has been found wanting.

It is capitalism which has given us the efficient organisation of the individual factory, yet on the world level of production, anarchy . . . capitalism which has made all nations inter-dependent, yet of national and racial hatred, almost a religion . . . capitalism which has brought about social production, yet of the wealth so produced, individual ownership . . . capitalism which has afforded abundance for all, yet for the mass of mankind, a life of poverty . . . capitalism which has presented us with over-production, yet of the plethora of goods produced by needy millions, an orgy of destruction . . . capitalism which has shown the necessity of “national law and order,” yet of international war and its mass-murder, an equal necessity . . .

Such are some of the glaring contradictions of present-day society which so perplex the minds of millions throughout the world. A society sometimes called Christian, democratic, civilised, new democratic — take your choice of a name—but that can only be truly described as insane. The squalor and misery which are the result of such social contradictions for the working class cannot, however, be veiled by high-sounding words and phrases—the pill is just as bitter for all the sugar-coating. Working class conditions the world over belie the assertions of honey-tongued statesmen and politicians: workers everywhere are dissatisfied with conditions as they are.

Strikes in Britain, Germany, Australia, America—unemployment growing in all countries — millions needing houses — diseases exacting increasing death-tolls — living costs soaring and wages and salaries limping far behind—military manoeuvres and war preparations everywhere—and the Great Powers sparring for World War III — and, over all, the Atom Bomb, and the greater threat of bacterial warfare, ready for the next holocaust. This is the civilised world at present, stripped of its false glamour and its “new look.”

Such a world—capitalist society and its basis, production for profit—surely deserves to go! As long as it continues—as long as the working class, the producers of all wealth, accept capitalism as the only social arrangement—so long will all its evils persist, so long will the workers of the world be doomed to hunger, disease and slums . . . a prey to fears of unemployment and war. Whether capitalism be administered by Party Dictatorship, Coalition Governments, or so-called Labour parties, it can never be administered in the interest of the working class.

# The Socialist Party of Ireland



## DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES

### THE SOCIALIST PARTY OF IRELAND HOLDS:

1. That Society as at present constituted is based upon the ownership of the means of living (i.e., land, factories, railways e.c.,) by the capitalist or master class, and the consequent enslavement of the working class, by whose labour alone wealth is produced.
2. That in society, therefore, there is an antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle, between those who possess but do not produce, and those who produce but do not possess.
3. That this antagonism can be abolished only by the emancipation of the working class from the domination of the master class, by the conversion into the common property of society of the means of production and distribution, and their democratic control by the whole people.
4. That as in the order of social evolution the working class is the last class to achieve its freedom, the emancipation of the working class will involve the emancipation of all mankind without distinction of race or sex.
5. That this emancipation must be the work of the working class itself.
6. That as the machinery of government, including the armed forces of the nation, exists only to conserve the monopoly by the capitalist class of the wealth taken from the workers, the working class must organise consciously and politically for the conquest of the powers of government, national and local, in order that this machinery, including these forces, may be converted from an instrument of oppression into the agent of emancipation and the overthrow of privilege, aristocratic and plutocratic.

7. That as all political parties are but the expression of class interests, and as the interest of the working class is diametrically opposed to the interests of all sections of the master class, the party seeking working-class emancipation must be hostile to every other party.

8. THE SOCIALIST PARTY of Ireland, therefore, enters the field of political action determined to wage war against all other political parties, whether alleged labour or avowedly capitalist, and calls upon the members of the working class of this country to muster under its banner to the end that a speedy termination may be wrought to the system which deprives them of the fruits of their labour, and that poverty may give place to comfort, privilege to equality, and slavery to freedom.

*Those agreeing with the above principles and desiring enrolment in the Party should apply for membership form to secretary of nearest branch.*

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